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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

COMMEMORATION OF THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 20 June 1985 from the Permanent Representative of
Czechoslovakia to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Chairman of the Czechoslovak Commission for the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace, His Excellency Mr. Bohuslav Chnoupek, and to request that the letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 27 and 39 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jaroslav CESAR
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/40/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Letter dated 20 June 1985 from the Minister for Foreign
Affairs of Czechoslovakia to the Secretary-General

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic welcomed the United Nations General Assembly decisions 39/425 of 17 December 1984 on the observance of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and 39/10 of 8 November 1984 on organizing an International Year of Peace.

The proclamation and organization of the two projects represent, in our view, an important contribution to the mobilization of nations for averting the threat of a nuclear catastrophe, in the struggle for restoring the international climate to health, for durable peace.

The Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace are organized at a time when the entire progressive international community is recalling an event of lasting historic significance - the victory over fascism and militarism in the Second World War which was the most sanguinary and the most destructive war in mankind's history. It is hardly possible to commemorate befittingly the founding of the United Nations and to strive consistently for universal peace without recalling the countless victims in the States of the anti-Hitler coalition in the Second World War. For the sake of drawing a lesson, encouragement and inspiration, it is impossible to forget the crucial and, for the whole of mankind, decisive moments in its course. It is difficult not to acknowledge with a single word the price which the different nations had to pay for their liberation from the fascist yoke. And it was the peoples of the Soviet Union which paid the highest price with their 20 million dead, immeasurable suffering and material losses. With their own blood they bought freedom not only for themselves but also for other peoples, including the peoples of Czechoslovakia. It was the victory over fascism and the determination to save future generations from the scourge of war that gave birth to the decision to found an organization of such a kind that would be an effective instrument in the struggle for international security and peace. The difficult struggle against fascism also demonstrated vividly that, in order to protect and defend noble human ideals, co-operation among States with different social systems is not only possible but also generally beneficial.

Furthermore, this victory gave birth to the post-war settlement which has found a reaffirmation in bilateral agreements between a number of States and in the Final Act of Helsinki and for 40 years has reliably served the interests of safeguarding security in Europe. That victory, at the same time, strengthened the national liberation struggle of colonial peoples and contributed to the acceleration of the process of a world-wide disintegration of the colonial system.

The Czech and the Slovak peoples were among those which never reconciled themselves to the fascist subjugation and struggled actively against the Nazi invaders. History imprinted many a bitter experience on our national consciousness, particularly at the time immediately preceding the Second World War and in its course. It is therefore only natural that on this very occasion we look more closely, through the prism of that experience, at the developments in the

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world around us and all the more sensitive is our response to them. If somebody today does not deem it necessary to recall the significance of the events 40 years ago as a prerequisite for laying the foundations of the United Nations, then it is a cause to us for a very deep reflection. At the time of the current serious threat to mankind's very existence it is necessary to emphasize the spirit of realism and reason which at that time motivated the common victory in the interest of defending human civilization and social progress.

In these days when our whole country lives under the sign of the fortieth anniversary of its liberation from the Nazi-Fascist rule and from the tribulations of the Second World War, we appreciate the value and the significance of that historic victory for our entire post-war development. The results of the 40 years of building socialism in Czechoslovakia are obvious and affect every sphere in the life of our society. The dynamic development of the forces of production led to the speedy development of the whole country, to the creation of a new material base, to an unprecedented growth of the standard of living, of the material and cultural prosperity of the Czechoslovak people. Today the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is in every respect an advanced country with a high standard of living. The socialist system gave all citizens genuine human dignity and it has effectively secured their rights and freedoms.

From the very establishment of the United Nations, Czechoslovakia has consistently striven for the successful implementation of the aims of its Charter formulated by the founding States, among which was also our country. We have always considered it our duty and, at the same time, honour to defend its existence and role as a significant factor of international relations, and to take an active and creative part in its important activities in all fields, whether political, economic, social, cultural or that of international law.

The implementation of the basic provisions of the United Nations Charter, the consolidation and fortification of the foundations of peace, is viewed by socialist Czechoslovakia as the fulfilment of the legacy of those millions of dead who died for the ideals on which the United Nations was built and the establishment of which they did not live to see. For 40 years now the majority of mankind has enjoyed peace. But it must be added that it has been a fragile peace, put to everyday tests which painfully affect many nations. Moreover, a peace which within a matter of minutes could be turned into global catastrophe in which, unlike in the last conflict, there would be no victors, there would be only the defeated.

That is why we sincerely welcomed the start, thanks to Soviet initiative, of Soviet-American talks on a whole set of questions relating to space and nuclear weapons and aimed at averting an arms race in space and at halting it on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear weapons and strengthening strategic stability. In that context, we appreciate as an expression of good will and a noble act the Soviet proposal for a moratorium on the development, including scientific research work, testing and the deployment of offensive space weapons, and freezing strategic offensive weapons of both sides; the initiation of a unilateral moratorium on the deployment of medium-range missiles and the suspension of further retaliatory measures in Europe. We want to express the hope that this Soviet step will not remain without a positive response from the other side.

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While commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the victory over the barbarism, degradation of human spirit and, at the same time, the resurrection of that spirit on a broad international basis which found such a concentrated expression in the establishment of an international organization of a new type, we join those forces of peace and progress that are resolutely determined to do their utmost for the elimination of the danger of war, the strengthening of peace and international security and for disarmament; for the liquidation, once and for all, of destructive weapons of any kind. The year of peace should therefore mark the beginning of an end to the squandering of the vast material and spiritual potential of mankind of stockpiles of deadly weapons. It should encourage broad international co-operation benefiting economic and overall social progress in the world.

In the spirit of the above outlined approach to the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace, I should like to inform you that also on the national level the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic wishes to make a maximum possible contribution to the success of both these international projects organized along the lines of the United Nations.

In keeping with the recommendation of the United Nations General Assembly, the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic adopted the decision to establish a Czechoslovak Commission for the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace and entrusted to me its chairmanship.

The Commission comprises Czechoslovak government and public figures, leading representatives of the Federal Assembly, government members of the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic forming the Czechoslovak Federation. Its members furthermore include prominent representatives of the peace movement, the trade unions, the co-operative movement, women, youth, science, culture, sports and the information media.

The Czechoslovak Commission for the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace sets for itself the goal to acquaint the broadest Czechoslovak public circles with the importance of the United Nations as a collective instrument for the safeguarding of peace and security throughout the world. It will actively promote peace initiatives aimed at averting the threat of a nuclear war, preventing the militarization of outer space, achieving progress in the sphere of disarmament, particularly in the nuclear field, restoring the international climate to health, and building confidence among States, at resolving conflict situations in the world, speeding up the completion of the process of decolonization, expanding international co-operation in the interest of durable peace and social progress.

Apart from a festive rally that will be held in Prague on 24 October 1985, the Commission is preparing a whole number of social, cultural and educational projects to mark the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace in various localities of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. It will make sure that the Czechoslovak media provide, to an increased extent, information on these actions and those carried out by the United Nations.

Thus, for instance, in June 1985 on the occasion of the anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, the Institute for International Relations

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and the Czechoslovak United Nations Association will hold in Prague a seminar on the role of the United Nations and the Czechoslovak contribution to its activities.

In keeping with the recommendation of the United Nations General Assembly, the Commission also plans, in co-operation with the Czechoslovak Solidarity Committee, a number of projects to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

On the occasion of both Years special publications will appear that will be devoted to the activities of the United Nations. A number of programmes, including a special programme on peace education of children in Czechoslovakia to be distributed through the United Nations, will be prepared by the Czechoslovak Television.

The Czechoslovak Commission will also participate in international projects organized by the United Nations and its specialized agencies to mark the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will take advantage of the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace to promote joint efforts by States Members of the United Nations to increase the authority and the role of the United Nations as an important instrument of international co-operation in the struggle for peace and social progress in the world.

(Signed) Bohuslav CHNOUPEK
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Chairman of the Czechoslovak Commission
for the Year of the United Nations and
the International Year of Peace
