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REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Letter dated 27 April 1977 from the Permanent Representative of  
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

In connexion with General Assembly resolution 31/87 on the question of the reduction of military budgets, the Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations would like to bring the following to your attention.

The Soviet Government has repeatedly offered its observations on the question of the reduction of the military budgets of States, in particular in the letter dated 25 September 1973 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the letter dated 26 June 1975 from the Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, and also in the memorandum of the Soviet Union on questions relating to the cessation of the arms race and disarmament of 28 September 1976. All those observations are still fully valid today.

The Soviet Union is firmly convinced that the present constant increase in the military expenditures of States should be replaced by the practice of systematically reducing such expenditures. As is known, in resolution 3093 A (XXVIII), adopted on the initiative of the USSR, the General Assembly appealed for the reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and for the allocation of part of the resources released for the provision of assistance to developing countries. The speedy implementation of that decision of the General Assembly would help to relax international tension and to limit the arms race. In addition, substantial additional resources could thus be directed towards economic and social development goals.

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\* A/32/50/Rev.1.

The practical implementation of that decision of the General Assembly is, however, being delayed. Some permanent members of the Security Council have still not declared their readiness to respond to the appeal of the General Assembly. Unfortunately, in recent years it has been the practice in the United Nations to carry out technical studies of individual aspects of the problem of the reduction of the military expenditures of States. But, as the experience of recent years has shown, such studies do not promote the practical reduction of the military budgets of States and, in fact, only divert attention from a solution to the problem.

In the view of the Soviet Union, the efforts of States must be directed not towards abstract research which does not yield practical results, but towards the implementation of genuine effective measures to reduce military budgets.

The Soviet Union, as it has already stated in the General Assembly, is prepared to adopt a flexible position and seek mutually acceptable specific decisions, inter alia, concerning the figures by which military budgets should be reduced initially. It might be possible, as a first step, to agree on a larger figure than 10 per cent, or on a smaller figure. It is important to make this question the subject of businesslike talks between all the States concerned. The Soviet Union is prepared to take serious steps in this area simultaneously with the other permanent members of the Security Council.

I request you to circulate this letter from the Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations as an official document of the General Assembly under item 47 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) O. TROYANOVSKY  
Permanent Representative of the  
USSR to the United Nations

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