



Distr.
GENERAL

A/4356
20 January 1960
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 16 January 1960 from the Permanent Representative of
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

New York, 16 January 1960

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the Appeal of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Parliaments and Governments of all the nations of the World.

I should be glad if you would arrange for this Appeal to be published as an official United Nations document.

(Signed) A. SOBOLEV

Permanent Representative of
the USSR to the United Nations

APPEAL

OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE UNION OF SOVIET
SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE PARLIAMENTS AND
GOVERNMENTS OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

The Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has resolved to appeal to the Parliaments and Governments of all the nations of the world on a matter of supreme importance, affecting the interests of the whole of mankind.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR has decided, without waiting for the disarmament issue to be settled on an international scale, to carry out a further big reduction of the strength of the armed forces of the USSR. We have enacted a law cutting them by another one third, namely by 1,200,000 men. Reductions are to be made in the armaments of the Army and Navy, and in military expenditure.

When the law we have adopted today has been carried out, the strength of our Army and Navy will be 2,423,000 men.

We should like you to remember that during the discussion of the disarmament problem in 1956 the United States, the United Kingdom and France proposed that the level of the armed forces of the Soviet Union and the United States should be established at 2.5 million men. The Soviet Government accepted their proposal, naturally assuming that this would be only the first step toward disarmament. But no sooner had the Soviet Union accepted this figure than those who had suggested it themselves repudiated it.

Three years have since passed. Agreement with the Western Powers has not been reached, and we are faced with the question: What must be done now? Our Government, which has already several times reduced its armed forces and cut its military budget unilaterally, has decided to take a new bold and generous step, namely to effect another considerable cut in its armed forces without further delay.

In adopting the Law for a Further Considerable Reduction in the Armed Forces of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was guided by a realistic appraisal of the latest developments in the international situation. It is a fact that international tension has eased considerably and that the prospects for the strengthening of peace have substantially improved. The peoples of the world and the political leaders and statesmen are becoming ever-increasingly aware of

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the irrefutable truth that peaceful coexistence of nations with different social systems is a historical fact and a vital necessity, arising from the present stage of evolution of human society.

Meetings and contacts between leading statesmen are becoming an effective means of easing tensions and solving the most complicated international problems. The visit by N.S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to the United States and his discussions with President Dwight Eisenhower have opened a new chapter in world relations - one of peaceful negotiations for the settlement of the international issues left unsettled since the Second World War or created during the years of the arms race and the "cold war". Negotiation is the only possible way to solve the issues in dispute. This is one of the major conclusions agreed on and recorded in the joint Soviet-American communiqué of 27 September 1959. The talks of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the President of the United States were characterized by frankness, by the forthright and outspoken manner in which they stated their positions and by a constructive attitude to each other's interests. It is an example which must be followed if there is a genuine desire to achieve a radical improvement of the international situation.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR expresses the hope that a similar constructive approach will be adopted at the forthcoming conference of heads of government which has at last been agreed on. The peoples expect that this summit meeting will lead to new positive developments in international relations and will help to solve the disarmament problems.

In its appeal of 31 October 1959, to the Parliaments of all countries of the world, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR urged the Parliaments of all countries and their members to take advantage of the present favourable international situation and to do everything in their power to relieve the peoples of the terrible scourge of the arms race and open to all mankind the road to a lasting peace.

In adopting the Law for a Further Considerable Reduction in the Armed Forces of the USSR, we express the hope that the Parliaments and Governments of other countries too will embark on a course leading in the same direction. It is high time that talk about disarmament gave way to practical disarmament measures. Only then will it be possible to carry out the great task for the solution of which representatives of all nations voted at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly, at which the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR presented on behalf of the Soviet Government a plan for general and complete disarmament.

Never before in the history of mankind have the arms race and military psychosis been as dangerous as in our days. Ranged against each other stand armies equipped with most dreadful means of mass destruction. In these conditions, the foolish action or evil designs of any one statesman may plunge the world into the abyss of a catastrophic war.

Modern weapons have unlimited range and destructive power. The explosion of a single hydrogen bomb could wipe the largest centres of world civilization from the face of the earth. It would take only a few H-bombs to destroy whole nations. Yet more and more atomic and hydrogen bombs are being stockpiled.

Because of the continuing arms race, masses of people are divorced from peaceful labour and kept under arms or employed in the manufacture of means of destruction. Millions of workers, engineers, scientists and talented and hard-working people, the flower of our society, whose creative minds and energies could do so much for the welfare of the peoples, are today wasting their energies on the creation of increasingly dreadful instruments of death. And the more resources go into the arms race, the more guns, tanks, missiles and other weapons produced, the greater is the burden of taxation imposed on the peoples. If the arms race were put to an end, large additional resources could be diverted to housing construction, health and education, to increasing the working people's incomes and providing assistance to the economically under-developed countries.

The implementation of the great programme for general and complete disarmament which has been put forward by the Soviet Union would permit vast material and spiritual resources to be used for creating conditions of life worthy of human beings.

Over the past four years alone, the strength of the armed forces of the USSR has been unilaterally reduced by a total of 2,140,000 men, and now we are reducing these forces by another 1,200,000 men. During these years, the Soviet Union completely withdrew its troops from the Romanian People's Republic, substantially reduced its armed forces stationed on the territories of the German Democratic Republic and the Hungarian People's Republic, and liquidated its military bases on the territories of other States.

Year by year, the Soviet Union has systematically cut down the USSR's budget appropriations for military purposes. For 1960, these appropriations amount to 12.9 per cent of the total USSR budget, as against 19.9 per cent in 1955.

We are profoundly confident that the Law for a Further Considerable Reduction in the Armed Forces of the USSR adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR will contribute greatly to bring about still further improvements in the international climate.

Now that international negotiations are shortly to be held on general and complete disarmament, particular importance attaches to practical action by States in the direction of unilateral disarmament, action which could help to create an atmosphere of confidence and promote the success of the forthcoming negotiations. Such action is the more essential because, despite the relaxation of international tension which has been achieved, there still are forces in the world trying to prevent the ending of the "cold war" and arms race. West Germany is being rearmed and equipped with atomic weapons and missiles, with grave consequences for the cause of peace in Europe and the rest of the world. Open calls for the implementation of the long-bankrupt "positions of strength" policy are still being made in a number of countries.

All this makes it imperative that those who sincerely wish to spare the peoples the horrors of a new war should not relax their efforts to bring about agreement on disarmament. There is much that Parliaments and their members can do in this respect. Their duty and responsibility to the peoples is to do everything in their power to help to end the arms race and solve the problem of disarmament.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR expresses the hope that the new unilateral reduction by the Soviet Union of its armed forces will serve as an example to other States, especially those possessing the greatest military might.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR calls upon the Parliaments and Governments of all countries of the world to respond to this new peaceful initiative on the part of the Soviet Union, and to undertake in their turn practical steps aimed at reducing existing armed forces, relieving the peoples of their countries of the burden of armaments, freeing humanity from the threat of war and ensuring peace throughout the world.

The Supreme Soviet of the
Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics

Kremlin, Moscow.

15 January 1960
