PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 29 March 1977 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 22 March 1977 from A. E. Gurinovich, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian SSR, concerning the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

(Signed) Boris V. KUDRYAVTSEV
Acting Permanent Representative of the Byelorussian SSR to the United Nations
Letter dated 22 March 1977 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic addressed to the Secretary-General

In connexion with the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-first session concerning the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, I have the honour to communicate to you the following.

Among the most important problems of the present day which are awaiting solution, the problem of ending the arms race and of disarmament occupies a special place.

The Byelorussian SSR together with other States of the socialist community has year after year been waging a persistent campaign in favour of peace, the cessation of the arms race and disarmament. As is well known, in recent years, thanks to the efforts of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, it has been possible to conclude a number of agreements which have placed certain limits on the arms race. The relaxation of international tension and the development of the process of détente in the world are creating favourable opportunities for the realization of other concrete measures in the field of disarmament. However, although progress in checking the arms race has been made, mankind has not yet succeeded in putting an end to it. The unprecedented arms race imposed on the world by the imperialist forces and the production of increasingly destructive kinds of weapons are continuing, absorbing vast material resources. That is why there is no more urgent task confronting mankind today than that of ending the arms race.

The Byelorussian SSR considers that an important step towards putting an end to the arms race would be the implementation of the measures provided for in the memorandum of the Soviet Union on questions of ending the arms race and disarmament submitted by the Soviet delegation for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-first session. Now, as is noted in the memorandum, "What is most important is to move on from discussions on ending the arms race to practical action". In that important document the Soviet Union, guided by the noble purposes set forth in the foreign policy programme of the 25th Congress of the CPSU, submits for co-ordinated action by States a realistic platform of joint measures to be taken with regard to the main areas of disarmament.

In the opinion of the Byelorussian SSR, in order to make decisive progress in checking the arms race and moving toward general and complete disarmament it is essential to consider the whole problem of disarmament in the widest and most authoritative forum - a world disarmament conference, the convening and holding of which is supported by the overwhelming majority of States.

Such a conference, being a truly universal forum, would be able to consider in a qualified manner and in depth the whole complex of problems concerning disarmament and take effective decisions regarding them which would provide for
the adoption of concrete and efficacious measures aimed at the solution of the problems of disarmament.

With regard to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to questions of disarmament, the decision to convene which was taken by the Assembly at its thirty-first session, it could, in the opinion of the Byelorussian SSR, constitute an intermediate stage on the path towards a world disarmament conference.

The Byelorussian SSR considers that a most important task facing the special session is that of determining the further steps to be taken toward the practical preparation and holding of a world disarmament conference at the earliest possible time. Its results should help to facilitate consideration of the problem of disarmament at the world disarmament conference, in which all States would participate.

The Byelorussian SSR considers that the special session should be thoroughly and comprehensively prepared and should provide in its agenda for a broad exchange of views with regard not only to the fundamental approaches to the question but also to the basic directions of the priority efforts of States with a view to attaining the ultimate goal of all efforts in the field of disarmament - general and complete disarmament. It could also devote attention to partial measures in the field of disarmament, and to measures taken on a regional basis.

A joint approach by States to these problems could be reflected, for example, in a final political declaration to be adopted by the special session. Decisions at the session should be taken in such a way as to exclude entirely the possibility of damaging the security interests of States. The Byelorussian SSR considers that the organization and holding of the session must fully reflect the lofty responsibility of all States of the world, especially the great Powers.

The special session of the United Nations General Assembly should not replace existing forms of negotiation on disarmament which have proved their usefulness. It should facilitate the work of the existing bodies dealing with disarmament.

(Signed) A. E. GURINOVICH
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian SSR