

**United Nations General Assembly
Fifty ninth session
Plenary meeting of the General Assembly
Commemorating the sixtieth anniversary
of the end of the Second World War
9 May 2005**

Statement by

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Memory and reconciliation. In the history of humankind the bitter memory about past wounds and losses is often an insurmountable wall on the way of reconciling individuals and the whole peoples. However, sometimes the same memory leads to peace and agreement through repentance and forgiveness.

In the war my country lost millions of lives of its citizens. Every fourth inhabitant of Belarus perished. That war was for my compatriots not just another world war. That was the Great Patriotic War. Up to now Belarusian people with the same intensity and pain recall the victims who gave their lives for the victory over Nazism.

Time does not heal well such deep wounds in the soul and heart of the people. But today we firmly say that for Belarus there are no “enemy states” in the world. Moreover, Belarus sincerely wishes that this notion would disappear not only from the Charter of our organisation but from the practice of international relations. However, the latter task seems to be much more difficult to achieve than the former.

People learn their own lessons from events of the past. The main lesson for Belarus literally burned to the ground in the fire of the World War was an understanding that SUCH A THING MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. Simple and unfortunately, as recent events have shown, a hardly obvious lesson.

The nightmare of war, suffering and death of the millions forced the humanity to shudder. Sixty years ago the international community found in itself the strength and courage to rise above the mutual distrust, claims and accusations. Battle comradeship of allied powers made it possible to create a new system of international relations. Its key principle was enshrined in the United Nations Charter: this is a principle of non-use of force and the threat of use of force.

What new upheaval must it take to shake the foundations of our world order so that we could be able once again with the same insight, as our

predecessors in 1945, to understand the enormous meaning and value of this principle?

The victors in the last world war no less than we ourselves cherished their convictions. Not less than we, each of them was certain about the rightfulness of the chosen way. Those were often conflicting ideas. Nevertheless, those people agreed on the main point - on their sacred endeavor at whatever cost to preserve life on Earth.

What must force us once again to shudder so that we might be able to overcome the natural temptation to yield to old historical offences? What can force us to seriously think about which of our noble intentions can truly help to preserve peace and life on Earth and which of them only push the humanity to the abyss of self-destruction?

We are all different. Sometimes we are even too different to deal with this fact. But if we wish to continue to live in this world we will have to live together and in peace.

To understand and accept this simple truth is the least that we can do in order to commemorate meaningfully the memory of those who perished in the last world war.