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Agenda item 10

CONSIDERATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE 1990s
AS THE THIRD DISARMAMENT DECADE

Working paper submitted by India

1. As the Second Disarmament Decade draws to a close and thinking commences on
launching the Third Disarmament Decade, a broad assessment needs to be made to
identify both the achievements of the past and the emerging agenda for future
action. In the overall international security environment today, there are
encouraging signs which need to be built upon. The pace of dialogue between the
United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has quickened
in recent years, the military and ideological blocs in Europe are engaged in
serious and substantial negotiations and there has been easing of tension in many
regions with hopes for political resolution of problems. There is thus hope for
survival and peace in the world. But these accomplishments can be regarded only as
a beginning. Last year, the world community had gathered together for the third
special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and found itself
unable to make a collective statement on this seminal theme for world peace. This
indicates that the recent gains giving rise to optimism are still tentative and
that more needs to be done to ensure that the perception of positive trends is
confirmed and reinforced and the disarmament and demilitarization process is made
irreversible. A decisive transformation has to be striven for in deed and
thought. This calls for simultaneous progress on two parallel tracks: progressive
and significant negotiation of concrete disarmament agreements and ushering in of a
new world security order and inter-State relations, in which global security is
enhanced collectively through co-operative and non-violent means.

2. The growing interdependence between States and globality of emerging issues
makes imperative the need for a new system of and basis for collective security.
The realization is now taking hold that true security cannot be measured in terms
of military strength and that the root-causes of insecurity lie deeper. They are
in part related to the instability generated by widespread poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. A collective system of security based on co-operation rather than confrontation must rest on a more just and equitable world order. The means for such a world order are available to us in the scientific and technological revolutions of the present century. At present, the arms race has made science and technology the master of war rather than the servant of peace. Quantitative disarmament measures are therefore important but not enough as their limited gains are quickly eroded by development and deployment of new weapon systems and through technological escalation of the arms race. The qualitative aspect of the arms race has therefore to be urgently addressed. This requires increased transparency in research and development in frontier technologies with potential military applications and cessation in military applications of such research.

3. The Third Disarmament Decade contains the seeds for the creation of a new world order. The efforts towards radical and comprehensive disarmament must be resolutely pursued along with efforts to create a new system of comprehensive global security. The components of such a system must be mutually supportive and participation in it must be universal. The structure for such a system must be firmly based on the principle of non-violence. Non-violence in international relations is based on the guidelines of coexistence, non-use of force or threat of use of force, non-intervention in internal affairs of other States and the right of States to pursue their own paths to development. These principles were perceived at the very dawn of the nuclear age and are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Their centrality must be reaffirmed so that faith in the original vision of the ideal community of nations becomes unshakeable.

4. The objectives of the Third Disarmament Decade are clear and must be clearly spelt out in the Declaration. The means to achieve these objectives are identifiable and must be presented emphasizing their interrelated features and the need to adopt a total, holistic approach and mode of thought. The recently concluded INF Treaty between the United States and the USSR marks a brief pause in the arms race; it does not yet mark a change of direction. This process must be taken quickly to its logical and ultimate conclusion by ridding the world forever of nuclear weapons. The elimination of this apocalyptic hardware must go hand-in-hand with changes in doctrines and attitudes and in the institutions required to usher in and manage a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order. Progress in this direction in the last decade of the century will cover the following areas:

(a) Conclusion of a convention to prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by accepting that these are not weapons of war;

(b) Agreement on a 50 per cent cut in the strategic arsenals of the United States and the USSR;

(c) Elimination of nuclear weapons from the European theatre;

(d) Moratorium on testing of nuclear weapons followed by negotiations to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty;
(e) Freeze on production of fissionable material for weapon purposes as a step towards halting the development, production and deployment of all types of nuclear weapons;

(f) Negotiation of a new treaty which would provide for a comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach to nuclear disarmament to replace the existing NPT;

(g) Conclusion of a chemical weapons convention to bring about the complete prohibition and effective elimination of these weapons of mass destruction;

(h) Moratorium on testing and deployment of all space weapon systems coupled with specific measures, such as an ASAT ban, that will promote international co-operation in peaceful uses of outer space;

(i) Monitoring of scientific and technological developments with a view to assessing their impact on the international security environment;

(j) Strengthening the United Nations, particularly in scientific and technical fields, to enable it to develop and run a multilateral verification system;

(k) Consideration of effective multilateral action aimed at tackling the non-military threats to security as identified in the Action Programme adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. 1/

To strengthen the intent of the Declaration, the above-mentioned objectives should be generally pursued, within a prescribed time frame for the purpose of concluding negotiations.

5. It is clear that action along these lines during the Third Disarmament Decade will be crucial in nurturing, promoting and strengthening the present positive trends perceived in international affairs. Action has to take place in a phased and structured manner, across a broad range of issues so that the comprehensive nature of the new security order becomes self-evident and self-sustaining. Both in terms of the current pace in the unremitting arms race and the perception that the world is hopefully entering a historic period which would see the shedding of the hostile bipolarity of the cold war period and assertion of multilateralism, the 1990s will be a decade of critical importance for the future of the world community and the Declaration it should adopt for this decade should reflect this sense of an approaching historical watershed.

Notes

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.87.IX.8, para. 35.