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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

Note verbale dated 29 May 1980 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba  
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to transmit herewith, on behalf of the non-aligned countries participating in the work of the Disarmament Commission, a working paper on agenda item 4 (b) of the Disarmament Commission and kindly request to have this paper circulated as a document for the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) Ernesto LOPEZ Paz  
Chargé d'Affaires

Annex

WORKING PAPER

A GENERAL APPROACH TO NUCLEAR AND  
CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT

Agenda item 4 (b)

1. Effective steps to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race and to initiate conventional disarmament have become even more imperative in the present tense international situation. In this situation, when the negotiations between the two major Powers and their alliance systems are in an impasse, the responsibility of the United Nations to promote the goals of disarmament has greatly increased. The Committee on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum for all multilateral negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament especially now that it includes the participation of all the nuclear Powers and other militarily significant States.

Nuclear disarmament

2. Nuclear disarmament is the task of the first and highest priority as confirmed by the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

3. All nuclear-weapon States, in particular those among them which possess the most important nuclear arsenals, bear a special responsibility in achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament. In this process, account will need to be taken inter alia of the relative qualitative and quantitative importance of the existing arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States and other States concerned.

4. The special session reached a general agreement regarding the need to promote the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapon systems, the cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and a comprehensive, phased programme for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time. It also called for the urgent conclusion of a treaty to comprehensively prohibit nuclear-weapons tests as well as the conclusion of the SALT II Agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to be followed promptly by further strategic arms limitation negotiations between the two parties, leading to agreed significant reductions of, and qualitative limitations on strategic arms.

5. If genuine and meaningful problems is to be made towards halting and reversing the nuclear-arms race, it is indispensable that negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty should be commenced immediately by the Committee on Disarmament with a view to its conclusion before the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this connexion the absence of progress

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in the restricted negotiations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America on this question should not be sufficient reason to prevent the consideration of the comprehensive test ban by the Committee on Disarmament. Furthermore, the SALT II Agreement signed by the two parties concerned, should be ratified without further delay and negotiations over a SALT III Agreement should be opened as soon as possible to achieve the objectives specified in paragraph 52 of the Final Document. At the same time, if the prospects of future nuclear disarmament negotiations between the two leading nuclear-weapon States and their alliances, are not to be eroded, they should refrain from developing, manufacturing or deploying any new nuclear-weapons system whether or not these are covered by the limitation measures contained in the SALT II Agreements.

6. The Committee on Disarmament should be enabled to fully discharge its responsibilities in the field of nuclear disarmament. As a general rule, the Committee should establish the necessary modalities for the conduct of negotiations on each of the items on its agenda. It should continue its efforts to open substantive negotiations with the participating of all nuclear-weapon States on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament in conformity with and to achieve the objectives specified in paragraph 50 of the Final Document.

7. In accordance with paragraph 66 of the Final Document "nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon states should jointly take further steps to develop international consensus of ways and means, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons". For this purpose, it is essential to ensure equality between the rights and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States and in particular to achieve genuine and significant progress in nuclear disarmament, to credibly assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to ensure the full access of all countries to nuclear technology and materials for peaceful purposes.

8. The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the Final Document can also contribute to the goals of disarmament.

9. Urgent efforts are also needed to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war. The nuclear-weapon States have a primary responsibility in this context. The most effective means of preventing nuclear war is by achieving complete nuclear disarmament. However, until nuclear disarmament is attained, efforts to prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, especially against the non-nuclear-weapon States, must be vigorously pursued. To this end:

- (i) The Committee on Disarmament should urgently negotiate and conclude the proposed international instrument to credibly and effectively assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.
- (ii) Each of the nuclear-weapon Powers must also give serious consideration to adopting unilateral or joint undertakings not to be the first to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any State, nuclear or non-nuclear.

- (iii) The General Assembly has declared that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would constitute a violation of the United Nations Charter and a crime against humanity. Efforts must be continued to translate this declaration into a general agreement for the complete prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

#### Conventional disarmament

10. Nuclear disarmament is the task of first and highest priority. However, together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all States to protect their security and to defend their independence and territorial integrity. These negotiations should be conducted with particular emphasis on armed forces and conventional weapons of nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant countries.

11. The achievement of nuclear disarmament measures should not be predicated on corresponding progress in conventional disarmament. Both nuclear and conventional disarmament measures should be pursued at the same time and with the specific objective of achieving undiminished security of States at lower levels of armaments. The relationships between nuclear and conventional disarmament arises from the fact that the largest arsenals of both nuclear and conventional weapons are in the possession of the same Powers and are deployed largely in the same region of the world.

12. In the conventional as in the nuclear field, the major responsibility for disarmament rests on those States with the largest military arsenals. The vast proportion of conventional weapons produced in ever-increasing volume are retained and deployed by the two leading military Powers and members of their respective alliance. Therefore, the cessation of the conventional arms race in Europe and the progressive and significant reduction of armaments in that region is most urgently required to avert the threat to international peace and security. Urgent progress should be made in the Vienna talks for reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. The proposal to convene a disarmament conference in Europe should be considered favourably by all States concerned. Progress in conventional disarmament measures between the two major alliances systems would constitute a significant step in strengthening peace and security in the world. Conventional disarmament measures are also particularly necessary in regions and areas where international peace and security are threatened.

13. In accordance with the provisions of the Final Document agreements or other measures should be resolutely pursued on a bilateral, regional and multilateral basis with the aim of strengthening peace and security at lower levels of military potential by the limitation and reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons. The only realistic approach to promote these objectives would be one based on the endeavour to find just and lasting solutions to conflicts and disputes in various parts of the world through strict observance of the principles of the United Nations Charter. In the process of promoting conventional disarmament, full

account must be taken of the principles regarding the right of each State to preserve its security, independence and territorial integrity for the maintenance of balance in the process of disarmament, and to ensure equal security for every State, the inherent right of self-defence embodied in the United Nations Charter and the principle of equal rights and the right to self-determination of peoples under colonial and alien domination.

14. The world trade in armaments constitutes a fraction of the total production of conventional weapons. Most of the arms trade takes place between members of the two major alliance systems and should be restrained through their bilateral and regional negotiations. The flow of armaments to developing countries is still a small proportion of the world arms trade and is directly related to the existence of conflicts and disputes in various parts of the world. Most developing countries do not possess the capacity to produce armaments and are thus dependent on the purchase of weapons to acquire the means for self-defence. All negotiations and consultations on the transfer of weapons must take this fully into account. It is particularly important to prohibit or limit increasingly sophisticated conventional weapons with great destructive capabilities.

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