DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

DOCTRINES OF NUCLEAR WARFARE

Agenda item 4 of the current session of the Commission

Working paper: German Democratic Republic

1. In order to contribute to removing the obstacles which impede the solution of the tasks that have the highest priority for nuclear disarmament, appropriate attention should be given to the doctrines of nuclear warfare.

2. The United Nations has commented repeatedly on such doctrines:

   (a) The Final Document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament stated in paragraph 13:

       "Enduring international peace and security cannot be built on the accumulation of weaponry by military alliances nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority."

   (b) Resolution 35/152 B, which was subsequently reaffirmed by resolutions 36/92 E and 37/78 C said, *inter alia*:

       "Noting with alarm the increased risk of a nuclear catastrophe associated both with the intensification of the nuclear-arms race and with the adoption of the new doctrine of limited or partial use of nuclear weapons giving rise to illusions of the admissibility and acceptability of a nuclear conflict."

   (c) Resolution 36/100 notes:

       "Any doctrines allowing the first use of nuclear weapons and any actions pushing the world towards a catastrophe are incompatible with human moral standards and the lofty ideals of the United Nations."
(d) Referring to what was stated in the above documents, resolution 37/78 C underlined:

"Noting with alarm that to the doctrine of a limited war was later added the concept of a protracted war,

"Noting also with alarm that these dangerous doctrines lead to a new twist in the spiral of the arms race, which may seriously hamper the reaching of agreement on nuclear disarmament".

In addition, the comprehensive study on nuclear weapons (A/35/392) deals with the doctrines of deterrence and other theories concerning nuclear weapons. The resolutions quoted point out that nuclear warfare doctrines are particularly dangerous since their orientation is on strategic superiority and first strike.

3. These specifically threatening characteristics of nuclear warfare doctrines have become increasingly manifest in the second half of the 1970s in connection with long-term arms programmes and other decisions on the development, production, introduction and stationing of qualitatively new nuclear weapon systems. The escalating nuclear-arms race at the beginning of the 1980s is reflected in the escalation of new concepts to fight and win a nuclear war, which have been elaborated above all by the main Western Power.

4. These doctrines include the following major concepts.

(a) The concept of limited nuclear war, according to which nuclear weapons, limited in scale and geographically, could be used or the use be threatened in order to achieve political and military goals. This concept, which provides for the first use of nuclear weapons, is directed against not only the socialist States of Europe but also countries in all other parts of the world. It bears the risk of a nearly unavoidable escalation of such a "limited" war into a full exchange of nuclear strikes.

(b) The concept of protracted nuclear war with a duration of up to six months, in which not only tactical but also strategic nuclear weapons would be employed. Preparatory measures for such a conflict include, inter alia, the creation of invulnerable command systems.

(c) The concept of a strategic first strike. Planning provides for the "decapitation" of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other socialist States, above all by means of those new medium-range missiles to be deployed in Western Europe from the end of 1983. At the same time, a massive strategic first strike is envisaged against the strategic counter-strike weapons of the USSR, its industrial basis and population centres.

(d) The concept of a defence system based in outer space to neutralize intercontinental ballistic missiles has the purpose to achieve a first-strike capability while the other side is deprived of its capability to respond with a counter-strike. In disregard of the indivisible interrelationship between strategic offensive and defensive weapons, the realization of this concept would...
lead to an arms race in the field of all kinds of strategic weapons which could not be stopped.

The purpose of all those plans is to win a nuclear war. Arguments, without any justification whatsoever, are disseminated claiming that it is possible to wage and to survive such a war. This will only serve to counteract the rejection of the idea of nuclear war by world public opinion.

5. The adverse effects of nuclear doctrines have increasingly become felt in the negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament. The implementation of arms buildup programmes linked with these doctrines accelerates the arms race. Through discontinuing and protracting disarmament negotiations, refusal to ratify concluded agreements and calling existing treaties into question, the intention is to remove obstacles to the achievement of strategic superiority on which these doctrines are being based.

6. In contrast to this, the Political Declaration of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, adopted at the session of the Political Consultative Committee held at Prague on 4 and 5 January 1983, says:

"The States represented at the session wish to stress as forcefully as possible that any expectation of winning a nuclear war after unleashing it is senseless. If a nuclear war is started, there can be no winner. Such a war would inevitably lead to the destruction of whole nations, to enormous devastation and catastrophic consequences for civilization and life itself on earth".

These States have no doctrines which contain the threat or first use of nuclear weapons. The USSR explicitly renounced each form of the first use of nuclear weapons, and the Warsaw Treaty member States proposed to the member States of NATO the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the first use of nuclear and conventional weapons.

7. The vast majority of the other member States of the United Nations reject nuclear warfare doctrines. The Political Declaration of the seventh summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries states that

"the renewed escalation in the nuclear arms race, both in its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, as well as reliance on doctrines of nuclear deterrence, has heightened the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war and led to greater insecurity and instability in international relations."

In the endeavour to prevent a nuclear war, the majority of member States attach great importance to those measures which most directly oppose the main danger arising from preparations for nuclear war and related doctrines. These include:

(a) The prevention of nuclear catastrophe (resolution 36/100),
(b) The commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons (resolution 37/78 J),
(c) The non-use of nuclear weapons (resolutions 36/92 I, 37/100 C),
(d) The freeze on nuclear weapons (resolutions 37/100 A, 37/100 B),
(e) The prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests (resolutions 37/85, 37/72, 37/73),
(f) The prohibition of the nuclear neutron weapon (resolutions 36/92 K, 37/78 E),
(g) The non-stationing of nuclear weapons (resolutions 33/91 F, 35/156 C, 36/97 E, 37/99 A),
as well as other measures to halt the qualitative arms race.

8. The United Nations is called upon to exploit all possibilities at its disposal
to prevent the implementation of plans that envisage a nuclear first strike with
the possible consequence of a nuclear catastrophe that would endanger the very
survival of mankind. It is necessary, therefore, that the Disarmament Commission
engage in even more thorough studies of the implications and consequences of
theoretical and psychological war preparations as a concomitant of physical war
preparations. Appropriate measures of the United Nations could considerably
contribute to efforts to check the influence of such perilous doctrines on the
political decisions of some States.

A recommendation of the Disarmament Commission should therefore be included in
its report to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session that the Commission
be requested to attach due importance, during its next session, to doctrines of
nuclear warfare, which is under item 4 of its present agenda.