Letter dated 18 May 1979 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Proposal on the Elements of a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament submitted by the Chinese delegation to the Disarmament Commission. I request that you kindly arrange for the circulation of this Proposal as an official document of the Disarmament Commission to be considered at its Working Group.

(Signed) Lai Yali
Acting Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations
Annex

'Chinese Delegation's Proposal on the Elements of a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament

I. Objective of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament:

The objective of the comprehensive programme of disarmament is, by formulating reasonable principles and practical and effective measures for disarmament, to promote real progress in disarmament, oppose a new world war and all armed aggression and safeguard international peace and security.

II. The Programme should include the following main principles:

(1) For the purpose of safeguarding international peace and security, relations between States must be based on the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. No State may seek hegemony in any form and in any part of the world or subject other States to aggression, interference, subversion, expansion or control. No disarmament measure may impair the sovereignty, independence and security of any State.

(2) In order to safeguard the security of all States, the two States with the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals have the primary responsibility for disarmament and should be the first to reduce their armaments. When they have drastically reduced their nuclear and conventional armaments and closed the huge gap between them and the other nuclear States and militarily significant States, the other nuclear States and militarily significant States should join them in reducing armaments according to reasonable ratios.

(3) It is imperative to bring about the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons so as truly to eliminate the danger of nuclear war. While nuclear disarmament is being considered, equal importance should be given to the question of reducing the super-Powers' ever-growing arsenals of conventional armaments, and disarmament in these two fields should be carried out in conjunction. Full attention should also be paid to the prohibition and destruction of biological and chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

(4) The actual process of disarmament should benefit the economic and social development of States. The super-Powers are spending huge sums on the arms race, which not only increases the danger of war and jeopardizes international peace and security, but also hinders the establishment of a new international economic order. Their military expenditures account for two thirds of the military budgets of all countries put together, so it is only natural that they should be called on first of all to reduce greatly their military expenditures and to make real contributions to aiding the developing countries.
(5) No disarmament measure may prejudice the right of States to make use of modern scientific and technological achievements to promote their economic development. The super-Powers must be prevented from using disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as pretenses to deprive other States of their right to use nuclear energy and develop their nuclear industries for peaceful purposes.

(6) While formulating more comprehensive disarmament measures, importance should be attached to limited scope measures, including regional measures. Zones of peace or nuclear-weapon-free zones shall be established in the light of the specific conditions prevailing in different parts of the world and the desire of the States in the regions concerned. These zones shall be free from rivalry for hegemony between the super-Powers, foreign military presence in all its forms, all armed occupation of other countries' territory and direct or indirect armed intervention and the threat of force. All nuclear States shall unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against these zones.

(7) The question of disarmament concerns the security and interests of all States and should be discussed and settled by all States on an equal footing. The organization and procedures of the disarmament machinery should be democratized; they should be free from super-Power manipulation and control and should fully reflect the demands and wishes of all States in the world.

(8) The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament should be strengthened. The United Nations General Assembly shall be kept informed of progress in all bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations. All parties to disarmament negotiations should earnestly consider and respect the recommendations and calls made by the General Assembly.

(9) Disarmament agreements should provide for strict and effective measures of international control to ensure their effective implementation. No control or verification measure may prejudice the sovereignty and security of any State.

(10) The people of the world should be fully informed about the intensification of the arms race between the super-Powers, the increasing danger of war and the lack of progress in disarmament in order to get active mass participation in the struggle for disarmament and the defence of world peace.

III. The comprehensive programme of disarmament should provide for the following main measures:

(1) Nuclear Disarmament

1. The ultimate aim of nuclear disarmament is the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

2. Pending agreement by the nuclear States on the non-use of nuclear weapons, all nuclear States, the two States with the largest nuclear arsenals in particular, shall unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the non nuclear weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones.
3. The two States with the largest nuclear arsenals shall immediately stop their nuclear arms race, cease all activities aimed at improving the quality and increasing the quantity of their nuclear weapons and hence to reduce and destroy their nuclear weapons by stages. When substantial progress has been made in the destruction of their nuclear weapons, thus closing the huge gap between their nuclear arsenals and those of the other nuclear States to the satisfaction of the majority of States, the other nuclear States shall then join them in negotiations for the total destruction of nuclear weapons.

(2) Reduction of Conventional Weapons

1. As a step preceding the reduction of conventional weapons, the two States with the largest conventional arsenals shall renounce military intervention in and threat of force against other States, both direct and indirect, withdraw all their troops stationed abroad and dismantle all their military bases on foreign soil.

2. The two States with the largest conventional arsenals shall first greatly reduce their conventional weapons and equipment. They can start by reducing the number of such heavy weapons as tanks, aircraft, warships and artillery. When substantial progress has been made in this regard, the other militarily significant States shall join them in reducing conventional armaments according to reasonable ratios.

(3) Prohibition of Chemical and Biological Weapons

1. All chemical and biological weapons shall be completely prohibited and totally destroyed. Pending the attainment of this goal, all States shall unequivocally undertake not to use any chemical or biological weapons.

2. A convention on the complete prohibition and total destruction of all chemical and biological weapons shall be negotiated and concluded as soon as possible.

(4) Prohibition of All New Weapons of Mass Destruction

The two super-Powers shall immediately stop the research, development and production of all new weapons of mass destruction and renounce their use.

(5) Establishment of Zones of Peace

1. At the request of the States in the region, South East Asia should be declared a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. All attempts by any State to seek any form of hegemony in this zone are prohibited, all foreign troops shall be withdrawn, all foreign military bases dismantled and all foreign aggression, expansion, interference and control eliminated.

2. The position of declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace should be respected by all States, the two super-Powers in particular. Activities of rivalry for hegemony between the super-Powers must be put an end to. The
independence and sovereigny of the littoral and hinterland States there should be strictly respected. There must be no military threat, aggression or expansion in any form directed against these States.

3. In conformity with the desire of the countries in the region, the Mediterranean should be declared a zone of peace.

(6) Nuclear-weapon-free Zones

1. All nuclear States shall respect the status of the nuclear-weapon free zones and unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against these zones.

2. The status of the nuclear-free zone in Latin America shall be respected by all States.

3. In conformity with the common desires of the States in the respective regions, nuclear weapon-free zones shall be established in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, etc.