DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Addendum

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BYELORUSSIAN SOVET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]
[11 June 1984]

Being firmly convinced that the prevention of nuclear war and the halting and limitation of the arms race are a global problem of extreme significance, the Byelorussian SSR considers that the adoption of measures in this area is the key to ensuring international security, an important condition for the economic and social development of all States and a necessary prerequisite for the solution of the problems of overcoming the developing countries' backwardness, combating hunger, disease and illiteracy, preserving the environment, and so on. The attainment of these and other goals is being hampered by a lack of resources, which are being swallowed up by the arms race imposed by the forces of imperialism.

The Byelorussian SSR reaffirms its often stated view that disarmament and development are closely linked. The limitation of the arms race and attainment of disarmament can and must make an effective contribution to the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis and to the establishment of a new international economic order free of exploitation and diktat.

The unbridled continuation of the arms race unleashed by the United States and its NATO allies and the attempts to extend it to outer space, dangerously increasing the threat of nuclear war, are incompatible with progress towards more stable and balanced socio-economic development.

The imperialist Powers' pursuit of a policy based on a position of force and their arbitrary declaration that numerous developing countries are their spheres of "vital interest" are forcing these States to channel resources which they badly need for development into expenditure on armaments.

To sum up, it is now extremely urgent to adopt effective measures to avert nuclear war, to halt and limit the arms race and to prevent it from spreading either to new countries or to new areas and spheres of human activity.

The Byelorussian SSR is managing consistently and purposefully to adopt specific measures to attain these goals and has for many years been submitting and supporting relevant proposals, in the United Nations and in other organs including proposals aimed directly at diverting to peaceful needs the funds and resources to be released as a result of disarmament.

The reduction of military expenditures is one of the simplest and, at the same time, most effective ways of halting the arms race and making the transition to disarmament. All that is needed is the political will to take specific and really effective steps in this direction.
Unfortunately the United States and its NATO allies do not want to proceed to a reduction of military budgets; indeed, they are planning a long-term and large-scale build-up of such budgets. Their erection of artificial obstacles in the way of the reduction of military budgets under far-fetched pretexts concerning the budgets' "opaqueness" concerning the need to conduct an assessment of States' "military efforts and capabilities" and concerning their comparability is all simply an attempt to conceal a lack of political will, to move this important issue out of the realm of the attainment of specific agreements into the sphere of sterile rhetoric and to camouflage the increase in their military budgets. This type of approach, which is yet another variation of the holding of talks for the sake of talking, is essentially equivalent to creating only a semblance of efforts to achieve disarmament and distracts attention from the continuation of the arms race on an unprecedented scale.

The idea of introducing a "tax on military expenditure" obscures the need for a genuine reduction of States' military budgets and for the adoption of real measures to limit the arms race and achieve disarmament and may also, under certain conditions, create in some countries an interest not in reducing but in increasing armaments.

In the absence of a clear link with disarmament measures, a conference on the various implications of the relationship between disarmament and development can hardly promote the release of resources for development purposes and may be used as smoke-screen by the opponents of real disarmament.

This kind of approach and idea is alien to the States of the socialist community.

In the current tense international situation, only really effective action on disarmament can create the conditions for the reallocation of resources to solve vitally important social and economic problems in the world as a whole and in the developing countries in particular. In view of this, such action becomes particularly urgent.

The States of the socialist community are sympathetic to demands, primarily from the developing countries, for measures to limit and reduce armaments in close connection with finding a solution to the problems of economic development. They have repeatedly and for many years put forward initiatives aimed at the adoption of concrete measures to reduce military budgets. The United Nations General Assembly has already approved their proposals in that regard, particularly the Soviet Union initiative concerning the reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries. The flexible approach of the socialist countries and their readiness to proceed to a reduction of military budgets, both in percentage and in absolute terms, to settle the question of the initial scale of such reductions on a mutually acceptable basis, and also to agree to the freezing of military budgets as a first step towards achieving that objective, create a good basis for agreement and are evidence that those States have the steadfast political will to bring about real progress in that direction. In 1983, important proposals on reducing military expenditures were set forth in the Prague Political Declaration of States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty and in the Moscow Statement of leading party and State figures of those countries.
Further substantial confirmation of the constructive political will of the countries of the socialist community came in the proposal made by the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty addressed to the NATO member States regarding talks on the question of freezing and reducing military expenditures. That proposal was made on 5 March 1984 and expanded on previous proposals. The new initiative envisages the holding of preparatory consultations with the participation of all the countries belonging to those two alliances in order to reach agreement regarding the commencement of talks on a mutual freeze of military expenditures and their subsequent reduction. It is intended thereby to reach specific understandings on this question at the earliest opportunity, so that the resources released could be used for the benefit of economic and social development, including that of in the developing countries. The new proposal is of a constructive and flexible character, and envisages a whole range of tangible measures. It is now up to the Western side.

If the United States and its allies, which have considerable economic and military capabilities, had also shown genuine readiness for practical steps in the area of reducing military budgets, an appropriate agreement would already have become a reality and substantial resources would already have been reallocated to social and economic development.

In addition, one should not lose sight of the indisputable fact that the implementation of the broad range of initiatives advanced by the States of the socialist community for limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament in all areas would also have led to the reallocation of considerable resources. It is important, in particular, to note that the implementation of the Soviet proposal for mutual recognition by the nuclear Powers of certain norms in their relations for the benefit of peace would help to create an atmosphere favouring the redirection of the ever-increasing proportion of resources used for armaments towards development goals.

MEXICO

[Original: Spanish]

[21 June 1984]

With regard to paragraph 2 (a), (b) and (c) of General Assembly resolution 38/71 B, concerning the evaluation of the burden of armaments in the world, the impact of military expenditures on the world economic situation and development, and the contribution that a reduction in arms and military expenditures, in particular by nuclear-weapon States and other militarily important States, would make to development tasks, the Government of Mexico reaffirms the validity of the Study on the relationship between disarmament and development, which was prepared in 1978 by a group of governmental experts co-ordinated by Mrs. Inga Thorsson.

Moreover, the Government of Mexico believes that any initiative in connection with this topic should be regarded as being complementary to action undertaken by the international community in the field of disarmament. Likewise, the resources released as a result of the reduction in expenditure on armaments must be additional to the total amount available for development assistance.
As regards ways and means of placing disarmament at the service of development, the Government of Mexico believes that one of the best solutions would be to establish a fund financed from the resources that would be released through the implementation of specific disarmament measures.

The above-mentioned fund could be destined for use by the United Nations Development Programme, in accordance with the proposal put forward by Mexico at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Furthermore, it would be possible to determine that there should be a gradual reduction, on a jointly agreed basis, in the military budgets of the ten States that alone account for over 80 per cent of total military expenditure in the world and that a portion of any funds thus saved should be reallocated for the purpose of promoting the economic and social development of the third world countries.

With regard to the proposals concerning the convening of a conference to consider problems relating to the relationship between disarmament and development, the Government of Mexico is of the view that a conference would help to break the current deadlock in multilateral negotiations on disarmament, while providing an opportunity to set the often mentioned relationship between disarmament and development on a new footing, rather than dealing with the question merely at the intellectual level.

If it is held, a conference of the kind under consideration should devote particular attention to the following:

(a) The importance of the transfer of technology in the field of conventional weapons and its impact on the developing countries' economies. In view of the importance of the transfer of such technology, agreements limiting trade in conventional weapons must be negotiated;

(b) A review of the industrialized countries' policies on military assistance to the developing countries, in comparison with the economic aid which the industrialized countries give. Such a review should facilitate the reallocation of resources set aside for the military sector to economic and social development activities;

(c) An analysis of the relationship between security and development, taking account of the fact that in general international tensions have a greater impact on the poorest States, which are obliged to use their scarce resources for the acquisition of military equipment, including sophisticated equipment. Security is therefore one of the prerequisites for economic and social development, which means that any endeavour to determine which countries are most affected by an unfavourable relationship between security and development must be based on the principle of the primary responsibility of the great Powers for the deterioration in the international situation.

With regard to arrangements for holding the conference, the Government of Mexico believes that any proposal that an initial conference with limited participation should be convened, followed by a second conference open to all Member States, must take account of the following:
(a) If a conference with restricted participation is held, the membership of the Disarmament Conference could be taken into account as a criterion for selection;

(b) The initial conference should be largely focused on the consideration of specific proposals calling for the use of resources currently set aside for the military sector for the purpose of promoting economic and social development.