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, especially the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

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 38/183 D added that the new doctrines of limited or partial use of nuclear weapons "are incompatible with ... resolution 110 (II) of 3 November 1947, entitled 'Measures to be taken against propaganda and the inciters of a new war'."
(d) Resolution 38/183 D, reaffirming what was stated for the first time in resolution 37/78 C, underlined:

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

"Gravely concerned about the renewed escalation in the nuclear arms race, both in its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, as well as reliance on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which in fact are heightening the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war and lead to increased tensions and instability in international relations."

(e) The Declaration on the Prevention of a Nuclear Catastrophe, adopted as 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."

(f) In the Declaration on the Condemnation of Nuclear War, adopted as resolution 38/75, the General Assembly:

"Condemns the formulation, propounding, dissemination and propaganda of political and military doctrines and concepts intended to provide 'legitimacy' for the first use of nuclear weapons and in general to justify the 'admissibility' of unleashing nuclear war."

In addition, the Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons 1/ and a number of documents of the Committee on Disarmament and/or the Conference on Disarmament relating to the question of the prevention of nuclear war, inter alia, documents CD/341 of 4 February 1983, CD/355 of 21 March 1983 and CD/484 of 28 March 1984, deal with doctrines of deterrence and other strategies concerning nuclear weapons. The resolutions quoted and the documents mentioned point out that such nuclear warfare doctrines are particularly dangerous and destabilizing since they are oriented to strategic superiority and nuclear 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. Since the beginning of the 1980s the escalating nuclear-arms race has been 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 nuclear warfare concepts are closely linked with the doctrine of deterrence, which is increasingly becoming an instrument of direct nuclear war preparations. It includes, inter alia, the use of nuclear weapons, in particular...
first use of nuclear weapons, both in the regional and global framework; the
offensive use of conventional weapons combined with chemical and nuclear weapons;
and the use of outer space for offensive military purposes and for averting
possible counter-attacks. All this dangerously increases the risk of a global
nuclear catastrophe.

5. Such concepts are aimed at achieving overall military and strategic
superiority, which would also serve as an instrument for political and military
threat and blackmail against peoples all over the world. They also lead to an
escalation of the arms race, in particular in the nuclear field, undermine
confidence, destabilize international security, jeopardize existing arms limitation
and disarmament agreements and prevent further arms limitation and disarmament. An
approach to arms limitation and disarmament negotiations, based on such concepts,
is counterproductive and entails the danger that such negotiations end up in an
impasse.

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 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 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 use of military force and on the maintenance of peaceful relations between the
Warsaw Treaty and NATO member States, whose core would be the commitment of the
States members of the two alliances not to be the first to use nuclear or
conventional arms against one another. They are prepared to start negotiations on
this question based on the principle of equality and equal security.

7. The vast majority of the other Member States of the United Nations also reject
nuclear warfare doctrines. The Political Declaration of the seventh summit
Conference of Heads of State or 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.
8. In this connection, the Disarmament Commission should include in its recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session:

(a) The condemnation of all military doctrines and concepts which are based on the admissibility of nuclear warfare and aimed at strategic superiority and first use of nuclear weapons, leading to a further escalation of the nuclear arms race, to an increase of the danger of war and impediment of disarmament;

(b) The proposal that the Disarmament Commission should be requested to further examine such doctrines and concepts as well as its consequences under item 4 of its present agenda, with a view to finally achieving a renunciation of such doctrines and concepts by all States.

Notes