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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE  
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

CUBA

[Original: Spanish]

[6 May 1985]

The Government of the Republic of Cuba feels that it is necessary, in considering the matter, to recall the fundamental objective which led to the establishment of the United Nations and which is related to the prevention of war and the maintenance of peace.

To this end, in the contemporary world it is essential to bring about a halt to the arms race and make progress towards general and complete disarmament. This constitutes an eventual prerequisite for the maintenance of international peace and security and, consequently, the future and the survival of mankind.

The diversification of the activities of the United Nations in the 40 years since its establishment has continued to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the prevention of war and the consolidation of peace. This is the case with regard to the struggle waged by the United Nations against colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid and in favour of the economic and social development of peoples.

The Charter of the United Nations assigns a fundamental role to the contribution of the Organization to the search for negotiated solutions to conflicts with a view to safeguarding international peace and security. The commitments undertaken by the United Nations in carrying out this mandate, which was given to it in 1945, are not inconsiderable.

These efforts must continue with renewed determination and with greater emphasis than ever on the current international situation, in which the capability of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to the survival of mankind. The obligation of our Organization to continue its efforts and the possibility of making an effective contribution in this regard deserve the encouragement and support of all responsible Governments in the world.

Unfortunately, despite some hopeful signs, the international climate today remains tense and the process of détente has hardly begun to make progress. It is clear that the efforts undertaken by the United Nations cannot achieve real success as long as the imperialist forces persist in their determination to continue the accelerated pace of the arms race and refuse to take, in a serious and consistent manner, the path of peaceful co-existence.

Although it has been repeatedly stated that the two major nuclear Powers have a fundamental responsibility with regard to the disarmament process, the other peoples of the world and the United Nations, which was established primarily in order to protect them from the scourge of war, have the obligation and the right to make the greatest efforts to achieve that goal.

In this connection, the United Nations can rely on the firm and unswerving support of the Government of the Republic of Cuba.

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NORWAY

[Original: English]

[10 May 1985]

Norway welcomes the opportunity to review at the 1985 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

The machinery which is established within the United Nations for deliberations and negotiations on disarmament reflects the central role which the United Nations has in the field of disarmament. It is of vital importance that this machinery function as well as possible. The machinery should therefore be flexible enough to meet the needs as they arise.

A comprehensive review of the machinery was carried out at the United Nations first special session on disarmament. The conclusions of this review is included in the Final Document of that special session (part IV, Machinery). In view of the growing importance attached to disarmament questions after the first special session and in light of the growing disarmament agenda and the complexity of the issues involved, as well as the more active participation of a large number of Member States, Norway introduced a draft resolution at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly concerning institutional agreements relating to the process of disarmament. This draft resolution was adopted without a vote as resolution 37/99 K on 13 December 1982. Through that resolution the General Assembly:

- Requested the Committee on Disarmament to report to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly on the review of the membership of the Committee, taking into account the relevant paragraphs of both the Final Document of the first special session and the Concluding Document of the second special session on disarmament,
- Commended to the Committee on Disarmament that it designate itself as a conference without prejudice to paragraph 120 of the Final Document,
- Requested the Secretary-General to revive the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies,
- Decided that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) should function as an autonomous institution,
- Requested the Secretary-General to transform the Centre for Disarmament of the United Nations Secretariat into a Department for Disarmament Affairs headed by an Under-Secretary-General.

During the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, when a representative of Norway chaired the First Committee of the General Assembly, certain initiatives were taken with a view to streamlining and expediting the work of the First Committee. These initiatives included the following:

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- Division of the general debate on the disarmament items into phases,
- Advancement of the deadline for submission and introduction of draft resolutions on disarmament items, in order to give more time for consideration of the draft resolutions,
- Division of the draft resolutions into clusters, enabling draft resolutions on the same or related issues to be acted upon at the same time.

Closing that session of the First Committee, the Chairman stressed that there was a need for continuing the process of streamlining and rationalizing the Committee's consideration of the disarmament items. In particular, an overhaul of the agenda was long overdue.

On this background, Norway welcomes the initiative which the Chairman of the First Committee of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly took with a view to having considered a rearrangement of the agenda of the First Committee. In document A/C.1/39/9 the Chairman presented his own ideas and suggestions on this question. Norway is of the opinion that these ideas and suggestions should be considered further. As stated in document A/C.1/39/9 a rearrangement of the agenda should aim at providing a more clear organization and presentation of the issues to be considered by the First Committee, without prejudging their substance.

In the opinion of the Norwegian Government a comprehensive review of the machinery of the United Nations in the field of disarmament should be undertaken at the third special session on disarmament. The process of initiating this review could, however, be started at the 1985 session of the Disarmament Commission. The issues to be considered under item 7 of the provisional agenda of the 1985 session of the Disarmament Commission should therefore be limited in number. The review could be continued in more detail at the 1986 session of the Disarmament Commission, in preparation for the Third Special Session on Disarmament.

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