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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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

Addendum

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

POLAND

[14 May 1985]

1. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations is the principal international institution responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. The discharge of that responsibility obligates the United Nations to pursue efforts with a view to arms limitation and disarmament, their ultimate goal being general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.
2. Pursuant to the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations plays in the field of disarmament an important and complex role of a deliberative and promotive character. On the one hand, it implies facilitating the disarmament negotiating process and generating an international climate conducive to disarmament efforts while, on the other hand, it denotes the critically important task of identifying disarmament priorities and working out specific recommendations in that regard. The effective discharge of that function should encourage the disarmament negotiating process and serve well the goal of elaborating disarmament agreements, in keeping with the expectations of international public opinion as well as the wishes of a majority of United Nations Members.
3. The difficulties encountered at present in reaching effective disarmament measures not only do not detract from the usefulness of, but to the contrary they enhance the need for the involvement of the United Nations in the disarmament

process. Over the past years, in a more suitable climate in international relations and owing to the political will of Member States, the United Nations had been able on many occasions to play a prominent role in the process of negotiation of multilateral disarmament agreements. This was the case with the Non-Proliferation Treaty; the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof; and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

4. Among the important functions of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is also its share in the broadly conceived process of implementation of the already concluded multilateral disarmament agreements. The United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies perform specific functions in the process of control of their observance, functions which are to protect the interests of States parties. Thus, for instance, the Security Council has been assigned an important role in the consideration of possible complaints pertaining to violations of the above-mentioned agreements and, in the case of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, an additional role with regard to security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States (in accordance with Security Council resolution 255 (1968)). Moreover, both the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America have also provided for a crucial role for the International Atomic Energy Agency relative to the observance of their régimes by introducing a system of safeguards agreements between the Agency and the States parties.

5. With respect to efforts to reach specific disarmament measures, the Government of the Polish People's Republic attaches particular attention to the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva which the Tenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly has recognized to be the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in a global context. Thanks to its limited size yet representative character, the Conference is able to undertake and pursue intensive efforts with a view to elaborating agreements in such spheres as the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons, the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the prevention of militarization of outer space and the elimination of chemical weapons.

6. Poland is also appreciative of the fact that the United Nations is one of the principal factors for promoting a climate conducive to international disarmament efforts, among other things by emphasizing - through the initiation of special actions - their urgency and indispensability. The Government of Poland deems, however, that for such actions to attain their set goals, it is necessary for Member States to make greater efforts. The results of the First Disarmament Decade indicate that a gradual progress in disarmament is possible. For this reason, the United Nations and all its Members should do their best in order that the current Second Disarmament Decade yields positive results, which is particularly crucial in the light of the accelerating arms race.

7. The informational, educational and research function of the United Nations, so remarkably expanded in the late 1970s, also has a major importance for the fostering of a climate conducive to disarmament efforts. The activities of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, as well as the numerous works,

reports and studies of the Secretary-General represent a volume of important background information of great use to the relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Disarmament Commission and the First (Political) Committee of the General Assembly. The above function is carried out, furthermore, through the substantial and valuable co-operation of the United Nations with different institutions and international and national organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, which actively support disarmament efforts, especially within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign. In the view of the Polish Government, the experience of past years indicates that the positive impact of broad strata of partisans of peace and disarmament and the growing support on the part of public opinion for disarmament efforts represent major premises of their effectiveness.

8. A positive feature of the United Nations approach to disarmament problems is also the fact, among other things, that these problems are within the purview of the entire United Nations system, its particular specialized agencies and organizations. Thus, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is being involved in disarmament education of societies; the United Nations Children's Fund is dealing in education for peace; the World Meteorological Organization is monitoring the effects of military activities of States for meteorology and climate; the World Health Organization is following and evaluating the medical effects of military activities, whereas the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is taking interest in the adverse effects of weapons for the food chain and so on.

9. The universal character of the United Nations predestines it in the first place, to promoting multilateral, global disarmament measures. The United Nations bears special responsibility for the development of mechanisms capable of checking the arms race and cutting down its cost to the societies and economies of States, mechanisms allowing for the resources released as a result of disarmament to be reallocated to the civilian sector for the purpose of progress and social development, to resolve such global problems as hunger, illiteracy, energy shortage and environment protection.

10. The important role played by the United Nations in the field of disarmament does not relieve Member States of their responsibility for pursuing disarmament efforts and coming forth with initiatives, within a bilateral or regional framework, because such steps can prove to have global significance. The disarmament activities of the United Nations have to be supported, in particular, by the endeavours of the nuclear-weapon Powers, the permanent members of the Security Council, bearing special responsibility for peace and international security.

11. In the view of the Polish Government, the United Nations should continue to represent the key element in international disarmament efforts. The evolving forms of disarmament dialogue, whether bilateral, between politico-military blocs or regional ones, have to be supported and supplemented by efforts aimed at multilateral, global disarmament and this should be the domain of the universal Organization, the United Nations.

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12. Poland, which on many occasions has spoken out in support of the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, used to take the advantage of that forum precisely to present its own peace initiatives, including the pioneering concept of denuclearization of Central Europe, the "Rapacki plan", as well as the idea of the preparation of societies for life in peace. Through its constructive initiatives and activity at the United Nations, the Polish People's Republic is determined to pursue sustained efforts with a view to expanding and consolidating the role of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, the maintenance of peace and the strengthening of international security.
