DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

AUSTRALIA

[Original: English]

[6 June 1985]

Australia's support for the multilateral disarmament machinery is well known. In his General Assembly speech of 3 October 1984 the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Hayden, endorsed the United Nations Secretary-General's view that the multilateral forums be used to deal with disarmament matters. In his remarks at a reception in honour of the 1985 Security Council the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Hawke, said on 6 November 1984 that in our increasingly interdependent world, there was no sensible alternative to multilateral efforts to solve problems, least of all on issues of international peace and security.

Australia is conscious that the multilateral disarmament machinery has not produced the results envisaged when it was established by the United Nations General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978. However, it is Australia's view that the fault lies less in the machinery itself than in the policies of participating States. Without a willingness on the part of States to discuss and negotiate, there is little that the machinery itself can do to produce disarmament and arms control agreements.

The machinery is not of course perfect and Australia would like to see some improvements made. Of particular concern to us is the burgeoning number and duplication of resolutions in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. We strongly support the efforts of immediate past chairman of the Committee to institute reforms to alleviate this and other problems with the Committee's procedures. Australia is also in favour of streamlining the agenda of the Disarmament Commission to allow more intensive consideration of its most important items. These reforms are within the power of the respective organizations to institute and could take place regardless of any overall review of the disarmament machinery.

Australia's view is that, depending on the outcome of the debate at the 1985 session of the Disarmament Commission, a thoroughgoing review of the disarmament machinery should take place at the proposed third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[28 June 1985]

In examining the question of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, the Byelorussian SSR takes the position that the present international situation urgently requires that all States - small and large, with or without
major military potential - should join forces to solve the problems confronting mankind in the field of preventing nuclear war, curbing the arms race and achieving disarmament. The need for joint action is dictated by the very nature of these problems because the fate not only of individual States but of all mankind depends upon whether or not they are solved.

The nuclear danger has increased greatly in recent years, as a result of the reckless policy and actions of the United States and its closest allies, and has assumed such proportions that the very existence of intelligent life on earth has been threatened with disappearance in the event of a nuclear catastrophe. In these circumstances, stereotyped thinking rooted in efforts to guarantee the "security" of one State or a small group of States at the expense of the security of other countries has become both senseless and dangerous. In today's world, the only genuine security is security for all. Accordingly, this security must be built through the efforts of all States without exception. To avert the nuclear threat, to halt and reverse the arms race, especially the nuclear-arms race and to prevent its extension to new areas, particularly outer space, are all goals which can be achieved only through joint efforts. It must be realized that this approach is not a short-term one and is not dictated by interests of the moment. The ultimate goal proclaimed in this field by the United Nations - general and complete disarmament under effective international control - also requires the participation of all States regardless of size, military power, geographical position or other factors.

In the light of the foregoing, the Byelorussian SSR feels that the United Nations is the appropriate forum for dealing with these problems. The need for the United Nations to have an active role in solving them also derives from the provisions of its Charter. "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" is the direct responsibility of the United Nations. The effective participation of all States in the struggle to prevent nuclear war and achieve disarmament is also facilitated by the role of the Non-Aligned Movement, a role which has grown considerably in recent years.

The United Nations has already acquired positive experience in this area. It has to its credit a number of international agreements designed to curb the arms race and achieve disarmament, which are working effectively. Without those agreements international security would be more fragile.

The Byelorussian SSR feels that the United Nations must and can play an important role in the struggle to prevent nuclear war and to achieve disarmament. All the objective pre-conditions for this already exist, including extensive machinery resulting from the decisions of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and an entire system of goals and methods for achieving them laid down in General Assembly resolutions.

While many of those goals remain unachieved and progress towards their achievement cannot be regarded as satisfactory, this is not due to any inadequacies in the United Nations itself or in the existing disarmament machinery. The reason consists in the obstacles placed in the path of progress by certain forces, especially the United States and its closest allies, which are blocking the efforts of other States. That is why the Byelorussian SSR has stressed time and again that
real progress requires political will on the part of all countries. The States of the socialist community have that political will, as they have frequently proved by their deeds. It also exists among the non-aligned States. The fault lies with the Western countries.

An important contribution to the struggle to prevent nuclear war and promote disarmament can be made by appealing to public opinion. The clearly expressed will of the world’s peoples for peace and their opposition to war must be taken into account by the Governments of all countries without exception. Here too the United Nations must play a major role by intensifying the World Disarmament Campaign.

Strict observance of the Charter of the United Nations, full use of the capabilities of existing machinery, consistent implementation of stated goals and tasks - these are the means by which the international community can effectively realize the great potential of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

The fortieth anniversary of victory over the forces of fascism and militarism in the Second World War and the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, one of the elements of the post-war structure of the world, again recalls a truth which must become indisputable: that only the joining of all forces against the general danger can ensure triumph over it and guarantee success.

MEXICO

[Original: Spanish]

[19 June 1985]

In reply to the invitation which the General Assembly addressed to the Member States in its resolution 39/151 G, the Government of Mexico submits the following views and suggestions on ways and means by which the United Nations can more effectively exercise its central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament.

1. The Government of Mexico feels that it is the responsibility of the United Nations, by virtue of its mandate under its Charter, to play a major role in all that relates to the struggle to halt and reverse the arms race in its most diverse forms, with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

To that end, the Government of Mexico is determined to do everything in its power to ensure that the deliberative bodies and negotiating forum of the United Nations in the field of disarmament may fulfil the functions assigned to them by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. In particular, the States members of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament should enable that unique multilateral negotiating forum in the field to address itself, without further delay, to the conclusion of mandatory legal agreements relating to the items on its agenda. However, in view of the fact that during the past several years the Conference on Disarmament has made no significant progress...
in its work, largely because its prevailing rule of consensus is used by some States as a way of blocking the work of that body, the Government of Mexico reaffirms its belief that the rules of procedure of the Conference should be reformed. Specifically, Mexico holds the view that rule 25 of the rules of procedure should be amended in such a way as to make impossible any use of the rule of consensus to prevent the establishment of subsidiary bodies (ad hoc committees, working groups, etc.) which the Conference on Disarmament may deem necessary in order to carry out its functions.

2. Moreover, the Government of Mexico feels that, although the nuclear-arms States have a primary responsibility to avert a nuclear disaster, the danger to the survival of mankind represented by the existence of nuclear arsenals is so serious a problem that it cannot be left to be solved by the atomic Powers alone. Therefore, in the Joint Declaration on disarmament of 22 May 1984 and the Delhi Declaration of 28 January 1985, Mexico, together with Argentina, Greece, India, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania, undertook to pursue deliberations on these questions in the relevant forums of the United Nations and affirmed that the strengthening of the highest world organization should be a fundamental part of a genuine disarmament process.

3. In addition, the Government of Mexico reaffirms its view that the United States and the Soviet Union, during their bilateral talks on disarmament questions, should be mindful of the fact that not only their own national interests but the vital interest of all mankind are at stake.

For that reason, the Government of Mexico considers it essential that the United States and the Soviet Union should keep world public opinion informed, on a timely and regular basis, of the status of their bilateral talks, in accordance with the call of the United Nations General Assembly and the appeal contained in the Delhi Declaration of 28 January 1985.