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

Addendum

CONTENTS

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS ......................................................... 2

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ................................................................. 2
Yugoslavia ............................................................................................................. 5
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]

[19 September 1985]

The Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, with reference to General Assembly resolution 39/151 G of 17 December 1984, in which the General Assembly invited all States to communicate their 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, has the honour to communicate the following.

The Soviet Union is convinced that the further strengthening of the role and effectiveness of the United Nations as an instrument for attaining the lofty goal proclaimed in its Charter - "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" - will be determined chiefly by the weight of the contribution which the United Nations makes to the cause of limiting and eliminating the material means of warfare.

The concentration of United Nations efforts in this major direction is all the more essential at the present time, when certain circles, ignoring the realities of the nuclear and space age, are trying to gamble primarily on accelerating in every possible way the stockpiling of nuclear weapons so as to achieve military advantage, and on making the first use of nuclear weapons. They are even calling into question the very idea of achieving security through disarmament, which received unanimous approval at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Taking no account of the fact that military preparations have assumed gigantic proportions on earth, these circles are furthermore seeking to extend the spiral of a destructive arms race into outer space.

It is not difficult to imagine what extremely dangerous consequences the realization of such schemes would have for mankind, how it would encourage the arms build-up and to what extent the threat of nuclear war would be increased. The process of drawing up new agreements on limiting and reducing armaments would be frustrated and many of the international agreements now in existence would be overturned.

The vital interests of the States and peoples of the world call for another course of action - that of removing the nuclear threat without delay, freeing peoples from the burden imposed by armaments and redirecting material and intellectual resources towards solving the global and other problems facing mankind. It is precisely in this area that efforts by the States Members of the United Nations must be concentrated.

Under present conditions, the problem of curbing the nuclear arms race is inextricably linked with the task of preventing the militarization of outer space. The preservation of space as an area of peace outside the scope of military rivalry would allow progress to be made in solving the whole range of questions relating to the limitation and reduction of nuclear arsenals. At the same time, broad
opportunities would be opened for all-round co-operation in the most varied fields of human activity - both on Earth and in space. This is the aim of the proposal which has been submitted by the Soviet Union for discussion at the fortieth session of the General Assembly concerning international co-operation in the peaceful exploitation of outer space under conditions of its non-militarization.

Today, more than ever before, specific material steps are needed to limit the arms race and proceed to disarmament. The Soviet Union is convinced that the prestige and effectiveness of the Organization would be substantially strengthened if the decisions of the General Assembly calling for the adoption of material steps to curb the arms race in such ways as stopping the build-up of nuclear-weapons arsenals, prohibiting nuclear-weapons tests, preventing the arms race in outer space and limiting it in maritime and ocean spaces were implemented. The United Nations must do everything possible to ensure that these decisions by the international community, which are crucial for the destiny of the world, do not remain on paper but find their way into practice.

One of the priority areas of work by the United Nations should continue to be efforts to create a moral and political atmosphere which would ultimately make it possible to initiate real steps for arms limitation and disarmament. In this respect, a most important part is played by manifestations of the will of the international community in favour of improving the world situation and providing the conditions for achieving progress in the field of disarmament, such as the United Nations declarations on the prevention and condemnation of nuclear war and the decisions taken by General Assembly in support of the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons.

For its part, the Soviet Union is prepared to limit or prohibit any type of weapon on a reciprocal basis and in a manner which is not detrimental to the security of any side, and it expects that the same approach will be followed by other States. The Soviet Union has more than once taken steps on a unilateral basis, setting an example to others and thereby promoting the elaboration of agreements in the area of limiting and halting the arms race. It has assumed important unilateral undertakings not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to be the first to place anti-satellite weapons in outer space, and with effect from April 1985 it has declared a moratorium on the further deployment of its medium-range missiles and suspended implementation of other counter-measures in Europe. In its desire to contribute towards halting dangerous competition in the build-up of nuclear arsenals and wishing to set a good example, the Soviet Union has unilaterally ceased carrying out any nuclear explosions with effect from 6 August 1985. However, the United States and its closest allies have not responded to these steps by exercising due restraint. The United Nations has still far from exhausted its capacity to encourage other States, above all the nuclear-weapon States, to work towards curbing the arms race by mutual example, and to promote unilateral acts of good will in that area.

The enhancement of United Nations efforts for disarmament would, of course, be helped by the adoption of the comprehensive disarmament programme which is being drawn up in the Conference on Disarmament.
The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is called upon to make a substantial contribution to strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Thorough preparatory work must be undertaken in good time for this session, so that its conclusion may yield important positive results which will help to curb the arms race.

In order to achieve a breakthrough in the limitation and reduction of armaments, it is vital for the peoples of the world and for world public opinion to be aware of the critical nature of the present situation. The duty of the United Nations, in the context of the World Disarmament Campaign which it has declared, is to ensure the broader dissemination of accurate information about the consequences of continuing the arms race, so that world public opinion can exercise a growing influence in support of restraining the militarist forces. The potential of the United Nations in this respect has far from been exhausted.

The impact of United Nations efforts within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign will be more tangible if those efforts are directed towards developing close co-operation with the most representative mass movements and public organizations. It would also be extremely useful if in materials issued by the United Nations Secretariat to the public, wider publicity were given to decisions taken by the United Nations on the key issues of removing the nuclear threat and achieving disarmament.

Definite progress towards the goal set by the United Nations of achieving security through disarmament can be ensured only by collective efforts. There is a need for close co-operation by all States, particularly those with large military capabilities. A good basis for this is the obligation, under the Charter, of each State Member of the United Nations to promote "the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament emphasized that all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations. The Final Document of the session contains an important provision, namely that all States have the duty to contribute to disarmament negotiation. The Document established the fundamental principles and priorities as well as the machinery for the conduct of such negotiations. The United Nations has the right to call upon all States without exception to comply in practice with the moral and political obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Final Document, to undertake concrete steps to end the arms race, and to make a business-like and constructive contribution to the elaboration of appropriate agreements.

Active efforts by the United Nations in the area of arms limitation and disarmament are even more essential given that the process of negotiations on that subject in recent years has become disordered in many respects for well-known reasons. Under these conditions, the United Nations has the task of helping to ensure that the machinery for negotiations on disarmament issues is made to function and that it yields practical results.

/...
As a whole, in the view of the Soviet Union, the existing procedure and arrangements for considering disarmament questions make it possible for the Organization to discharge the responsibility entrusted to it in the field of disarmament.

As far as proposals for the so-called "rationalization of procedures" in the United Nations are concerned, these frequently conceal the intention of opponents of disarmament to reduce the activities of the United Nations in that area, limit consideration of the major issues to a bare minimum, avoid detailed and extremely necessary exchanges of views on the key aspects of arms limitation and hinder the adoption of effective solutions.

The Soviet Union believes that the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and the observance of the International Year of Peace can and should serve as an additional incentive for mobilizing the efforts of the peoples and States Members of the Organization for the consolidation of international peace and security. The successful conduct of activities within the framework of the Year of the United Nations and the International Year of Peace will contribute to strengthening the joint actions of States to remove the threat of war and achieve security through disarmament.

For its part, the Soviet Union continues to attach great importance to the United Nations as an effective instrument for peace and is prepared to take new steps in order to ensure that the noble goals for which the Organization was founded become a reality. On this basis, the Soviet Union will continue to promote the effective use of the potential of the United Nations for achieving real, practical results in arms limitation and disarmament and will contribute actively to the efforts of the Organization aimed at removing the threat of nuclear war, preventing the militarization of outer space and stopping the arms race on earth.

YUGOSLAVIA

[Original: English]
[16 September 1985]

The Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia takes this opportunity to present its views on the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament on the basis of General Assembly resolution 39/151 G. The Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to point out that it supports the aspirations towards reaffirming and realizing in practice the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, as emphasized in the Charter of the United Nations and reasserted in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The United Nations is the sole irreplaceable framework for international disarmament negotiations.

The founders of the United Nations emphasized in the Charter that the main purpose of the establishment of the world Organization was to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to maintain stability and lasting peace and
strengthen international security. The main pre-condition for achieving these purposes is to achieve the disarmament process. Consequently, disarmament falls within the primary responsibility of the United Nations.

During the forty years of its existence, the United Nations has devoted full attention to the struggle for international security and disarmament and has achieved remarkable results. Seen through the number of multilateral or bilateral and formally valid treaties or agreements, the results of the endeavours to achieve disarmament have so far not been meagre. In addition to ten multilateral and eight bilateral Soviet-United States agreements, there is also the universal programme of action adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and numerous recommendations and programmes of the United Nations. Conditionally, numerous programmes, requests and recommendations of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, non-governmental organizations, etc., may be added to this list.

However, as it is stressed in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, these agreements are related to measures of limited scope while the arms race is continuing. These partial measures have not brought the world closer to the aim it is aspiring to, namely, general and complete disarmament.

The United Nations has offered the world a generally accepted approach to the concept of disarmament. It has helped heighten the awareness of the dangers inherent in the arms race and of the need for immediate and effective disarmament. This has created an essential pre-condition for the transition from the present stage of immobility and stagnation in the field of disarmament, caused by unfavourable development of international relations, above all the relations between the great Powers, into a stage of active negotiations and decision-making in respect of concrete measures for halting the accumulation of ever more destructive arsenals and achieving disarmament. Such a process would be unimaginable without the central and even more active role of the United Nations.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries is also endeavouring in its activities to achieve negotiations on disarmament to be conducted within the framework and under the auspices of the United Nations.

The basis for such approach was set forth in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, which identified the priorities and specified the obligations and duties both of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, particularly the United Nations Commission for Disarmament, as the broadest and most democratic deliberative organ of the international machinery for disarmament.

The ways for promoting the activities of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs in the field of disarmament cannot be uniform. They must correspond to the dynamics of military sophistication and to the needed measures aimed at changing it through disarmament. It has, however, become evident especially in the last years, that some ways and means of action towards achieving disarmament must be updated or, if necessary, modified in order to become more
effective. It seems that the General Assembly, i.e. the First Committee, in discussing certain problems, should abandon the practice of broad consideration and repetition, namely of standardization in treating certain problems. Instead of this, it is necessary to select key, or smaller number of problems, which would be discussed more comprehensively, with the aim to finding the right formula for consensus and for effectuation of recommendations.

Likewise, the United Nations Disarmament Commission could improve its work by focusing its attention to individual problems in an effort to further concretize, elaborate, but also work out a set of instruments for the application of the United Nations studies on disarmament.

The United Nations should also exercise its influence on the efficiency of the talks conducted outside its framework which are of direct interest for international security and disarmament.

The Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that the United Nations should further underscore its connection with the work of the Conference on Disarmament by demanding that effective negotiations be carried out within this body, by directing its efforts towards the finalization of those issues on which considerable progress has already been made - chemical weapons and radiological weapons, since the race in weapons for mass destruction is becoming an ever more important problem. The work of this organ could certainly be improved with the effective assistance of the United Nations - through a more active participation of Secretary-General's representatives, but also through publications, regular dissemination of information, and substantial review of the work of the Conference on Disarmament by the United Nations General Assembly.

We do not underrate the importance of bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers. However, the Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to point out that it is very important that bilateral and multilateral negotiations be mutually strengthened, complemented and encouraged, and not to exclude each other. It is, therefore, necessary that the great Powers should inform the General Assembly of the course of their bilateral negotiations. Perhaps consideration should be given to having periodical assessments in the United Nations, within the framework of the existing mechanism, of the situation in the field of the arms race as well as negotiations on such an important question.

The Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia avails itself of this opportunity to point to the importance it attaches to the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The holding of that session will provide an opportunity to consider the available possibilities and find out the best ways and means for further strengthening of the role of the United Nations, which remains an irreplaceable factor in the field of disarmament, with increased efficiency and improved substance of work of all bodies engaged in this area. It is necessary to further broaden the rights and possibilities of the Member States to make their contribution to the consideration of the questions related to international security and disarmament which are of their particular interest. In addition, it is necessary to establish a more direct relationship and a firmer link between all the current forms of negotiation on individual issues of
disarmament and security on the one hand, and the United Nations on the other, whenever these negotiations have broader implications, and to ensure that the international community is adequately informed about the substance and course of these negotiations.

Finally, the Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to point out that, since its inception, the United Nations has asserted itself as the sole and most adequate instrument of universal international co-operation, based on equality and full respect for sovereignty and interests of all States. The universal value of the implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations has in the past period been repeatedly proved and reaffirmed in practice as the only basis for stability and peace in the world and the development of equitable international co-operation in all areas. Proceeding from these considerations and viewing the United Nations as the essential institutional framework for the development of the processes of indispensable changes in the world aimed at establishing new, more just, international, political and economic relations, Yugoslavia will continue to participate actively in the work of the United Nations, pledging its support to the realization of its universality, democratic character, strengthening of its efficiency and role as a negotiating body in the implementation of the decisions, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.