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CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT

Addendum

Views received from Member States

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

[Original: Russian]

[21 April 1987]

1. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic resolutely supports any constructive activity designed to promote progress in disarmament, including reductions in conventional weapons. This approach determines its positive attitude to the United Nations Study on Conventional Disarmament, 1/ in whose preparation Czechoslovak experts played an active part. The study has without question made an important contribution to a more thorough understanding of the urgency of resolving all aspects of the conventional arms race and of disarmament in the area of conventional weapons and forces.

2. The study rightly points out that existing nuclear arsenals embody a threat to the very existence of mankind. Paramount importance in international negotiations must therefore be given to measures aimed at preventing nuclear war and eliminating nuclear weapons. In addition, the study indicates progress in limiting conventional weapons and reducing armed forces, in particular among States with the largest military arsenals, would beyond question facilitate progress in the limitation of nuclear weapons and their subsequent elimination (para. 12). The paper also emphasizes that halting and reversing the arms race must be an integrated process based on a step-by-step approach (para. 144).

3. This is precisely the kind of basis on which the series of initiatives by the socialist countries, particularly the proposal by the USSR, on 15 January 1986, of a programme to abolish nuclear weapons by the end of this century - further developed in the Soviet Union's sweeping proposals at Reykjavik - is constructed. These historic initiatives by the USSR have the full support of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.
4. Like the other countries of the socialist fraternity, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic favours a comprehensive approach to the question of disarmament, so that the abolition of weapons of mass destruction can be buttressed by significant reductions in armed forces and conventional weaponry. It believes the time is ripe for such moves towards disarmament in conventional weapons and forces, especially on the European continent.
5. Additional opportunities for an early agreement on the question of reductions in armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe have been provided by the USSR's offer for immediate signature, on 28 February 1987, of a separate agreement with the United States to eliminate American and Soviet medium-range missiles from Europe entirely, and its willingness to withdraw its longer-range tactical missiles from Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic immediately after such an agreement is signed. The same is true of the joint proposal, sent by Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, to create nuclear- and chemical-weapon-free zones in Central Europe.
6. A specific programme for the step-by-step reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe, addressed to the NATO member States and all European countries, was put forward in June 1986 at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, in Budapest. It calls for significant reductions throughout Europe - from the Atlantic to the Urals - in all components of the European States' land and tactical air attack forces and the corresponding United States and Canadian forces and facilities deployed in Europe. By the beginning of the 1990s, cuts affecting both military and political alliances ought to have amounted to 25 per cent of today's levels, with a corresponding reduction in the military spending of States so that the reduction process can go on from there.
7. Implementation of the proposed programme would take place subject to appropriate monitoring, maintaining a military balance at ever lower levels. We consider it important for the reduction in the level of military confrontation to be accompanied by moves allowing the possibility of sudden attack to be reduced, if not ruled out altogether.
8. Like the other socialist countries, Czechoslovakia believes that these issues should be discussed and resolved within the framework of the Helsinki process, as advocated in the proposal by the Polish People's Republic at the Vienna meeting to enlarge the mandate of the Stockholm Conference to permit substantive discussion of disarmament issues.
9. These talks would run in parallel with the elaboration of confidence-building measures on which no agreement was reached during the initial phase of the

Stockholm Conference, and any measures put forward in the future, including a progressive cut-back in military activity, especially the two military alliances, notification of independent ground-force, aerial and naval exercises, the extension of confidence-building measures to cover all the countries taking part in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and other confidence-building and security measures. At the same time, to make the attainment of negotiated agreements easier, fundamentally new confidence-building measures and moves to enhance strategic stability in Europe in direct association with cuts in conventional forces and weaponry would also come under scrutiny.

10. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic believes that the opening of general European negotiations on reductions in armed forces and conventional weapons would create a favourable climate for real progress at the talks on limiting, reducing and abolishing weapons of mass destruction, preventing the militarization of the cosmos, and acting upon initiatives to create nuclear- and chemical-weapon-free zones.

11. All in all, the above initiatives by the socialist countries are designed to bring about a significant reduction in military confrontation and the danger of a military clash, enhance mutual trust and create a comprehensive system of international peace and security; this is a strategic aim of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's foreign policy.

Notes

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IX.1.
