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

Working paper submitted by Czechoslovakia, Mongolia,  
Poland and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

1. Decisive movement towards the United Nations goal of security through disarmament can be achieved only through collective efforts, and these will require close collaboration between all States.

The first special session of the United Nations 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 the important provision to the effect that all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament and the right to participate in disarmament negotiations.

It is important in the process of constructing a nuclear-free, non-violent world that the United Nations should play an enhanced role in disarmament and that the assembled disarmament negotiating machinery should come into full play. The United Nations, uniting 159 States, can and must increase the contribution foreseen for it at its foundation to the strengthening of peace and, above all, to the shaping of a new political thinking and mode of action.

In recent times the membership of the United Nations has expanded significantly and the individuality of the Members has grown. As they become stronger and gain experience, the voice of sovereign States is beginning to carry more conviction and weight in the United Nations. Conversely, the global nature of the threat looming over mankind and an interest in the survival of the human race are prompting all members of the world community to press vigorously for disarmament and comprehensive security.

Today as never before, the United Nations can and must serve as a genuine centre for the co-ordination of efforts by all States to save this and succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

It is essential to make fuller and more effective use than in the past of the potential of this universal international Organization, in part by democratizing the work of the United Nations and its principal organs. The authority of the United Nations and its decisions must be enhanced in every respect, and its political, legal and moral standing must be raised.

2. There is a need for strict compliance with decisions by the international community that are intended to improve the world situation, and for a responsible approach to the democratically adopted expressions of support by the United Nations for the preservation of life on Earth.

The role of the United Nations in disarmament would be substantially enhanced if resolutions by the General Assembly calling for material steps to turn back the arms race and establish a moral and political climate in which it was possible to embark on genuine moves to limit and reduce military capabilities were actually put into practice. There is a solid basis for this: the Charter obligation of every State Member of the United Nations to fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter and give the United Nations assistance in the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is important for all States to treat recommendations by the United Nations, especially those adopted by consensus, with respect, and truly act in accordance with their assumed political obligations. This also applies to the important task of giving effect to the Final Document adopted by general consent at the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

3. The dawning era of specific action to bring about comprehensive security demands serious reorganization within the United Nations in order to increase its efficiency and output in both the long and the short term.

As of now, the Commission could recommend to the General Assembly at its forty-second session the adoption of the following decisions relating to the modus operandi of the First Committee:

(a) To bring forward the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions, in order to increase the amount of time available for discussion and for consultation among delegations;

(b) To call for a reduction, wherever possible, in the number of resolutions adopted on one and the same topic and the combining of drafts with a similar thrust. In this context it is also important to ensure that all Members of the United Nations take due account of decisions adopted by general consent and that consensus (which is, of course, the upshot of a harmonization of positions) truly indicates a willingness to take the corresponding action;

(c) To study the possibility of extending the First Committee's practice of adopting, besides resolutions which reflect the position of the majority of States, parallel decisions indicating areas of general agreement on specific matters;

(d) To study the possibility - subject to the sponsors' consent - of adopting only the operative parts of resolutions that recur from year to year, and of approving such resolutions every two or three years;

(e) To accept the informal proposal made by the Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-first session of the General Assembly that recommendations on certain items should be adopted as decisions, not resolutions;

(f) To combine the general debate with "statements on specific disarmament agenda items and continuation of the general debate". In this way the Committee would be able to discuss specific disarmament issues in parallel with the general debate from the very outset;

(g) To commence work in the First Committee at the same time as in other Committees. This will permit a more rational apportionment of the time available for discussing individual agenda items. Changes in the Committee's schedule of meetings can be made as necessary, depending on the overall progress of discussions in the General Assembly. Beginning work earlier ought not to entail an increase in the time the Committee spends in session.

4. The efficiency of the Disarmament Commission must be improved, and its work must be stepped up. The provision in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament which states that the Commission should, inter alia, consider the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament to be submitted as recommendations to the General Assembly and, through it, to the negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament, is still fully valid. The Commission had by no means exhausted its potential in that area, as is evident from the inclusion in its agenda for 1987 of two important new items: conventional disarmament, and consideration of the question of verification in all its aspects.

5. Another important area of United Nations activities is the Secretary-General's preparation, with the assistance of governmental experts, of studies on various aspects of the arms race and disarmament. The contribution of United Nations studies to the practical solution of disarmament issues should be increased, and that could be fully achieved by adhering to the established procedure and organizational methods for preparing such studies.

The work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research deserves support, including financial support.

6. The specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should, within their areas of competence, make a greater contribution to the cause of arms limitation and disarmament. At the forty-first session of the General Assembly, the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/491), which deals with the important activities conducted by United Nations agencies in

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that field, met with broad support. The United Nations agencies should, for example, devote more attention to the relationship between disarmament and their respective areas of competence, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 41/59 D.

7. The desire of a growing number of States from all parts of the world to make a useful contribution to the work of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, and their wish to participate in the work of that unique multilateral body for disarmament negotiations, give cause for satisfaction. International practice shows that the democratic majority of the world community expects practical results from the Conference on Disarmament and would like to take an active part in its work.

8. The Security Council's machinery for conducting a multilateral exchange of views on nuclear disarmament among all nuclear Powers must operate more efficiently. The proposal of Cyprus that the Security Council should hold a special meeting to consider the question of halting the nuclear-arms race and achieving nuclear disarmament deserves support.

9. The Commission could declare its support for the Secretary-General's proposal on the establishment, within the Organization, of a multilateral centre for reducing the threat of war, and could call on all States to contribute to the implementation of that proposal.

10. The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament could undoubtedly be enhanced by strengthening the ties between the Organization and the disarmament negotiations being conducted outside the United Nations. In the near future, a number of measures could be taken to provide the States Members of the United Nations and the General Assembly with more information about the progress of such negotiations, and to make General Assembly resolutions and decisions available to participants in the negotiations. To that end, the following proposals could be studied:

(a) The relevant General Assembly resolutions should be made available to the delegations at the negotiations (for example, through statements by a special representative of the Secretary-General, or in writing);

(b) The Secretary-General should submit annually to the General Assembly a progress report on the disarmament process;

(c) With a view to preparing such a report, the Secretary-General should have the opportunity to consult the participants in the disarmament negotiations and to make inquiries of them;

(d) The States participating in the disarmament negotiations should regularly inform not only the General Assembly but also the Secretary-General about the progress of the negotiations - naturally without damaging their confidentiality;

(e) In that context, the possibility of sending a representative of the Secretary-General to the disarmament negotiations should eventually be explored.

11. An important factor in the creation of a non-violent and demilitarized world must be the enhanced role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The United Nations must play a unique and indispensable role in achieving a world without nuclear arms, a world where the security of each person will be based on the security of all, and on the force of law and morality and not weapons. The Organization must become one of the major guarantors of the stability of such a world.

The process requires that States should seek answers to their security concerns not as enemies but as partners and through political means, in particular in the United Nations, and not in exclusive military alliances and new methods of warfare.

The United Nations must contribute actively to all stages in the limitation of military potential and should become the guarantor of States' security. In particular, in the post-nuclear stage, it should be responsible for maintaining a balance of arms at the level of reasonable sufficiency while constantly seeking to achieve arms reduction.

In particular, the United Nations can make a considerable contribution to the monitoring of compliance with agreements on arms limitation and reduction.

The Commission must call on all States to participate in the collective search for ways to enhance the role of the United Nations in building and strengthening confidence, overcoming the stereotypes of enemy psychology and humanizing international relations.

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