Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference

DRAFT REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

(Submitted by its Working Group)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 31/190, the General Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference to maintain close contact with the representatives of the States possessing nuclear weapons in order to remain currently informed of their respective attitudes, as well as to consider any relevant comments and observations which might be made to the Committee and for this purpose to meet briefly and submit a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session in accordance with its established procedure.

2. By resolution 31/83 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, the General Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference 1/ to examine all the views and suggestions expressed by Governments on the convening of a world disarmament conference and related problems, including conditions for the realization of such a conference, and to submit, on the basis of consensus, a report to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session. The General Assembly invited the States possessing nuclear weapons to co-operate or maintain contact with the Ad Hoc Committee, it being understood that they would enjoy the same rights as the appointed members of the Committee. The General Assembly also invited all States to communicate as soon as possible to the Secretary-General, for transmission to the Ad Hoc Committee, any views and suggestions they deem pertinent to submit for the purpose defined in this paragraph.

3. At its twenty-ninth session, by resolution 3260 (XXIX), the General Assembly invited all States to communicate to the Secretary-General their comments on the main objectives of a world disarmament conference, in the light of the views and suggestions compiled in section II of the summary annexed to the 1974 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference. 2/ By the same resolution, the General

1/ The General Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should consist of the following 40 non-nuclear-weapon Member States appointed by the President of the General Assembly after consultation with all regional groups: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.
Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should resume its work in accordance with the procedure established in General Assembly resolution 3183 (XXVIII) and that, in discharging its assigned task, it should give priority (a) to the preparation, on the basis of consensus, of an analytical report, including any conclusions and recommendations that it might deem pertinent concerning the comments received pursuant to paragraph 1 of resolution 3260 (XXIX); and (b) to maintaining close contact with the representatives of the States possessing nuclear weapons, in order to keep currently informed of any change in their respective positions.

4. By its resolution 3469 (XXX), the General Assembly decided to renew the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and requested it to submit a report of its work to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, including an analytical study of the conclusions contained in the Committee's report to the thirtieth session, as well as any observations and recommendations it might deem appropriate relating to its mandate. The resolution reaffirmed in its entirety resolution 3260 (XXIX) (see para. 3, above).

5. In accordance with its mandate mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Committee in 1977 held four meetings at United Nations Headquarters between 4 April and 16 September 1977.

6. The elected officers of the Committee were appointed to serve as follows:

   Chairman: Mr. Fereydoun Hoveyda (Iran)
   Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Artémion Simbananiye (Burundi)
                  Mr. Henryk Jaroszek (Poland)
                  Mr. Carlos T. Alzamora (Peru)
   Rapporteur: Mr. Juan Lopez-Chicheri (Spain)

7. France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland participated in the work of the Committee by virtue of paragraph 3 of resolution 3183 (XXVIII). Under the same provision, China and the United States of America maintained contact with the Ad Hoc Committee through its Chairman. The German Democratic Republic attended meetings of the Committee as an observer.

8. The working group established in 1974 3/ continued to function and held meetings between 12 September and 16 September 1977.

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3/ The composition of the Working Group is as follows: Burundi, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Poland and Spain (Chairman). Austria, Netherlands, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia participated in the Working Group as observers.
II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

9. Pursuant to the mandate entrusted to it by resolution 31/190 the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference held the first meeting of its eighth session on 4 April 1977, and after a general debate 4/ and an exchange of views decided, inter alia, that the remainder of the eighth session be held in September 1977 and that the working group should have the same composition 5/ and follow the same procedure as in the past.

10. The Committee resumed its work on 12 September 1977 and held two meetings devoted to a general debate. 6/ Statements were made by a number of countries. (See relevant parts of Summary Records annexed to this report.) Members of the Committee were also fully aware of the positions previously expressed by other governments on the convening of a world disarmament conference. 7/


5/ See paragraph 8 above.


7/ See the following documents:
   Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Resolution 2833 (XXVI) concerning the convening of a world disarmament conference containing communications received from Member States (A/8817 and Add.1 of 25 September and 1 November 1972).

   Verbatim Records of the Thirty-first Session
   Plenary: A/31/PV.5-32; First Committee: A/C.1/31/PV.20-50.

   Views of Member States on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (A/AC.187/51 and Add.1 of 14 May and 23 August 1977).

   Views of delegations to the Preparatory Committee on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (A/AC.187/76 of 15 August 1977).

11. The Committee at its 40th meeting on 16 September 1977 considered and adopted the draft report submitted by the Working Group.

12. In compliance with its mandate, the Committee also held, through its Chairman, close contact with the representatives of States possessing nuclear weapons in order to remain currently informed of their respective attitudes towards the convening of a world disarmament conference.

13. Information regarding those contacts which in the opinion of the Committee, in the prevailing circumstances of its work, are a unique feature of the Committee 8/ was provided by the Chairman to the Members of the Committee on 25 August 1977, and is as follows:

China: The position of China has not changed. According to that position a world disarmament conference can only be convened if certain prerequisites for the creation of conditions conducive to genuine disarmament are met. The convening of a world disarmament conference, or preparation for such a conference, could only be acceptable if all the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two nuclear-weapon Powers would undertake an obligation: (a) not to use nuclear weapons, particularly against the non-nuclear-weapon States; and (b) to end all forms of military presence on the territory of other countries by those concerned. If such pre-conditions are met, a world disarmament conference can be convened with a clear aim, namely, to consider the question of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons.

France: The holding of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, the main objectives of which would be to define the general principles applicable in the matter of disarmament, to determine the main focuses of efforts in that regard and to enhance the effectiveness of the existing negotiating machinery, does not in any way lessen interest of France in the convening of a world disarmament conference. It is hoped that the necessary prerequisites for such a gathering – in particular, endorsement by all the nuclear Powers – can be met in the near future.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: The U.S.S.R. attaches exceptional importance to the question of convening the World Disarmament Conference, at which all countries of the world, without exception, and on an equal basis, could state and compare their views on the whole range of disarmament problems. If properly organized and with working bodies available to ensure a thorough preparation and practical agreement in taking appropriate decisions with due regard for the interests of all States, a World Disarmament Conference could work out specific, effective measures aimed at curbing the arms race and thus achieving a breakthrough in solving the problem of disarmament. The Ad Hoc Committee on the WDC could recommend to the General Assembly that the latter entrust it to prepare a report for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament on the item of convocation of WDC in order to implement Resolution 31/190.

8/ In this connexion the Ad Hoc Committee wishes to recall paragraph 15 of its report to the thirty-first session of the General Assembly which reads as follows: "At present, this is a unique feature of the work of the Committee. No other forum exclusively dealing with problems related to disarmament has formally established similar contacts with all five nuclear-weapon States. Under the circumstances now prevailing and given a basic diversity of opinion among nuclear-weapon States (see sect. III below) on the convening of a world disarmament conference, an examination of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee may take due account of this fact." (A/31/28)
United Kingdom: There is no change in the position of the U.K. which has been expressed on many occasions in the past. In the view of the United and Northern Ireland: Kingdom, the participation of all militarily significant States, including all nuclear weapon States, remains an essential element in convening a world disarmament conference.

United States: The U.S. position has not changed. According to that position the General Assembly could note by consensus that a world disarmament conference could play a role in the disarmament process at an appropriate time. However, under the circumstances it is not the lack of a suitable forum, but the lack of political agreement that constitutes the principal obstacle to progress in disarmament. A world disarmament conference would be unlikely to overcome this lack of agreement and thus would more probably hinder, rather than assist, efforts to reach concrete arms control agreements. It, therefore, would be premature at this time to convene, to set a date for or to start preparations for a world disarmament conference.
III. CONCLUSION

14. In considering the advisability of the continuation of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference under an appropriate mandate, in the light of the contents of the present and previous reports, the General Assembly may wish to bear in mind the recommendation made to it by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. 2/

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