Thirty-eighth session
Agenda item 63 (e)

REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE
TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Regional disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]

[26 October 1983]

1. In the existing tense international situation, the Soviet Union attaches particular importance to the practical implementation of measures of regional disarmament and particularly those concerning Europe, where huge numbers of both nuclear and conventional weapons are concentrated and where the armed forces of the two most powerful military-political unions - the Warsaw Treaty group and NATO - are immediately adjacent to each other. Since almost three quarters of its population live in the European part of the country, the Soviet Union is vitally interested in removing the threat of nuclear war hanging over the continent, curbing the arms race and moving towards disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

2. The Soviet Union believes that the key to the problem of ensuring European and international security is to be found in the maintenance of the approximate military-strategic balance between the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO countries which exists in Europe and globally and which over recent decades has objectively permitted the preservation of peace. The Soviet Union and the other States parties to the Warsaw Treaty have repeatedly stated that they are not striving for military superiority and have no intention of attacking any country inside or outside Europe. They reject the Western doctrines and concepts concerning the admissibility of first use of nuclear weapons and of the conduct of a "limited" nuclear war, in other words, one waged in Europe. So far as Europe is concerned, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty have proposed to all the signatories of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe the conclusion of a treaty obliging the parties not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other. When this proposal was rejected on the pretext that the USSR could then use conventional weapons, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries proposed the conclusion between the States which participated in the European Conference of a treaty prohibiting the first use against each other of both nuclear and conventional arms. It will be recalled that, at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Soviet Union gave a solemn undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

3. In an effort to overcome the division of Europe into opposing military groupings and to take one more important step towards the strengthening of European security and the improvement of the world situation, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty made a proposal to the NATO members concerning the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual non-use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. Other interested European States would also be entitled to participate in the elaboration and signature of the treaty.

4. Today Europe is threatened with a very serious danger in connection with the plans for the deployment as early as this year of new American medium-range
missiles in a number of European member countries of NATO. The Soviet Union considers that the best solution would be for Europe to be completely free from both medium-range and tactical nuclear weapons. A first step in this direction could be the implementation of the Soviet proposal for a radical reduction in medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe. The Soviet-American talks in Geneva on the limitation of nuclear weapons in Europe, in which the USSR is taking a constructive and flexible position, are of very great significance in this connection. As is well known, the Soviet Union has proposed that the reduction of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe should be carried out in such a manner that, as a result, it would have no more medium-range missiles and warheads on them than are possessed by the United Kingdom and France. Similarly, the parties would also be left with an equal number of aircraft for the delivery of nuclear weapons with medium-range capability.

5. Recently the Soviet Union took yet another major step in this direction. It issued a statement to the effect that, if a mutually acceptable agreement is achieved whereby the United States would refrain from deploying new missiles in Europe, the Soviet Union would, reducing its medium-range missiles in the European part of the country to a level equal to the number of missiles in the possession of the United Kingdom and France, liquidate all the missiles covered by the reduction. In this event, a significant number of the latest SS-20 missiles would also be liquidated. The Soviet proposals do not impose any obligations on third countries.

6. The Soviet Union has done and is doing everything in its power to find a mutually acceptable solution at the Geneva talks, based on a realistic approach and on the principle of equality and equal security.

7. The present United States administration, proposing first a "zero" and then an "interim" option, is not thinking about reaching a mutually acceptable understanding but is thinking only about the deployment in Europe of new American nuclear missile systems. This is also apparent from the so-called new American proposals, made at the end of September this year. There is nothing at all new, in the sense of constructiveness and real flexibility, in these proposals.

8. The USSR wants Europe to be free from such weapons of mass destruction as chemical weapons. In the opinion of the USSR, a radical solution to the problem of the prevention of chemical war would be the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons on a world-wide scale, as is being discussed in Geneva in the Committee on Disarmament. In addition, it would be useful to adopt parallel measures, leading to the same goal within the European continent.

9. The Soviet Union is unrelenting in its efforts to achieve progress at the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. An opportunity for progress is provided by the draft agreement submitted by the socialist States on 23 June 1983, which represents a realistic and integral programme of practical action designed to lead the Vienna talks out of the "numerical impasse" artificially engineered by the Western States and to attain within a short space of time the agreed goal of establishing equal collective ceilings for numbers of NATO and Warsaw Treaty armed forces in Central Europe at a lower level. Still on the table also are the important proposals made by the
socialist countries on 17 February 1983, concerning measures that could be taken even before the conclusion of an agreement. The best practical beginning in this regard would be made by implementation in the near future of a reduction of a definite portion of the Soviet and American troops on a basis of mutual example, with subsequent freezing of the level of armed forces and armaments of all direct participants prior to the conclusion of the talks. Success in Vienna depends on whether the Western participants display a desire to reach agreement on a realistic and mutually acceptable basis.

10. The Soviet Union is striving resolutely to make Europe into a continent of peace and good-neighbourliness. It favours the proposals for the creation of nuclear-free zones in Northern Europe, the Balkans and other parts of the continent and the transformation of the Mediterranean Sea into a zone of lasting peace and co-operation. The Soviet Union advocates the holding of appropriate talks on those issues.

11. Sweden's proposal for the creation in Europe of a zone free from battlefield nuclear weapons is also aiming in the same direction. The Soviet Union was the first to react positively in principle to this idea and made its own specific suggestions, stressing willingness to take part in talks on the creation of the proposed zone.

12. The Soviet Union believes that, thanks to the joint efforts of States, the foundation has been laid in Europe for the consistent development of relations of good-neighbourliness and co-operation, of mutual respect and confidence among States. All the European States have been convinced by their own experience of the advantages inherent in détente. It would be in the interests of all the European States and peoples to preserve and augment the achievements of détente. The outcome of the Madrid meeting, its weighty results, reflected in the final document, once again confirm that the reserves of the policy of détente are far from being exhausted. The specific measures agreed in Madrid can promote its dynamic continuation and development.

13. Among the decisions taken at the Madrid meeting, of special significance is the understanding reached on the convening of a conference on confidence-building measures and security and disarmament in Europe, destined to be an important factor in the strengthening of European and international security. The holding of this conference, and also the preparatory meeting preceding it, should be approached with the very strong sense of responsibility which it demands. It is important that the work of the conference should from the outset be conducted in a business-like manner and consist of efforts to impede the arms race on the European continent and reduce the danger of a military confrontation in Europe. All participating States will have to make their contribution in order to ensure the success of the conference.

14. People in the Soviet Union are convinced that all the necessary prerequisites still exist in Europe for the States and peoples of that continent to live in conditions of peace, security and co-operation. This depends, above all, on the joint efforts of the European States themselves.