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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

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 13 December 1982, the General Assembly adopted resolution 37/100 F, the operative part of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Expresses the hope that Governments, where the circumstances of the region permit, will consult with each other on appropriate regional disarmament measures that could be taken at the initiative, and with the participation, of all the States concerned;

"2. Encourages Governments to consider the possible establishment or strengthening at the regional level, where appropriate, of institutional arrangements capable of promoting the implementation of such measures;

"3. Calls upon Governments and the existing competent regional institutions which may have taken measures to that end so to inform the Secretary-General;

"4. Requests the Secretariat, in particular the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to lend assistance to States and regional institutions which may request it in the context of regional disarmament measures taken at the initiative and with the participation of all the States concerned;

"5. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a progress report to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session;

"6. Decides to include in the agenda of its thirty-eighth session an item entitled 'Regional disarmament: report of the Secretary-General'."

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General has received two replies, from Belgium and Bulgaria, which appear in section II of the present report.
II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BELGIUM

[Original: French]

[6 October 1983]

1. Belgium attaches the highest priority to all endeavours to promote disarmament, and particularly those aimed at reducing the numbers of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe.

2. Belgium hopes that the ongoing negotiations in Geneva between the United States and the USSR will result in early agreement.

3. Belgium has, among other efforts, encouraged a regional approach to disarmament, which, as experience has demonstrated, prepares the ground for and promote a global approach, so long as a number of conditions have been met.

4. Among such conditions, the following are the more important:

(a) Consensus among States in the region;

(b) Respect for the relationships existing between the region and the rest of the world, especially the conditions under which the States in the region intend to ensure their security in accordance with the United Nations Charter;

(c) Contribution to the attainment of general and complete disarmament, which presupposes that regional initiatives must not jeopardize the implementation of global measures.

5. The United Nations has gradually forged agreement on a set of measures to organize and promote a regional approach.

6. General Assembly resolution 37/100 F, adopted by consensus, clearly indicated the dual function of the United Nations in this field, given the relationship which exists between regions and the rest of the world.

7. The first function is to inform the international community of the measures which have been taken within a regional framework.

8. The second function is that carried out by the Secretariat of the Organization – in particular the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research – in assisting States and regional institutions.

9. Belgium considers the agreement reached in Madrid at the beginning of September at the follow-up meeting to the Conference on Security and Co-operation...
in Europe (CSCE) to be a significant achievement, in that it continues the process begun in Helsinki in 1975. The difficult conditions surrounding the adoption of that agreement amply demonstrate the extent to which the behaviour of States both within and outside the region can affect international relations.

10. Although the Madrid document has many shortcomings, Belgium considers it sufficiently substantial and balanced.

11. In the narrower framework of regional disarmament, Belgium is gratified that, following an initiative by the group of countries to which it belongs, the Conference on Disarmament and Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Europe has been convened, as an integral and major element in the Helsinki process. Belgium trusts that the Conference will foster, firstly, agreement on confidence-building and security measures which are politically binding, militarily significant and verifiable, and which cover the whole of Europe - from the Atlantic to the Urals - as well as the neighbouring air and sea zones. Concrete results in this field are essential to any progress in monitoring, limiting and reducing the numbers of conventional weapons on European territory in any framework in which such endeavours might be undertaken, and particularly in the context of the work to be undertaken subsequently by the Conference.

12. With its Western partners, Belgium is striving to attain mutual and balanced reductions of armed forces in central Europe, and has contributed to the presentation in Vienna of comprehensive, detailed and balanced proposals to that end. Reaction to those proposals indicates some progress in the negotiations, particularly in the essential area of verification.

13. Belgium trusts that new efforts will be made to formulate a framework agreement based on agreed facts and incorporating realistic and effective verification measures relating to the whole process of reducing and limiting armed forces in central Europe. Belgium will contribute to that end by all the means within its power.

14. Belgium is also concerned to submit specific, easily negotiable proposals that would take account of everyone's position in the various fields in which it considers that a regional approach might contribute to the implementation of broader measures:

(a) In that connection, Belgium participated in the initiative taken by Austria at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and proposes, in the spirit of resolution 37/99 G, that the possibility of exchanging information on conditions of military service and other similar civic obligations should be explored. Belgium considers that the conditions under which such obligations are fulfilled directly affect the manpower available and the state of preparedness of armed forces. In that regard such facts are a useful means of comparison. It might subsequently be possible to standardize the conditions of such obligations, with a view to substituting civilian work for part of the period of military service without there being any corresponding increase in regular members of the armed forces. Belgium considers that it could, initially, be more effective to take up this proposal at the regional rather than the global level.

/...
(b) As far as the prevention of nuclear war is concerned, Belgium has proposed certain practical measures to the Committee on Disarmament with a view to increasing confidence among States and improving their relations, thus averting the risk of nuclear weapons being used. Some of these measures could also be taken up at the regional level.

(c) In general, Belgium trusts that the illustrative list of disarmament measures likely to be appropriate to a regional approach, which is contained in the Secretary-General's study on all the aspects of regional disarmament (A/35/416), will continue to inspire States in a practical manner. Belgium attaches particular importance to initiatives which could be taken in that regard by appropriate regional institutions. Such organizations are better able to appreciate tensions in their region and thus facilitate the formulation of regional measures. Moreover, such organizations could assist the Secretary-General in drafting communications on the international situation to the General Assembly.

15. Belgium thus accords the highest priority to the work which the United Nations Secretariat - in particular the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research - will carry out in future in implementation of resolution 37/100 F, paragraph 4.

16. Belgium thus wishes the international community to fully exploit the possibilities offered by resolution 37/100 F, and, in particular, wishes the General Assembly to consider on a regular basis communications submitted to it by the Secretary-General to that end relating both to information addressed to him by States and regional institutions and to his own initiatives in the field of regional disarmament.

BULGARIA

[Original: Russian]
[6 July 1983]

1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria attaches great importance to all concrete steps to avert nuclear war, limit the arms race and bring about disarmament, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons. In the current, tense international situation, in which there exists a real danger of the outbreak of a nuclear conflict, no more important task confronts the world than that of preserving peace and halting the arms race. Together with achievements at the global level, regional disarmament measures - particularly in regions of heightened international tension, where the danger of spontaneous military conflict is greatest - can make a vital contribution to the success of such efforts.

2. As a European State, the People's Republic of Bulgaria gives special attention to measures for strengthening security and for disarmament in Europe, where nuclear confrontation has reached a level at which it seriously threatens the stability of regional and global peace. The implementation of plans to deploy new nuclear missiles in certain countries of Western Europe will bring about exceptionally
serious qualitative changes in the strategic situation, a lessening of trust and a sharp increase in the danger of a nuclear conflict. Bulgaria has therefore actively supported all proposals designed to lower the level of nuclear and other confrontation in Europe, strengthen trust among the European countries and create conditions for real disarmament measures in the region.

3. More specifically, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, together with the other socialist countries, advocates the urgent solution of the problem of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, on which the future of the European continent and prospects for normalizing the situation in this region largely depend. The constructive proposals made by the Soviet Union, which take account of the legitimate security interests of all European peoples and indicate the correct way to free the continent completely from nuclear weapons, both medium-range and tactical, would provide a basis for a just solution at the bilateral Soviet-American negotiations on the limitation of nuclear weapons in Europe. Unswerving observance of the principle of equality and equal security, with account taken of all components of the medium-range nuclear forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Europe, is the key to reaching mutually acceptable agreement.

4. The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important measure from the viewpoint of security and trust among the countries in the region. The socialist countries actively support making entire regions of Europe nuclear-weapon-free zones and are doing their part in putting forward concrete proposals concerning the creation of such zones in northern Europe, the Balkans and other parts of the continent. As a Balkan State, Bulgaria ardently supports the idea of making the Balkans a zone free from nuclear weapons and, with a view to taking specific, practical steps to create such a zone, in 1981 proposed that a meeting of the leaders of the Balkan countries be held in Sofia to discuss this question. The idea put forward by the Swedish Government concerning the establishment of a zone free from tactical nuclear weapons in the region with the greatest concentration of armed forces and armaments in Europe also helps to limit the danger of nuclear war and strengthen trust among the countries of the region.

5. The Vienna negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe should also make an important contribution to limiting and reducing the danger of war on the European continent. Adoption of the compromise proposals put forward by the socialist countries participating directly in the negotiations, which point to a new way to overcome the prolonged deadlock that the negotiations have reached, constitutes the objective prerequisite for achieving the long-awaited agreement without further delay. The conclusion of the Madrid Conference with the adoption of a meaningful and balanced document that would provide a mandate for convening a conference on measures to strengthen trust and security and bring about disarmament in Europe would help to advance the all-European process begun at Helsinki.

6. As a State located in the immediate vicinity of the Mediterranean Sea, Bulgaria has a vital interest in strengthening security and promoting co-operation among the countries of this subregion. The Bulgarian Government cannot remain indifferent to plans being carried out to build up nuclear missiles in the
Mediterranean Sea and in the territory of certain coastal countries so that these weapons can reach the territory of Bulgaria. The inclusion in the agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly of a new item specifically devoted to the strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region reflects the general concern at the situation in the region. The proposals set forth in the documents of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, which have retained their relevance, occupy an important place among the many concrete proposals concerning the Mediterranean region. The socialist countries support the idea of making the Mediterranean Sea a zone of peace and co-operation and advocate the holding of negotiations on this question.