1. We approach the decision to convene the special session devoted to disarmament with no illusion. We are cognizant of the extremely difficult nature of the subject-matter and of the inherent complexity of the issues involved. We believe the snail-pace progress towards disarmament is not merely due to the lack of trying, nor can the absence of appreciable advance in this direction be reasonably explained by sheer deficiencies related to the machinery of disarmament. Substantive international issues and antagonisms — fed by mistrust and by real or perceived insecurity — stimulate the drive for armament and weapon competition which is the heart of the problem.

Yet, in the nuclear era, the growing burden and increasing dangers of a continued arms race with unthinkable consequences are too foreboding to be ignored by any responsible country. Thus Iran gives active support for all genuine efforts that are intended to lead us along the road towards disarmament, and in particular, the decision to convene the special session in which we have pinned certain hopes.

If reasonable success of the special session is to be ensured, meticulous preparation is necessary. This, among other things, requires care, patience and also perseverance, in order to lay the groundwork for widespread agreement on such basic issues as objectives and agenda. It is in this vein that we offer the following observations.

2. Among the many diverse ideas suggested to justify the convocation of this special session devoted to disarmament, a number has emerged as broadly acceptable themes embodying the goals of this session. The special session should accordingly:

(a) Provide a vantage point to bring all States together, to undertake a genuine discussion of global disarmament;

(b) Provide a forceful and fresh impetus to all disarmament negotiations;

(c) Generate public interests and opinion, through the provisions of reliable information of the (i) present situation in the field of disarmament;
(ii) consequences of an arms race; (iii) measures to be undertaken to slow and, if possible, eventually arrest armaments;

(d) Reassert the United Nations responsibilities and declining influence in this vital field, and reject the thesis that it is the prerogative of super-Powers which possess the more deadly paraphernalia of war.

3. If the special session is to achieve the preceding goals, it is imperative that it should embody the following guidelines:

(a) Given the multiplicity and the complexity of the issues involved and general goals to be achieved in a relatively short span of time, the special session should best act as a deliberative body – albeit possessing special character. Thus, it has to perform a twofold responsibility. It must, on the one hand, provide dynamic continuity with ongoing deliberative activities carried out within the existing machinery of disarmament, whilst on the other hand embark at charting out a future course of action which could lead the way in follow-up negotiations.

It is to be emphasized, however, the special session should, in pursuance of the first aspect of its presumed responsibility, avoid simply duplicating what the General Assembly and the First Committee produce in their annual debates. The special session’s eye on the future course of action – as the other aspect of its responsibility suggests – should not impart the impression that it be necessarily involved in practical negotiations on collateral disarmament issues.

(b) If one assertive feature of the special session, bearing on the global nature of disarmament, were to be manifested by serious involvement of small and medium size countries in the process of disarmament discussion, it is even more essential that all nuclear and militarily significant States actively participate. The importance of this flows logically from one of the basic themes of the session.

(c) The mobilization of world public opinion is yet another central aim of the special session. This brings into focus the role the NGOs are uniquely qualified to play. It is of cardinal importance that specific and explicit provisions be made so as to benefit from the valuable input of NGOs and other responsible research institutions both at the preparatory and final stages of the special session.

4. The agenda of the special session should be responsive to and consistent with these above-mentioned objectives. It must, at the same time, be attuned to the particularities envisaged for this special gathering.

A broad enough agenda following for discussion and consideration of basic aspects of arms control seems necessary. It is, however, desirable that it be comprised of an agreed list of priority items that embody critical issues of disarmament.

To emphasize the deliberative feature of the special session, the agenda should focus on mapping a general, theoretical strategy; to bring about a futuristic outlook of this important undertaking, the agenda should also be clearly geared, in part, to produce action-oriented decisions.

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To summarize, the agenda of the special session of the General Assembly should be drawn up along the following lines:

(a) Review and assessment of basic aspects and principal assumptions;

(b) Concise and systematic evaluation of the present state of affairs;

(c) Consideration of future outlook with a view to charting a programme of action based on priority issues;

(d) A review of disarmament mechanisms, in order to make them more consistent with present realities and responsive to follow-up responsibilities.