Note verbale dated 10 June 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to his note No. CR 421/6(3) dated 19 May 1977 whereby the Secretary-General invites all States to communicate to him "their views and suggestions on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special session of the General Assembly not later than 15 April 1977", has the honour to enclose herewith the Egyptian Government views in Arabic.
I. Introduction

1. The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt has always supported all efforts and constructive proposals made for arriving at general and complete disarmament under effective international control and has submitted a number of suggestions which make a positive contribution towards the realization of this major goal, both with regard to regional action to save specific regions from the serious consequences of the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race, and with regard to international action to halt this momentous race which threatens humanity and its achievements with total destruction at a time when the peoples of the world are being deprived of important resources which could contribute to its progress or help in coping with development problems, particularly with regard to developing countries.

2. General and complete disarmament under effective international control is therefore rightly regarded as one of the major objectives at the current stage of international development, if not the major objective to which many other objectives, not least among them the turning of the wheel of development, the reform of the international economic order and the direction of scientific progress along a sound course which will serve the cause of peace, justice and progress - the objectives for which the United Nations was founded and which it has made its final objectives - are linked and on which they are based.

3. On the basis of the above views and convictions, the Egyptian Government cannot but support the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to discussion of this major and vital topic; this support is reflected in its support for the General Assembly resolution on the convening of this session.

II. The non-aligned movement and disarmament

1. Ever since the establishment of this movement, of which Egypt is proud to be a founder, the non-aligned States have taken a firm stand calling for general and complete disarmament. The position of the non-aligned group has been a reliable expression of the hopes which have tempted mankind ever since armament or the arms race became a threat to the future of humanity, just as it is a threat to its present, in view of the heavy burdens which it represents and which are actually borne by all peoples of the world at the expense of their progress, prosperity and security.

2. The States of the non-aligned group, both within the framework of the United Nations and the General Assembly and within the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, have played a positive role in promoting the objective of the realization of tangible progress towards
disarmament; the initiative to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament arose from the first Non-aligned Summit Conference and was reaffirmed at the fifth Non-aligned Summit Conference held in August 1976 in Colombo (Sri Lanka).

3. The non-aligned group took as its starting-point for this initiative the fact that the time has come to instigate joint action and a collective international approach in order to achieve genuine progress towards general and complete disarmament through the United Nations, which is considered the rightful framework for the establishment of a world strategy to guarantee progress towards this objective. Moreover, the General Assembly's decision to undertake a study of the question and its adoption of a significant number of declarations and resolutions on disarmament make it the most appropriate body to review measures in respect of which widespread acceptance has been achieved and to determine what progress or action can be established on the basis thereof.

4. Furthermore, the non-aligned States believe that the policy of the use of force, which is regarded as the basis of the continuation of unjust circumstances presenting a threat to world peace, stems from, is based on, and finds its expression in the continuation and development of armaments and the savage arms race. Therefore, a halting of the arms race, the reduction of armaments, and disarmament will serve to weaken and ultimately put an end to the policy of reliance on force and the use of force in international relations and open the way to peaceful negotiation, peaceful coexistence and the peaceful solution of problems, which would be a sound expression and faithful implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, in which the non-aligned movement firmly believes.

5. It is, of course, clear that the position of the non-aligned States and the developing countries generally, and indeed any sound position on the subject of general and complete disarmament, is based on the need to establish a just peace and put an end to racism in all its forms, foreign occupation and pockets of colonialism, not on the imposition, acceptance or consecration of the status quo. The Egyptian Government considers that the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and foreign occupation, the abandonment of theories of domination and expansion, and respect for all established rights is an essential condition for the establishment of a just international order which would form the basic framework for general, complete and effective disarmament.

III. The special session

1. Appraisal of the present situation with regard to disarmament:

(a) Despite all the efforts made, the initiatives and decisions taken and the agreements arrived at, the importance of which must not be underestimated, the practical results are not commensurate with the efforts made and the hopes placed on them. There is a clear contradiction between the pressing need to halt the arms race - at least - and the paucity of actual achievements in the field and the vicious circle in which international efforts have become engaged. 

...
(b) The efforts currently being made, particularly at the bilateral level and in the light of the responsibilities binding upon the two major Powers under the provisions of the Charter and in accordance with the specific commitments arising out of a number of international agreements, in particular article VI of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation, merit careful attention and support inasmuch as they may provide an effective point of departure for progress towards the halting of the arms race and, eventually, general and complete disarmament itself. This by no means negates the importance of joint international action, nor is it a substitute for it. The issue is world-wide in its dimensions and consequences, hence the importance of the forthcoming special session.

2. General principles of Egypt's position concerning the special session:

(a) The Egyptian Government would like to emphasize its faith in the role of the United Nations in tackling all the problems facing mankind in our present age. It would, however, at the same time, like to point out that a major step such as a special session of the General Assembly should not conclude merely with a declaration or declarations concerning the international community's zeal for disarmament, but must tackle the problem with in-depth studies which take into account the technical, political, economic, social and informational aspects of the subject and which serve to link and co-ordinate the measures taken to this end in the past with those being taken currently and those which may be taken in the near future. In addition, there is the important question of planning for a programme divided into time phases over which progress towards the agreed objectives is to be achieved, taking into account the elements mentioned above and other elements. All this indicates clearly the important role which the Preparatory Committee must play in steering action towards the realization of this study on a world-wide level and towards the achievement of significant results at this session.

(b) Furthermore, efforts must be made to check the trend towards auctioneering and opportunism and prevent it from dominating, or at least infiltrating, the discussions of the special session, as this possibility emerges from some of the replies, which indicate a desire to utilize the occasion of the session for the realization of specific objectives. In this connexion, in order to make the matter clear, the Arab Republic of Egypt would point out once again that the framework of the United Nations and acceptance of its decisions and the agreements concluded under its auspices constitute the only appropriate basis for serious and sincere work on general and complete disarmament.

(c) With regard to the decision taken by the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session at its first session that decisions and declarations of the session are to be based on consensus where possible and that, where this is not possible, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly shall apply in the taking of decisions, the Egyptian Government considers that consensus may be necessary at the negotiation stage to arrive at agreement on the fundamental principles of disarmament agreements and that when these principles have been agreed upon, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly must apply in the drafting process. In general, consensus must be viewed as a factor for promoting a rapprochement of viewpoints and not as a means of hindering progress towards the completion of the work envisaged.

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3. Programme of action and agenda:

(a) It is essential that the special session should produce, as well as such declarations and decisions as it may issue, a specific and clear programme of action indicating the role of all committees and subsidiary organs active in this field with regard to all points agreed upon or approved for study.

(b) Programme of action and the role of United Nations bodies and machinery in international action on disarmament: A study should be made of the role of the Security Council in the field of disarmament, as the Council is the main body concerned with the maintenance of international peace and security. It is perfectly clear that there is a link between the maintenance of international peace and security, on the one hand, and general and complete disarmament, on the other. The programme of action should take into consideration the co-ordination of the political and security aspects which are within the competence of the Security Council, the economic and social aspects which are a matter for the Economic and Social Council, and the technical aspects which concern the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, as well as other aspects referred to specialized committees and bodies. The General Assembly will undertake the over-all supervision and co-ordination of all these efforts within a specific time period.

(c) With regard to the agenda, the Egyptian Government maintains that the topics to be discussed at the special session, and in the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session, should include the following:

(i) General principles, the link between disarmament and the establishment of international peace and justice, and the role of the principal organs of the United Nations, such as the Security Council, in this respect;

(ii) Examination of what has been achieved so far in the field of disarmament, the reduction of armaments, the banning of certain nuclear tests, etc.;

(iii) The cessation of nuclear tests and, in particular, the question of the conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive nuclear test ban; the extent of implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and measures for the implementation and strengthening of that Treaty; the conclusions of the Review Conference held in 1975, the enhancement of the safeguards system; the establishment of general principles concerning non-proliferation, binding on all parties, as a result of the entry into force of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation as part of the applicable rules of international law;

(iv) The question of nuclear-free zones and its relation to accession to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation;

(v) Consideration of measures to be taken in accordance with a specific timetable with regard to the banning of the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the prohibition of the development of weapons of mass destruction;

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(vi) The importance of international control of peaceful uses; the question of safeguards; and the measures to be taken in respect of non-compliance by a State;

(vii) Follow-up of progress achieved in bilateral talks, especially the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the United States and the Soviet Union, in the light of reports submitted by the two super-Powers to the special session. In this connexion, the Egyptian Government proposes that the General Assembly should, at its thirty-second session, adopt a resolution calling on both super-Powers to submit such reports to the special session;

(viii) Disarmament and the environment;

(ix) The economic and social implications of disarmament;

(x) The security of non-nuclear States pending the establishment of a comprehensive nuclear disarmament régime;

(xi) Trade in armaments;

(xii) Machinery to supervise the implementation of any commitments that may arise from the resolutions and instruments adopted at the special session;

(xiii) United Nations organs active in the field of disarmament;

(xiv) An international information programme on disarmament.

(d) The Preparatory Committee

- In addition to determining the agenda on which the programme of action and any other measures will be based, the Preparatory Committee should consider the preliminary organization of work and submit its recommendations in that respect to the General Assembly at its forthcoming regular session so that the Assembly may refer the recommendations to the competent organs for study, and for the preparation of the relevant working papers. The Preparatory Committee should then meet again before the special session in order to finalize the documents for the special session including any declarations and the programme of action.

- The work of the Preparatory Committee should receive support from other organs specializing in the field of disarmament. Those organs should submit to the Preparatory Committee reports on matters which it has been agreed should be included in the agenda, so that the work of the special session will be new and comprehensive.

- Thirdly, the Preparatory Committee should examine the political action which is to be combined with action in the field of disarmament, such as that relating to foreign military occupation and methods of curbing the arms race, so that it will be possible to give consideration to the discontinuation and reduction of armaments and to disarmament.
- Fourthly, the Preparatory Committee should submit a report on the efficiency of existing disarmament machinery. The Egyptian Government is of the view that it is important to maintain the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference since this Committee has covered significant ground in considering relevant topics, solving a number of issues, and reaching some conclusions.

- It would also be worth while for the Preparatory Committee to study the possibility of a proposal to amend the Charter by the inclusion of a provision prohibiting nuclear weapons, or a proposal for a commitment to seek such a prohibition regarding the proliferation of military nuclear armaments as a threat to international peace and security. The Committee may also consider the inclusion in the programme of action of a provision requiring States to submit reports periodically (e.g. annually) on the extent of their nuclear armaments, on measures they have taken in connexion with the reduction of such armaments or the commitment to nuclear disarmament, and on the enhancement of the authority of international control of nuclear armaments.

- Consideration of an international information programme to be carried out at all levels to publicize the importance of disarmament.

(e) Follow-up of the conclusions of the special session:

Consideration should be given to the convening of another special session, perhaps on the occasion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, in other words, shortly before the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, which will coincide with the end of the Disarmament Decade. Consideration might also be given to the convening of an international conference on disarmament in which all nuclear Powers would participate, since without their participation the Conference would serve little purpose.