Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

Basic provisions of the declaration on disarmament

Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: working paper

I

Ending the arms race, achieving disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, and removing the threat of a world war is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Mankind is confronted with a choice: it must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or else the machinery of preparation for war will continue to consume an ever-increasing proportion of resources vital to human beings, making the danger of a disastrous war ever more real.

Modern weapons are thousands of times as destructive as anything used in military conflicts of the past, and they pose a far more serious threat to the survival of nations than has ever been the case before. Yet, the actions of the enemies of détente and disarmament and the interests of the military-industrial complex are pushing mankind into a new and ever more dangerous and destructive spiral of the arms race. Weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems are continuing to develop with the aid of the latest achievements of science and technology while the stockpiles of weapons are steadily increasing in size. This creates an increased threat of nuclear war, particularly since under present circumstances any military conflict can develop into a nuclear cataclysm.

The arms race involves an enormous waste of resources which could be used to advance the well-being of peoples. At the present time, the world is spending approximately $350 billion a year on armaments. The war machine requires ever greater human resources, diverting people from peaceful creative work. This hampers the solution of such important and pressing problems facing mankind as the eradication of disease, hunger and cultural backwardness, the development of new sources of energy, extensive exploration of the ocean and outer space, and the prevention of disastrous environmental changes. It also calls for urgent measures to curb the arms race and bring about disarmament.
Recent history shows that it is possible to curb the arms race. In the past few years, it has been possible to achieve a positive change in the development of international relations towards détente and the affirmation in international relations of the principle of peaceful coexistence between States with different social systems. Thus, favourable conditions have been established for successful negotiations on disarmament. The recently concluded agreements in this field provide tangible proof that it is possible to solve the problem of disarmament. These are but the first steps; their importance, however, is great.

They include the Soviet-United States agreements aimed at preventing nuclear war and reducing the risk of its accidental outbreak and at limiting strategic arms, as well as the Soviet-French agreement on the prevention of an accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

They also include such measures for limiting the nuclear arms race as the treaties on the prohibition of nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water and on the non-emplacement of weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and also the Soviet-United States treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear weapon tests and on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

An important role in curbing the arms race belongs to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other measures agreed upon in recent years for preventing the spread of such weapons.

These steps also include the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and the Convention on the Prohibition of Action to Influence the Environment and Climate for Military and Other Hostile Purposes.

Important proposals for the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests, for the prohibition of chemical weapons and for the prohibition of the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction are on the negotiating table. Negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe and on further limitation of the strategic weapons of the USSR and the United States are currently in progress. A proposal has been submitted calling upon all the participants in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other. The question of concluding a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations is under consideration.

Thus, the political and material prerequisites exist for making decisive progress towards ending the arms race and achieving disarmament. The crucial question now is to translate into practical terms the initiatives which have been taken and to proceed along the road towards binding and effective international agreements in the field of disarmament. This calls for joint efforts by all States, nuclear and non-nuclear, big and small, developed and developing.
II

The following fundamental provisions and principles should form the basis of negotiations and decisions on the questions of curbing the arms race and achieving disarmament.

1. The relaxation of international tensions and the resulting positive political processes can be truly stable if accompanied and buttressed by measures of military détente, i.e. new concrete results in the field of limiting the arms race and of disarmament.

2. The principal, ultimate objective of the efforts of States in this field is general and complete disarmament under strict international control; only general and complete disarmament can bring mankind, on a stable, long-term basis, the universal peace and security which are essential in order to solve the urgent problems of economic and social development on a world-wide scale.

3. Specific partial measures for limiting the arms race, reducing armaments and achieving disarmament can play an important role as stages on the road to general and complete disarmament and the establishment of stable peace. Such partial measures should involve prohibiting and destroying certain types of existing armaments, preventing the development of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, excluding certain spheres or regions from the arms race, systematically reducing the military expenditures of States, limiting armaments and achieving disarmament on a regional basis as well as other steps to prepare the way for general and complete disarmament.

All States should refrain from actions which might adversely affect efforts in the field of disarmament. An important prerequisite for the success of negotiations on limiting armaments and achieving disarmament is the willingness of States to display a constructive approach to negotiations and a political will to reach agreements.

4. Measures to curb the arms race and bring about disarmament should be based on the principle of not impairing the interests of any of the parties to an agreement; strict adherence to this principle and the abandonment of attempts to obtain unilateral advantage are the essential prerequisite for the effectiveness of negotiations and the viability of agreements once they have been worked out.

5. The universal acceptance and development of the principle of the non-use of force in international relations are extremely important in terms of ensuring favourable conditions for curbing the arms race and saving mankind from the danger of war. Renunciation of the use or threat of force must become a law of international life.

6. In order to prevent a continuing arms race it is essential to put an end to qualitative improvements of arms, especially weapons of mass destruction, to the development of new means of warfare. Scientific and technological achievements must be used solely for peaceful purposes.

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7. If disarmament measures are to be effective, it is of the utmost importance that negotiations and agreements should involve the largest possible number of States, particularly nuclear Powers and States which possess the most powerful arms and armed forces. The participation of all the nuclear Powers in efforts to curb the nuclear arms race and to limit and eliminate all armaments is essential if complete success is to be achieved in this regard. The accession of all States to existing international agreements aimed at limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament is a major prerequisite of further progress in this field. A world disarmament conference must be used as an important forum for working out specific, effective measures to solve the problem of disarmament.

8. Agreements in the field of disarmament must provide for effective verification of disarmament measures, with the scope and nature of such verification depending on the scope, nature and specific characteristics of the concrete measures provided for in the agreements.

9. The resources released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be used in a manner which will promote the well-being of peoples, the solution of world-wide problems facing mankind, and the economic and social progress of the developing States.