GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 9 November 1971 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee

I have the honour to send you a statement of the Government of the German Democratic Republic on questions of disarmament and arms limitation and to ask you to circulate it as an official document of the General Assembly on agenda item 27 "General and complete disarmament".

Accept, etc.

(Signed) Otto WINZER
Minister of Foreign Affairs

* Circulated at the direction of the Chairman of the First Committee.
STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TO
THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON QUESTIONS OF DISARMAMENT AND ARMS LIMITATION

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has noted with satisfaction
that the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly is discussing
in detail problems of disarmament and arms limitation. As these questions deeply
affect the life and security of all peoples, the Government of the German
Democratic Republic addresses itself to the United Nations General Assembly to set
forth its position on them.

The German Democratic Republic was and is open to all initiatives aimed at
checking the arms race and at world-wide and regional disarmament, and it has on
previous occasions made proposals to this end. It opposes the arms race, which
involves new and unknown dangers and requires immense material and intellectual
resources that, if used for peaceful purposes, could considerably increase the
prosperity of mankind.

In this sense, and in accordance with the foreign policy principles adopted
by the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Government of
the German Democratic Republic has expressed its full approval of the comprehensive
proposals on peace, arms limitation and disarmament submitted by the Government of
the Soviet Union to the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.
The Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic also declares its
explicit support for the draft resolution on questions of disarmament that the
Soviet delegation has submitted to the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations
General Assembly.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic considers the proposal of
convening a world disarmament conference in the near future as apt to combine the
constructive efforts of States in this field and to make a major step forward on
the road towards general and complete disarmament. It believes that such a
conference indisputably is not only necessary and useful but that, in addition,
developments of recent years have given rise to more favourable conditions for
its convocation and success. A decisive prerequisite for the success of this
world-wide action is full respect for the principle of universality. The Government
of the German Democratic Republic declares its readiness to participate on equal

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terms in a world disarmament conference and to co-operate with all interested States in multilateral and bilateral consultations to prepare for the conference.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic shares the opinion of the overwhelming majority of States that the ending of the nuclear arms drive, nuclear disarmament and the elimination of the other types of weapons of mass destruction constitute an urgent task. Disarmament measures with respect to nuclear weapons, which continue to be the most dangerous of all weapons of mass destruction, deserve utmost priority. To achieve effective agreements to this effect it is indispensable that all nuclear-weapon States participate. Therefore, the Government of the German Democratic Republic supports the proposal of the USSR to convene a conference of the five nuclear-weapon States which bear a special responsibility for an early nuclear disarmament.

To prepare the ground for nuclear disarmament it is particularly pressing to take steps curbing the nuclear arms race. This means above all that all States should end any atomic weapon tests. The Government of the German Democratic Republic is of the opinion that this goal would be served best if also an agreement banning underground nuclear weapon tests would be concluded in the near future. It feels that the deliberations of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva confirm its view that the position of the United States of America and some other Western countries, which still maintain that verification of the prohibition of underground nuclear weapon tests through national means of verification were inadequate and which with this argument obstruct the conclusion of a relevant agreement, is factually unfounded.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic has also recently followed closely the deliberations of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva and has, in accordance with its possibilities, contributed towards the successful work of that important international body. It has actively supported the efforts of the USSR and other States to achieve the complete prohibition of both chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons as demanded in General Assembly resolution 2662 (XXV). The adoption of the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which has been submitted to the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, would make it possible to ban and eliminate from
the arsenals one of the weapons of mass destruction. This would at the same time pave the way for the prohibition of chemical weapons, which objective is envisaged in article IX of the draft Convention. The German Democratic Republic is ready to accede to this Convention.

The German Democratic Republic emphasizes its firm intention to work persistently also for a prohibition of chemical weapons of mass destruction. The consequences chemical warfare would also and especially entail for the civil population in the densely populated European areas, and the mere dangers that arise from such weapons stockpiled in this area, make their destruction an urgent command of humanity.

The German Democratic Republic has acceded to all agreements on arms limitation concluded so far and has created all domestic conditions to ensure their full effectiveness. It urges a universal validity of these agreements. This applies, above all, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The German Democratic Republic underlines its warranted interest in seeing all States, chiefly those which have the technical and material capacities to produce nuclear weapons, accede to and ratify this Treaty. Full effectiveness of this Treaty is a requirement of international security.

The twenty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held at a time when, thanks to the efforts of the peace-loving forces in the world, more favourable conditions exist for taking effective steps on arms limitation and disarmament, which are the most reliable way towards strengthening international security. The negative impact of the arms race on the life of societies is now bigger than ever before. Heightened dangers in the wake of a further escalation of the arms race make it imperative to do everything in order to make further progress on the road towards arms limitation and disarmament. In accordance with the historical experience embodied in the Charter of the United Nations that disarmament is the most effective method for the preservation of peace, the German Democratic Republic assures the United Nations General Assembly of its willingness to co-operate with all interested States in the attainment of this goal.

Berlin, November 1971