Twelfth special session
Agenda items 9 and 11

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE 1980s AS THE SECOND DISARMAMENT
DECADE AND CONSIDERATION OF INITIATIVES AND PROPOSALS OF MEMBER STATES

Prevention of nuclear war

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]
[23 June 1982]

The views of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the question of the prevention of nuclear war are set out in the message from L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/S-12/AC.1/10), the statement made by A. A. Gromyko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, on 15 June 1982 (A/S-12/PV.12) and the memorandum from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics entitled "Averting the growing nuclear threat and curbing the arms race" (A/S-12/AC.1/11 and Corr.1).

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[Original: English]
[24 June 1982]

1. The world has a particular horror of nuclear war, and mankind longs for an answer to the question of how to prevent it. The fear of nuclear war has compelled all peoples of the world to beseech their leaders to find a remedy. Their fears are understandable, but they should not cause us to ignore the broader goal of seeking means to prevent all wars. The Charter of the United Nations laid down our mandate to strive towards this goal when its opening words declared the determination of the peoples of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

2. It is to the Charter that we must turn in the first instance for guidance on the prevention of war. Member States are obligated to abide by its provisions, and foremost among these are the principles set forth in Article 2, including in particular those calling for Members to settle their disputes by peaceful means and to refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. The continued failure of some to abide by these injunctions is all too evident in the armed conflicts which today disturb international peace and security and which impede progress in all arms control and disarmament efforts, whether in regard to nuclear or non-nuclear weapons. Fundamental, therefore, is the need for all States to comply fully with the Charter.

3. With respect to nuclear war, the United States of America believes that a key element in reducing the risk of its occurrence is to reduce significantly and verifiably the quantities of nuclear weapons themselves. We have therefore advanced proposals for the complete elimination of an entire class of intermediate-range nuclear forces and for substantial reductions to equal levels of
strategic ballistic missile forces, so that there will be a nuclear balance at a significantly lower and verifiable level. Such balance is essential for maintaining stability and security and minimizing the danger of war.

4. The United States will spare no effort in search of measures to prevent any accidental outbreak of nuclear war. To this end, it concluded with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the 1971 agreement on measures to reduce the risk of outbreak of nuclear war, as well as the so-called "hotline" agreements providing for rapid direct communication between the two Governments in times of emergency.

5. To improve further mutual confidence and communication and lessen the likelihood of misinterpretation, the United States, as President Reagan told the General Assembly on 17 June 1982, will approach the Soviet Union with proposals for reciprocal exchanges in such areas as advance notification of major strategic exercises that otherwise might be misinterpreted; advance notification of the launching of inter-continental ballistic missiles within, as well as beyond, national boundaries; and an expanded exchange of data on strategic forces. It is the view of the United States that the sharing of such information would represent a qualitative improvement in the strategic nuclear environment and would help reduce the chances of misunderstandings.

6. While the United States remains strongly committed to the achievement of bilateral and multilateral arms control and confidence-building measures that will lessen the risk of war, as long as the threat of war remains a reality and the universal respect for the principles of the United Nations is yet to be achieved, the United States must continue to rely on the strategy of deterrence. The strategy works because it makes clear to any potential aggressor that the risks and potential costs of aggression far outweigh any gains he might possibly hope to achieve.

7. There is no objective of greater importance than the prevention of nuclear war. As President Reagan said on 9 May 1982, the United States believes "that it will be possible to reduce the risks of war by removing the instabilities that now exist and by dismantling the nuclear menace". The first steps in the process are to seek effective and verifiable agreements for the control of nuclear arms at substantially reduced levels and to reduce the possibilities of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. But, until the ultimate goal is reached, the United States must continue to rely on the strategy of nuclear deterrence which has succeeded in helping keep the peace since the Second World War.