Twelfth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE TWELFTH
SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda item 11

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

Letter dated 24 June 1982 from the Permanent Representative of
Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the
Ad Hoc Committee of the Twelfth Special Session

Following my letter of 18 June 1982 (A/S-12/AC.1/19), I have the honour to
transmit herewith a revised copy of the document entitled "Institution of an
international body for the verification of disarmament agreements" that Italy
submits to the consideration of the second special session of the General Assembly
devoted to disarmament.

I should be grateful to have the annex of this letter circulated as an
official document of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Twelfth Special Session under
agenda item 11.

(Signed) Umberto LA ROCCA
Ambassador
Institution of an international body for the verification of disarmament agreements.

1. The negotiations conducted in recent years on disarmament-related subjects have emphasized the importance of the issue of verification in arms-control agreements and the technical complexities of the problem.

Furthermore, a general consensus has been reached at this stage on the indispensability of including in disarmament and arms control arrangements and Conventions, provisions specifically designed to monitor the implementation of and the compliance to such arrangements and Conventions.

2. It is generally recognized that verification is aimed at and fulfills two basic functions: on the one hand, it serves to deter and detract possible violations of obligations and, on the other, it helps to generate a climate of international trust which is indispensable for further progress in the disarmament field.

It has to be noted, however, that the efficacy of these functions is currently limited.

In many cases, there exists no organ or authority at the international level entrusted with the specific task of ensuring compliance with the obligations and commitments assumed in disarmament agreements and of directly enforcing procedures aimed at verifying any allegation of non-compliance.

Even when some limited international competence does exist in principle, it is related mainly to the post facto verification of alleged violations through procedures which may often be considered unsatisfactory and ineffective.
3. The solutions proposed or adopted so far have clearly demonstrated marked differences of approach which extend far beyond the inherent diversity of verification needs for categories of weapons.

This variety shows the absence of a common vision and of a global approach towards the ultimate objectives of verification, rendering all the more evident the lack within the disarmament machinery of a unifying factor in this field. In the Italian Government's view, that factor might be an international body to be established in the framework of the United Nations entrusted solely and specifically with the task of verifying observance to arms-control agreements.

4. In the light of such concerns, the need has been stressed on several occasions, in multilateral fora, for an international centralized structure which would, inter alia, fully reflect the elements of confidence-building and deterrence typical of international verification.(1)

4. More generally, the Final Document itself of the XI Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is based on the assumption that disarmament and the cessation of the arms race are to be dealt with comprehensively.

5. This comprehensive approach would be greatly facilitated if the international community itself would conduct operations of monitoring multilateral disarmament agreements.

(1) It may suffice to recall, inter alia, the 1961 provisions of the "Joint Statement of Agreed of Principles for Disarmament Negotiations" introduced by the United States and the Soviet Union and approved by the General Assembly (A/RES/1722-XVI); more recently, the Netherlands' proposals for a "Study on the Establishment of an International Disarmament Organization" (A/AC.187-1080/5 April 1978 and A/S-10/AC.1/37, para.186) and Sri Lanka's for the "Establishment of a World Disarmament Authority" (A/S-10/AC.1/9 and Add.1), as well as France's initiative to create an Agency to monitor disarmament agreements by satellite (Res. 33/71i of 14 December 1978 and subsequent resolutions).
The participation of all countries in this process would give the best guarantee of compliance in fulfilment of the obligations deriving from the agreements, would strengthen the principle of undiminished security at all stages of the disarmament process, and would ultimately foster the goal of the universality of disarmament agreements referred to in paragraph 40 of the Final Document.

6. To this end, Italy proposes the institution of a permanent verification body.

Such a body would operate in the United Nations framework with the aim of supervising the implementation of disarmament treaties in force both from the technical and legal standpoints. It would also be entrusted with providing, within the limits of its field of competence, all support and assistance which may be needed in the course of arms-control negotiations, including any scientific and technical information available on the specific issues under discussion.

The international verification body would be created in successive stages. The pace of its functional and structural development would depend on both the substantive advancement of the disarmament process and the strengthening of the United Nations' role in this field.

7. Therefore, Italy suggests the following course of action:
   a) in the first phase, an ad hoc section should be set up within the unit of the Secretariat competent with disarmament and under its overall jurisdiction.

   From an organizational standpoint, the new structure would operate initially at a level equivalent to that of the existing sections of the present Center for Disarmament and with a comparable staff.

   The necessary resources would, in principle, be provided from existing overall resources of the United Nations.
From the substantive viewpoint, in addition to assuming all the tasks for which the Secretariat has so far been responsible in the field of verification, the international verification section should be entrusted with the following functions and responsibilities:

- to act as a centre for the collection of data and information related to the application of disarmament agreement and to compliance with the provisions of such agreements;

- to disseminate the data and information received, directly to the Parties to the agreements, and once annually to the United Nations membership in a report on the "review of implementation" of each convention; that document should be formally circulated as a report of the Secretary General.

- to act as a permanent Secretariat to the various Consultative Committees of Experts envisaged by existing and future arms control and disarmament agreements in order to provide the support necessary to the implementation of the complaints procedures; it could, inter alia, contribute to implement the complaint procedures of the BW Convention as well as play a central role in supporting the investigations activities conducted by Experts' Groups.

- to prepare background papers for review conferences;

- to assist the work of disarmament bodies in the field of verification, especially that of the Committee on Disarmament, and to provide all scientific and technical information available on the issues under discussion, including schematic and factual analyses of individual monitoring measures;

- to develop knowledge and expertise on verification options and verifiability of weapons categories for which multilateral disarmament negotiations are anticipated;

- to maintain liaison with other UN bodies and specialized Agencies on matters of common interest.
b) At a later stage, the structure might be transformed into a "Centre for the Verification of Disarmament Agreements", still under the aegis of the highest ranking officer (possibly an Under-Secretary-General) competent for disarmament matters. The functions of the new Centre, though developed, would remain essentially the same as in its initial stage, but the nucleus of a corps of international inspectors might be established within its structures along the lines of the provisions set forth within the IAEA.

c) In a third and final phase, either the new Centre would be made independent or, in consideration of the specificity and broad range of its functions, an Agency for verification of disarmament agreements might be established.

In either of these options, the new organ would have to assume eventually the three basic tasks already indicated, namely: 1) to assist and support on a technical level the negotiations of disarmament agreements and the deliberations on disarmament matters; 2) to perform any operation or service deemed useful for the verification of disarmament agreements; 3) to establish a staff of inspectors which would be responsible for supervising and monitoring adherence to obligations deriving from disarmament agreements, following consultations with the States concerned and in collaboration with such States.

8. Finally, the proposed international verification body should coordinate its activities, in all its stages and as appropriate, with those of other organs that might be established within the United Nations framework for operational purposes in the field of verification.

This is especially valid with regard to the international satellite-monitoring Agency, whose future activities are to be considered complementary to those of the body proposed in this working paper. The international satellite-monitoring Agency would indeed provide a vast range of information, acquired through sophisticated technical means, which would complete and in some cases substitute for operations performed by the international verification body and its inspectors.