Fifteenth special session
Agenda items 9, 10 and 12

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION,
ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE VITAL OBJECTIVE OF
TERMINATING THE ARMS RACE AND THE PRESSING NEED TO ACHIEVE
SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT
ITS TENTH AND TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSIONS

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS, INCLUDING QUALITATIVE AND
QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS, RELEVANT TO THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS, WITH
A VIEW TO THE ELABORATION OF APPROPRIATE CONCRETE AND PRACTICAL
MEASURES AND, IF NECESSARY, ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES, TAKING DULY
INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THE
FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY, THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Note verbale dated 3 June 1988 from the Permanent Mission of
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

1. The Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations, referring to General Assembly resolution 42/40 of 30 November 1987 entitled "Convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", which contains a request to participants in bilateral or multilateral negotiations on disarmament issues outside the framework of the United Nations to submit appropriate information on such negotiations to the General Assembly, wishes to report the following.

2. At the basis of the Soviet approach to negotiations on nuclear and space weapons lies the stage-by-stage programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons throughout the world by the year 2000 described in the statement made by Mr. M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 15 January 1986.
3. Questions concerning the reduction of strategic offensive arms, subject to observance of the ABM Treaty, occupy a central place in the Soviet-American dialogue on security issues. Progress in this direction - in the context of the implementation of the Treaty between the USSR and the United States on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - would objectively contribute to reducing the risk of nuclear conflict and lead to greater stabilization of the military and political situation in the world as a whole.

4. The Soviet-American summit meeting in Reykjavik in October 1986 was a landmark in strategic arms limitation and reduction. In the Icelandic capital the sides agreed to reduce the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States by 50 per cent in respect of delivery systems (no more than 1,600) and warheads (a ceiling of 6,000). The USSR proposed that these reductions should be made over five years, and that in the subsequent five-year period such weapons should be completely eliminated. It was agreed that the question of limiting long-range sea-launched cruise missiles would be dealt with separately.

5. The Soviet side proposed that the right to withdraw from the unlimited ABM Treaty (under art. XV) should not be exercised, at least during the 10-year period by the end of which strategic arms are to be completely eliminated, and that the Treaty should be strictly observed.

6. The Soviet Union proposed that work on the establishment of space-based anti-missile weapons in accordance with the ABM Treaty should be limited to the confines of the laboratory, and that there should be no tests of ABM space elements outside laboratories, particularly in outer space.

7. The Soviet Union took into account the fact that under the ABM treaty each side undertook not to deploy ABM systems for a defence of the territory of its country and not to provide a base for such a defence (art. I), and not to develop, test, or deploy space-based ABM systems or components (art. V).

8. The American side took the position that the development and testing of space-based ABM systems, including systems in outer space, are not prohibited.

9. In the course of 1987, a significant convergence of the positions of the sides was noted in the negotiations on space and nuclear arms in Geneva.

10. Substantial progress was achieved in December 1987 during the visit to the United States of M. S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The sides agreed to establish ceilings of 4,900 on the aggregate of ICBM and SLBM warheads within an overall total of 6,000 warheads. Subceilings were agreed for heavy missiles (1,540 warheads on 154 heavy missiles).

11. During the meeting in Washington consensus was reached on the need to work out an agreement that would commit both the Soviet and the American sides to observe the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972, while conducting their research, development, and testing, as required, which are permitted by the ABM Treaty, and not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for a specified period of time. The Soviet side believed and ...
continues to believe that observance of the obligations under this Treaty is essential in order to maintain strategic stability and, consequently, is a necessary prerequisite for carrying out the 50-per-cent cuts in Soviet and American strategic offensive arms. It was agreed in Washington that intensive discussions of strategic stability will begin not later than three years before the end of the specified period, after which, in the event the sides have not agreed otherwise, each side will be free to decide its course of action. Such an agreement must have the same legal status as the Treaty on strategic offensive arms, the ABM Treaty and other similar, legally binding agreements. This agreement will be recorded in a mutually satisfactory manner. The delegations in Geneva were directed to address these issues on a priority basis.

12. At the meeting in Washington the problem of limiting the deployment of long-range nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles was further considered. The sides agreed to establish upper limits for such missiles of 6,000 warheads and 1,600 delivery systems and to seek mutually acceptable and effective methods of verification of such limitations, which could include the employment of national technical means, co-operative measures and on-site inspection.

13. At present four joint draft documents have been drawn up at the negotiations in Geneva relating to the agreement on the 50-per-cent reduction of the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States, the Treaty itself, a memorandum on baseline data and protocols on inspection and on conversion and elimination. Work on the texts of the documents is at an advanced stage, and the outlines of a future agreement are already emerging fairly clearly. However, further progress towards completely agreed documents is being increasingly impeded by the absence of a solution to a number of key questions.

14. First of all, the USSR and the United States must find a mutually acceptable solution in respect of observance of the ABM Treaty. The Soviet Union consistently advocates that the ABM Treaty should be observed in the form in which it was signed in 1972, and proposes that this should be reflected in an agreement on the observance of the ABM Treaty in strict accordance with the Washington understanding of 10 December 1987.

15. The Soviet side is in favour of working out a separate agreement on observance of the ABM Treaty, which would consolidate the Washington understanding and a protocol thereto regulating questions of verification, the predictability of the strategic situation and understanding in unclear situations.

16. With regard to the limitation of long-range sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs), the Soviet Union is proposing a broad system of verification measures, including verification on a continuous basis of the output of missiles from production facilities, and the use of national technical means, including remote control methods and monitoring of the equipping of missiles with nuclear warheads and their payload on carrier ships, since the SLCMs would be placed only on certain types of above-water vessels and submarines.

17. It is obvious that without the limitation of long-range SLCMs it is impossible to achieve deep cuts in strategic arms since the possibility of circumventing the treaty would remain. The answer lies with the American side.
18. Another unresolved problem is the question of long-range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) and the formulation of rules for counting them for the purposes of the treaty on strategic offensive arms.

19. The Soviet side believes that the count of long-range ALCMs on heavy bombers should be based on their actual equipment for such purposes.

20. A serious problem which has not yet been solved is the establishment of subceilings for warheads on the strategic offensive arms remaining after the reductions. The Soviet side is prepared to meet the wishes of the American side regarding the establishment of a separate subceiling of 3,300 ICBM warheads, with the establishment of the same ceiling for SLBMs. This would be a fair way of taking into account the concerns of both sides.

21. In the view of the Soviet side, another alternative is also possible whereby the sides would independently determine the composition of their systems within the limits of the total agreed level of 4,900 warheads for ICBMs and SLBMs.

22. The question of mobile launching facilities for ICBMs has not been fully resolved.

23. The Soviet side, believing that mobile ICBMs are a means of ensuring strategic stability, has made a series of proposals which together would help to solve the problem of ensuring effective verification. They involve the use of national technical means, carrying out inspections of production facilities on a continuous basis, and notification of changes in the number of launching facilities for such missiles and in their locations.

24. At the negotiations on space and nuclear arms, a number of questions of verification also have to be settled (in particular, verification of the production of arms subject to limitation and the destruction of arms that are to be reduced), and there is also to be an exchange of data between the sides about their strategic offensive arms. The Soviet side believes that the exchange of such data should cover all categories of strategic offensive arms without exception: ICBMs, SLBMs, heavy bombers, ALCMs and, indisputably, SLCMs. It is precisely on all these categories of arms that the Soviet Union has provided baseline data to the American side. The American data received so far are selective and do not reflect the existing composition of American strategic offensive arms or their real numbers.

25. Intensive work must be done to make the Treaty on strategic offensive arms reality. For its part, the Soviet Union will continue actively to seek progress in drawing up a treaty on a 50-per-cent reduction of strategic offensive arms, while observing the ABM Treaty, and will continue to display the necessary constructive attitude and flexibility, in a compromise approach.

26. The prohibition of all nuclear testing has always been one of the priority goals of USSR foreign policy.
27. In an attempt to break the deadlock in solving the problem of a nuclear test ban, on 6 August 1985 the Soviet Union announced the establishment of a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions and called on the other nuclear Powers to follow that example. This appeal, however, did not receive a constructive response, despite the fact that the USSR extended the duration of the moratorium five times.

28. Although, in February 1987, nuclear tests were resumed in the USSR as a forced step dictated by security interests, the USSR is prepared to resume the moratorium immediately if the United States announces a decision to halt its nuclear tests.

29. The Soviet Union is proposing that the Geneva Conference on Disarmament should start work on drawing up a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. In June 1987 the Soviet Union, along with other socialist countries, submitted for the consideration of the Conference a document on the basic provisions of such a treaty. It sets forth proposals on a wide-ranging system of verification, including compulsory on-site inspections. Essentially this is a qualitatively new document bringing together in a single framework the positive results of the joint work of many countries aimed at solving the problem of halting nuclear tests.

30. To this end, the Soviet Union is making consistent efforts at the bilateral level also — within the framework of the dialogue with the United States on arms limitation and disarmament questions. In order to prepare the ground for the initiation of bilateral negotiations on the question of halting nuclear tests, and on the initiative of the USSR, from July 1986 to July 1987 Soviet-American expert consultations were held in Geneva, but they did not produce tangible results. The situation changed in September 1987, when Mr. E. A. Shevardnadze, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and Mr. George Shultz, the Secretary of State of the United States, reached agreement on beginning full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations on the limitation and ultimate complete cessation of nuclear testing.

31. At these negotiations, which began in Geneva on 9 November 1987, as a first step the sides have to agree on effective measures of verification, which would make it possible to ratify the 1974 Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests and the 1976 Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes and to start work on further interim limitations on nuclear testing with a view to the ultimate goal of the complete halting of nuclear tests as part of an effective disarmament process. In order to work out improved verification measures, it was agreed that a joint verification experiment would be held at testing grounds of the two sides.

32. In January 1988 Soviet and American experts visited the two countries' testing grounds (in the Semipalatinsk region of the USSR and in Nevada in the United States) to acquaint themselves with these facilities and the organization of work at them so as to establish a practical basis for the early formulation and organization of a joint verification experiment.
33. At present the delegations of the USSR and the United States which are conducting the second round of full-scale negotiations at Geneva have agreed on a draft agreement on the conduct of a joint verification experiment and have virtually completed the preparation of the many annexes to the agreement which will regulate specific aspects of the experiment. For the purposes of the experiment each side will give the other the opportunity to measure the yield of a nuclear explosion with a planned yield of not less than 100 kilotons and close to 150 kilotons. On the basis of complete reciprocity, the sides will, for verification purposes, be able to measure the yield of the explosions, using both teleseismic methods and hydrodynamic equipment located in the instrumentation borehole on the other side's testing ground. The sides also reached agreement that the experiment would provide sufficient information to respond to all the fears expressed by each of them with regard to the verification methods proposed by the other by providing an example which proves the effectiveness of the verification methods used in the experiment and demonstrates their practical applicability and non-intrusive nature. In future, each of the sides will be entitled to use any or all of the verification methods which are agreed upon. At the same time, the use or non-use in the experiment of any given procedures will not be grounds for demanding or rejecting such procedures when agreeing on improved methods of verification.

34. At present groups of American and Soviet specialists are at the Semipalatinsk and Nevada testing grounds, respectively, carrying out direct preparations for the experiment. Progress in this work is such that explosions under the joint verification experiment are likely to be conducted no later than August or September 1988.

35. Concurrently with preparations for the experiment, work has begun at bilateral negotiations on improved verification measures for the 1974 and 1976 Treaties. Both sides have submitted draft protocols. Moreover, during meetings of the ministers for foreign affairs of the USSR and the United States in April 1987 in Moscow and in May in Geneva, agreement was reached on the possibility of formulating in the very near future a single new protocol to the 1976 Treaty, without awaiting the results of the joint verification experiment.

36. As to improved measures of verification for the 1974 Treaty on the limitation of underground nuclear-weapon tests, they can be finally agreed upon only on the basis of the results of the joint verification experiment. However, in the view of the Soviet Union, this should not impede the search for solutions without delay to issues which are not directly linked with the experiment.

37. The Soviet Union believes that after the completion of work on the protocols to the 1974-1976 Treaties, the sides should, in accordance with the negotiating mandate, proceed without artificial interruptions and delays to agree on further interim measures to limit nuclear tests with a view to the ultimate goal of banning them completely.

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38. Another priority goal of the USSR in the area of arms limitation and disarmament is the early conclusion of a universal and verifiable multilateral convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. In this respect we believe that the future convention must effectively ensure the complete and universal prohibition of the development, production and the stockpiling of chemical weapons of any kind, and the destruction of all stockpiles of such weapons without any exceptions, and should guarantee that such weapons never reappear anywhere or at any time. This is why the Soviet Union advocates negotiations for the establishment of a reliable and effective verification system which would exclude any loopholes for circumventing the convention. In particular, on 6 August 1987 the USSR stated that the Soviet delegation at the negotiations will base its position on the need for legal confirmation of the principle of mandatory inspections on request without the right to refuse such inspections.

39. The radical initiatives of the USSR at the negotiations were backed by steps to strengthen trust and openness in the area of military-chemical arsenals. The Soviet Union has halted the production of chemical weapons and begun to build special facilities for destroying stockpiles of such weapons in the Chapayevsk region; it has declared that there are no Soviet chemical weapons in the territories of other States and that it has not transferred chemical weapons or technology or equipment for the production of such weapons to other countries. Finally, the USSR was the first and so far the only State to make public the size of its chemical weapon stockpiles, which do not exceed 50,000 tons of toxic substances.

40. In October 1987 participants in the negotiations visited the Soviet military facilities at Shikhany, where they were shown prototypes of Soviet chemical ammunition, given information about all toxic substances in the possession of the Soviet army and shown the technology for destroying chemical weapons.

41. In February 1988 the Soviet Union submitted a proposal to the Conference on Disarmament on carrying out a multilateral exchange of data in connection with the work on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Such an exchange would not only be an important measure of trust and glasnost in the area of chemical weapons, but would also facilitate the practical solution of questions of verification within the framework of the convention. To that end, the USSR proposed that an international experiment should be conducted in testing procedures for verifying that chemical weapons are not being manufactured commercially.

42. Another important way of strengthening trust, in the view of the Soviet Union, is for States to refrain from steps which could give rise to doubts about the sincerity of their intentions at negotiations. The initiation of production of a new type of chemical weapons - binary weapons - at a time when there are clear prospects of concluding a convention gives rise to such doubts.

43. Today the vast majority of fundamental political problems at the negotiations have been or are close to being resolved. At the same time it must be noted that unfortunately the tempo of negotiation has slackened recently. We are convinced that further substantial progress at the current advanced stage of the negotiations is impossible unless the main participants finally adopt a clear political decision...
in favour of the prohibition of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union has uttered a decisive "yes". We are now awaiting for our partners to follow suit.

44. Extremely alarming trends are developing in the world in respect of chemical weapons. These weapons are spreading geographically, and instances of their use have become more frequent. In the current circumstances, the stagnation at the negotiations means not simply a standstill but a slide backwards. For if the momentum is lost, it is quite possible that in a few years' time the convention will become an unattainable goal. Action is required today, now. Delays in the completion of work on the convention are inadmissible and cannot be justified by any arguments.

45. A rapid and successful conclusion of negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of chemical weapons will not only save mankind from this barbaric type of weapon of mass destruction but also demonstrate the possibility of multilateral efforts in the area of disarmament.

46. February 1987 saw the initiation in Vienna, where the meeting of States participants of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) is taking place, of consultations between the 23 Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries to work out the mandate for future negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. The mandate of these negotiations will be an integral part of the final document of the Vienna meeting.

47. In advocating a comprehensive approach to the problem of disarmament, the USSR and other socialist countries are making active efforts to ensure that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction is accompanied by a significant reduction in armed forces and conventional armaments.

48. The Soviet Union believes that the process of reducing military confrontation in Europe should be carried out in stages and that at each stage there should be a balance at the level of military sufficiency. As a result of future negotiations, existing imbalances and asymmetries in armed forces and individual types of conventional armaments must be identified and eliminated; a further substantial joint reduction of armed forces and armaments should be carried out in order to achieve a balance at reduced levels, and areas of reduced concentration of armaments should be established along the line dividing the two military-political alliances under effective verification both of the reductions themselves and of the remaining forces and armaments. Ultimately each State could have armed forces sufficient for defence, but not for attack.

49. Understanding now exists in principle that the negotiations between the 23 Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries can begin in 1988. These negotiations will be held concurrently with the second stage of the Conference on confidence-building measures, security and disarmament, and in the same city. It has been agreed that the negotiations between the 23 States will be considered to be taking place within the framework of the CSCE process and will be linked with it.
50. The Soviet Union and the other socialist States have proposed to the NATO countries that data on armed forces should be exchanged immediately, before the beginning of the negotiations. This, in their view, would allow an objective assessment of the current military situation in Europe and would speed up the development of approaches to the negotiations themselves. The NATO countries have refused to carry out this exchange of data.

51. In view of the unwillingness of the NATO countries to reduce tactical nuclear systems along with conventional arms, the Warsaw Treaty countries have proposed that at the forthcoming negotiations, all types of conventional weapons should be considered regardless of what other characteristics they may have. Nuclear warheads would not be considered at these negotiations. The nuclear component of dual-purpose systems could be the subject of separate negotiations on the reduction and subsequent elimination of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. The Soviet Union believes that such negotiations should not be postponed for too long, but could be held at the same time as the negotiations on conventional weapons.

52. On 20 February 1986, at the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, the socialist States participating in the negotiations proposed an extremely simple form of agreement for a certain reduction of the troops of the USSR and United States in Central Europe with joint observation of such a reduction. This step could supplement the joint political obligation of the sides that in anticipation of the negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe they would not build up their troops and armaments in Central Europe.

53. The United States and its NATO allies rejected this proposal of the States parties of the Warsaw Treaty as well.

54. The Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations requests that this material be circulated as an official document of the fifteenth general session of the General Assembly, the third special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament, under agenda items 9, 10 and 12.