CONSIDERATION OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT AND OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

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Report of bilateral negotiations to the international community

1. The bilateral negotiations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have made considerable progress in recent years. Both sides are committed to maintaining these negotiations and recording more progress in, inter alia, strategic arms reductions and nuclear-test reductions. The international community has expressed considerable interest in, and support for, the success of such negotiations. It is deeply affected by their outcome.

2. The disarmament machinery of the international community would be strengthened if a link were established between the bilateral negotiations and the international community itself. The two major Powers might, it is suggested, be invited to report to the international community on the progress in their bilateral negotiations. This could be done regularly each year to both the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly.

3. There is both a precedent and a justification for such a practice. The trilateral reports of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the nuclear-test-ban negotiations of the late 1970s offer a precedent in which progress in important nuclear disarmament discussions was reported to the Conference on Disarmament.
4. The justification is clear. The current nuclear forces exist at such quantitative levels that, in the event of a major nuclear exchange, no State Member of the United Nations would be unaffected. This has been made conclusively clear by the recent United Nations Experts "Study on the climatic and other global effects of nuclear war". 1/ In their findings and conclusions, the Group of Consultant Experts stated:

"The global, environmental disruption resulting from a major nuclear war would be inseparably related to its direct and localized effects. Both should be considered in resolving policy issues of nuclear weaponry and should be the concern of all nations." 2/

In his foreword to the study, the Secretary-General stated:

"The circumstances arising from a nuclear war lie at the extreme end of the range of harmful actions that the human race might inflict on itself. The Group's report ... can also be seen as a strong argument for the pursuit of sharp reductions in, and ultimate eradication of, nuclear weapons." 3/

And in addressing this special session, the Secretary-General observed:

"Survival and security are basic to human existence and Governments have a duty to assure their citizens of both. Nuclear issues, however, go far beyond national security and impinge directly on human survival." 4/

5. These observations and judgements of the United Nations are evidently shared by the Governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of the recent Moscow Summit, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev "expressed their joint confidence that the existing work done provides the basis for concluding the Treaty of Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms which will promote strategic stability and strengthen security not only of the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, but of all mankind". 5/

6. This shared judgement has been reiterated by the two Governments separately at this special session. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stated in the general debate: "Faced with the threats of this century, the world is one and it shares one destiny". 6/ United States Secretary of State Shultz stated in the general debate: "All these achievements are important and they have received their due share of attention. But that must not be allowed to obscure the fact that building a safer world is not a United States/Soviet problem alone or even an East/West problem, it is every nation's responsibility". 7/

7. These statements of view, by the United Nations and the Governments of the two major Powers, reflect a consensus that global peace and security is indivisible and that a close nexus exists between the bilateral and multilateral disarmament machinery. In this light, it should be accepted that the bilateral arms reduction process is the legitimate concern of all Member States.
Proposal

It is proposed that the special session invite the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to report on their bilateral arms limitation and disarmament negotiations each year to the Conference on Disarmament at its spring session and to the General Assembly at the commencement of each regular session, and at any other time when significant developments in the negotiations have taken place.

Notes

1/ A/43/351, annex.
2/ Ibid., para. 16.
3/ Ibid., p. 5.
4/ See A/S-15/PV.1, p. 23.
5/ Joint Statement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics issued following meetings in Moscow, 29 May-1 June 1988 (A/S-15/28, p. 6).
6/ Statement by Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR in the general debate of the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament (A/S-15/PV.12, p. 4).
7/ Statement by the Hon. George P. Shultz, United States Secretary of State, to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament (A/S-15/PV.19, p. 4).