Tenth special session
Item 11 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON DISARMAMENT

Regional aspects of disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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\* A/S-10/10.
REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BULGARIA

[Original: Russian]
[18 May 1978]

1. The People's Republic of Bulgaria considers one of the fundamental tasks of its foreign policy to be collaboration in strengthening the peace and security of peoples and in preventing the threat of a new world war. In order to achieve those purposes, it is particularly important today that the process of political détente should be extended to the military sphere by the adoption of specific measures aimed at ending the arms race and at disarmament. A significant contribution in this field can be made by the regional measures referred to in United Nations General Assembly resolution 32/87 D of 12 December 1977.

2. The People's Republic of Bulgaria views all matters relating to regional disarmament as being indissolubly linked with the fundamental problems of disarmament. Measures of a regional character must accompany and supplement the efforts to solve those problems and help to achieve the ultimate goal – general and complete disarmament under strict international control. In addition, they must be carried out with the most rigorous observance of the principles of disarmament negotiations as established in international practice, especially the principle that there must be no impairment of the security of any State party to such an agreement.

3. The People's Republic of Bulgaria has recently reaffirmed its support as a matter of principle for the idea of disarmament measures on a regional scale in the document "Basic provisions of the programme of action on disarmament" (A/AC.187/82), submitted by seven socialist States in connexion with the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As is known, this document emphasizes that such regional measures for military détente and disarmament as mutual reductions of armed forces and the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-free zones can make a substantial contribution to the limitation of the arms race and to disarmament, above all in those areas where military confrontation is particularly grave.

4. The People's Republic of Bulgaria is one of the socialist States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty which have also made a number of joint proposals for the strengthening of security in Europe. Its active and constructive participation in the work of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and later in the Belgrade meeting, has been a genuine contribution to détente, and hence to the creation of favourable conditions for further progress in the field of disarmament. Evidence of the significance which Bulgaria attaches to regional disarmament measures can be seen in its strict observance of the confidence-building measures included in the Final Act of the European Conference.

5. The task of strengthening and intensifying the process of détente in Europe
is now the centre of attention. The People's Republic of Bulgaria believes that in this connexion special significance attaches to successful progress in the Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, which is conditional upon the renunciation of unrealistic attempts to gain one-sided advantages at the expense of the socialist countries' security.

6. The countries of the Warsaw Pact continue to support the proposals contained in the Bucharest Declaration of the States Parties to the Warsaw Pact, dated 26 November 1976, particularly the proposal that States which signed the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference should conclude an agreement binding each of them not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against any other, and also the proposal that there should be no extension of the membership of the Warsaw Pact and of NATO and others. The People's Republic of Bulgaria also supports the USSR proposals for an agreement among those States to refrain from conducting military manoeuvres involving more than 50,000 to 60,000 persons and for extending the confidence-building measures envisaged in the Final Act to the countries of the southern part of the Mediterranean basin. As is known, at the Belgrade meeting the People's Republic of Bulgaria and other socialist countries made serious efforts to implement the Soviet proposal for holding special consultations among participating countries to consider both measures put forward by those countries and constructive proposals submitted by other countries.

7. Appreciating the useful role of regional disarmament measures, the People's Republic of Bulgaria supports proposals to create nuclear-free zones and zones of peace in various regions of the world - for example, in Africa, the Middle East, the Indian Ocean and other regions - and fully supports the USSR proposal that United States and Soviet ships and submarines carrying nuclear weapons should be withdrawn from the region of the Mediterranean Sea.

8. The People's Republic of Bulgaria intends to continue supporting any initiative of a regional character in Europe and in other continents which would contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in such regions and to the achievement of a lasting peace throughout the world.
1. Tensions and elements of conflict specific to particular regions are among the factors underlying the buildup of armaments in various parts of the world. It therefore seems clear that measures on a regional basis, under appropriate conditions, would be conducive to progress in the field of arms control and disarmament. In these circumstances, it is the view of the Government of Denmark that the regional dimension of disarmament should be given adequate attention in future international disarmament negotiations.

2. The Antarctic Treaty 1/ and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, 2/ as well as current efforts towards a more stable military relationship in Europe, constitute examples of the application of the regional approach.

3. In the view of the Government of Denmark, active consideration should be given to applying a similar approach to, inter alia, the establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones at the initiative of and based on agreement among the States of the region in question, restraint with regard to international arms transfers and confidence-building measures. Obviously agreements and arrangements of this kind should be suitable to the specific conditions in the regions concerned. Reference is made in this context to the draft programme of action (A/AC.187/96), of which Denmark is co-sponsor.

4. Against this background, the Government of Denmark feels that, as stated in the draft programme of action, a study relating to all regional aspects of disarmament, including further measures designed to increase confidence and stability as well as means of promoting disarmament on a regional basis, should be undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations.

I

1. In today's world, where the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons and their proliferation constitute a grave threat to the survival of mankind, the Government of Japan considers it beyond question that nuclear disarmament should be given the highest priority in the field of disarmament. Japan, as the only nation in the world that has experienced the ravages of nuclear explosions, has taken every possible opportunity to appeal to the world for the promotion of nuclear disarmament, and has actively participated in international efforts for the prevention of the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

2. At the same time, progress in science and technology has now produced conventional arms of such sophistication that these are very nearly comparable to nuclear weapons in their destructive effects. Such weaponry has been rapidly and incessantly flowing into some parts of the world, resulting in an increasing buildup of conventional arms. In regions where tensions already exist, such an arms buildup involves a potential risk of increasing incentives for the outbreak of armed conflict.

3. In the light of these tendencies, the Government of Japan is convinced that both the nuclear and conventional arms races should be halted, and that the search for all possible ways and means of reducing these armaments should be continued and intensified. It is also the opinion of the Japanese Government that, while taking into account the nature of the various aspects of the disarmament question, efforts to accomplish disarmament on a regional basis should be undertaken parallel with those being conducted on a global basis. Examples of these regional approaches can be seen in the context of nuclear non-proliferation in the proposed establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and can be seen in the Declaration of Ayacucho (A/10044, annex), as well as negotiations on mutual and balanced force reduction in the field of conventional weapons.

II

4. In dealing with any disarmament measures, it should be strongly emphasized that implementation of those measures should be based upon agreement reached among the States concerned, since disarmament measures are closely related to the exercise of sovereignty by each State and to the ensuring of its own security. In the case of regional approaches to disarmament, it is highly important in arriving at effective arrangements that the States concerned in the region voluntarily undertake a common initiative in the commencement of their consultations.

5. As an example of such an initiative, one might cite the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean in examining the question of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.
6. One of the main tasks the United Nations ought to perform in the field of disarmament should be to respect and to encourage such initiatives.

III

7. In view of her basic foregoing positions on regional approaches, Japan has supported regional approaches to arms control and disarmament in the United Nations through, for example, her active participation in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

8. Japan considers it possible and appropriate to take up the question of the international transfer of conventional weapons as part of the specific and practicable aspects of regional approaches to disarmament. In view of the fact that conventional arms are being transferred on a world-wide scale, a broad consensus is now emerging in favour of having some type of regulation of the ever-increasing transfer of conventional arms within the international community. In order to prepare for these regulatory measures, a variety of universal actions, including such global approaches as studies of the international transfer of conventional weapons or the establishment of a registry of arms transfers with the Secretary-General have already been proposed.

9. However, given the fact that much of this buildup of conventional arms is inspired by the efforts of certain States to avoid falling behind their neighbours in the level of their conventional armaments, it would clearly be more effective to take up the question of the unabated international transfer of conventional arms as part of disarmament measures which are to be undertaken on a regional basis. Such consultations among the States concerned in a given region would also serve as a basis for further negotiations aimed at the mutual control in the future of conventional arms and of military forces within the region.

10. In this connexion, the Japanese Government wishes to point out that it has already submitted the following specific proposals:

(a) Comprehensive studies of the international transfer of conventional arms to be undertaken by a group of qualified experts;

(b) (i) A request by the (United Nations) General Assembly to the major arms-supplying countries, in particular, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, that they begin consultations on voluntary restraint measures;

(ii) In areas where appropriate conditions exist, the holding of regional conferences which would be convened on the initiative, and by consensus, of the States of those regions;

(iii) A request to the Secretary-General (of the United Nations) that he follow both the current state of affairs in the international transfer of conventional weapons, and the developments in the foregoing consultations of the major supplying countries and of the regional conferences mentioned above.
1. Norway supported the initiative taken at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly to solicit the views and suggestions of Member States concerning regional aspects of disarmament. The Government of Norway is of the opinion that arms control and disarmament measures at a regional level could make an important contribution to enhance international peace and security. Regional arrangements must not, however, be regarded as an alternative to global disarmament and distract our efforts to achieve the goal of general and complete disarmament, but should rather complement and reinforce such efforts.

2. While pursuing disarmament at a regional level, due consideration should be given to the over-all military balance in the region, and hence to the security of all States in the region, the goal being the preservation of the security of all States concerned at the lowest possible level of armaments and armed forces.

3. Regional disarmament should be accompanied by disarmament and arms control measures in other areas, particularly those that might influence the security of the States in the region.

4. As conditions differ in various areas of the world, a universally applicable definition of a disarmament region or subregion does not seem feasible. In deciding the extent of a region, geographical, political, military and technological factors should be taken into account.

5. In the judgement of the Government of Norway, an important prerequisite for regional disarmament arrangements is the agreement of all militarily significant States in the region on the usefulness of entering into regional arms control arrangements. Effective disarmament on a regional basis requires active co-operation by the major military Powers. The question of guarantees should also be taken into account.
1. In the opinion of the Government of Sweden, all approaches which clearly could contribute to initiating a process of disarmament should be explored. A United Nations study of the regional aspects of disarmament would no doubt serve a useful purpose.

A. Introduction

2. In the preparations of a study of the kind envisaged in General Assembly resolution 32/87, it must be borne in mind that conditions in different regions vary and that, consequently, formulae should be sought which are adapted to the specific political, military and other characteristics of a given region and of the countries concerned. This general circumstance obviously will have to be taken into account in possible attempts to formulate general guidelines concerning regional aspects of disarmament.

3. The following comments should bring into focus some aspects of the matter which seem particularly relevant to the Swedish Government.

4. A fundamental principle should be that the initiative for beginning a process of regional disarmament should come from the States of the region concerned.

5. The ongoing talks in Vienna on force reductions in Central Europe constitute a most significant example of an attempt to set in motion such a process. The negotiations comprise the most heavily armed area of the world. It is therefore particularly important that they should soon yield concrete results.

6. The agreement reached for a given area of reduction might naturally affect adjacent countries. As a non-participating European nation, Sweden is following the negotiations with undiminished interest and expects to take part in an appropriate way, when negotiations reach the point of dealing with issues that affect areas close to our borders.

B. Nuclear-weapon-free zones

7. Among possible measures suitable for implementation on a regional basis, nuclear-weapon-free zones have been discussed for a long time. In 1975, an ad hoc study group under the auspices of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament made a comprehensive review of the problem (A/10027/Add.1). 1/ The Swedish Government has also presented its views on the report (A/31/189, pp. 34-36).

9. In summary, an agreement on nuclear-weapon-free zones should, in the view of the Swedish Government, be based on three obligations. One is the non-possession of nuclear weapons by zonal States. Another is the non-development or non-presence of nuclear weapons in the zone. The third is a commitment by the nuclear Powers not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against targets within the zone.

9. The latter measure could in some cases depend on the establishment of a safety area or security belt, adjacent to the zone, in which nuclear weapons that might be assigned to targets within the zone, or that have limited delivery ranges, making them generally suitable for attacking such targets, would be removed.

10. A nuclear-weapon-free zone implies that all nuclear weapons would be withdrawn from the zone. A partial limitation of nuclear weapons within an area would, however, be a useful step in that direction.

11. Particular consideration should be devoted to the relation between nuclear and conventional arms reductions in cases where the regional balance is dependent on both. Europe is such a region characterized by the urgent need to reduce both the number of nuclear weapons and equally tension-building conventional armed forces.

C. Biological and chemical weapons

12. The use of biological and chemical means of warfare is already forbidden by the 1925 Geneva Protocol. 2/ The acquisition and possession of biological weapons is also forbidden by the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. 3/ A global ban of acquisition and possession of chemical weapons is presently subject to negotiations within the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. These negotiations should be carried on with high priority in order to achieve an adequate global solution. If, on the other hand, the ongoing multilateral negotiations turn out to be unsuccessful, regional approaches in relevant regions ought to be considered.

D. Demilitarized zones.

13. In the past, permanent demilitarized zones have been established in various parts in the world. These have frequently been very small and have been intended to play a stabilizing role in the military situation at the time of agreement. The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 4/ is one example of the establishment of a very large demilitarized zone. Reference could also be made to the proposal to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

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3/ General Assembly resolution 2926 (XXVI).
14. Although many such zones are too small to serve extensive arms control purposes, the possibility of establishing new zones, possibly in connexion with United Nations peace-keeping operations, should be kept in mind not only for solving problems related to acute crises. Consideration should also be devoted to the possibility of establishing such zones in areas of potential crisis in peace-time to prevent the violent release of latent military tension. Such zones could concern both land and sea areas.

15. One should also observe the provisions laid down in article 60 (Demilitarized zones) of Additional Protocol I adopted by the Diplomatic Conference on Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts in 1977. 5/

E. Conventional troops and arms reduction

16. The main effort in regional arms control should be focused on reductions of troops and conventional arms aiming, without reducing the security of any participating State, at successively lower and less tension-building levels.

17. Among possible general approaches could be mentioned the seeking of agreement on upper limits of the number of men in the armed forces in the region, on the number of specified military equipment, such as tanks, aircraft and naval vessels, on the number of military units, such as army divisions and airborne and amphibious units, and on specified reductions in military budgets. Particularly important would be the determination of the mix of several such limits.

18. Relevant to this problem is the transfer of arms into regions subject to reduction agreements. The Swedish Government does not consider restrictions in the arms trade alone as a primary measure for regional arms reductions, although restrictions on arms transfers of course would discourage regional arms races where force levels were not limited by agreements. Negotiations aimed at general limitation agreements between States of the regions concerned must adequately consider the important problem of conventional arms transfers. In such a case, the choice between national production or the import of permitted arms would be left to the discretion of the parties, and the arms trade in the area would automatically be subordinated to the regional arms control agreement.

F. Confidence-building measures

19. In a situation where military forces continue to influence the relations between States, confidence-building measures in the military field could play an important role. These are matters of considerable complexity and will most probably require extensive negotiations.

5/ For the text of Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I), adopted by the Conference on 8 June 1977, see A/32/1k4.
20. A basic premise for such measures is that States wish to avoid military activities which create tension and thus complicate the development of more trustful inter-State relations. States are supposed to carry out such activities with their military forces, which are legitimate from a strictly defensive point of view.

21. Confidence-building measures would thus, in principle, imply a certain increased openness and certain restraints and would deal with matters such as the movement of military forces and their deployment in certain areas, military manoeuvres and special arrangements for verification.

22. The question of regional security has political as well as military aspects that are both complementary and dependent on each other. In the opinion of the Swedish Government, confidence-building measures can be applied both in a situation where agreements on military force reductions are still lacking and in situations where such agreements have been reached. In the first case, confidence-building measures aim generally at promoting stability and security within the region and, in the latter, also at supplementing and strengthening the substantive measures agreed upon.

23. Confidence-building measures should focus on such military activities of States that might create uncertainty about their intentions. They might include restrictions on the military presence without generally affecting the over-all military capacity of a State. Prior notification of military manoeuvres as well as an exchange of observers at military manoeuvres has now been practised for two and a half years, in accordance with the provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. As a result, valuable experience has been gained.

24. The stipulations of prior notifications should, where appropriate, comprise forces of all services and also take into account the importance of smaller-scale military manoeuvres, especially those involving significant numbers of amphibious and airborne troops.

25. Exchange of observers at military manoeuvres has served a useful function and should be further developed. By inviting observers, a host country can demonstrate that manoeuvres or movements of forces are not steps in preparation for a military attack, but rather has the purpose of training or some other legitimate purpose.

26. Military movements constitute an important component in the over-all assessment of military threats within a region. Prior notification of such movements would form a desirable further step in establishing a system of confidence-building measures. An obligation to notify military movements could be prescribed in the same way as is now done for manoeuvres under the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and could take advantage of the experience gained.

27. Beyond measures discussed so far, the establishment of certain physical restrictions in the military freedom of action within a region could, if properly formulated, also have a valuable effect. These restrictions could cover the movement of certain types of military units into specific areas and the carrying out of certain types of military movements.

/...
28. An important additional function of confidence-building measures could be to supplement and strengthen negotiated agreements on regional force reductions. They would aim at verification of agreements and also at stabilization within the area of reduction and within zones adjacent to the area of reduction.

29. As regards the verification aspect, a systematic use of military observers might prove possible to apply.

30. An agreement on force reductions seems to presuppose collateral measures to assure that the agreed ceiling of forces is not exceeded. With the aim of stabilizing a force reduction agreement, several arrangements could be used.

31. The following measures in this category, which have been mentioned as subjects of negotiations between military alliances, could play an important role: agreed ceilings on the number of military personnel that can be moved into the area of reduction within a certain period of time; prior notification of movements of military units into an area of reduction; restrictions as to size and other limits on military manoeuvres within an area of reduction, as well as prior notification of such manoeuvres. Also zonal arrangements affecting areas not included in regional disarmament measures, but directly adjacent to them could be important stabilizing measures. It is, of course, clear that agreements on measures of the kind described above would require thorough deliberations.

32. In sum, the confidence-building measures having this supplementary and stabilizing function for agreements on regional disarmament could contain a structure of measures applying to a number of geographical zones and cover a broad spectrum of arrangements.

33. Exaggerated secrecy in military matters often causes misunderstandings and uncertainties about intentions. Increased openness in this regard would generally contribute to strengthening of confidence between States in a region. A practical means of ensuring such openness would be to bring into operation an international reporting instrument on military expenditures. The Swedish Government hopes that the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will take a further step towards the development, testing, refinement and application of such a reporting instrument by initiating the pilot test proposed by the Group of Experts on the Reduction of Military Budgets (A/31/222/Rev.1 6/ and A/32/194 and Add.1) and requested by the General Assembly in resolution 32/85.

G. Verification

34. The Swedish Government believes that it would be necessary to devise a system of verification in order to ensure that all States parties to regional disarmament agreements are complying with their agreed obligations. Provisions for confidence-building measures, discussed above, would fulfil important functions

in this connexion. However, further measures would probably be necessary. The precise nature of a verification system, including an effective machinery for complaints would vary from region to region and would depend on the terms of the agreements in question. In the Swedish view, full use should in this context be made of the United Nations. It cannot be excluded that the establishment of some form of global verification mechanism could supplement a given regional verification system or even fulfil the entire verification function deemed appropriate in the implementation of a regional disarmament agreement.