Tenth special session
Agenda item 11

ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON DISARMAMENT

Regional aspects of disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

[Original: English]
[6 June 1978]

I

1. The German Democratic Republic holds that political détente can be lasting and expanded for the benefit of all peoples only if it is supplemented by effective measures to prevent a nuclear war, to halt the arms race and to achieve disarmament. This is the guiding principle for the German Democratic Republic's participation in negotiations on global and regional steps towards military détente.

2. Any agreement on military détente necessarily presupposes strict respect for the principle of undiminished security of all the States concerned. In this context, regional disarmament measures have to take into account the balance of forces in the given region as well as the impact of any such agreement on the global relationship of forces. Regional measures for military détente should accord with the generally accepted rules of international law. They must not violate legitimate rights of third States in these regions.

3. In consideration of these aspects the German Democratic Republic supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace. The German Democratic Republic wishes to see specific agreements on the reduction of armed forces and armaments.

II

4. On grounds of its geographical position and mindful of the historical experience that two devastating world wars started from Europe, the German Democratic Republic attaches special importance to effective measures of military détente in Europe. On this continent, and notably in central Europe, there is today the biggest concentration of military forces and lethal weapons. The socialist States seek to diminish that dangerous concentration by accords on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in central Europe without any of the States concerned suffering military disadvantages. The German Democratic Republic, jointly with other socialist States, presented several proposals to this effect at the Vienna talks. These proposals, based on the military equilibrium existing in the region, provide for a reduction of the ground, air and nuclear forces of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by 150,000 troops each, including the corresponding armament. Pending a reduction agreement, the socialist States have proposed that the numerical strength of armed forces should not be increased.

5. Aware of the obligation of the 35 signatory States under the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to lessen military confrontation and to promote disarmament, the German Democratic Republic will continue to work for achieving accords acceptable to all participating States at
the Vienna talks. Pursuant to the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, the German Democratic Republic joined its allies in submitting a number of proposals directed at supplementing political détente in Europe and strengthening peace and security from the Bucharest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

6. In this regard particular importance attaches to the proposal to conclude a treaty committing the participants in the all-European conference not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against one another. Such a treaty would work against the danger of nuclear war between the signatory States of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. That treaty would not only have a positive effect in the regional framework, but would at the same time be an important step towards reducing the danger of a world-wide nuclear catastrophe.

7. Together with other socialist States the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly proposed that both the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO be dissolved simultaneously. With a view to avoiding at least a further enlargement of the opposing military and political groupings, the socialist States suggested that both alliances should not admit any new members. This would also meet a demand of many non-aligned States.

8. At the Belgrade meeting the German Democratic Republic proposed that the participants in the all-European conference refrain from the production and emplacement of neutron weapons. The urgent necessity of banning the neutron weapon justifies both regional and global approaches. Along with the proposal for an agreement among the signatory States of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, the German Democratic Republic therefore supports the draft convention on a world-wide ban on the neutron weapon submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

9. It is an undisputed fact that production of the neutron weapon and its emplacement in western European States would aggravate the danger of nuclear war since it would increase the probability of an early use of nuclear weapons. In addition, the deployment of neutron weapons almost inevitably would provoke a new spiral in the arms race. Such a development would be dangerous in military terms and most harmful to the further shaping of relations of peaceful coexistence.

10. Experience has shown that the confidence-building measures provided for in the Helsinki Final Act, such as the prior notification of major military manoeuvres, the invitation to send observers to attend military manoeuvres, and the exchange of military delegations have contributed to strengthening confidence and to military détente. The relevant provisions are strictly observed by the German Democratic Republic.

11. In pursuance of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference and encouraged by experience gained hitherto, the socialist States have suggested to agree that in the future no military manoeuvres should be held in excess of a certain size - about 50,000 to 60,000 troops. The reasoning behind that proposal is that especially manoeuvres of that size are bound to increase mistrust among States and are likely to be regarded as military demonstration.
12. In concert with other socialist States the German Democratic Republic, moreover, has pronounced its preparedness to accept that the sphere of the confidence-building measures as provided for in the Final Act be extended to the southern Mediterranean.

13. These and other regional measures of military détente can be discussed in the various bodies. Likewise it would be useful to engage in specific consultations, parallel to the continuing Vienna talks, among all the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, to study in depth all the problems relating to military détente in Europe.

PONTUGAL

/Original: English/
/5 June 1978/

1. Portugal voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 32/87 D, thus showing its support of initiatives to an approach to disarmament on a regional basis. The Portuguese Government is convinced that total and complete disarmament, the ultimate object of all negotiations, can only be achieved through partial measures, among which are measures to be taken on a regional basis.

2. In a first phase, such measures can consist of consultations aimed at creating a spirit of mutual confidence, through very simple means such as the exchange of information regarding manoeuvres or other military movements.

3. In a second phase, negotiations could be held on measures of arms limitation, countries of the area agreeing not to acquire for themselves certain types of more sophisticated and destructive armaments, the competitive acquisition of which could lead to a dangerous arms race.

4. Among these measures we include the efforts that have already been made to create nuclear-weapon-free zones.

5. In a third phase, negotiations could take place on concrete means of reducing pre-existing armaments, eliminating certain arms or diminishing their number.

6. Also, negotiations for the reduction of military forces, although extremely complex, will perhaps have more chance for success if engaged in on a regional level.

7. The possibility of the militarily more powerful States providing negative assurances to States of a specific region that voluntarily decide to limit their armaments, should be carefully studied.

8. The measures and suggestions that have been stated as examples in the preceding paragraphs should, in the opinion of the Portuguese Government, result from the free initiative of the interested States.
SWITZERLAND

Original: French
3 June 1978

1. We should take as a premise that both the current state of disarmament and the arms race are merely the consequences of international political tensions and of the resulting security problems. The maxim which the great Greek jurist and diplomat, Nikolaos Politis, coined in the days of the League of Nations, when he traced the sequence "arbitration - security - disarmament", remains entirely valid.

2. Consequently, it would be desirable, even before disarmament, to endeavour to reduce these tensions and enhance the security of States. Nevertheless, the Swiss Federal Council welcomes international efforts for arms limitation and disarmament. It supports such efforts and is prepared to take part in the measures envisaged, provided that they are effective, include adequate controls and are compatible with the status of permanent armed neutrality.

3. Arms limitation and disarmament are now matters of universal dimension, in that every step in the arms race - or, conversely, every limited disarmament measure - affects every member of the community of States. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that this universal problem has aspects which differ from region to region. It follows that the States of a given region are best acquainted with its particular characteristics and would naturally be best qualified to work out appropriate solutions. Therefore, if it were possible for more arms limitation or disarmament measures to be adopted on a regional basis, that would surely be conducive to stability and to the maintenance of peace throughout the world.

4. Switzerland notes with regret that the Vienna talks on balanced force reductions in central Europe, which could be viewed as precisely such a regional initiative, have not yet borne fruit, although they have been going on for more than five years. If these negotiations led to a reduction of military potentials in central Europe, such an achievement would undoubtedly also strengthen security throughout the world and the security of Switzerland, a small neutral State.

5. The Swiss Federal Council would particularly welcome the organization of regional negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament in which all the States of a given region could take part. In the case of the European region, such a forum already exists within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.