Tenth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE
TENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda item 9


Note verbale dated 22 June 1978 from the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to the statement delivered by the representative of Liberia at the 46th meeting of the First Committee, on 30 November 1976 (see A/C.1/31/PV.46) has the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum entitled "Declaration of a new philosophy on disarmament".

The Permanent Representative would be pleased to have this memorandum circulated as an official document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.
ANNEX

Declaration of a new philosophy on disarmament

1. Despite 30 years of sustained effort by the United Nations and Governments of Member States, the volume of armaments in national arsenals is greater than ever and the total annual appropriations for more and newer arms is running into the astronomical figures of hundreds of billions of dollars. An accelerated armaments race is seemingly escaping the control of the human society.

2. Ironically this dedication to maximum arming coincides with man's greatest effort in contemporary history to attain an order of final peace. This is an intolerable contradiction and, if not resolved, could undermine every basic endeavour launched to build a better and safer world for all mankind.

3. With so much at stake we categorically reject the growing pessimism that huge armaments are the historic fate of man and nations. In the dogged spirit of international aspirations we must never give up trying to bring the deadly race to a standstill, and beyond that to dismantle the structures of war until nations learn to live without guns in their hands in amity and peace.

4. Thus, we state our conviction that a new beginning must be made, a new approach fashioned - an essential component initiated chiefly to mobilize the peoples of the world in a new and more effective endeavour. Such a mobilization would, in fact, only be a fulfilment of the United Nations Charter, of which the first three words - "We the peoples" - make the peoples themselves, beyond all Governments and international institutions, the primary custodians of the United Nations and its historic peace mission. It is our firm conviction that the peoples must now fulfil that responsibility in the entire area of the United Nations disarmament objectives.

5. To make such participation effective the peoples must be informed of the nature of the problem, the difficulties involved, the issues at stake. They must understand that ideas on disarmament, like weapons, can become dated, that new causes arise for new rivalries, that new problems demand new answers.

6. Nations produce arms to assure their national security. But behind every concept of national existence is a philosophy of the international condition. Today this philosophy is undergoing profound change.

7. It is the aim of this declaration, in the interest of an enlightened public participation, to outline the evolution of a new philosophy of disarmament which mirrors the change in the world security situation. In this change the cold war struggle, the main cause of the arms race, is largely reduced and with it the fear of a major war among the big Powers. Despite some remnants of suspicion, there is an improved relationship among erstwhile hostile nations and, as this develops, arms reductions should hopefully follow in proportion.

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6. But new causes of fear and uncertainty have emerged. The technological perfection of new and more sophisticated weapons surpasses all scientific expectations. The race is now less ideological and more technological.

9. Another new and disturbing factor is the poverty of new nations whose hundreds of millions of people are rebelling against legacies of exploitation, disease, hunger, malnutrition, infant mortality - and above all hopelessness. Their frustrations on many continents are overthrowing Governments, creating civil wars, which, in turn, invite foreign intervention, thus converting entire nations into a battleground in a new kind of war - less ideological and more economic. The gap between rich and poor peoples threatens to become a war between nations.

10. In the interest of peace and justice the United Nations has launched a new economic order to speed up the development of some 100 nations. This will require hundreds of billions of dollars over the years - vast sums that are now diverted into the production of destructive weapons.

11. Thus we are confronted with a kind of molecular chain reaction. New weapons creating new arms races siphon off the vast sums needed to halt economic wars which drive nations into new arming. This situation is a vicious circle which threatens the world's two major peace objectives: freedom from political wars through disarmament and freedom from economic wars through economic development.

12. To paraphrase a famous prophecy: they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and the ploughshares shall make no need of swords.

13. This is the new philosophy of disarmament. If it becomes a universal creed, peoples working together with Governments and the world Organization in a three-way partnership can make the age-old dream of a truly peaceful world an eventual reality.