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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Letter dated 16 August 1988 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the German Democratic Republic to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the statement of the German Democratic Republic on regional disarmament (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this text circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 64 and 67 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Dietmar HUCKE
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/43/150.

ANNEX

Statement of the German Democratic Republic on regional
disarmament (General Assembly resolution 42/39 E)

1. The Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the elimination of their intermediate- and shorter-range missiles marks the start of nuclear disarmament. What is vital now is to use this historic chance and to make the process of disarmament and détente lasting and irreversible. Regional measures of confidence-building, arms limitation and disarmament assume an important role in this process. All States can contribute to the realization of these goals.

2. The fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament, clearly indicated the endeavour of a great number of States to advance the disarmament process through regional steps such as nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace, measures of confidence-building, and reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments.

3. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an appropriate proposition to contain the nuclear-arms race, to strengthen security and confidence, and to facilitate the negotiation of global disarmament agreements. Such zones help to strengthen the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The first such experiences were with the treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific, respectively. Numerous proposals have been tabled for other regions of the globe. The German Democratic Republic also welcomes plans to create zones of peace in the Indian Ocean, the South Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the South Pacific, South-East Asia and other regions of the world.

4. As a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, it supports the transformation of that region into a zone of peace, as well as the speedy preparation of a United Nations conference for this purpose.

5. All these initiatives were discussed at the Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones at Berlin from 20 to 22 June 1988. A total of 1,034 eminent figures from 113 countries attended that conference. They represented both Governments and parliaments and a broad range of public and civic groups. The dialogue between them all, representative of different world outlooks and political positions, was comprehensive, on an equal footing, open and businesslike, bringing together experiences from every continent. The Meeting was a convincing expression of the new thinking and of the new approach to issues of war or peace in the interests of guaranteeing international security. "Though we may differ in our opinions about how and how quickly to advance towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, and about the usefulness and practicability of nuclear-weapon-free zones", the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, commented on the outcome of the Berlin Meeting, "we are united in striving for a world without war or violence, without nuclear or chemical weapons".

6. It was a great honour for the German Democratic Republic to host that forum discussing the aspirations and initiatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world in all their aspects and variations, in their regional and global dimensions. What appears necessary now is to continue the dialogue begun in Berlin, and to intensify efforts in order to deliver the peoples forever from the fear of nuclear destruction.

7. As a State situated at the sensitive divide between the Warsaw Treaty countries and the NATO countries, the German Democratic Republic attaches special importance to measures of regional disarmament. Remaining committed to its declared objective to do everything to ensure that no more war, but only peace, will emanate from German soil, this country has been working towards ridding Central Europe of weapons of mass destruction, reducing armed forces and conventional armaments, and increasing confidence and security. With this aim in mind, it has proposed, jointly with the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, that a nuclear-weapon-free corridor be established in Central Europe. This initiative suggests creating in Central Europe a 150-kilometre corridor free from battlefield nuclear weapons on either side of the dividing line between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO. On 3 April 1987, the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, made an offer to the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany to enter into respective negotiations.

8. It was a great encouragement for the German Democratic Republic that the Soviet Union, on 10 April 1987, declared its readiness to withdraw its nuclear weapons from such a corridor and to guarantee and respect its nuclear-weapon-free status.

9. A nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would be an effective link to further-reaching steps of nuclear disarmament, to the inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons, which have so far not been negotiated on. Their reduction and ultimately their complete elimination was and remains an aim of the German Democratic Republic's foreign policy. In view of the dual-capacity character of these weapon systems, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor would at the same time be an essential step towards disengaging offensive-capable conventional military forces in Central Europe.

10. Weapon systems with ranges under 500 kilometres are of particular concern to the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Therefore, the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic on 14 December 1987 proposed to the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany that both German States undertake joint efforts for the continuation of the disarmament process.

11. The German Democratic Republic has been anxious to assist in the endeavours for the speedy conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

12. The creation of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe would promote a global ban on such weapons. It would be an integral part of and a source of experience

for the implementation of a convention on chemical weapons. In 1985, the German Democratic Republic, jointly with the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, made a proposal to the Federal Republic of Germany to start direct negotiations on the establishment of such a zone, initially comprising the territories of those three States. Following up their own initiative of 1985, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany of the German Democratic Republic, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Social Democratic Party of Germany of the Federal Republic of Germany issued a joint statement on 5 April 1988, calling upon the Governments of the three States to immediately start negotiations to free their territories, or to keep them free, of chemical weapons. Still, in April 1988, the Government of the German Democratic Republic officially communicated its readiness in that respect to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The document, entitled "Principles and main lines for future negotiations of the German Democratic Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany on the establishment of a zone free of chemical weapons in Central Europe", of 21 May 1986, to be supplemented by the parts agreed at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of the draft treaty on a world-wide ban on chemical weapons, could provide the basis for the negotiations. An eligible supplementary element would be provisions on the verification mechanism.

13. The German Democratic Republic believes that the process of confidence-building, security and disarmament in Europe must also serve the solution of specific security problems in individual regional contexts. Therefore, it supports the proposal put forward by the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for creating a zone of confidence, co-operation and good-neighbourly relations along the dividing line between the two alliances, the plan proposed by the Polish People's Republic to reduce armaments and enhance confidence in Central Europe, the proposals submitted by the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Socialist Republic of Romania to create a zone free of nuclear and chemical weapons in the Balkans and to develop good-neighbourly relations and co-operation among the countries of the region, and the initiative of the Nordic States on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northern Europe. The German Democratic Republic shares the view that the ongoing efforts to strengthen stability on the European continent must be complemented by determined steps for the reduction of military activities in the sea and ocean areas around Europe. It welcomes the Soviet Union's proposals on radically reducing military postures in Northern Europe and in the Arctic, on the transformation of that region into a zone of peace and co-operation, and on holding the necessary negotiations, consultations and meetings among the interested States. The German Democratic Republic also underlines the need for the Mediterranean to be declared a zone of peace and co-operation, and commends the proposals made for this purpose.

14. On 7 July 1988, the Joint Working Group of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany of the German Democratic Republic and of the Parliamentary Group of the Social Democratic Party of the Federal Republic of Germany on security policy issues in Europe presented the proposal for a zone of confidence and security in Central Europe. This new initiative is to help to enhance the prerequisites for nuclear- and chemical-weapon-free zones and for the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe.

15. Essential elements of the proposal are:

(a) Amplification of the agreements reached at the 1986 Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe by further lowering the thresholds for notifiable military activities, by including separate military activities of air and naval forces into notification, by forgoing large-scale manoeuvres, etc.;

(b) Establishment of permanent confidence-building centres which would, through the timely exchange of information, enhance security, forestall crisis situations in Central Europe, or help resolve any by political means;

(c) Establishment of permanent mixed observation posts at strategically important points, joint European satellite observation, direct bilateral links ("hot lines") among Central European States.

16. In the spirit of the joint proposal for a zone of confidence and security in Central Europe the Government of the German Democratic Republic is prepared to take up negotiations immediately with the Governments of States of this region on its implementation.

17. In the long-term perspective, international peace and security can only be guaranteed if problems of conventional disarmament are addressed too. Top priority is due to those regions where the concentration of armed forces and conventional armaments is the biggest.

18. Together with the other States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, the German Democratic Republic has submitted far-reaching proposals for cuts into armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. Negotiations have been proposed to begin still in 1988, and their priority purpose should be to cut down drastically the military postures of the two alliances and to bring about a situation on the European continent in which the countries of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty will retain forces and means that are necessary for their defence but insufficient for a surprise attack and offensive operations. With this objective in mind, the following stages have been proposed:

(a) Establishment of approximately equal (balanced) collective ceilings on the numerical levels of armed forces and the amounts of conventional armaments through the mutual liquidation of imbalances and asymmetries existing in individual types of conventional armaments and in armed forces;

(b) Reduction of either side's armed forces by approximately 25 per cent (some 500,000 troops) together with their assigned equipment;

(c) Further reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments with the aim of giving the forces of both sides a strictly defensive character.

19. An inalienable part of the whole process would be measures to reduce and eliminate the danger of surprise attack. To this end, starting in the first stage, strips (zones) of reduced levels of armaments should be established along the line

of contact between the two military-political alliances, from which the most threatening, destabilizing types of conventional armaments would have to be withdrawn or reduced. All these steps would be accompanied by agreed measures of confidence-building, information exchanges and verification. Of particular topicality in this connection is the mutual exchange of data on armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe which the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty have proposed to NATO. In order to make rapid headway in future negotiations, it would be suitable to carry out such an exchange at the beginning of the negotiations or, if possible, prior to their commencement. It would be possible to verify the submitted data through on-site inspection when the negotiations begin.

20. A comparison of the military doctrines of the two alliances, as was proposed by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty at their summit meeting at Berlin in May 1987, would also contribute towards strengthening stability and reducing the danger of war in Europe. Such comparison would be aimed at giving the military doctrines and concepts a strictly defensive character.

21. The document adopted by the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe on 19 September 1986 is a significant contribution to enhancing security and developing co-operation on the European continent. The German Democratic Republic conscientiously fulfils its obligations under this document. It holds the view that, at the second stage of the Conference, the confidence- and security-building measures should be further developed and that concurrently measures of a new generation should be elaborated, including such as would limit military activities in Europe and include independent activities of air and naval forces.

22. In the view of the German Democratic Republic, regional measures of arms limitation and disarmament would substantially promote the creation of a comprehensive system of international peace and security, a topic to be discussed further, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/93, at the forty-third session of the Assembly.
