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## GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Note **verbale** dated 22 August 1988 from the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist **Republics** to the United **Nations** addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United **Nations** has the honour, with reference to resolution **42/39** E of 30 November 1984 entitled **\*\*Regional disarmament**", to state the following:

The Soviet Union considers that the 1988 Soviet-United States summit meeting in Moscow was a political turning point for international life as a whole, marking a new **stage** in the disarmament **process**. The entry into force of the Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the first international agreement in history to make provision for the destruction of two classes of Soviet and United States nuclear weapons - laid the foundations for the practical building of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The agreements in principle reached in the course of the Moscow meeting, especially with respect to a 50-per-cent reduction in strategic strike weapons while continuing to comply with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, give grounds for hoping that nuclear disarmament will not stop there.

Under these circumstances, it is important to maintain the favourable political climate that has been created, reinforce the bilateral actions with multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and make the process of arms limitation and reduction a progressive and uninterrupted one.

The attainment of this global objective must also be promoted by regional disarmament measures which take into account the specific nature and characteristics of the world's various regions.

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\* A/43/150.

The Soviet Union consistently attaches great importance to regional **disarmament in Europe**, where the two major military and political alliances, the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO, with **vast concentrations of armed forces and arsenals of both nuclear and conventional weapons**, are *in* direct juxtaposition to each other.

The Soviet approach to disarmament **problems** is based on **adherence to the concept of military sufficiency and non-aggressive defence**. With the aim of bringing about a substantial reduction in the level of the danger of war in Europe, the Soviet Union and the **other States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation** put forward in June 1966 a programme of measures designed to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, tactical nuclear weapons and effect a substantial reduction in armed forces and conventional armaments **with the aim of excluding the possibility of a surprise attack and substantially lowering the level of military confrontation on the European continent**. At its meeting in May 1987, the Political Consultative Committee of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation confirmed this proposal and acknowledged the need to work out new measures enabling even more significant reductions in armed forces, armaments and military expenditure to get under way by the year 2000.

In a further development of these proposals, the Political Consultative Committee of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation adopted at its meeting held in Warsaw in July 1988 a Statement on Negotiations on Reductions in armed forces and Conventional Weapons in Europe. The intention is to conduct these negotiations in three stages. The first stage would culminate in the establishment of equal and lower overall levels of numerical strength of the armed forces and the amounts of conventional arms possessed by the States making up the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO. In the second phase, the armed forces of each side would be cut by approximately 500,000 people along with their statutory military **stockpiles**; the third phase would see further reductions of armed forces and conventional arms, giving the armed forces of the two alliances a strictly defensive character. **In addition, the proposal of the Warsaw Treaty countries provides for an exchange of basic data on conventional weapons at the start of the negotiations, and if possible even before they commence.**

The document of the Warsaw Treaty countries also proposes, as an inseparable component of the process of reducing armed forces and arms in Europe, measures aimed at reducing and eliminating the threat of a surprise attack. Such measures might include the establishment of zones of lowered level of armaments from which the most threatening and destabilising kinds of conventional weapons would be excluded or reduced.

The Soviet Union and the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization are ready to settle these questions within the framework of the Helsinki process. In July 1988, the Soviet Union advocated the convening of a "Europe-wide Reykjavik" a meeting of the leaders of all the European countries to discuss moving to the reduction of conventional weapons.

There is no topic relating to the reduction of armed forces and armaments on which the Soviet Union would not be ready to engage in talks. If NATO would agree not to station in Italy the 72 F-16 fighter-bombers which Spain has refused, the USSR is prepared to make matching withdrawals from its forward air bases in Eastern Europe. The Soviet leadership has also proposed yet another step towards the guaranteeing of reliable security for all countries of Europe - the creation of a European centre for the reduction of the danger of war and the prevention of a surprise attack.

Operating on a full-time basis, such a centre could become a useful structure for enhancing the reliability of peace in Europe.

These proposals by the USSR and the other States members of the Warsaw Treaty **Organization** do not exclude parallel discussion of other measures which would lead to a peaceful and safer Europe. The USSR supports the comprehensive plan put forward in May 1987 by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and Chairman of the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, W. Jaruzelski, for decreasing armaments and increasing confidence in central Europe by means of a gradual reduction of nuclear and conventional weapons in the region, the adoption of a defensive orientation of military doctrines, agreement on **confidence-** and security-building measures, and mechanisms for the strict monitoring of compliance with the commitments entered into. The proposals regarding concrete actions in furtherance of this plan contained in the statement of the Polish Government transmitted to the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (**CSCE**) in June 1988 afford a sound basis for work on the strengthening of security and the development of co-operation in the region.

In the view of the Soviet Union, the initiative put forward in February 1988 by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, M. **Jakeš**, regarding the establishment along the line of contact between the Warsaw Treaty States Organisation and the NATO States of a zone of confidence, co-operation and good-neighbourly relations, and advocating a comprehensive approach to the solution of problems in the military, political, economic and humanitarian fields, is of great importance to the strengthening of European and universal security. The establishment of such a zone would give new impetus to the development of the Helsinki process and the beginning of a qualitatively new phase in the reduction of military confrontation in Europe.

The USSR supports the initiative of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in central Europe. A nuclear-free corridor between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty would lower the risk of conflict breaking out between the two alliances and facilitate the solution of the question of tactical nuclear weapons and the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe. The same objectives are served by the proposal made in June 1988 by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, E. Honecker, regarding the development of a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of crisis situations and the prevention of military incidents in central Europe.

The Soviet Union supports other proposals designed to strengthen the security of various parts of Europe - the initiatives of Bulgaria, Romania and Greece regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Balkans and of the countries of northern Europe regarding a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

The USSR supports the call by the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for the elimination of chemical weapons in central Europe, as well as the initiatives of Bulgaria and Romania regarding the

- Establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in the Balkans.

A reduction in the level of military confrontation is also the aim of the initiatives put forward by Mr. Gorbachev in Murmansk in October 1997, calling for negotiations to limit and reduce the scale of military activities throughout the North, including restrictions on naval activity in the seas adjacent to northern Europe. During visits by the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, N. I. Ryabkov, to Norway and Sweden in January 1999, the Soviet Union put forward further initiatives relating to this region. Among other things, they call for consultations between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO States on reductions in military activity and restrictions on the scale of activities by naval vessels and military aircraft in and over the Baltic, the North, Norwegian and Greenland Seas, and the extension to those areas of confidence-building measures (the Barents Sea also to be included in the area covered by the confidence-building measures). A meeting of military experts from both military-political alliances, to find mutually acceptable approaches in this area, has also been suggested.

The Soviet Union hailed the proposal by the non-aligned countries to transform the Mediterranean into a zone of lasting peace and co-operation. It suggests the activation in regard to the Mediterranean region of the confidence-building measures agreed upon in the CSCC framework, a start on reducing the armed forces stationed in the region, an undertaking not to deploy nuclear weapons in the territory of the Mediterranean countries, and a commitment by the nuclear Powers not to use such weapons against any Mediterranean country which does not permit their deployment on its soil. We are willing to withdraw our navy from the Mediterranean on the basis of reciprocity with the United States.

In March 1988 the Soviet Union made further proposals, including a freeze and cap on the naval strength of the USSR and the United States in the Mediterranean, notification of each other and all Mediterranean countries concerning regrouping of naval vessels and military exercises, the invitation of observers to attend such exercises, and the formulation of principles and methods for ensuring a régime of safe shipping in the Mediterranean basin.

In the interests of universal security, the Soviet Union is an active and consistent supporter of initiatives aimed at the enhancement of security and at disarmament, not only in Europe but in other regions of the world as well.

As one of the major Asian Powers, the Soviet Union has a vital interest in security in Asia. The Soviet programme for comprehensive security through disarmament is in tune with the mood of the peoples of Asia, who perceive the problems of peace and security no less keenly than do the peoples of Europe,

It is a position of principle with the USSR that the process of reductions in nuclear and in conventional weapons should not prompt countervailing measures such as an arms build-up in other regions - including, naturally, Asia. This position was upheld in the Soviet-American INF Treaty, which encompasses missiles deployed in Asia.

The extensive proposals on security in the Asian and Pacific region made by the Soviet Union call for steps to prevent the proliferation and build-up of nuclear weapons, reductions in naval activity in the Pacific Ocean, particularly by ships carrying nuclear weapons, restrictions on anti-air and marine activity in specified areas of the Pacific, restrictions on the scale of naval exercises and manoeuvres in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and adjacent seas and timely notice of such exercises and manoeuvres, a reciprocal undertaking not to hold naval exercises or manoeuvres in international straits and adjacent areas or to use battle weapons around traditional shipping lanes during such exercises, a gradual reduction in armed forces and conventional armaments in Asia down to a level of reasonable sufficiency, and the initiation of practical discussion on the question of confidence-building measures and the non-use of force in the region,

Recently the USSR has not only given substance to these proposals but has also undertaken a series of practical steps to improve the situation in the Asian and Pacific region. Soviet forces are being withdrawn from Afghanistan in accordance with the Geneva accords. Within the framework of its Vladivostok initiatives, the USSR has completed the withdrawal of part of its military contingent from Mongolia. Based on its position of principle in support of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, the USSR in 1986 became the first of the nuclear Powers to sign, and in January 1986 to ratify, without reservation, Protocol II and III to the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty, thus becoming a guarantor of the nuclear-free status of that zone.

The Soviet Union has a high regard for the efforts of the Asian and Pacific countries to ensure peace and stability in the region. Action on the proposal by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to establish a nuclear-free zone on the Korean peninsula would be a significant step towards the strengthening of security in the region,

The Soviet Union supports the proposals by the Indochinese States to make South-East Asia a zone of peace, good-neighbourliness and co-operation. It also supports the idea of establishing a nuclear-free zone in that region.

The Soviet Union is making active efforts to hasten the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and the convocation of an international conference for that purpose. It has, of course, put forward a number of proposals in the United Nations on confidence-building measures, significant reductions in naval activities in the Indian Ocean, the creation of reliable guarantees for the security of the littoral and hinterland States and the safety of shipping and aerial communications in the region. It has offered to begin talks with the United States and other non-littoral States with a view to permanently reducing the Indian Ocean on significant cuts in, and limits to the activities of, naval forces.

The USSR, which has signed and ratified Additional Protocol II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, is in favour of strengthening the nuclear-free status of Latin America.

The Soviet Union supported the decision by the General Assembly, on a Brazilian initiative, to declare the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation. It is willing to discuss with interested States what steps are needed to reduce the military presence and prevent the deployment of nuclear and other weapons in that region.

The Soviet Union believes that constructive international co-operation in regional disarmament will have a positive effect, improving the climate in many parts of the world, and can make an important contribution to the shaping of universal security in the military sphere.

The Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations requests that this text be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 64 of the provisional agenda.

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