



Eighteenth session

QUESTION OF CONVENING A CONFERENCE FOR THE PURPOSE
OF SIGNING A CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE
USE OF NUCLEAR AND THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONS

Report of the Secretary-General

The General Assembly, having considered at its seventeenth session the report of the Secretary-General concerning his consultation with Governments of Member States on the question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons,^{1/} adopted resolution 1801 (XVII) of 14 December 1962 (annex I) which requested the Secretary-General "to consult further the Governments of Member States to ascertain their views" and to report on the results of such consultation to the General Assembly at the eighteenth session.

Accordingly, in a circular note dated 8 February 1963, the Secretary-General requested those Member Governments concerned to state their views.

As at 17 September 1963, twelve replies were received. They have been reproduced in annex II to this report.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 26, document A/5174 and Adds.1 and 2. Annexed to that report and addenda were the sixty-two replies received during 1962.

ANNEX I

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the First Committee (A/5323)]

1801 (XVII). Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons,

Having regard to the usefulness of further consultation with Governments of Member States on this question,

Requests the Secretary-General to consult further the Governments of Member States to ascertain their views on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for war purposes and to report on the results of such consultation to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session.

1192nd plenary meeting,
14 December 1962.

ANNEX II

Replies of Governments to General Assembly resolution 1801 (XVII)

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AUSTRIAN MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
31 East 69th Street
New York 21, N.Y.

No. 1691-A/63

The Acting Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to acknowledge receipt of the latter's note, PO 134/51 of February 8, 1963, concerning the inquiry as to the views of the Austrian Government on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for war purposes.

The Austrian Government shares the conviction of all Member States of the United Nations that all possible steps should be taken in order to arrive at practicable solutions to the problem of general and complete disarmament and in this way to exclude the dangers of nuclear warfare. It was with these considerations in mind that Austria repeatedly co-sponsored resolutions urging the states concerned to reach agreement, as soon as possible, on the cessation of tests of nuclear weapons, and to refrain from further test explosions, pending the conclusion of such agreements.

Any initiative in the field of disarmament is consequently warmly welcomed by the Austrian Government. The project of convening a conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes should therefore be given most earnest and careful consideration. Austria feels, however, that the preparations for a conference of this scope and importance must

be carried out with particular care and thoroughness. They must furthermore warrant the hope that the conference will bring about positive results. Failure to do so would - in view of the world-wide publicity which this undertaking would undoubtedly receive - almost certainly cause concern and disquiet amongst the peoples of the world and might, in the end, lead to even more intensified nuclear armament.

In order to ensure the success of this undertaking it would seem indispensable to have agreement amongst the major powers, particularly the nuclear powers, on the basic issues to be discussed and eventually resolved at the conference. If it should prove impossible to reach an agreement of this kind between the major countries concerned prior to the conference, it would seem the more urgent that disarmament discussions be continued and speeded up in order to arrive as soon as possible at the goal of general and complete disarmament.

In view of the prevailing international situation the Austrian Government would not consider it appropriate at the present time to convene a special conference with the purpose of considering the signing of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons.

New York, 7 June 1963.

To the
Secretary-General
of the United Nations
United Nations H.Q.
New York

PERMANENT MISSION OF BURMA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

888 Madison Avenue
New York 21, N.Y.

No. 590/CR15.

August 9, 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your Note No. PO 134/51 of 8 February 1963 addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Burma, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 1801 (XVII) which requests the Secretary-General to "consult further the Governments of Member States to ascertain their views on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for war purposes and to report on the results of such consultation to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session."

I am instructed by my Government to reaffirm its support to any action which has for its objective the prohibition of the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as those utilising nuclear and thermo-nuclear energy. Consequently, this question is receiving the close attention of my Government which feels, however, that a final decision should be deferred pending the results of the work of the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(James Barrington)
Permanent Representative
of Burma
to the United Nations

The Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

Translated from French

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AMERICA ASIA UN DIVISION

Yaounde, 12 March 1963
No. 0240/DIPL/2

Subject: Convening of a special conference
for signing a convention on the prohibition
of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear
weapons for war purposes.

Reference: Your letter PO 134/51 dated 8 February 1963

Sir,

In reply to your letter referred to above, I have the honour to inform you that the Federal Republic of Cameroon has consistently stated, both in its own territory and from the rostrum of the United Nations, that it is irrevocably opposed to all nuclear tests, no matter who carried them out or where they take place.

Consequently, the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon favours the convening of a special Conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Nzo Ekhhah-Nghaky
Deputy Foreign Minister of the
Federal Republic of Cameroon

The Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York, New York

Translated from French

REPUBLIC OF DAHOMEY
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. M.A.E./01

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat and, with reference to the Secretariat's note No. PO 134/51 of 8 February 1963, has the honour to inform it of the views of the Government of Dahomey regarding the possibility of convening a special conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.

The Government of the Republic of Dahomey is very favourably disposed to the principle of the holding of such a conference, which could not fail to serve the cause of peace by helping to restrict, if not to eliminate altogether, the danger of a nuclear or thermo-nuclear war with its frightful consequences for mankind.

However, the Government of Dahomey considers that no decision should be taken in this matter pending the outcome of the current "eighteen-Power" talks at Geneva, the aims of which are much the same as those that the projected special conference would seek to achieve.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to convey to the United Nations Secretariat the assurances of its highest consideration.

United Nations Secretariat
New York

Porto Novo, 1 July 1963

Translated from Spanish

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DI012

The Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit the attached Note No. DEI-7291, of 27 May 1963, from Mr. Andrés Freites, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, in reply to the Secretary-General's Note No. PO-134-51 of 8 February 1963, concerning resolution 1801 (XVII) adopted by the General Assembly at its 1192nd meeting on 14 December 1962.

The Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic begs the Secretary-General to forgive the delay in forwarding the attached reply from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, which it has only just received today.

New York, 3 June 1963

Translated from Spanish

Dominican Republic
Office of the Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs

DEI-7291

Santo Domingo
27 May 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your communication of 8 February 1963, referring to the operative paragraph of resolution 1801 (XVII), adopted by the General Assembly at its 1192nd meeting held on 14 December 1962, in pursuance of which you request the views of the Government of the Dominican Republic on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for war purposes.

I am instructed to inform you that my Government is in favour of convening such a conference in the hope that it will culminate in an effective instrument for the prohibition of the use of these weapons of mass destruction which constitute the most serious threat which mankind has ever faced in the course of its history.

In view of the manifest goodwill of the States which are in favour of convening the conference, and the interest shown by the majority which voted for resolution 1801 (XVII) adopted by the General Assembly on 14 December 1962, my Government believes that the basic aims of the proposed conference can be achieved if a practical approach is taken in seeking to give effect to the spirit and principles underlying the basic idea of the proposed meeting.

In supporting the proposal for the convening of a special conference to sign a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, my Government shares the serious concern of the peoples of the world over the existence of such weapons whose use, in the event of war, by the great Powers possessing them would not only affect the actual belligerents but would extend its destructive effects to all other nations, thus endangering the very survival of mankind on earth.

My Government supports the convening of the conference on the understanding that its activities and results should in no way prejudice the negotiations for an agreement on balanced disarmament which is now being considered by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

The Government of the Dominican Republic expresses the hope that the proposed conference will result in a convention that will afford mankind the peace and security it needs in order to fulfil its destiny and rid itself of the uncertainty, fear and anxiety which is oppressing it.

(Signed) Andrés A. FREITES
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

ETHIOPIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
575 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N.Y.

March 20, 1963

Excellency,

On the instruction of my Government, I have the honour to transmit its views on Resolution 1801 (XVII) - Question of Convening a Conference for the Purpose of Signing a Convention for the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear and Thermonuclear Weapons, as follows:

1. A cursory examination of the report of the Secretary-General (A/5174) reveals that of those Governments who submitted their views pursuant to operative paragraph 2 of resolution 1653 (XVI), the majority are clearly in favour of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. We believe, therefore, that response thus far is positively in favour of the conference.
2. No less encouraging is the fact that those Governments which did not favour the convening of a conference did not deny the usefulness of the contemplated steps; they simply expressed concern lest the envisaged conference detract from the work of the Disarmament Committee at Geneva. Some doubted the effectiveness of the type of convention advocated since, in their view, the convention would be only morally binding. In this connexion, it is necessary to observe that, short of war, the binding force of all international agreements does, in fact, rest partly on moral compulsion and partly on vicarious interests. And since the Charter of the United Nations itself is basically and rightly founded on moral compulsion, and since the substance of the contemplated convention will be subject to the same rules for effectiveness, it is hard to detect wherein the weakness of the latter lies.

3. The convention envisaged in resolution 1653 (XVI) was never meant to replace negotiations on general and complete disarmament; nor will it in any way detract from the efforts of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee meeting in Geneva. On the contrary, it would substantially contribute to the reaching of an early agreement on the difficult problem of general and complete disarmament. For this paramount reason the Ethiopian Government, like many others, fully supports the idea of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention envisaged in resolution 1653 (XVI).

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Tesfaye Gebre-Egzy
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Ethiopia
to the United Nations

H.E. U Thant
Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations
New York, New York

Translated from Spanish

PERMANENT MISSION OF HONDURAS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

New York,
28 June 1963

No. CD/126

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your note No. PO 134/51, of 8 February 1963, addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, in connexion with General Assembly resolution 1801 (XVII) of 14 December 1962, in which the Secretary-General is requested "to consult further the Governments of Member States to ascertain their views on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for war purposes, and to report on the results of such consultation to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session".

In this connexion, I take pleasure in reproducing for your information the relevant portion of a note sent by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, which reads as follows:

"With regard to this matter, my Government attaches the greatest importance to the conclusion of a convention prohibiting the use of nuclear and thermonuclear materials for purposes of mass destruction. It is fully aware of the consequences of the use of such weapons in warfare, and in that respect is in complete agreement with the idea of convening a special conference for the purpose of signing a convention which will definitely prohibit the use of such weapons.

"The constant threat to mankind resulting from the possible future use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for war purposes has convinced my Government of the need to take a decision such as the proposal referred to, that might help to solve this grave international problem."

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Guillermo CACERES-PINEDA
Acting Chargé d'Affaires

His Excellency U Thant,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
United Nations, New York

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PERMANENT MISSION OF IRAQ
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
14 East 79 Street
New York 21, N.Y.

15 March 1963

The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General and with reference to his Note No. 134/51 of 8 February, 1963, has the honour to inform him that the Government of Iraq agrees to the convening of a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.

The Permanent Representative of Iraq avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General the assurances of his highest consideration.

Secretary-General
United Nations
New York 17, New York

The Permanent Mission of the
United Kingdom of Libya
to the United Nations
New York

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Libya presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and pursuant to the General Assembly Resolution 1801 (XVII) has the honour to inform that the Libyan Government welcomes the idea of convening a special Conference for Signing a Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear and Thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Libya to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations its highest considerations.

June, 8th. 1963

PERMANENT SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

15th Floor - 655 Madison Avenue
New York 21, New York

REF. 11/28/1

The Permanent South African Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to refer to the latter's Note No. PO 134/51 dated 8th February, 1963 relating to the possibility of convening a Special Conference for signing a convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear and Thermo-nuclear Weapons for War Purposes. While the South African Government is in favour of holding such a conference, it feels that the timing of the proposed conference must depend on the prior attainment of a much greater measure of agreement amongst the great Powers on the general question of nuclear disarmament.

NEW YORK

4th June, 1963

Translated from French

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

405 Lexington Avenue, Room 4001-03
New York 17, New York

No. 329/63

1 April 1963

Sir,

I refer to your note PO 134/51 dated 8 February 1963, addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country.

In accordance with the instructions I have received, I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in keeping with its policy of defending peace, fully supports the proposal to convene a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Salah El Dine Tarazi
Permanent Representative of
the Syrian Arab Republic

His Excellency U Thant
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York, New York

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

New York
10 May 1963

No. 108

Excellency,

I wish to refer to the General Assembly resolutions 1653 (XVI), and 1801 (XVII), which requested the Secretary-General to ascertain the views of Member States on the possibility of convening a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.

While the Government of the United Arab Republic welcomes the convening of a special conference for the aforementioned purpose, it is relevant to indicate that this position is motivated by our declared policy regarding disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons. A policy which during the last three years gained momentum and wide-spread support.

Having taken this position which stems from our firm belief of the necessity of an early agreement to prohibit the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons, the Government of the United Arab Republic believes that when that conference is convened it should draw from the experience gained during the discussions which took place in the 18 Nation Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

Mahmoud Riad
Permanent Representative of
the United Arab Republic to
the United Nations

Secretary-General
United Nations
New York