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Working Paper

Views on Disarmament and its related Questions

I. Disarmament is a matter of great importance to world peace and the security of all countries. The evolution of the world situation, both regional and global will certainly influence the progress of disarmament negotiations. It is inconceivable that substantive progress could be made in the disarmament negotiations at a time when the world situation is marked by turmoil and tension and when the security of states and world peace are not adequately ensured. Any acts of foreign aggression, occupation or intervention occurring in any country or any region, such as those presently seen in Kampuchea, Afghanistan and the Middle East, inevitably bring inimical consequences to the disarmament negotiations. However, some people are reluctant to link the disarmament negotiations with the grave problems emerging in the international situation. They even accusingly term such a linkage as a deviation from the disarmament negotiations and a hindrance to the business-like practice in the CD. We find this hard to understand.

We are of the view that disarmament negotiations should not be conducted in an "ivory tower" far from realities. Such a practice is bound to lead them astray and will be criticized by the international community. Consequently, in discussing and negotiating disarmament issues, we must pay attention to their linkage with the realities of the international situation and with the present situation of armaments. Only thus will the Committee on Disarmament be able to make substantive progress in its work. At the same time, we must also pay attention to the voice of the peoples of the world calling urgently for disarmament, as this is a positive factor promoting the cause of disarmament.

II. Both nuclear disarmament and the cessation of nuclear testing are priority items on the agenda of each CD session. The numerous small and medium-sized countries urgently demand the consideration of these two issues because they find that the nuclear arms race between the superpowers and their nuclear arms expansion have created a serious danger of nuclear war.

The Chinese Government is resolutely opposed to the nuclear arms race and nuclear war. It has consistently stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and demanded that the two superpowers be the first to substantially

reduce their nuclear armaments. As early as the beginning of 1960s, the Chinese Government put forth specific proposals on nuclear disarmament, including the prohibition of nuclear testing, of production and use of nuclear weapons, and the reduction and destruction of nuclear weapons. These are interrelated measures. To stress a certain measure alone, such as the banning of nuclear testing, can in no way halt the superpowers in their nuclear arms expansion, still less can it reduce their nuclear arsenals. So how can one talk about the cessation of the nuclear arms race or about lessening the danger of nuclear war?

The prohibition of nuclear tests and nuclear disarmament are connected with each other. The prohibition of nuclear tests by itself can not bring about nuclear disarmament. It can be conducive to the lessening and elimination of nuclear threat only when it is combined with various other measures of nuclear disarmament.

III. The numerous small and medium-sized countries demand that the two superpowers take the lead in reducing armaments. For in terms of both nuclear and conventional armaments, they have far surpassed any other country in the world. They should not advocate universal disarmament while totally disregarding the present state of armaments. In fact, their armaments have far exceeded their defence needs and thus have become tools of aggression and expansion, and tools in their rivalry for hegemony. But the armaments of the numerous small and medium-sized countries are the necessary means for defending their independence and security against foreign aggression. In order to prevent a world war, it is necessary to call on the two superpowers to be the first to reduce drastically their armaments in a balanced way. Only after progress has been made in this respect, will it then be possible for the other nuclear-weapon States and militarily significant States to join them in a further reduction of armaments according to rational procedures and ratios. As for the peace-loving small and medium-sized countries, their defence capabilities are usually inadequate and therefore they should not be the target countries of disarmament.

It is the strong demand of the numerous non-nuclear-weapon States that security assurances be given to them by the nuclear-weapon States. This is fully legitimate and necessary. As for the question of negative security assurance under discussion now in CD and the working group concerned, the nuclear-weapon States should undertake unshirkable obligations to provide guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States, and they should in no way make unreasonable demands of any kind to the non-nuclear-weapon States. This should be a fundamental principle to be followed by the nuclear-weapon States on this question. To do otherwise would make it difficult to achieve substantive progress in our discussions and negotiations.

IV. The CD attaches great importance to the formulation of the "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament", in preparation for the SSOD II to be held in 1982. To this end, the CD and the working group on CPD have conducted discussions and negotiations over a fairly long period. Certain progress has so far been achieved in negotiations on some substantive questions, such as the principles and measures, the time limits and stages of disarmament. However, as the contents to be contained in the CPD are rather extensive and complicated, further efforts are needed before we can realize the aim we anticipated.

We are confronted with numerous problems in the field of disarmament. The representatives of various groups and countries have already submitted quite a number of documents of a partial or comprehensive nature relating to the CPD in the Committee and the Working Group. Such being the case, it is necessary to make clear the relations between various questions and identify priorities. In addition, we feel that it might be desirable to first concentrate our efforts on working out disarmament measures to be included in the first stage of the CPD and then proceed to the consideration of other stages. The former should be relatively specific while the latter only calls for an indicative outline.

Up to now, various groups and countries have put forward their respective working papers on the CPD. This is helpful in the drafting of the Programme. And it can be anticipated that some more papers will be advanced. In order to facilitate the consideration of the elements of the Programme being drafted, we think it may be necessary for the Secretariat to try to compile a paper incorporating the proposals of various groups and countries and distribute it to the delegations as a basis for discussions and negotiations. This will, we believe, facilitate our future discussions and negotiations and accelerate the progress of our work.

V. The task of disarmament must include the two aspects of conventional and nuclear disarmament. The superpowers regard their conventional and nuclear armaments as inseparable parts of their military strength. Nuclear weapons are their major deterrents and means of blackmail, while conventional weapons are their tools frequently used for aggression. Therefore, while emphasizing nuclear disarmament, we can not overlook conventional disarmament. Conventional and nuclear disarmament should be carried out in conjunction. This is necessary for world peace and the security of the numerous small and medium-sized countries. Attaching importance to conventional disarmament in no way means ignoring the importance of nuclear disarmament, nor does it imply underestimating the destructive power of nuclear war. Even less would it affect the priority status of nuclear disarmament. Whether or not the superpowers agree to carry out nuclear and conventional disarmament is the

real test of their good faith in promoting disarmament. The Committee on Disarmament has all along concerned itself with the discussion of the issue of nuclear disarmament, but has not discussed the issue of conventional disarmament. This year, at its May session, the UEDC considered the question of conventional disarmament. The Chinese delegation hopes that the CD will also in the future do likewise, for this will be beneficial to the cause of disarmament as a whole.

VI. Lastly, I turn to the questions of organizational work and efficiency of the Committee on Disarmament. On these questions, representatives of various countries engaged themselves in fairly long discussions at informal meetings -- a fact which demonstrates the general concern for these matters. During the discussions, they submitted various proposals regarding future progress in the work of the Committee. Quite a few of these proposals are constructive and acceptable to us, and we will also consider the other proposals.

The Committee on Disarmament has failed to make marked progress in its work. We hold that the crux of the matter lies in the lack of sincere readiness for disarmament, and in the discrepancy between words and deeds. This has hindered progress in the negotiations of some of the disarmament items.

Some delegates treat the negotiating organs of the CD and its Working Groups as fora for propaganda. They constantly quote from all kinds of speeches, declarations and documents, taking up a great deal of the CD's time to no avail. If this situation can be changed, the efficiency of the Committee would be enhanced. It is clear that the failure to make substantive progress in our disarmament negotiations is not mainly due to the lack of time. Of course, we can also go along with the idea that we allocate more time to our work if the developments of the negotiations so require.

It appears to us that the question of the composition of the CD membership is either one of maintaining the status quo or of allowing an appropriate increase, and not one of reducing the number of members. We have no difficulty in this regard and are ready to accept a consensus.

With regard to the question of participation by non-member States in the CD's activities, the Chinese delegation is of the view that all members of the United Nations and its specialized agencies have the right to participate in some of the CD's activities, provided that such participation does not run counter to the United Nations Charter or the rules and regulations of the specialized agencies concerned. No State or group of States should, for political or other reasons, discriminate against any non-member State or deprive it of its legitimate rights, for this would be contrary to the purposes of the cause of disarmament.