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Twenty-eighth session

WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Letter dated 9 January 1973 from the Permanent Representative of China
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a statement issued by the Chinese delegation on a letter dated 20 December 1972 from the President of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General. 1/ I would request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) HUANG Hua
Permanent Representative of the
People's Republic of China
to the United Nations

1/ A/8990.

Statement by the delegation of China on a letter dated
20 December 1972 from the President of the General
Assembly to the Secretary-General

In disregard of the objections by many countries, the President of the twenty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly addressed a letter to the Secretary-General on 20 December 1972, ^{2/} announcing his decision to appoint 31 Member States to serve on the Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and to reserve four seats for the nuclear States (the letter was distributed by the Secretariat on 22 December 1972). The Chinese delegation is greatly surprised at this conduct of the President and deems it necessary to make the following statement:

1. During the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the Chinese delegation, together with many other peace-loving and justice-upholding countries, opposed the super-power policies of arms expansion and war preparation which endanger world peace and security, and supported the proposal of some countries for the establishment of a special committee to study the different views and suggestions expressed by various countries on the convening of a world disarmament conference.

2. With regard to the composition of the Special Committee, the following wording was envisaged at the initial stage when the sponsors were formulating the draft resolution: "Decides to establish an ad hoc study committee made up of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament which are not permanent members of the Security Council and eight other Member States...". At the time, the Chinese delegation clearly indicated that China would agree to maintain contact with the Special Committee after its formation and to exchange views on the question of disarmament, but that China would not be prepared to participate in it. China would not agree to the draft resolution providing for the inclusion of the five permanent members in the Special Committee, nor would it agree to the reservation of seats for China or any other Member States. Furthermore, quite a few delegations expressed disagreement with the formation of a special committee on the basis of the membership of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). After consultations, the sponsors agreed to delete from the draft resolution the words "the five permanent members of the Security Council, the members of the Conference Committee on Disarmament which are not permanent members of the Security Council and eight other Member States" and to replace them by: "a Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference consisting of 35 Member States, to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly after consultation with all the regional groups and taking due consideration of the necessity to ensure adequate political and geographical representation". Moreover, during the consultations the sponsors stated that the Special Committee should be composed only in the spirit of the revised wording without attaching any preconditions that any particular country must take part in the Special Committee. It was on the basis of this understanding that the Chinese delegation agreed to support the draft resolution. The exact revised wording as mentioned above was incorporated

^{2/} Ibid.

in the relevant paragraph of resolution 2930 (XXVII) adopted by the General Assembly at its 2093rd plenary meeting, on 29 November 1972, thus avoiding the possibility of causing different interpretations.

3. The President of the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly is well aware of the implication of the provision on the composition of the Special Committee as contained in the resolution as well as the understanding reached by the various parties. One would expect that after the adoption of the resolution the President should, in accordance with the provisions of the resolution, allot the 35 seats to the regional groups to be nominated by them through consultations. But the President has from the very outset arbitrarily reserved seats for the five permanent members of the Security Council, arbitrarily decided to stick to the CCD membership as the basis for the composition of the Special Committee and asked the regional groups to nominate the members according to such an arrangement. In the course of the consultations, most members of certain regional groups disagreed with such practice of the President. For instance, at the consultation meeting of 18 December, the Asian group reached the consensus that there should be eight seats for the Asian group and recommended that the reserved seat should be taken by the Philippines. It is understood that the African group is not in favour of forming the Special Committee on the basis of the CCD membership and has asked for an increase of the African seats from six to eight. And many members of other regional groups have also expressed disagreement in varying degrees with the practice of the President. As his unreasonable practice had met with the opposition of many countries, the President of the General Assembly formally declared at the last plenary meeting on the evening of 19 December, before the closing of the session, that with regard to the composition of the Special Committee "lack of time" had prevented him from "completing all the indispensable consultations with Member States". ^{3/} He also stated that he would defer the announcement of the composition of the Committee. That means the President also deemed it necessary to conduct further the "indispensable consultations" with Member States on the composition of the Special Committee after the closing of the General Assembly session. Unexpectedly, however, the President went back on his own words and all of a sudden changed his attitude overnight. On the morning of 20 December, he told the chairman of the regional groups that he had decided not to consult with the regional groups any longer and announced forthwith along the line of his original position that seats would be reserved for the nuclear States, except the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and appointed 31 other Members to the exclusion of the Philippines, whose nomination was unanimously agreed upon by the Asian group, and two additional African seats as unanimously requested by the African group. Overnight "lack of time" was turned into "no lack of time" and "indispensable consultations" into "no need for consultations". During the consultation on this matter among the Asian group on the afternoon of 20 December, many countries expressed surprise at the arbitrary conduct of the President and voiced strong dissatisfaction and objection. Nevertheless, upon his departure from New York, the President announced on 21 December the aforementioned so-called decision in the form of a letter to the Secretary-General, in an attempt to impose it on others as a *fait accompli*, by taking advantage of the conclusion of the General Assembly session.

^{3/} A/PV.2116, p. 113.

4. It is not difficult to see from the development of the whole problem that by his arbitrary conduct the President has abused his function and authority as President of the General Assembly and totally contravened the spirit of the Assembly resolution concerning the establishment of the Special Committee. He has also completely ignored the different opinions unequivocally expressed by many representatives during the consultations in the regional groups and contradicted his own position publicly declared before the conclusion of the session on 19 December. One cannot help asking: "Why should the President cling to his obdurate course and, in disregard of the opinions clearly expressed by many countries, refuse to comply with the reasonable request of certain Member States which wish to take part in the work of the Special Committee and exclude certain countries which have been unanimously recommended by the regional groups while trying hard to impose on others his decision to reserve seats for certain Member States which have no intention to take part in the work of the Special Committee? Why should the President insist on taking the CCD membership as the basis for the composition of the Special Committee in disregard of the objections from various parties? What legality can such a forcibly appointed Special Committee have? Evidently, such self-contradictory, crude and arbitrary practice can only be construed as a submission and catering to the needs of a certain super-Power for executing a political fraud. From the very outset, on the composition of the Special Committee, it was designed to lead the Committee on to a wrong track so as to turn the Committee into a tool of that super-Power for its political manoeuvres. Thus, serious obstacles have been placed in advance to the smooth execution of the Committee's duty in the spirit of the General Assembly resolution.

5. In view of the foregoing, the Chinese delegation deems it necessary to state that it firmly opposes the arbitrary decision made by the President of the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the composition of the Special Committee. It reiterates that it will not take part in the work of the Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and firmly opposes the forcible reservation of seats for China or any other countries which have no intention to take part in the work of the Special Committee.
