



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/39/516
5 October 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-ninth session
Agenda item 59 (h)

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

Unilateral nuclear disarmament measures

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The study on unilateral nuclear disarmament measures has been prepared by a group of governmental experts appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 J of 20 December 1983.
2. By letter dated 31 August 1984, the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament Measures transmitted to the Secretary-General the study, which is hereby submitted to the General Assembly.

ANNEX

Study on unilateral nuclear disarmament measures

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FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. The study has been prepared by the Group of Governmental Experts on Unilateral Disarmament Measures appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 J of 20 December 1983, which called for the preparation of a study "on ways and means that seem advisable for stimulating the adoption of unilateral nuclear disarmament measures which, without prejudice to the security of States, would come to promote and complement bilateral and multilateral negotiations in this sphere".

2. The subject of this study was referred to in paragraph 41 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2) in the following terms:

"There are certain negotiations on disarmament under way at different levels, the early and successful completion of which could contribute to limiting the arms race. Unilateral measures of arms limitation or reduction could also contribute to the attainment of that goal."

3. The Group of Governmental Experts that prepared this study has, inter alia, come to the conclusion that, since "during the past four decades the arms race has developed as the result of unilateral decisions by States, taken in the name of national security, ... the process of de-escalation and reversal of the arms race and, in particular, the nuclear arms race, could be promoted by unilateral initiatives of States aimed at reducing the level of international tension, gradually creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence and in general improving the environment for negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament".

4. The Secretary-General wishes to thank the experts for their study, which is submitted herewith to the General Assembly for its consideration. It should, however, be noted that the observations and recommendations contained therein are those of the experts.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

31 August 1984

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament Measures, which was appointed by you in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 38/183 J of 20 December 1983.

The Governmental Experts were the following:

Mr. Mansur Ahmad
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Pakistan to the United Nations, Geneva

Mr. Saad Alfarargi
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the
United Nations, Geneva

Mr. Guenter Birbaum
Deputy Permanent Representative of
Austria to the United Nations, Geneva

Mr. Miguel Marín-Bosch
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations, New York

The report was prepared during sessions held at Geneva from 13 to 17 February 1984 and from 30 April to 7 May 1984 and in New York from 27 to 31 August 1984.

Because of budgetary constraints (see A/C.5/38/83), the Group had to work under rather unusual conditions, including the fact that no interpretation services were available to it.

The members of the Group would like to express their thanks to Ms. Ingrid Lehmann who served as Secretary of the Group. Dr. Alessandro Corradini also gave the Group valuable assistance, especially during its second session. In addition, a series of contributions were received, reflecting a wide range of opinions both from governmental and non-governmental sources.

His Excellency
Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

I have been requested by the Group of Experts, as its Chairman, to submit to you its report, which was unanimously approved.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Miguel MARIN-BOSCH
Chairman of the Group of Experts on
Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament Measures

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The current international situation is characterized by fear, suspicion, tension and the steady growth of armaments. Bilateral and multilateral efforts to check the nuclear arms race and reduce the risk of war have met with only limited success. Important bilateral talks between the two major Powers remain suspended, while multilateral efforts, though continuing, are not producing tangible results. In this context unilateral initiatives acquire particular urgency and potential and deserve close scrutiny.
2. During the past 40 years the nuclear arms race has developed and escalated as the result of unilateral decisions by States taken in the name of national security. As decisions by one side were perceived to affect the security of the other side, an action/reaction process set in whose end is not in sight. The dynamics of the arms race can thus be traced to a series of unilateral and reciprocated steps. Conversely, its de-escalation and reversal could be facilitated by unilateral initiatives of States aimed at reducing the level of international tension, gradually creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence and in general improving the environment for negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament.
3. This implies that, even in the absence of formal negotiations, unilateral steps of self-restraint and disengagement could usefully be taken in a way that generates interaction. Indeed, such steps should invite reciprocation because it is through reciprocation that their political feasibility is assured and their scope can gradually become more significant.
4. There is no either/or choice between unilateral and negotiated measures of disarmament. Both are needed in view of their complementary nature. As the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2) - the first special session devoted to disarmament - clearly recognized in paragraph 41, unilateral measures of arms limitation or reduction, no less than negotiated measures, could contribute to progress in disarmament. Although the General Assembly did not elaborate on the scope of unilateral initiatives in the field of arms limitation and disarmament, it is generally assumed that they could include reductions of military expenditures, reductions in the number of troops, cuts in the number of certain types of weapons or even their elimination, moratoria and freezes, policies of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and a wide variety of restraints in military programmes.
5. The Final Document of the 1978 special session also repeatedly stresses that a decisive factor for achieving measures of disarmament is the political will of States, meaning that only if there is adequate political motivation and impulse from all sides can the arms race be brought to an end and real measures of disarmament be achieved.

6. It should be noted, in this connection, that disarmament negotiations often present a number of built-in obstacles that the negotiating parties must surmount. These include: differing systems, and asymmetries in geography, strategies and the basic components of military establishments; the tendency "to negotiate from strength", i.e., to replenish and modernize one's stockpiles before sitting at the negotiating table; the question of "bargaining chips", i.e., weapons systems in hand or in prospect which can be offered as quid pro quo for concessions by the other side; demands from internal pressure groups, both military and civilian, regarding the measure being negotiated; verification and enforcement of the agreements sought; the "linkages" with other questions; and, once an agreement has been reached, the often complex process of its final adoption. On the other hand, the foregoing obstacles may be overcome through unilateral measures.

7. For all these reasons, it would seem to be advantageous, and in some situations even essential, to pursue nuclear arms limitation and disarmament not only through formal agreements, but also through unilateral measures advanced in the expectation of eliciting a positive response from the other side. Such a positive response, while desirable in itself, could also help create favourable conditions for negotiations. In the words of General Assembly resolution 38/183 J, the legislative authority for this report, attention must be focused on "ways and means that seem advisable for stimulating the adoption of unilateral nuclear disarmament measures which, without prejudice to the security of States, would come to promote and complement bilateral and multilateral negotiations in this sphere".

8. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 J, the present study, after considering the question in the specific context of the nuclear arms race (chap. II), focuses its attention on the concept of unilateral disarmament measures (chap. III), attempts to assess past unilateral nuclear disarmament measures (chap. IV), and considers ways of making unilateral initiatives a complement to nuclear bilateral and multilateral negotiations (chap. V). The body of the report is followed by a summary and conclusions (chap. VI).

9. In carrying out their task the experts were mindful of the general considerations underlying the action of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and, in particular, of the following, as set forth in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2): disarmament must be sought through a gradual but effective process beginning with a reduction in the present level of armaments (ibid., para. 1); as nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization, it is essential to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race and, ultimately, to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons (ibid., para. 47); negotiations should also be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed forces and of conventional armaments (ibid., para. 22); the final objective of all disarmament efforts should continue to be general and complete disarmament under effective international control (ibid., para. 8). At the same time, the causes of the arms race and threats to peace must be reduced and to this end effective action should be taken to eliminate tensions and settle disputes by peaceful means (ibid., para. 13).

CHAPTER II

THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

10. Four decades ago there were no nuclear weapons. Today it is believed that there are some 50,000 such weapons deployed world wide, on the territories of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike, as well as on the high seas. Among the five nuclear-weapon States, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics possess by far the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons and the most advanced delivery systems. It is estimated that about 20 per cent of the entire defence budgets of the two major Powers is currently devoted to their nuclear forces, i.e. to production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, and the general operation and support of those forces.

11. The 1980 report by the Secretary-General, Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons, 1/ contains a wealth of detail on the size and destructive capacity of today's nuclear arsenals, as well as a description of the long-range, intermediate and short-range nuclear-weapon delivery systems. It stresses that, over the last four decades, there has been a constant increase, both quantitative and qualitative, in nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles.

12. The dynamics of the nuclear arms race is to be found in the seemingly endless drive to produce more varied, accurate and effective nuclear weapon systems. A step towards the further sophistication of nuclear arsenals on one side is followed by similar or counter-efforts on the other. This pattern of action and counteraction has been apparent since the very beginning of the nuclear age. Indeed, this has been the case at almost every step of the nuclear arms competition, beginning with the development of the weapons themselves.

13. The positions of the nuclear-weapon States with regard to nuclear weapons have evolved over the years, and at no time have their views on this subject fully coincided. But, while both major nuclear-weapon Powers now maintain that nuclear war would be a catastrophe for mankind which must be prevented, they continue to expand their nuclear arsenals in ways which contradict that declaration and threaten stability. Reliance on assured retaliatory capabilities rather than on defensive means has given rise to concepts such as "balance of terror" and "mutually assured destruction", which stem from the very nature of nuclear weapons. Yet, if one side acquires a "first-strike capability", i.e. the capacity to deliver a nuclear strike against the other without risking an intolerable reprisal, parity becomes ineffective and deterrence fails.

14. In paragraph 13 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, which was adopted by consensus, the General Assembly declared that enduring international peace and security cannot be built on the competitive accumulation of weaponry nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority.

15. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence was thoroughly examined in the above-mentioned Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons. 2/ The study came to the conclusion that the concept of the maintenance of world peace, stability and balance through the process of deterrence was perhaps the most dangerous collective fallacy of our time. 3/

16. The study also warned that in a situation like the present one, where "technology rather than policy leads", there is practically no limit to the sheer momentum of the arms race. It is imperative, therefore, that statesmen and political leaders accept their high responsibilities. If they do not, the arms race is certain to go out of control. 4/

17. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated in 1982 at the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, 5/ the second special session devoted to disarmament:

"The search for security through strength is as old and as deeply rooted in the life of nations as the desire to live in peace. But what puts the present arms race in an altogether different and still more dangerous category are two of its basic characteristics: first, it derives its momentum not so much from well-considered security goals as from the inexorable advance of military technology and, secondly, it is a pursuit whose consequences do not accord with its assumed aims. This holds true, to one degree or another, in the fields of both nuclear and conventional weapons ... Unless it is restrained by political decisions backed by a moral will, the advance of military technology is a process that, by its very nature, can never exhaust itself. At present, it is always creating new possibilities, new breakthroughs leading to new applications, strategies and doctrines, paving the way to the point of no return."

18. The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, at its Seventh Summit held at New Delhi from 7 to 12 March 1983, considered

"that the greatest peril facing the world today is the threat to the survival of mankind from a nuclear war. Disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, is no longer a moral issue; it is an issue of human survival. Yet the renewed escalation in the nuclear arms race, both in its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, as well as reliance on doctrines of nuclear deterrence, has heightened the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war and led to greater insecurity and instability in international relations. Nuclear weapons are more than weapons of war. They are instruments of mass annihilation. The Heads of State or Government therefore find it unacceptable that the security of all States and the very survival of mankind should be held hostage to the security interests of a handful of nuclear-weapon States. Measures for the prevention of nuclear war and of nuclear disarmament must take into account the security interests of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike and ensure that the survival of mankind is not endangered. They rejected all theories and concepts pertaining to the possession of nuclear weapons and their use under any circumstance." 6/

19. Yet, the nuclear arms race continues, driven onward by the relentless progress of technology and the lack of adequate political restraints. The halting of the quantitative and, especially, the qualitative nuclear-weapons competition between the two major Powers is not in sight.

20. The bilateral and multilateral nuclear arms control agreements concluded so far, while dealing with some distinct aspects of the nuclear arms race, have not been sufficient to stop and reverse it. Indeed, it has become increasingly clear, over the years, that the pace of technological innovation in the military field is much faster than the pace of disarmament efforts when the "political will" to seek disarmament is weak.

21. It is evident, therefore, that a more effective strategy is needed to stop the nuclear arms race. In such a strategy the adoption of unilateral measures of restraint and de-escalation as a means of building confidence in the relations between States and helping to promote and complement bilateral and multilateral negotiations in the disarmament field acquires particular importance.

CHAPTER III

UNILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MEASURES - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

22. The concept of unilateral measures has been part of the disarmament debate over the decades. While unilateral measures have been considered by some as meaningful and desirable, others have expressed doubts regarding the validity of the concept. Still others have viewed them as feasible and positive in certain circumstances.

23. Unilateral disarmament measures have sometimes also been described as unilateral disarmament initiatives, or unilateral steps, or even just as unilateral actions. While there may be some difference in the precise meaning of those words, in a functional context they can be used as synonymous. For the purposes of the present study, therefore, they are used as such.

24. Similarly, in the literature on the subject of unilateral disarmament measures one finds a number of expressions which, by and large, describe the same course of action, such as, for instance, "graduated unilateral disengagement", "reciprocal unilateral restraint", "reciprocal interaction", or even "independent initiatives for reciprocal restraint". Here again, it seems appropriate to consider those and other similar expressions as interchangeable. Perhaps the single most important element which provides the distinguishing feature of all unilateral disarmament actions is that it is not a formally negotiated course of action. It may be intended to lead to negotiations and it may in fact lead to negotiations, but it does not originate as a negotiated step.

25. Unilateralism has attracted the attention of many distinguished writers. ^{7/} As developed in the literature, unilateralism is not one-sided disarmament, but it is a way in which, through unilateral or more precisely "graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction" (GRIT), ^{8/} two or more countries can promote genuine arms limitation and disarmament agreements. In these terms, the arms race can be viewed as a kind of tension increasing system which operates on the basis of unilateral, graduated and reciprocated measures. GRIT, on the other hand, is meant to be tension reducing - a flexible, self-regulating procedure in which the participants carefully monitor their own initiatives on the basis of their own evaluation of the reciprocate actions taken by the other side. As such GRIT may be said to go beyond military consideration and acquire a political dimension.

26. The aim of GRIT is thus to reduce and control international tension levels and, then, to create gradually an atmosphere of confidence and mutual trust within which negotiations on critical issues will have a better chance of succeeding. This implies that unilateral initiatives do not require confidence and mutual trust to exist before they are taken. On the contrary, confidence and mutual trust come about as a result of the unilateral actions. Mutual self-interest is thus the key to successful action. It should also be stressed that GRIT does not rule out bilateral and multilateral negotiations. These are an essential feature of a genuine disarmament process, but they may be stimulated or complemented by unilateral actions. The essence of GRIT is that reciprocation in tension reduction and disarmament measures must be encouraged, while security is maintained. Thus the concept of gradualism can be viewed as distinct from other approaches to unilateralism.

27. Within this framework "an arms race in reverse" can be developed. From this basic principle a number of rules can be derived for maintaining security, inducing reciprocation, and demonstrating the genuineness of intent. These rules include the following: 9/ (a) unilateral initiatives must in no way impair the capacity of one party to meet aggression; (b) they must be graduated in risk according to the degree of reciprocation obtained from an opponent; (c) be so designed and conveyed to an adversary as to emphasize a sincere intent to reduce tensions and invite reciprocation in some form; (d) be publicly announced in advance of their execution and identified as a deliberate policy of reducing tensions; (e) be executed on schedule, regardless of any prior commitments by the adversary to reciprocate; (f) be persisted with over a considerable period of time regardless of the degree or even absence of reciprocation; (g) be as unambiguous and as susceptible to verification as possible.

28. The underlying assumption of this approach, one might add, is incompatible with the view that negotiations can only succeed if they are undertaken and pursued from a position of strength. That is a recipe for the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race, which can hardly be defined as a strategy for survival in the nuclear age.

29. Unilateral initiatives should be considered within the wider framework of a continuing, constructive political discourse. As concrete steps, they may serve to improve the political climate by sending a clear signal to the other side with the expectation of reciprocation.

30. The need to draw the two major Powers away from their concentration on military strength and into a regular and productive dialogue has been repeatedly stressed. In 1983 it was restated by the then Prime Minister of Canada who focused attention on the relationship between the two major Powers and the "widening gap between military strategy and political purpose" and stressed that, in the absence of "high politics" in the East-West relationship, trust or confidence in the intentions of the "other side" appeared to have vanished as well. Concerning efforts to achieve confidence-building measures and other measures of restraint, he warned those would not be fruitful "if they proceed in a political vacuum". 10/

CHAPTER IV

REVIEW OF MAJOR UNILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MEASURES

31. After outlining the distinctive features of unilateral disarmament measures, it may now be appropriate here to examine the feasibility and potential usefulness of such measures in the light of past experience.
32. It is worth recalling that, well before the dawn of the nuclear age, there were initiatives which can be seen as typical cases of unilateral restraint or reduction in conventional armaments. Since the end of the Second World War, the nuclear arms competition has overshadowed the areas of conventional arms and chemical and biological weapons, but even in those fields unilateral measures have been taken both in the East and West. 11/
33. In the nuclear field there have been examples of unilateral restraint. Some countries have unilaterally renounced the development, production or acquisition of nuclear weapons. 12/ These unilateral decisions were later formalized by adherence to international or regional treaties.
34. Nuclear-weapon States themselves have also taken unilateral measures of restraint in the nuclear field. The tripartite moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests of 1958-1961 is a well-known case. The suspension of nuclear weapon testing late in 1958 by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States was triggered by the unilateral decision of the Soviet Union on 31 March 1958 to stop nuclear testing. The Soviet Union reserved its right to resume testing should the two Western Powers fail to reciprocate. As the United States and the United Kingdom were not prepared to stop their test programmes, which had been announced well in advance, the Soviet Union declared that it would continue testing on a "one-to-one ratio" to the combined number of explosions carried out by the two Western Powers after 31 March 1958. However, after the United Kingdom and the United States suspended their tests by the end of October 1958, the Soviet Union, on 3 November 1958, also suspended them. The voluntary ban was maintained by the three Powers until tests were resumed by the Soviet Union on 1 September 1961. Nevertheless, two years later the Partial Test Ban Treaty was concluded.
35. A further step to the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty was the United States initiative of 10 June 1963 to halt nuclear tests in the atmosphere which can be said to have satisfied a number of the criteria described in paragraph 27 above and, in particular, the following: in purely military terms, the nuclear test moratorium may have been disadvantageous to the United States, but in no way impaired its military capacity; it was such as to be perceived by the other side as reducing an external threat; it was so designed and conveyed to the other side as to emphasize a sincere intent to reduce tensions and invite reciprocation; it was publicly announced and widely publicized; and it did not demand prior commitment to reciprocation by the other side as a condition for the execution of the unilateral initiative. The United States stated that it would not be the first to resume atmospheric tests. 13/ To all this it should be added that the offer by the United States was made in such terms that it was an invitation to a constructive political dialogue which was in fact achieved.

36. Several factors were connected with this sequence of events, including a widespread anxiety about radioactive fallout and shared concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation. They provided a foundation upon which the three nuclear-weapon powers concerned were able finally to de-link the question of nuclear tests from other issues and bring it to a solution, albeit incomplete, in 1963. The unilateral steps along the way were important in several respects. They made clear to branches of Government, military as well as civilian, on both sides, that it was possible in certain circumstances to have security even without nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere; they stimulated the development of, and confidence in, national technical means of verification in the absence of negotiated and agreed measures on the subject; they conveyed good-will to the other side, building political confidence about the observance of a future treaty and easing negotiations to that end.

37. During the years 1963-1964, the Soviet Union and the United States followed a "policy of mutual example" or "reciprocal unilateral action", under which they not only made some budgetary reductions, but also a cut-back in the production of fissionable material for military use. On 20 April 1964, at the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC), statements were made by the Soviet Union and the United States announcing the scope of the respective cut-backs. 14/

38. In its statement the United States expressed the hope that the cut-backs would mark the beginning of a process leading ultimately to a complete and verified cut-off in the production of fissile material for weapon purposes and to substantial transfers to peaceful uses. While this hope still remains unfulfilled, it is considered by many that a cut-off would be a suitable measure not only for negotiation but also for further unilateral reciprocal initiatives. As in 1964, consultations might lead to independent but co-ordinated actions by the two major Powers (and, at a later stage, by the other nuclear-weapon States) to be followed by negotiations for the complete and verified cessation and prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapon purposes.

39. Again, in 1964, a significant unilateral declaration in the nuclear field was made. Simultaneously with the announcement of the explosion of its first atom bomb, China declared that it would never at any time and under any circumstances be the first to use nuclear weapons. 15/ Since then, China has repeatedly reaffirmed its unilateral commitment.

40. In 1982, at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Soviet Union declared that it assumed an obligation, with immediate effect, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. 16/ The Soviet Union also stated that the peoples of the world had the right to expect that its decision would be followed by reciprocal steps on the part of the other nuclear-weapon States which, if taken, would be tantamount to a ban on the use of nuclear weapons.

41. In a number of resolutions (the latest being resolution 38/183 B of 20 December 1983) the General Assembly expressed the hope that those nuclear-weapon States which had not yet done so would consider making unilateral declarations with respect to not being the first to use nuclear weapons. No additional declaration of no-first-use has been forthcoming. 17/ The debate, however, is continuing both in the General Assembly and in the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body, in the context of items on the prevention of nuclear war and nuclear disarmament.

42. Another matter which presents unilateral aspects is that of security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States. In 1968, after the General Assembly commended the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for the widest possible adherence by both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear weapon States (resolution 2373 (XXII)), the three depositary Governments of the Treaty, the USSR, the United Kingdom and the United States, made separate but identical declarations in the Security Council to the effect that aggression with nuclear weapons, or threat of such aggression, against a non-nuclear-weapon State would create a qualitatively new situation in which the nuclear-weapon States, permanent members of the Security Council, would have to act immediately through the Council to counter such aggression or to remove the threat of aggression in accordance with the United Nations Charter. 18/ At the same time, the Security Council adopted resolution 255 (1968) which, inter-alia, welcomed the declarations by the three depositary Governments. Since then, at the initiative of non-nuclear-weapon States, efforts have been made to move towards the conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and, as a first step, to have solemn declarations on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, identical in substance, by the five nuclear-weapon States. As of now, each of the five nuclear-weapon Powers has made a declaration to this effect, but they are not identical in substance nor free from conditions or qualifications. 19/ Therefore, the Conference on Disarmament is continuing efforts to achieve a common approach or common formula with a view to concluding effective international arrangements providing assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

43. Directly or indirectly, the unilateral initiatives reviewed above have been, at one time or another, the object of deliberations or negotiations in, or within the framework of, the United Nations. There have also been a number of decisions since 1979 by the two major military alliances regarding tactical and intermediate range nuclear weapons in the European context which would be difficult to assess at this juncture.

CHAPTER V

UNILATERAL INITIATIVES AS A COMPLEMENT TO NUCLEAR BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

44. In the preamble of resolution 38/183 J, embodying the decision of the General Assembly to have a study conducted on unilateral nuclear disarmament measures, the Assembly noted "the impasse existing both in the bilateral and the multilateral negotiations", and in acknowledging the existence of such an impasse, was moved to seek ways and means to expedite those negotiations.

45. The current (1984) agenda of the Conference on Disarmament includes four nuclear items: (a) nuclear test ban; (b) cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; (c) prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters; (d) effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Among the other substantive items on the agenda, the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a question which more and more is acquiring nuclear connotations.

46. As noted in paragraph 1 of this report, while multilateral efforts are continuing in these various fields, there is an urgent need to inject new life into the multilateral negotiating process, if the present standstill is to be overcome and concrete results are to be achieved. Multilateral negotiations, either in the United Nations or within its framework, have a long history which goes back to 1946, when the General Assembly, in its very first resolution, sought to ensure that atomic energy would be used only for peaceful purposes. In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s the multilateral negotiating body (the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee and, then, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament) helped produce a number of agreements which have contributed to putting some constraints on the arms race. 20/ It is a reason for concern, however, that for the past several years the great potential of the multilateral negotiating body has remained largely untapped.

47. Bilaterally, the negotiations between the USSR and the United States of America are at a stage of total impasse. This represents a reversal from the positive trend of the 1970s, a decade that saw the conclusion of four major bilateral nuclear arms control treaties between them: SALT I (1972), including the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems; SALT II (1979); the Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests (1974); and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes (1976).

48. In 1977, the two major Powers decided to establish bilateral working groups on a number of arms control issues, covering eight distinct subject areas, with a view to placing their relationship on a more stable and more comprehensive basis. Among these subjects were: 21/ a comprehensive nuclear test ban, chemical weapons, radiological weapons in the context of new weapons of mass destruction, the Indian Ocean, conventional arms transfers and anti-satellite capabilities. Some of these issues had been the subject of prior negotiations; others represented new problems which had not previously been formally discussed.

49. The bilateral talks on a comprehensive nuclear test ban evolved into full-scale trilateral (USSR, United Kingdom, United States) negotiations in Geneva which continued until late 1980. During that period those three nuclear-weapon Powers reached agreement on many key provisions of a treaty. 22/ In their last report, 23/ dated 30 July 1980, the three Powers stated that, in spite of many difficulties, they had "made considerable progress in negotiating the treaty" and provided a good amount of supporting evidence. They also stated their determination to "exert their best efforts and necessary will and persistence to bring the negotiations to an early and successful conclusion." 24/

50. Since the end of 1980, the tripartite negotiations on a comprehensive test ban have been in abeyance. The same is true of the bilateral negotiations on chemical weapons. The bilateral talks on conventional arms transfers had already come to an end in 1978 and those on the Indian Ocean and anti-satellite capabilities in the course of 1979. Regarding radiological weapons, the Soviet Union and the United States submitted an agreed joint proposal on major elements of a treaty prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons. 25/ This proposal is still under discussion in the Conference on Disarmament.

51. Subsequently, the international community found new hope in the opening of two new sets of bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States: the negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe (INF), which started on 30 November 1981, and those on strategic arms reductions (START) which were convened on 29 June 1982, during the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In both cases the aim was the same, namely, the reduction of nuclear arms.

52. During 1982 and 1983, both the United States and the Soviet Union repeatedly stated their respective positions on nuclear arms reductions. ^{26/} At that time, the positions of the two sides did not seem irreconcilable. The subsequent suspension of both sets of negotiations has, however, shown once again how difficult it can be to move from general positions to agreements.

53. In such a situation, unilateral measures, which can have a valuable role to play in and of themselves, may acquire special relevance. They may serve as a means to initiate, stimulate or revive bilateral as well as multilateral disarmament negotiations. In particular, a unilateral action which invites reciprocation might do much to help revitalize negotiations.

54. To achieve this result, the action must be not only credible, but also meaningful, i.e. it should show willingness to de-escalate tension and contribute significantly to arms limitation goals. Moreover, there must be interaction. As explained at the very beginning of this study, "unilateral measures" are essentially "independent measures" and the two expressions can be used interchangeably. They are intended, however, to generate interaction, on the basis of a perceived common or mutual interest. If this does not occur, the disengagement process is likely to come to an early halt.

55. In the following paragraphs a number of priority areas for unilateral action, as defined above, are highlighted. The fact that they are singled out should in no way, however, be interpreted as excluding other areas from active consideration. They are examined here in the light not only of widely-supported decisions by the General Assembly, but also of their inclusion as separate items in the current bilateral and multilateral disarmament agenda, and their potential for negotiation in a not too distant future.

56. At the present time, there are a number of areas where unilateral actions could be of particular relevance. These include: nuclear-test ban; cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament; prevention of nuclear war; effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and prevention of an arms race in outer space. These areas, which are on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, should be viewed within the context of the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is therefore in the bilateral context that unilateral measures intended to expedite negotiations or nuclear-arms reductions should be considered.

57. No other question in the field of disarmament has been the subject of so much international concern, discussion, study and negotiation as that of ending all nuclear-weapon tests. The complete cessation of such tests is a prime objective of

the United Nations and, since the 1950s, the General Assembly has adopted almost 50 resolutions on the subject - far more than on any other issue of disarmament. In resolution 38/62 of 15 December 1983, the General Assembly called upon the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, as depositaries of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by virtue of their special responsibilities under those two Treaties and as a provisional measure, to bring to a halt without delay all nuclear-test explosions, "either through a trilaterally agreed moratorium or through three unilateral moratoria".

58. On the importance of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, little needs to be added to what has already been said. A comprehensive ban would impose constraints on nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike, that is, (a) it would lead to reduced reliance on nuclear weapons by the former and thereby, (b) it would contribute in a substantial way to reducing incentives for the latter to develop nuclear-weapon capabilities. As a result, a comprehensive test ban would represent an important step towards the goal of the eventual complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In the near term, it would undoubtedly help promote and stimulate other bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

59. As long as nuclear weapons remain in existence, the possibility of their use, either by design or by accident, will continue to be a threat to the future of mankind. In paragraph 18 of the 1978 Final Document it was declared that "Removing the threat of a world war - a nuclear war - is the most acute and urgent task of the present day". Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, it was added in paragraph 57, all States, and in particular nuclear-weapon States, should undertake measures aimed at preventing the outbreak of nuclear war and the use of force in international relations. They should co-operate to bring about conditions in international relations where States would be guided by "a code of peaceful conduct". Any such code should conform to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. It is also clear that while proposals on the subject are being considered, 27/ the individual conduct of States - specifically the nuclear-weapon States - is of crucial importance. The question of non-first use of nuclear weapons (see paras. 39 to 41 above) could be further pursued in this general context. As the preamble of above-mentioned resolution 38/183 B recalls, pending nuclear disarmament, all States, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, should actively participate in efforts to bring about conditions in international relations which would preclude the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

60. The question of a nuclear freeze has acquired particular importance in recent years. At its thirty-eighth session in 1983, the General Assembly adopted three separate resolutions on this subject, (38/73 B and E, and 38/76). By resolution 38/73 E in particular, the General Assembly once more urged the Soviet Union and the United States, as the two major nuclear-weapon States, to proclaim, "either through simultaneous unilateral declarations or through a joint declaration", an immediate nuclear-arms freeze. According to that resolution such a freeze would embrace a comprehensive test ban of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, the complete cessation of manufacture of nuclear weapons and of their delivery vehicles, a ban on all further deployment of nuclear weapons and of their delivery vehicles and the complete cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. The Assembly also noted that the freeze would be of an initial five-year duration, subject to prolongation in the event of other nuclear-weapon States joining in such a freeze.

61. Due attention should also be given to the related question of confidence-building measures, on which the General Assembly, in 1983, adopted resolution 38/73 A, inviting all States "to consider the possible introduction unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally, of confidence-building measures in their particular regions and, where possible, to negotiate on them in keeping with the conditions and requirements prevailing in their respective regions".

62. Again in the context of the prevention of nuclear war, the General Assembly, in paragraph 59 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, called upon the nuclear-weapon States to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Assembly noted the declarations made unilaterally by the nuclear-weapon States (see para. 52 above) and urged them to strengthen, through effective arrangements, those assurances.

63. On the question of preventing an arms race in outer space, the resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 38/70 of 15 December 1983, 28/ presents a detailed programme of action. In the present circumstances, it seems evident that, for the success of future negotiations on this subject, it would be highly desirable for States having space capabilities to take immediate independent reciprocated steps to prevent an arms race in outer space. The principle of peaceful conduct on which such steps would be based is clearly affirmed in the first paragraph of the resolution itself.

64. Concerning the INF and START bilateral negotiations, the lack of trust or confidence in the intentions of the negotiating partner is an obstacle to their resumption. A reaffirmation, in whatever form that may be found useful, of the principle of the non-use of force in international relations, as enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, could be helpful. Such a reaffirmation could be accompanied by the adoption by both sides of reciprocal confidence-building measures and measures of restraint, as well as by the resumption of an active and constructive political dialogue between the two major nuclear-weapon Powers. In this connection, in its resolution 38/183 N the General Assembly urged the Governments of the USSR and the United States "to examine immediately, as a way out of the present impasse, the possibility of combining into a single forum the two series of negotiations which they have been carrying out and of broadening their scope so as to embrace also the 'tactical' or 'battlefield' nuclear weapons".

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

65. During the past four decades the arms race has developed and escalated as the result of unilateral decisions by States, taken in the name of national security. As could have been expected, decisions on one side to seek security through a build-up of arms have been reciprocated by the other side and an action/reaction process has set in which has produced the present situation of "overarmament". Conversely, the process of de-escalation and reversal of the arms race and, in particular, the nuclear-arms race, could be promoted by unilateral initiatives of States aimed at reducing the level of international tension, gradually creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence and in general, improving the environment

for negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament. Even in the absence of formal negotiations, useful unilateral steps of self-restraint and disengagement could be taken with a view to generating interaction.

66. Throughout the last four decades, there has been a constant increase in both in the overall number of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery as well as in their variety. Increasingly, security has been based on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. In the present situation where "technology rather than policy leads", there is practically no limit to the sheer momentum of the arms race. It is imperative, therefore, that statesmen and all those who shape governmental policy accept their high responsibilities and bring the arms race to a halt without delay lest the arms race goes out of control. In an effective strategy to stop the arms race, unilateral disarmament measures have a role to play as a means of building confidence in the relations between States and help promote and complement bilateral and multilateral negotiations in the disarmament field.

67. Mutual trust is not a prerequisite for unilateral initiatives. On the contrary, it can be developed as a result of unilateral actions. Such actions should be designed and conveyed to the other side as to signal a sincere intent to reduce tensions and invite reciprocation in some form, and it is through reciprocation that their scope can gradually become more significant. For the sake of effectiveness, unilateral initiatives should be considered within the framework of a constructive political discourse. Concentration on military issues and programmes by the two major powers has created a political vacuum in the East-West relationship, thus further weakening the remaining elements of confidence between them.

68. A review of major unilateral nuclear disarmament measures provides evidence that unilateral measures of restraint and de-escalation may be feasible and useful, and that interacting unilateral measures could stimulate and advance arms limitation and disarmament negotiations.

69. At present, there is an impasse both in the bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on nuclear arms reduction (the INF and START negotiations) remain frozen and all efforts should be made for their resumption. The process of resumption of the negotiations could be accompanied by the adoption, on both sides, of confidence-building measures and other measures of restraint as well as by an active and constructive political dialogue.

70. Four other areas emerge as requiring priority attention in terms of unilateral measures, with a view to promoting and complementing disarmament negotiations. They are: (a) a nuclear-test ban; (b) prevention of nuclear war including the questions of the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and a nuclear freeze; (c) security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States; (d) prevention of an arms race in outer space. The highlighting of these areas should in no way exclude other areas from active consideration.

71. The world is overarmed and yet, for all the immense stockpiles of weapons, nuclear as well as conventional, there is no security on our planet and there is no real peace. The build-up of arms, far from helping to strengthen security, erodes it. It aggravates the many divisions and tensions which cast a dark shadow over

the world. It increases the threat of nuclear war. In the language of paragraph 11 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session: "Mankind today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced."

72. Without any progress towards disarmament, and in the present state of turmoil affecting many parts of the world, the United Nations, which was created to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends, is finding it "even more difficult than usual", to use the words of the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization, to be what it was intended to be. In particular, the possibilities of the United Nations as a negotiating forum are not sufficiently used, as Governments seem to be unable to look beyond narrow national interests. 29/

73. Military technology cannot be allowed to bring the world any closer to the point of no return. Politics and statesmanship must reassert, without hesitation, their leading role in the management of human affairs, both at the national and the international level. Our restless and anxious world has been living for too long under the threat of an escalating arms race, the negative impact of rising international tensions and the risk of nuclear war. Bold, but politically sound steps are needed to reassure it and to put it back on a safer course. The process of negotiation must be resumed and revitalized. Interacting unilateral measures of restraint and de-escalation in the nuclear field can make a positive contribution to that end.

Notes

1/ See Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.I.11).

2/ Ibid.

3/ Ibid., para. 519.

4/ Ibid. para. 493.

5/ A/S-12/PV.1, pp. 16-17 and 22.

6/ See A/38/132; for the printed text, see Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-eighth year, Supplement for January, February and March 1983, document S/15675, para. 28.

7/ See, in particular, Charles Osgood, An Alternative to War or Surrender (University of Illinois Press, 1962). Moreover, in connection with the preparation of this study a number of useful papers were brought to the attention of the Group. Among them were: Ulrich Albrecht: "Unilateral Disarmament"; George J. Crossley: "The Role of Unilateral Initiatives in the Process of Disarmament"; Geneva International Peace Research Institute (GIPRI): "Unilateral Disarmament Measures".

8/ For a full description of the concept of "GRIT" as developed in the following paragraphs, see Osgood, op. cit.

9/ See "GRIT: A Strategy for Survival in Mankind's Nuclear Age?", New Directions in Disarmament, edited by William Epstein and Bernard T. Feld. (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1981), pp. 164-172.

10/ See Address at the University of Guelph, Ontario, on 27 October 1983, "Reflections on Peace and Security", notes for remarks by Prime Minister Trudeau, as published by the Public Affairs Branch, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, Canada.

11/ Among them are found unilateral steps such as those taken by the United Kingdom in the late 1950s renouncing the acquisition of chemical weapons; by the United States renouncing biological weapons and the first use of lethal chemical weapons in 1969; and by the USSR in 1979 which announced that it would reduce the strength of its forces and armaments deployed in Central Europe.

12/ So, for example, Canada in 1945, which renounced the manufacture of atomic weapons and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1954, which renounced the production of atomic, biological and chemical weapons.

13/ Department of States Bulletin, vol. XLIX, No. 1253, 1 July 1963, pp. 2-6.

14/ ENDC/PV.185, pp. 13-15.

15/ See Peking Review, vol. VII, No. 48 (27 November 1964), pp. 12-14.

16/ A/S-12/PV.12, pp. 22-25.

17/ During the discussion of this section, mention was made to the statements of the NATO alliance to the effect that "none of its weapons will ever be used except in response to attack". See Communiqué of NATO Council Meeting, 31 May 1984; NATO Declaration of 10 June 1982. In this regard, it was stated, however, that the exercise of the right of self-defense cannot be invoked to justify the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in response to a conventional armed attack.

18/ Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-third Year, 1430th Meeting, 17 June 1968, pp. 1-5.

19/ For the text of the declaration, see Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/38/27), pp. 48-49.

20/ For a list of those agreements, see Status of Multilateral Arms Regulations and Disarmament Agreements (United Nations Publications Sales No. E.83.IX.5, New York, 1982).

21/ United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Arms Control 1977, p. 13.

22/ Arms Control 1980, pp. 43-46. See also the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Comprehensive nuclear test ban" (A/35/257, pp. 29-39).

23/ Tripartite Report to the Committee on Disarmament, document CD/130.

24/ Ibid., para. 25.

25/ See the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, 1979, p. 251.

26/ A/38/PV.5, p. 7 and A/38/C.1/PV.3, pp. 48-52, 61.

27/ As evidenced for instance by the related activities of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission, and the Conference on Disarmament on that subject. See The Prevention of Nuclear War: Initiatives and Actions in the United Nations, United Nations Fact Sheet No. 34, 1984.

28/ In this context, see also resolution 38/80.

29/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh session, Supplement No. 1 (A/37/1), p. 1 et seq.
