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MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE DISARMAMENT DECADE

Report of the Secretary-General

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

/7 November 1975

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The United Kingdom Government are fully committed to the achievement of effective measures of multilateral disarmament, nuclear and conventional, as an essential to greater peace and security for all peoples. This policy has been described in Government statements, it is reflected in active British participation in all relevant multilateral discussions and negotiations and in the prominence given to disarmament issues in bilateral consultations with other Governments. The United Kingdom Government's policy thus fully conforms with the purposes of the Disarmament Decade.

The United Kingdom Government fully support the General Assembly's appeal in paragraph 17 of resolution 2499 A (XXIV) regarding signature and ratification of the multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament. At the outset of the Disarmament Decade the United Kingdom Government ratified the Additional Protocols of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and were the first nuclear weapon State to do so in the case of Additional Protocol II. 1/ The United Kingdom Government ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof 2/ on 18 May 1972 and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction 3/ on 26 March 1975.

The United Kingdom Government have participated actively in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and in the annual debates on disarmament issues in the United Nations General Assembly. At the regional level the United Kingdom Government participate fully in the Vienna negotiations on the reduction of forces and armaments and associated measures in Central Europe. The United Kingdom has moreover played a full and constructive part in the series of meetings, held under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, concerning possible prohibitions or restrictions on conventional weapons which might be deemed to cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects; and intends to continue to do so during the further meetings on this subject scheduled for 1976.

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 634, No. 9068, p. 281.

2/ General Assembly resolution 2660 (XXV).

3/ General Assembly resolution 2826 (XXVI).

During 1975, the United Kingdom Government played a constructive part in the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Present policy is directed to giving effect to important recommendations in the Final Declaration of the Conference. ^{4/} At the joint initiative of a number of Governments, including the United Kingdom Government, the International Atomic Energy Agency has already established an Advisory Group on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions. It is hoped that this will make an important contribution in the field of nuclear non-proliferation.

The United Kingdom Government have the assistance of an Advisory Panel on Arms Control and Disarmament, whose members include distinguished experts and academics outside government and parliamentarians with a special interest in these issues. Ministers and officials also maintain contact with specialist institutions whose studies bear directly on disarmament problems and their possible solution.

The United Kingdom Government fully endorse the need for proper understanding by public opinion of disarmament issues and of their treatment in the United Nations and other multilateral discussions. The issues of the Disarmament Decade are accordingly given wide circulation through publicity for Ministerial speeches and through the presentation to Parliament of periodic White Papers. A White Paper dealing comprehensively with disarmament negotiations is published annually and is widely read.

Ministers and officials also maintain contact, through correspondence and periodic meetings, with non-governmental organizations with a special interest in disarmament questions, including the United Nations Association of Great Britain and its regional branches. Shortly before the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Minister of State responsible for disarmament held a discussion with representatives of interested non-governmental organizations to exchange views on the questions before the Conference.

^{4/} A/C.1/1068, annex I.