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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Confidence-building measures

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[16 October 1979]

1. The Byelorussian SSR consistently advocates the strengthening of peace and the consolidation of international security. It regards practical steps to halt the arms race and achieve disarmament as the most important measures for attaining that goal. The Byelorussian SSR also supports steps which, although not in themselves genuine disarmament measures, promote the achievement of that aim. This is precisely the aim of the measures to build confidence between States and to deepen international détente. The implementation of such measures is especially important for such a region as Europe, where the most destructive armaments are concentrated on a particularly large scale.
2. It is quite correctly noted in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament that the implementation of measures to promote the building of confidence between States and the deepening of military détente could significantly encourage further progress in disarmament.
3. In view of the importance of confidence-building measures in the cause of military détente and the relaxation of international tension, the Byelorussian SSR considers it necessary to emphasize the particular significance for the successful implementation of such measures of a number of bilateral agreements which have been concluded by the Soviet Union with certain States and are designed to reduce the danger of an outbreak of nuclear war, to prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, and to create and improve lines of direct communication.
4. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the provisions included in the Final Act which it adopted established a favourable basis for the deepening of political détente and its extension to the military sphere, for the development of mutually advantageous contacts, and for the strengthening of confidence-building measures between European States. The countries of the Socialist community favour the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act of the European Conference and are putting forward new initiatives the aim of which is the strengthening of peace, the halting of the arms race and the achievement of disarmament, the deepening of détente and the development of co-operation in the spirit of the Final Act. Clear evidence of this is provided by the documents adopted at the Moscow meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in November 1978 and the meeting of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Pact countries held at Budapest in mid-May 1979.

5. The countries of the Socialist community, making every effort to bring about a successful solution, together with other States, to problems of halting the arms race and achieving disarmament, advocate the strengthening of confidence in relations between States and are accordingly proposing the implementation of a whole range of measures, including such measures as the conclusion between all the States which participated in the European Conference of a treaty under which they would agree not to be the first to use nuclear or conventional weapons against each other and an agreement to refrain from expanding the opposing military and political alliances in Europe. In addition to the measures currently being carried out in conformity with the Final Act of the European Conference, the countries of the Socialist community have declared their readiness to reach agreement on prior notification of major troop movements in a specified area of Europe, large-scale air-force manoeuvres in that area, and any large-scale naval manoeuvres conducted near the territorial waters of other States which participated in the European Conference; they have also declared their readiness to reach agreement on restricting the level of military exercises and extending confidence-building measures to the Mediterranean area.

6. In a speech in Berlin on 6 October 1979, Mr. L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on behalf of the States parties to the Warsaw Pact, put forward a number of new proposals designed to provide a real guarantee that all the peoples of Europe may live in conditions of security and peace. These proposals include the following: a readiness to reduce, in comparison with the current level, the number of medium-range nuclear devices deployed in western areas of the Soviet Union, provided that no additional medium-range nuclear devices are stationed in Western Europe; a proposal that the prior notification envisaged in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference with regard to large-scale manoeuvres by land forces would be given further in advance, and that it would not be given, as at present, only where more than 25,000 troops were involved, but at a lower level, when the total exceeded 20,000 troops; a willingness to refrain, on a reciprocal basis, from holding military exercises involving the participation of more than 40-50,000 troops; a proposal that, in the area specified in the Final Act adopted at Helsinki, prior notification should be given both of military manoeuvres and of movements of land forces involving more than 20,000 troops.

7. Animated by a genuine desire to rescue many years of efforts to achieve military détente in Europe from deadlock and to set an example by translating words into practical action, the Soviet Union, by agreement with the German Democratic Republic and after consultations with the other States parties to the Warsaw Pact, has taken a decision to reduce unilaterally the number of Soviet troops in Central Europe. In the course of the next 12 months, up to 20,000 Soviet military personnel, 1,000 tanks and a certain amount of other military matériel will be withdrawn from the territory of the German Democratic Republic.

8. It is important to note that the countries of the Socialist community have indicated their willingness to give the closest consideration to other proposals designed to strengthen confidence between States and to reduce the risk of an outbreak of war in Europe.

9. The aim is to proceed in the near future to discussion and agreement on practical measures of such a kind as to promote the strengthening of confidence between States in Europe, the lessening of military confrontation and a subsequent curtailing of troop concentrations and reduction in armed forces and armaments on that continent. For that purpose, the States parties to the Warsaw Pact have proposed the convening of a conference at the political level with the participation of all European States, the United States and Canada. The Byelorussian SSR strongly supports this proposal and considers the preparation and convening of such a conference to be an extremely urgent and timely objective.

10. The Byelorussian SSR is convinced that implementation of the above-mentioned measures will promote the deepening and strengthening of international détente, the building of confidence between States and the reduction of military confrontation, and will serve as an example in the process of establishing favourable conditions for a solution to such problems in other areas of the world, with due regard to their specific circumstances and requirements.

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