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

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 40/18

Note by the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

In connection with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 40/18 of 18 November 1985, the Secretary-General has received a communication dated 9 September 1986 from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the text of which is reproduced below.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]

[4 September 1986]

1. The Soviet Union regards the negotiations on nuclear and space weapons with the United States of America as an important component of efforts to deal with the principal problem of our time: how to avert the danger of nuclear disaster. It is firmly convinced that agreement between the two mightiest Powers in military terms to prevent an arms race in space and make radical cuts in nuclear weapons would be of decisive importance in progress towards the resolution of that problem.

2. The Soviet position at the talks is based on the Soviet Union's position of principle on disarmament questions, given concrete expression in its proposed programme for the complete and universal abolition of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, and in the concept, elaborated at the Twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of an all-embracing system of international security.

3. The efforts of the Soviet party, since the very beginning of the talks, have been directed towards a goal accepted and spelt out in joint Soviet-American statements (of 8 January 1985 and 21 November 1985): arriving at negotiated agreements on preventing an arms race in space and halting the one on earth, limiting and reducing nuclear weapons and enhancing strategic stability. In a desire to speed up progress at the talks, as agreed during the meeting between Mr. Gorbachev and President Reagan in November 1985, the Soviet Union, during the two rounds of talks this year, has made proposals which would permit prompt settlement of the matters at issue in all three areas of negotiation.

4. To prevent the extension of the arms race into space, the Soviet party is calling for a negotiated agreement imposing an immediate ban on all categories of space strike weapons (i.e. space-based ABM weapons, "space-to-ground" strike weapons and anti-satellite weapons). Confronted, however, with open reluctance on the American side to ban weapons in space outright, the Soviet Union is inviting agreement on partial measures, each of which would make a noteworthy contribution towards a settlement, while together they would secure the objective of preventing an arms race in space.

5. These measures are three: tightening up the Soviet-American Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, banning anti-satellite systems and banning "space-to-ground" weapons. The first task is to bolster the ABM Treaty. Accordingly, the Soviet Union has invited the United States to agree that both parties should undertake not to depart from the Treaty for at least 15 to 20 years - in other words, not to exercise the right which, in special, extraordinary circumstances, article XV of the Treaty gives them. Agreement has also been invited on a clear distinction between permissible laboratory research on ABM systems and components and work prohibited under the Treaty. To monitor such a compact, the Soviet Union proposes that the relevant laboratories in the United States and the USSR should be opened for inspection.

6. As regards strategic attack weapons, the Soviet party has consistently argued for a 50-per-cent cut in American and Soviet nuclear weapons capable of reaching the other side's territory. Naturally, such cuts must be accompanied by a ban on space strike weapons. As a result of the proposed cuts, the USSR would be left with 1,250 nuclear-weapon launchers, and the United States with 1,680. Each side would have 6,000 nuclear warheads on its remaining launchers. Each side could itself decide how to apportion its reduced nuclear resources, on the understanding that no more than 60 per cent of its permitted warheads could be deployed in any one component - IBM, SLBM or airborne launcher.

7. As the United States is not prepared for such radical reductions, the Soviet Union put forward an interim solution as a step towards the 50-per-cent cut. The thrust of this proposal is that the United States and the USSR should reduce their strategic delivery systems (IBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers with associated weapons systems) to equal levels: 1,600 units apiece. The issue of medium-range weapons capable of reaching the other side's territory, including long-range land-based cruise missiles, would be left for separate agreement. Within certain limits, deployment of long-range cruise missiles would be permitted on heavy bombers and aboard strictly defined, numerically restricted categories of submarine. The deployment of long-range cruise missiles on surface vessels would be prohibited. The permissible level of nuclear projectiles for each party would be set at 8,000 units. Under this proposal, too, no more than 60 per cent of the total number of nuclear projectiles could be deployed on any one of the stipulated types of strategic launcher. To exclude any possibility of evading the limits set, the United States would have to undertake not to increase its medium-range nuclear weapons capable of reaching the territory of the USSR, and not to deploy such weapons within range of Soviet territory in parts of the world where they do not exist at the moment.

8. The new Soviet proposal accommodates the two main points of dissent by the United States from the 50-per-cent cut: its refusal to let the reductions extend to medium-range missiles capable of reaching the territory of the other party, and its rejection of a total ban on long-range cruise missiles. The USSR has thus taken into consideration the fact that the United States is not ready for deep cuts. The American proposals, which are also referred to as a 50-per-cent option, are in fact intended to allow an increase in weapons, affording the opportunity to retain not 6,000 but 15,000 or even more warheads by not counting nuclear weapons aboard aircraft and sea-based long-range cruise missiles.

9. As in the past, the Soviet preference is for the more radical solution - halving the relevant Soviet and American nuclear stocks and imposing a total ban on space strike weapons. The interim solution could swiftly be put into effect, over a period of five or six years, given agreement not to depart from the terms of the ABM treaty for a minimum of 15 years.

10. The Soviet Union is also suggesting a fair and effective solution to the question of medium-range nuclear arms in Europe: abolishing all, both Soviet and American, medium-range missiles in Europe as a first step towards ridding the continent of nuclear weapons. It has submitted the draft of an agreement on this matter, whose carefully considered wording might serve as the basis for a mutually acceptable settlement. Soviet policy in this regard is clear and straightforward: not to procrastinate, but to settle the matter as soon as possible, without burdening the issue of American and Soviet medium-range weapons in Europe with other considerations.

11. To ease the way towards a negotiated agreement, the Soviet party has announced that it will strike an agreement on this without direct reference to the questions of space and strategic weapons. The only requirement is that, if Soviet and American medium-range missiles in Europe are abolished, England and France must not expand their respective nuclear forces and the United States must not transfer its strategic or medium-range missiles to other countries. Such measures are necessary to exclude any possibility of circumventing the future agreement to NATO's advantage, and to maintain strategic stability.

12. The Soviet Union is pressing for reliable, effective verification of compliance with future agreements on nuclear-arms reductions. At the talks it has put forward specific proposals covering a wide range of measures, from the use of national technical means of verification to on-the-spot inspection.

13. The Soviet Union is engaged at the talks in a constructive search for mutually acceptable, practical solutions. It is not pressing for unilateral benefits or military advantage. It is ready for either sweeping solutions or interim settlements. It is issuing no ultimatums; on the contrary, it is making allowance for the views of the other party where they do not conflict with the agreed aims of the talks.

14. The Soviet Union's constructive proposals are backed up by noteworthy practical steps. Soon after the talks opened it unilaterally halted further deployment of SS-20 medium-range missiles in its European sector. In addition, a number of those missiles were stood down and the associated fixed installations were dismantled.

15. The Soviet Union is continuing to show restraint in space: since August 1983, it has not launched anti-satellite weapons into space. The unilateral Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions of any kind has been in effect for over a year. Although the Soviet Union had ample grounds to resume nuclear testing, it has extended the moratorium until 1 January 1987, providing the United States with yet another opportunity not to pass up the historic chance of ending the arms race.

16. The active and purposeful policy which the USSR is following to produce swift progress at the talks unfortunately evokes no comparable response from the American side. In actual fact, the United States position is not constructive on any of the areas under negotiation.

17. The American party still refuses to agree on the prevention of an arms race in space. What it advocates instead is, in essence, that both sides should draw up a schedule for a contest in space strike weapons. It is becoming more and more obvious that the chief goal of the United States as far as space is concerned, is to carry out its "Star Wars" programme at any cost, certainly not to make progress at the talks.

18. The proposals on strategic attack weapons put forward by the United States on 1 November 1985 do not form the basis of a mutually acceptable solution. Their intention is to secure unilateral military advantages for the United States; in fact, they call for an expansion, not a reduction in nuclear arsenals, in areas which Washington considers advantageous to itself. This is glaringly obvious in the case of long-range cruise missiles. Under the American approach, the issue is not a reduction in numbers but permission to continue deployment of this dangerous category of strategic weapon. Other strategic airborne nuclear weapons are exempted from the restrictions altogether. The American party is set on keeping a completely free hand as regards the possibility of a sharp increase in its medium-range nuclear weapons capable of reaching the territory of the USSR and its sea-based long-range cruise missiles.

19. Although its proposals are completely at odds with the agreed goals and purposes of the talks, the United States continues to hold fast to a position which, it knows, can win it no ground.

20. Nor does the American party show any signs of wishing to reach agreement on the question of medium-range nuclear weapons. Its response to the Soviet proposal to do away with American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe entirely is the trusty "Zero Option", albeit somewhat fleshed out with implementation deadlines, whose purpose is to secure unilateral Soviet disarmament. On the one hand, "zero" in the American sense means that the Soviet Union must do away with medium-range missiles not only in its European sector but also in the eastern USSR, thus weakening its defence capability in the face of the threat posed by continuously expanding American nuclear potential in Asia. On the other hand, the American approach excludes neither the possibility that the United States might transfer its strategic and medium-range missiles to other countries, nor that the nuclear allies of the United States in Europe might enlarge their own nuclear stocks.

21. The "interim solution" proposed by the Americans on 1 November 1985 holds out no prospect of a mutually acceptable agreement. It does not provide for a reduction, but rather a continuing increase in the number of warheads on American medium-range missiles in Western Europe; not the abolition, but the retention in the region of such dangerous first-strike weapons as Pershing-2 missiles. The American "interim solution" completely avoids the question of nuclear weapons belonging to the United States' NATO allies. It does, on the other hand, contain a completely unsubstantiated demand for the establishment of an unequal balance of

medium-range-missile warheads (in the Americans' favour) in the Eastern USSR, and a claim to the supposed "right" of the United States to deploy its medium-range missiles within range of Soviet territory in regions other than Europe.

22. The reluctance of the American party to resolve the problem of nuclear disarmament can also be seen in its conduct outside the talks. The United States is clearly working on the implementation of the "Star Wars" programme, and tapping the scientific and technological potential of other countries. Having announced what amounts to a refusal to abide further by Soviet-American treaty obligations limiting strategic attack weapons - the 1972 Interim Agreement (SALT I) and the 1979 SALT II Treaty - the United States Administration is now bent on full implementation of its comprehensive strategic programme for a nuclear-weapons build-up. The United States shows no desire to join the Soviet Union's unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions. In twelve months of Soviet moratorium, moreover, the United States, which is hundreds of tests ahead of the Soviet Union in terms of explosions conducted, detonated another 18 nuclear devices. Finally, the United States is still working on the deployment of further American missiles in Europe.

23. Such actions by the United States, of course, are no help to progress at the talks. On the contrary, they block progress.

24. The policy of the American party both at and outside the talks cannot but cause alarm, inasmuch as the longer the outstanding issues remain unresolved, the more difficult the situation becomes and the harder efforts to check the arms race grow. At the same time, military technology advances so swiftly nowadays that nations, States and politicians are left with less and less time to realize the extent of the threat hanging over the globe and the opportunity to stop mankind from sliding into the nuclear abyss is dwindling. What is needed now are sweeping measures, brisk and decisive action to steer events into better channels. This accords with the desires of every nation on earth. It is called for in the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and other international gatherings. And it is just such measures that the Soviet Union is proposing in its negotiations with the United States on nuclear and space weapons.

25. The Soviet Union will continue to press for progress at the talks, in the knowledge that an early resolution of the issues under discussion there affects the vital interests not only of the USSR, but of States and peoples throughout the world. For progress to occur, however, there must be some movement in response from the American side.
