



Seventeenth session

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS: REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN
ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION

ECONOMIC PROGRAMME FOR DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 21 September 1962 from the Minister for Foreign
Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the
President of the General Assembly

On instructions from the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I request the inclusion of an item entitled "Economic programme for disarmament" in the agenda of the seventeenth session of the United Nations General Assembly as a separate and urgent question of great importance for all States and peoples.

In accordance with rule 20 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, I attach an explanatory memorandum.

(Signed) A. GROMYKO
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the USSR

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The struggle of the peace-loving peoples for general and complete disarmament, for the discontinuance of the senseless arms race and for the relaxation of international tension has already brought to the forefront of the international scene the question of an economic programme for disarmament. This question acquires importance also by reason of scientific and technical progress, which today could and should bring about a fundamental improvement in people's living conditions everywhere on earth, once disarmament and general peace has been assured.

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, N.S. Khrushchev, addressing the World Congress for General Disarmament and Peace at Moscow on 10 July 1962, spoke of the vast opportunities for economic development which would be presented to all countries of the world if the incalculable resources now poured into the bottomless pit of the arms race were diverted to peaceful, productive purposes. Of particularly great importance for all countries, in this connexion, would be the equalizing of the level of economic development of States and continents and the raising of the economically under-developed countries to the level of the highly developed countries within the lifetime of the present generation.

This question naturally and inevitably attracts the attention of the United Nations and of all the States of the world.

It is the duty of the United Nations to fulfil this requirement of our time and to raise the banner of a comprehensive economic programme for disarmament, without waiting for a treaty on general and complete disarmament to be concluded. It should go beyond general considerations and should work out concrete projections for the economic development of the various countries in conditions of general and complete disarmament. Provision should, in the opinion of the Soviet Government, be made for most active participation, in the working out of such projections, by the Governments of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which have their national development plans and for which general and complete disarmament would open up entirely new prospects for economic and cultural advancement and for the greater well-being of their peoples.

On instructions from the Soviet Government, the delegation of the USSR requests the inclusion of the question "Economic programme for disarmament" as a separate item on the agenda of the seventeenth session of the United Nations General Assembly, and at the same time requests that the attached draft "Declaration concerning the conversion to peaceful needs of the resources released by disarmament" be circulated.

In view of the importance of this question, the Soviet delegation is of opinion that it should be considered directly by the General Assembly in plenary meeting.

DECLARATION

CONCERNING THE CONVERSION TO PEACEFUL NEEDS OF THE RESOURCES RELEASED BY DISARMAMENT

(Draft submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Three years ago the United Nations General Assembly, on the initiative of the Soviet Union, adopted a resolution on general and complete disarmament. The Eighteen-Nation Committee established by the United Nations, meeting at Geneva, discussed a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament. Although the majority of States represented on the Committee were in favour of concluding the treaty, no positive results were obtained.

Meanwhile, the arms race continues. The military budgets of States are increasing. Nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction are being stockpiled and perfected. The peoples are confronted with a choice: either general and complete disarmament and inviolable peace, or the intensification of the arms race and the drift of the world towards a disastrous thermonuclear war.

There is still time to avert the danger overhanging the world. The world's peoples can and must counter the plans for intensifying the arms race, and for waging aggressive war, with their own plan for general and complete disarmament, their own programme for friendship and peaceful economic co-operation.

The General Assembly, guided by its earlier resolution in favour of general and complete disarmament, deems it essential to make the present Declaration in order, at this time, to draw the attention of the States and peoples of the entire world to the economic aspects of disarmament.

General and complete disarmament would free States and peoples from the heavy burden of military expenditure, and would make available an additional sum of about \$120,000 million a year wherewith to meet mankind's urgent needs - a sum which is now spent for military purposes. Within twenty-five years, States would have realized from disarmament a total saving of \$3,000 thousand million. That sum is approximately equal to the total value of the wealth created up to the present time by human labour throughout the world.

It would be possible not only to divert the enormous sums now being absorbed by all kinds of weapons, ammunition and strategic stockpiles to the requirements of a peace economy and the improvement of the peoples' living conditions, but also to release from service in armies and employment in war industries tens of millions of people whose knowledge and labour could be used for peace.

The General Assembly, in accordance with the conclusions of the United Nations group of experts which studied the economic aspects of disarmament, recognizes that the diversion to peaceful purposes of the resources now used by States for military ends could be accomplished to the benefit of all countries without any adverse effect upon their national economies, and that all problems of transition connected with the realization of general and complete disarmament could be solved by appropriate national and international measures.

Disarmament alone would not, of course, solve all the problems confronting States and peoples. It would, however, unquestionably have a beneficial effect on the economy in all countries and help to increase the well-being of all peoples. Not a single country would lack opportunities for the peaceful use of the resources which would be made available as a result of general and complete disarmament.

In the industrially developed countries of the West - the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, etc. - the peoples everywhere have pressing needs which the arms race is largely preventing them from satisfying.

Considerable resources would be required in these countries - and general and complete disarmament would make them available - for the construction of housing and communal facilities, the reduction of taxes levied on the population, the introduction of free education, medical care, care of the aged, maternal and child welfare and the satisfaction of the people's other economic and social needs. The conversion of resources to peaceful purposes, and the growth of production in civilian branches of the economy, would increase the demand for manpower, and this would fully compensate for the decline in employment resulting from discontinuance of the production of armaments.

The socialist countries, in their plans for stimulating economic and cultural development and for improving the well-being of the people, are providing for economic and cultural construction at a rapid pace. If general and complete disarmament were realized they could devote additional resources, which they are now obliged to spend on defence, to peaceful creative purposes - to the establishment of new industrial zones, the further improvement of agriculture and the development of science and technology. Disarmament would enable the socialist countries to increase the output of products for mass consumption and to supply the public more rapidly with an abundance of foodstuffs, clothing and other material goods.

Disarmament would be of enormous benefit to the economically under-developed countries in their efforts to accomplish the formidable tasks associated with their national rebirth.

The help now being extended to the under-developed countries is not commensurate with their existing needs. If they are to throw off the shackles of backwardness, hunger and want, enormous resources are required. These resources can be secured through general and complete disarmament.

If, for example, one fifth of the resources spent for military purposes by States belonging to military-political groups was used to promote the economic development of the under-developed countries, it would make available \$20,000 million a year for that purpose, or \$500,000 million in twenty-five years. According to existing estimates, the use of that sum, in conjunction with their domestic efforts and resources, would suffice to enable all the economically under-developed countries of the world to overcome their economic backwardness and closely to approach the current level of industrial output in such developed countries as the United Kingdom and France within the lifetime of the present generation - that is, within the next twenty to twenty-five years.

With these resources it would be possible to set up from thirty to forty new power-based industrial centres, of world significance, in the under-developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. To do so it would be necessary to harness and make extensive use of the rich resources of those countries in water power, petroleum, gas, ferrous and non-ferrous metal ores and other natural wealth.

Industrial development would make it possible to exploit the surrounding agricultural areas on a modern technical basis. Many such projects exist. It is for the States concerned to decide which of them are essential, and in what order of priority. It is possible forthwith, however, to envisage the general outline of a programme of measures aimed at transforming the aspect of entire continents.

In South East Asia, where nearly a fourth of the world's population lives, projects exist for the comprehensive exploitation of the great rivers of that region - the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Irrawaddy and the Mekong - and for the utilization of its varied natural resources. These projects will make possible, in the most fertile and densely populated areas of India, Pakistan, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Viet-Nam, the erection of hydroelectric power stations with a total capacity of several tens of millions of kilowatts, the establishment of large industrial complexes serving various purposes, and the construction of great irrigation systems to water many millions of hectares. Similarly, the realization of the economic development projects of Indonesia, Malaya, Ceylon and the Philippines would result in a fundamental improvement in the economy of these countries.

In the region of the Near and Middle East the exploitation, on behalf of the inhabitants of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Afghanistan and the Arabian peninsula, of the petroleum, gas and other natural resources of this area would make it possible to establish gigantic chemical combines for the production of many valuable items such as fertilizers, synthetic fibres, construction materials, medicaments, and raw materials which are useful for technical purposes, as well as other industrial undertakings.

In Africa, existing plans and projects open up the possibility of establishing a number of great power-based industrial complexes of world significance.

In the great Nile basin, a number of large-scale power stations could be built in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, in addition to the Aswan power station now under construction in the UAR. This would make it possible to irrigate more land so that it could be used for the cultivation of cotton, rice and other valuable crops, and to construct a number of oil refineries and chemical, mechanical engineering, textile and food factories and workshops.

Another large power and industrial complex of world significance could be built in North Africa on the basis of the petroleum and gas of the Sahara.

A third important centre would be the area of the Volta, Niger and Konkoure rivers in West Africa. Their great water-power resources could be used to accelerate the development of industry and agriculture, and to expand the communications network - at present very limited - which will be required for the economic development of Ghana, Guinea, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Mali and other countries.

A fourth powerful industrial complex could be established on the basis of the immense power potential of that great African river, the Congo, and of the richest geological treasure-house on earth - the area covered by Katanga and Northern Rhodesia.

General and complete disarmament would make it possible for the countries of Latin America to put an end to the restrictive single-crop system and to diversify their economies.

According to existing estimates and plans, it would be possible to build great hydrotechnical complexes with a total hydroelectric capacity of several million kilowatts on the rivers of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Venezuela and Colombia. On the basis of the water power and other natural resources of the countries of that continent, a number of oil refineries and metallurgical, mechanical engineering and other undertakings could be established.

These projects are not idle fancies, but realistic estimates. They have been worked out by eminent scientists on the basis of the most recent achievements of science and technology. Their realization would radically change the economic and cultural situation of the still under-developed areas of the world in a very short time. In those areas new centres of culture would be formed, educational establishments and scientific and research institutes would be built, and each country would have its own national cadres of engineers, technicians, skilled workers, economists, agronomists, land-reclamation specialists, physicians and teachers.

Disarmament and the conversion of immense resources to peaceful needs would give ample scope for the development of peaceful co-operation between States, on

a basis of equality and in the interests of all concerned. The expansion of international trade and mutual assistance would redound to the benefit of all countries, great and small, economically developed and under-developed; would ensure the growth of production; and would provide employment for additional millions of people.

The General Assembly,

Taking into account the foregoing and guided by the lofty ideals of peace and peaceful coexistence,

Solemnly addresses to the Governments of all States the present appeal that they redouble their efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament as speedily as possible;

Calls upon all States to work for the accomplishment of the purposes set forth in this Declaration;

Requests the Acting Secretary-General, without waiting for the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, to hold with the Governments of the economically under-developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America consultations, which are even now imperative, concerning the formulation of an international programme of assistance to those countries in overcoming their economic backwardness with the aid of a part of the resources released by general and complete disarmament, and to submit that programme for consideration by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its eighteenth regular session;

Expresses firm confidence in the triumph of the principles of reason and justice and in the final establishment, throughout the world, of conditions in which wars shall be forever excluded from the life of human society and in which the arms race, now consuming enormous resources created by many generations of human beings, will be replaced by broad and fruitful co-operation between the peoples for a better life on earth.