

REPORT
OF THE
***AD HOC* COMMITTEE ON THE**
WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTIETH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 28 (A/40/28)



UNITED NATIONS

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New York, 1985

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[29 July 1985]

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 39/150 of 17 December 1984, the General Assembly, inter alia, renewed the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference 1/ and requested the Ad Hoc Committee to continue to maintain close contact with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States in order to remain currently informed of their positions, as well as with all other States, and to consider any relevant comments and observations which might be made to the Committee, especially having in mind paragraph 122 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2). The Assembly also requested the Committee to submit a report to the Assembly at its fortieth session.

2. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee were as follows:

Chairman: Mr. Nissanka Wijewardane (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen:* Mr. Kazimierz Tomaszewski (Poland)

Rapporteur: Mr. Arturo Laclaustra (Spain)

3. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics participated in the work of the Committee by virtue of paragraph 3 of resolution 3183 (XXVIII). Under the same provision, China, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America maintained contact with the Ad Hoc Committee through its Chairman. The German Democratic Republic, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Oman and Viet Nam attended meetings of the Committee as observers.

4. The Working Group established in 1974 continued to function. 2/

II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

5. In accordance with its mandate mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Ad Hoc Committee held two sessions in 1985.

6. During the first session, the Ad Hoc Committee held four meetings from 22 to 25 April. At the first meeting of the session (82nd meeting), the Committee was informed that Mr. Ryszard Krystosik (Poland) had completed his mission in New York and thus was unable to continue in his function as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The Committee, therefore, elected by acclamation Mr. Kazimierz Tomaszewski (Poland) as a new Vice-Chairman. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the contribution made to its work by Mr. Ryszard Krystosik. Two posts of Vice-Chairmen remained vacant, pending further consultations.

7. During the second session, the Ad Hoc Committee held four meetings between 15 and 19 July.

* See para. 6.

8. During the two sessions, the Chairman and the representatives of the following States members of the Ad Hoc Committee and observers made statements: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Poland, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. Representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also made statements.

9. Members of the Committee were fully aware of the positions previously expressed by the Governments of other States on the convening of a world disarmament conference.

10. The Working Group held two meetings, on 16 and 17 July, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Laclaustra (Spain), and elaborated the draft of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

11. The Ad Hoc Committee, at its 89th meeting on 19 July, considered and adopted its report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

12. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 39/150, the Ad Hoc Committee, through its Chairman, maintained close contact with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States in order to remain currently informed of their attitudes and obtained the following updated indications of their positions:

China

China has always stood for the convening of an international conference to discuss disarmament. As early as 1963, China proposed to hold a world summit conference to discuss the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. The two super-Powers that possess the largest arsenals of both nuclear and conventional weapons are now stepping up their arms race, posing a grave threat to world peace and security. It is therefore a matter of utmost urgency to urge them by various means to reduce their armaments. If the majority of the Member States are in favour of a world conference to discuss how the two super-Powers should take the lead in drastically cutting their armaments, China will be ready to support the idea.

France

With regard to the conditions which should be met in order to make possible the convening of a world disarmament conference, the position of France has not changed since last year. That position is that, as matters now stand, no consensus exists concerning such a project.

In these circumstances, France would have no objection to the Ad Hoc Committee studying the possibility of making its meetings less frequent in order to take account of the continuing deadlock.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Soviet Union reaffirms its position of principle on the convening of a world disarmament conference.

In the opinion of the Soviet Union, a world disarmament conference based on a comprehensive discussion of disarmament issues could work out effective

approaches for curbing the arms race and bringing about practical disarmament. The conference would produce not simply recommendations but concrete practical decisions which States would undertake to carry out. It is a matter of common knowledge that the idea of holding a world disarmament conference has received broad international support, including support in the United Nations.

The Soviet Union is convinced that the adoption of a decision on concrete measures relating to preparations for a world disarmament conference, including the dates on which it would be held, would be welcomed by the entire world community as evidence of the determination of Member States to devote special attention to the study and solution of disarmament problems which are of vital importance to all mankind.

In keeping with its policy of principle aimed at strengthening peace and curbing the arms race, the Soviet Union is prepared to promote as vigorously as possible the adoption of such a decision.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland believes that, in view of the present international climate, no useful purpose would be served by preparing for the holding of a world disarmament conference. The United Kingdom therefore continues to doubt the usefulness of further meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee.

United States of America

The United States believes that a propitious international environment is indispensable for a successful world disarmament conference. An unsuccessful or inconclusive conference would serve no useful purpose and could prove unhelpful by creating impediments to future efforts towards concrete and verifiable arms control and disarmament measures, as noted by the United States in the past. The United States believes that, at this time, insufficient political agreement exists on the conditions for and on the disarmament issues central to such a conference. It is therefore premature to contemplate the convening of a world disarmament conference. In view of this situation, the United States is persuaded that serious consideration should be given to dropping future meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Ad Hoc Committee reiterated that the idea of a world disarmament conference has received wide support by the membership of the United Nations, however, with varying degrees of emphasis on and differences concerning conditions and certain aspects related to the question of the convening of such a conference, including aspects related to the deteriorating international situation. It was also evident from the updated indications of positions of the nuclear-weapon States, as reflected in paragraph 12 of the present report, some of which confirm certain elements requiring careful consideration by the Ad Hoc Committee, that no consensus with respect to the convening of a world disarmament conference under the present conditions has yet been reached among the nuclear-weapon States, whose participation in such a conference has been deemed essential by most States Members of the Organization.

14. Having regard for the important requirements of a world disarmament conference to be convened at the earliest appropriate time, with universal participation and with adequate preparation, the General Assembly should take up the question at its fortieth regular session for further consideration, bearing in mind the relevant provisions of resolution 36/91, adopted by consensus, in particular paragraph 1 of that resolution, and resolution 39/150, also adopted by consensus.

15. The General Assembly may wish to renew the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee and to request it to continue to maintain close contact with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States in order to remain currently informed of their attitudes, as well as with all other States, and to consider any relevant comments and observations which might be made to the Committee.

Notes

1/ By its resolution 3183 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, the General Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should consist of the following 40 non-nuclear-weapon States Members of the United Nations appointed by the President of the Assembly after consultation with all regional groups: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

2/ The composition of the Working Group is as follows: Burundi, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Spain (Chairman) and Sri Lanka. Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics participated in the Working Group as observers.

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