



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/39/419/Corr.1
3 January 1985
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

Thirty-ninth session
Agenda item 65 (g)

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extention of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans

Report of the Secretary-General

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Before BULGARIA insert

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[25 April 1984]

1. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic believes that preventing nuclear war and changing international affairs for the better are crucial tasks, in the dangerous world situation which has arisen through the fault of the forces of imperialism.

2. For a number of years, as is known, the socialist States have been advancing important proposals on this matter. The Soviet Union has recently proposed a major set of far-reaching initiatives.

3. The Soviet proposal for the joint acknowledgement by the nuclear Powers of definite rules for relations between them which would serve the cause of peace is extremely important. The same objective is aimed at by the declaration on the condemnation of nuclear war, which was adopted upon the Soviet Union's initiative at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and other Soviet proposals, inter alia, for a nuclear-weapons freeze and for the prevention of an arms race in space - which were also endorsed by the General Assembly.

4. The reduction of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, requires genuinely tangible and effective steps. It is just such measures that are being proposed by the States of the socialist community.

5. The escalation of the naval and nuclear naval arms race, including nuclear naval weapons, being forced by the United States and its closest allies, greatly increases the danger of war. Initiating on a large scale a new round of the naval arms race and increasing its naval presence in various parts of the world's oceans, the United States is seeking to gain superiority in every military field and is threatening a massive use of force in any part of the world which it has arbitrarily declared to be a sphere of its "vital interest". Moreover, some Western Powers are directly employing their naval forces to commit acts of aggression against sovereign States, particularly developing States, to exert pressure on them and to interfere in their internal affairs in order to preserve the remnants of the colonial system.

6. That is why the United States and some of its allies have obstructed efforts to solve the problems of limiting the naval arms race.

7. At the same time, further development of the arms race in this direction will result in undermining the stability of the world as a whole and of specific regions and will have many other adverse effects - diverting resources from constructive purposes, jeopardizing the freedom of peaceful navigation and endangering the exploration and exploitation of marine resources.

8. In view of the above considerations, the struggle to curb the naval arms race should be made an important part of the efforts aimed at eliminating the threat of war, especially nuclear war, and at establishing the conditions for mankind's peaceful progress. On these grounds and guided by the goal of strengthening international security, the Byelorussian SSR continues to oppose the arms race in all its aspects, including the arms race in the seas and oceans. At the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, for example, it supported resolution 38/188 F on "Curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments, extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans".

9. The countries of the socialist community have frequently put forward proposals designed to curb the naval arms race. Thus, in view of the expanded role of navies, the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty advocated in their Political Declaration of 1983 the initiation of negotiations on limiting naval activities, limiting and reducing naval armaments and extending confidence-building measures to seas and oceans.

10. States which possess powerful navies and other interested States could participate in such negotiations. Having such States as the participants would provide a basis for discussing the possibility of holding the negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. Separate multilateral negotiations are also possible. Whatever the form chosen for such multilateral negotiations, they must not be construed as a barrier to the discussion of these questions in the negotiations between the nuclear Powers.
11. The negotiations could deal with measures for limiting and reducing any military presence and military activities in areas where there is a high probability of conflict situations or where the busiest sea lanes lie, confidence-building measures in the seas and oceans, and steps for the limitation and immediate reduction of naval armaments.
12. A regional approach to the limitation of naval activities and naval armaments also has significant possibilities. As is known, the States of the socialist community have proposed a series of measures aimed at transforming the Mediterranean Sea into a zone of stable peace and co-operation (the Byelorussian SSR's reply to the Secretary-General's inquiry about the strengthening of security and co-operation in the region of the Mediterranean Sea is contained in document A/37/355/Add.3) and at strengthening peace and security in the Persian Gulf; they support the idea, advanced by the non-aligned countries, of transforming the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and are participating constructively in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean with a view to making preparations for an international conference on the subject; they have made proposals to limit the activities of navies and to adopt confidence-building measures in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The USSR has made intensive efforts to curb the naval arms race in a number of its aspects, both in bilateral negotiations with the United States on the limitation and subsequent reduction of military activities in the Indian Ocean and in the context of the limitation and reduction of strategic weapons.
13. During the negotiations on limiting naval activities, limiting and reducing naval armaments and extending confidence-building measures to seas and oceans the principle of equality and equal security must be strictly applied, and the negotiations must be conducted not merely for the sake of negotiating but in order to deal with the essence of the problem, taking into account all the factors which affect the balance of forces in the seas and oceans.
14. The approach set forth in General Assembly resolution 38/188 G entitled "Study on the naval arms race" should not be confined to a study of the technical aspects of the problem alone. The interests of the international community would seem to be served by a study which would, within the framework of the appropriate negotiations, facilitate the development of practical steps to limit naval activities and to limit and reduce naval armaments.
15. The study must not be construed as a substitute for negotiations or serve as an excuse for unduly prolonging them; otherwise, its desirability and effectiveness will be questionable.

16. The Byelorussian SSR is convinced that if those naval Powers to which the proposals of the States of the socialist community are addressed have the necessary political will, progress in the development and adoption of measures to curb the naval arms race is really attainable.
