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CESSATION OF ALL NUCLEAR-TEST EXPLOSIONS

URGENT NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 40/88 ON THE IMMEDIATE
CESSATION AND PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT ON A
REGIONAL SCALE

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT

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

Letter dated 30 October 1986 from the Permanent Representative of
Sweden to the United Nations and the representative of Mexico to
the First Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you a document entitled "What is to be done? Recommendations of the Palme Commission" which was adopted on 26 October 1986 by the Palme Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues.

We should be grateful if you would have this text circulated among Member States as a document of the First Committee of the General Assembly under the following agenda items: item 47 "Cessation of all nuclear-test explosions", item 48 "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", item 54 "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", item 55 "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 40/88 on the immediate cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests", item 60 "General and complete disarmament: Conventional

disarmament on a regional scale", item 60 (c) "Conventional disarmament" and item 62 "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session".

(Signed) Anders FERM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Sweden

(Signed) Alfonso GARCIA ROBLES
Ambassador
Representative of Mexico
to the First Committee

Annex

THE PALME COMMISSION ON DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY ISSUES

Budapest meeting, 24-26 October 1986

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PALME COMMISSION

The world witnessed a breath-taking event in October 1986. For two days, the leaders of the great military Powers discussed the outlines of a far-reaching agreement to reduce drastically and, eventually, to eliminate the most dangerous weapons which humanity has ever devised. They came close to final agreement but could not reach it. The possibility for a resumption of this unprecedented negotiation, however, appears still to be in sight.

We urge the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a matter of the highest priority to continue the process begun in Reykjavik - to continue and to accelerate their efforts. The momentum of that remarkable weekend must not be lost.

In the Commission's view, there are four elements of a possible comprehensive agreement:

First, the two great Powers must reach agreement on the most difficult element of their significant compromise. The meeting at Reykjavik made clear that a major obstacle to the conclusion of this far-ranging agreement to eliminate nuclear arms is the development of strategic missile defense systems and the interpretation of the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) Treaty. In the view of the Commission, the problems raised in this connection are not insurmountable, making possible achievement of an historic accord.

The solution lies in the framework provided by the ABM Treaty. As presently drafted this document already contains effective means of avoiding new competition in defensive arms; it need not be amended. It should neither be broadened nor narrowed. What is needed is the attainment of an understanding by the two Powers to strengthen the ABM treaty régime. How can this be accomplished?

According to article V of the Treaty, "Each Party undertakes not to develop, test, or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based." It does not mention research and both sides implicitly accept the legitimacy of research. As the Commission understands, there is no disagreement that the continued development, testing, and deployment of a single, fixed, ground-based system by each side also is permitted by the Treaty. The problem is to identify the demarcation between permitted "research" and prohibited "testing and development" of ARM systems and their components, particularly those that would be deployed in space.

To this end, the United States should be willing to describe the specific activities in ABM research, testing, and development which it plans over the next 10 years. The Soviet Union should then specify which of those activities it would consider to be in violation of the Treaty. At the same time, the mirror-image of this process would be carried out: with the Soviet Union specifying its planned activities, if any, and the United States identifying which of those activities it considered to be permitted and which prohibited by the Treaty. Through such an interactive process, the two sides hopefully would come to a precise understanding of the specific meaning of the Treaty's key provision concerning research, testing, and development. Necessary procedures to verify the undertakings presented by each should be included in any such agreement.

Success in this endeavour could be reinforced by strict compliance with article XV, which states that the Treaty "shall be of unlimited duration," permitting either signatory to withdraw only following six months prior notice, "if it decides that extraordinary events ... have jeopardized its supreme interests". The Treaty could be reinforced by agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States not to exercise their respective withdrawal rights for a period of 10 years.

Finally, the two sides should discuss and resolve their respective charges of non-compliance with the Treaty, including those pertaining to the location and function of certain radars and other items of equipment. Concrete steps should be taken to ease any such concerns including, where appropriate, the modification or abandonment of radars now under construction, so as not to undermine confidence in the Treaty.

Because of the centrality of the problems of strategic missile defenses to the entire structure of arms control and disarmament, they cannot be dealt with in normal negotiating channels. An urgent and extraordinary effort is required at the highest possible level. The two nations' leaders must make clear to their respective officials that the solution of these issues must not be impeded by legalistic haggling or bureaucratic delays. While solutions to the problems posed by research in strategic defenses are technical and legal in implementation, they are at their root political. Once the political will to reach agreement has been confirmed, solutions will come rapidly.

Secondly, the United States and Soviet negotiators should begin immediately to complete the details of their agreement to reduce strategic nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles by 50 per cent within five years and to bring their respective total numbers of such weapons to equal numbers. Provisions for limitations on sea-based cruise missiles also should be included. The agreement on strategic weapons also should provide effective means of verification, including, as appropriate, on-site inspections on a challenge basis. It also should specify the commitment of the two nations to eliminate all these weapons completely within a period to be agreed upon.

Thirdly, there is near total agreement on a treaty concerning the United States and Soviet intermediate-range missiles. All such weapons in Europe, or capable of reaching Europe, should be destroyed. Deployments of intermediate-range missiles elsewhere in the world should be restricted for the time being to

100 warheads for the Soviet Union in Asia, and 100 warheads for the United States within its own territory. To ensure that the intention of this agreement is not circumvented, deployments of shorter-range missiles should be frozen and negotiations initiated immediately for their reduction and eventual elimination. Effective procedures to ensure the verification of these provisions, including on-site inspections on a challenge basis, should be included in the agreement.

The Commission recommends that the United States and the USSR complete work on, and initial, the draft of a treaty limiting intermediate-range missiles as soon as possible. In accordance with established international practice, upon the initialing of an agreement, no steps may thereafter be taken which are inconsistent with its spirit. Therefore, preparations for additional deployments of these weapons would be halted. Work on the other elements of the overall agreement should proceed as rapidly as possible, with the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) treaty to be implemented upon their completion.

Fourthly, the Commission reaffirms its belief that an immediate ban on all nuclear tests should be agreed. However, in the framework of negotiations for a comprehensive test ban, an interim approach should not be excluded. For example, a one kiloton limit on the yield of tests could constitute a useful first step.

A nuclear explosion in space has been suggested as a possible energy source for an x-ray laser as part of a space-based defensive missile system. This possibility should be precluded.

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Since deep cuts in nuclear forces now appear feasible, it is particularly urgent to find breakthroughs in negotiations on conventional weapons. The use of nuclear weapons would destroy Europe, not defend it, but a war restricted to the use of conventional weapons also would be enormously destructive.

The achievement of substantial reductions and stable parity in conventional forces is a necessary concomitant of progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons in Europe. Conventional and nuclear arms are linked; progress in one cannot proceed far without progress in the other.

In the view of the Commission, negotiations on conventional forces should aim at reaching stability at the lowest possible level in the region between the Urals and the Atlantic. Special attention should be paid to the forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Any such cuts should focus on those forces perceived to be the most threatening by each side, particularly those which would be necessary to initiate an attack. Cuts should be based on parity and common security.

The successful conclusion of the Stockholm conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe and the continued failure of the Mutual Forces Reduction (MFR) talks in Vienna underline the question of the appropriate forum for negotiations on these subjects. Possibilities include the development of a much broader agenda for the second Stockholm conference - which is the task of the imminent Vienna follow-up conference to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), a continuation of the Vienna MFR talks, or the convening of a new forum, perhaps one comprised of representatives of the two military alliances.

In the Commission's view, the Vienna talks on troop reductions should be concluded immediately with a first-phase agreement. No serious technical problems remain, only the specific arrangements necessary to ensure verification of the small reductions now envisaged. These talks have continued for 13 years to produce, at best, an agreement that would reduce the two sides' forces in the affected area by less than 1 per cent. The people of Europe, East and West, have a right to demand concrete results from these negotiations without delay.

The nations of Europe should draw lessons from these talks. Concentrating on quantitative limitations is not sufficient; attention also must be paid to qualitative aspects of the conventional military balance. Negotiations cannot be permitted to lapse into protracted quibbles on minor points; high-level attention is required to ensure rapid progress.

A new negotiating forum for conventional forces must promptly be chosen. The Commission takes no position on the question of whether the new talks should be convened within the CSCE context or on a bloc-to-bloc basis, or perhaps to include an inter-bloc working group within the broader forum that will meet in Stockholm as part of CSCE. We are clear that the forum should have a comprehensive agenda, including major reductions in conventional forces, creating a more stable balance, limitations on shorter-range "battlefield" nuclear weapons, and a variety of confidence-building measures, including the creation of a battlefield-nuclear-weapon-free corridor and a chemical-weapon-free zone. The agenda also could include the further development of constraints on military capabilities and activities that would be most amenable to offensive uses.

Reduction of conventional weapons also will require measures to deal with short-range "battlefield" nuclear weapons. These weapons provide the link between conventional and nuclear forces in Europe, and will assume added importance as progress is made in reducing either nuclear or conventional forces. The Commission strongly reaffirms its proposal to create a corridor free of battlefield nuclear weapons, beginning in Central Europe, and urges its serious consideration and implementation by all relevant Governments.

The Helsinki Accords recognized that the creation of true stability in Europe has humanitarian, economic, and security aspects. This Commission has concentrated on security questions. It is clear, however, that progress must be made in all three dimensions for the people of Europe to live in true peace and harmony.

CONCLUSION

If the remaining three years of the 1980s repeat the first seven years of the decade, there will be no substantial agreement to control or reduce arms - but accelerating deployments of new and more dangerous weapons. Yet a basis has been laid for extraordinary progress. An opportunity exists for the 1980s to witness what only recently seemed to be a dream, but which now can become real: concrete accomplishments in disarmament, stability and peace. We urge all responsible leaders to grasp this historical opportunity, and to establish common security.