

Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies

Program in International Affairs

Rosedale Road
Post Office Box 2820
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
609-921-1141

Cable: Aspeninst PrincetonNJ

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February 14, 1978

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Harlan Cleveland
Director

The Honorable Kurt Waldheim
Secretary General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Waldheim:

Beginning in the last week of May 1978, the UN General Assembly will meet for several weeks in a Special Session on Disarmament.

Today, fourteen weeks ahead of time, this may look like "just another meeting." But by late May, the Special Session will look more like the first world disarmament conference since 1922. At a minimum it will be a prime media event; the number of chiefs of state and heads of government attending will be multiplied by the accident that a NATO Council meeting at summit level is being planned for Washington while the disarmament session is going on in New York.

In the conviction that the U.S. has a chance to make this unique occasion something more than a well-reported rehearsal of familiar reasons for not reducing arms, the Aspen Institute (with the assistance of the Institute for World Order) undertook some months ago to suggest a strategy for the U.S. at this UN session. The resulting unsolicited advice, in a paper by Lincoln Bloomfield and myself, is partly intended to help stimulate the formulation of U.S. policy; in preliminary draft form it has already, we understand, been serving that purpose.

But it may also be of interest to policy officials in the United Nations Organization itself; you live in the same dangerous world and you share similar policy dilemmas. And that is why I am sending also to you a copy of the nongovernmental advice we are providing to our own government.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Mr. Allen / FOM

Harlan
Harlan Cleveland

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February 14, 1978

HIGHLIGHTS
of
DISARMAMENT AND THE UN:
STRATEGY FOR THE UNITED STATES

An Aspen Institute Policy Paper
by Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Harlan Cleveland

Booklet retained
in UNCD
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The first world disarmament meeting since 1922 will be held in New York from May 23 to June 28, 1978. This "Special Session on Disarmament" of the UN General Assembly will probably draw to New York a good many heads of government -- especially since there will be a NATO summit in Washington during this same period.

Thirty-three years after the Hiroshima bomb, the three arms races -- "strategic," "nuclear proliferation," and "conventional" arms buildups -- are more dangerous, and less constrained, than ever. World military spending is one-third of a trillion dollars per year, and rising. Some "arms control" has been agreed, but arms reduction has not yet started.

The UN Special Session could make things worse -- each bloc of nations blaming the tensions on the others. But it could be a "window" of opportunity for a fresh start -- since nuclear weapons look more and more unusable (except for deterrence), conventional arms buildups are widely perceived as more and more dangerous, and non-military forms of power -- energy, food, technology, information and money -- are growing in importance in world politics.

The UN's majority -- the weaker and poorer nations -- will be trying to link arms reduction with a fairer share of the world's economic benefits and a bigger voice in international decision-making. The major military powers

will want to avoid derailing the big strategic negotiations (SALT) and the moves toward peace in critical regions (the Mideast, southern Africa, the Indian Ocean).

This Aspen Institute study, urging a principle of parsimony -- so the Special Session is not swamped with too many detailed proposals -- suggests eleven key components for a U.S. strategy:

1. The U.S. should welcome, even urge, that the world assembly press the superpowers to get on with actual reductions of nuclear weapons.

2. Plutonium should be declared an international public good (or, more precisely, "bad"), inspected, stored and held in trust under internationally agreed controls.

3. The U.S. should urge the UN to sponsor a serious effort to involve in realistic discussion of nuclear war-fighting as many countries as possible. (This is already done inside the U.S. alliance systems, for example in the NATO Nuclear Planning Group). The point is to educate decision-makers about the increasingly doubtful utility of nuclear weapons in real conflicts.

4. For this educational purpose the nuclear powers might collaborate to arrange a joint demonstration of a one-time above-ground thermonuclear detonation, over an uninhabited region, which leaders of all nations would be invited to witness personally.

5. The U.S. should sign onto a universal pledge of no first use of nuclear weapons -- making clear that balanced force reductions in Europe will be necessary before the principle can be applied in the European theatre.

6. The UN should set up a long overdue mechanism to keep track of the global arms trade and military spending.

7. The Special Session should set a specific percentage (say 2%) of GNP as a desirable maximum, and arrange special consideration (by interna-

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there
any?*

tional banks and funds and bilateral aid programs) to those developing nations working hard toward arms reduction. A special fund for development aid might be derived from a surcharge on all military spending above the international standard.

8. Arms control can be usefully regionalized. Regional or sub-regional arms-control commissions should be developed to analyze potential conflicts, promote mutual arms reductions, help settle disputes that produce arms races, and negotiate with external powers to lay off and keep out. Nuclear-free zones, "Zones of Peace" and "conflict-regulated zones" should be actively encouraged, by the U.S. and by the Special Session.

9. The UN Security Council should be called into session with the General Assembly's Special Session on Disarmament; when it comes to the control and reduction of arms, the UN policy process is in some sense bicameral. While it is meeting, the Security Council can beef up its own peacemaking and peacekeeping machinery -- by forming a panel of internationally accepted mediators ("third-persons" for shuttle diplomacy); by modernizing the UN communications, through a global satellite link dedicated to Security Council use; and by using 20th Century methods to monitor incipient disputes and alert those who can tamp them down before the shooting starts.

10. The continuing disarmament committee that meets in Geneva (the "CCD") need no longer be co-chaired by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The leadership should rotate in a way that invites France and China to take some of the leadership too.

11. A single new amendment should be added to the U.N. Charter, to establish the principle that sovereign nations no longer have an unlimited right to arm themselves.

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