

July 12, 1977

Letter, Mostafa K. Tolba to Rafeeuddin Ahmed

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Summary:

Mostafa K. Tolba reports on China's nuclear policies in anticipation of an upcoming visit by the Secretary-General to China.

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Dear Rafee,

... I understand that the Secretary General is going on an official visit to China. I thought you may be interested to have a look at the attached report which I prepared on a visit to China in 1974 by Maurice Strong, myself and my special assistant.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Tolba

Mostafa K. Tolba

Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed
Executive Assistant to the
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DISARMAMENT

The People's Republic of China has been a nuclear power since 1964. It ranks among the top six countries whose military expenditures make up three fourths of total world expenditures.

China regards its own nuclear weapons as merely defensive and emphasizes that it supports genuine disarmament measures. For instance, it has called for the convening of a summit conference of all countries to discuss the question of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. As China sees it, the source of the arms race is the competitive drive of the two superpowers who must therefore take a major responsibility for disarmament. As a first step, they should affirm that they will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, particularly not against non-nuclear countries, and should withdraw all their nuclear bases and armed forces abroad.

China regards the Soviet proposal for a World Disarmament Conference as premature, since it has neither a clear aim nor a practical programme. China does not favour the Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament, arguing that it would create an illusion of peace under conditions of an accelerated arms race between the superpowers. In the General Assembly last year, China declared that it would not participate in the vote on this issue. However, as the Special Session is an initiative of the non-aligned countries, China has so far indicated that it would participate in it.

China has supported proposals of setting up nuclear-free zones in various regions, i.e. as laid down in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. It has also been a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. Similarly

it has demonstrated its support of ^{the} Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America by signing and verifying Additional Protocol II of that Treaty. On the other hand, China is not a signatory to the NPT and has criticized it as it would consolidate the nuclear hegemony of the superpowers and deprive non-nuclear countries of their sovereignty.

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As a result of the discussions held in the Preparatory Committee this year, the following points might be considered to be main objectives of the Special Session:

- The Special Session will provide the world community with a unique opportunity to make a thorough review of the present situation in disarmament.
- The adoption of a plan of action is envisaged, which will set priorities and work out a more effective disarmament machinery.
- World-wide publicity of the Special Session will increase international pressure on the major powers to fulfill their disarmament responsibilities.
- The non-aligned countries are seeking modifications in the structure and procedures of the CCD (abolition of co-chairmanship, expansion of membership, closer relationship with the General Assembly).
- The Special Session will therefore give greater emphasis to multilateral disarmament fora and further strengthen the role of the United Nations.