

**April 1971**

**Telegram from V.G. Joshi, 'Brief on Disarmament  
and Atomic-Free Zones for the Spring Meetings of  
the IPU to be held during April, 1971'**

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**Summary:**

Summary of history of negotiations of disarmament and nuclear-free zones.

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FROM: V.G. Joshi, S.R.O (UN-IV)  
TO: Ministry of External Affairs (UN-IV) Section  
MOST IMMEDIATE  
No: U-IV/162(2)/71

Subject: Brief on Disarmament and Atomic-Free Zones for the Spring meetings of the IPU to be held during April, 1971

□ Six copies of the brief on the above subject are sent herewith. The Lok Sabha Sectt. has asked for 5 copies

□ Disarmament: In 1959, under resolution 1378 (XIV) the UNGA accepted for the first time the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In 1961, it adopted resolution 1722 (XVI) endorsing the super Powers' agreement to establish a Disarmament Committee of 18 members for negotiating an agreement on general and complete disarmament. The Committee had before it two draft treaties between USA and USSR in 1962. However, because of differences between USA and USSR on various basic issues, the progress of negotiations was extremely slow and halting. These negotiations virtually came to end in 1965 when the question of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons came into prominence. Periodic and platitudinous references to the subject, however, continued to be made and the subject was also included in the provisional agenda which the Disarmament Committee adopted in 1968. Nevertheless, the big powers have openly said that since it is difficult to reach an agreement on general and complete disarmament, attention should be concentrated on collateral measures. We are of the view that this subject must be kept under active consideration and for that purpose have suggested that the two Superpowers should present for negotiations suitably revised versions of their draft treaties of 1962. We also consider that the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations accepted by the UNGA in 1961 can also form a suitable basis for evolving a scheme for general and complete disarmament.

□ Although, we are anxious for an early achievement of general and complete disarmament, we are not opposed to the conclusion of collateral measures of disarmament. However, we consider that any international agreement on disarmament to have real meaning must be universal in application and must also contain provisions for dealing with violations. Moreover, such agreement must deal with actual disarmament, among which, as is universally acknowledged, nuclear disarmament would receive priority. They should at least result in a freezing of the existing nuclear stockpiles. It is important to note that not a single agreement on actual disarmament has so far been concluded. Even the Non-Proliferation Treaty is not a measure of actual disarmament as it does not bring about any reduction in the existing nuclear stockpiles. The several agreements which are already in the field are partial and of a non-armament nature. The conclusion of more agreements of the same nature, whatever their merits, may create an illusion that problems are being solved whereas in fact they are not.

□ We are also in favor of a disarmament program so that there would be a responsive and meaningful channelizing of the negotiations towards accepted, and if possible, time-bound objectives. The UN has already declared the 1970s as a Disarmament Decade and we are in favor of a disarmament program for this decade giving highest priority to measures of actual disarmament and particularly nuclear disarmament. We fully share the priorities mentioned by the Lusaka Non-Aligned Summit in its Declaration on Disarmament.

□The 25th Session of the UNGA has adopted a resolution on this subject and has called upon the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva to take into account the various suggestions which had been already presented or which might be presented in the future. This subject would be taken up by that Committee during its current session.

□

□The Non-Proliferation Treaty also provides for negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. In pursuance of this, the two super powers have started in 1969, what are known as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). The talks, however, are only bilateral and secret and the actual outcome of it not known. They are, however, important not only because of their possible impact on East-West relations but also because, if successful, they will have a tremendous effect on nuclear stockpiles as well as on the progress in all the other disarmament negotiations. However, so far no agreement or understanding of any kind appears to have been reached.

### □Atom-Free Zones

The idea of the establishment of nuclear-free zones in different parts of the world was first mooted (?) in the UNGA in 1957 by the Polish Foreign Minister, Rapacki. Since then, a number of proposals have been made in regard to the establishment of such zones in various parts of the world, for example, in Africa, Latin America, Scandinavia, Mediterranean, Asia and the Pacific. Antarctica was the first concrete example of such a zone which was created in 1959 by the Antarctica Treaty. The area, however, is completely uninhabited. The zone established by the Latin American and Caribbean countries under the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco is the first and so far the only example of such a zone in an inhabited region.

□May of the African countries have also seriously considered sometime or the other the question of establishing such a zone. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had adopted a Declaration on this subject which was subsequently endorsed by the UN in resolution 2033 (XX). No concrete proposal has, however, still emerged. The socialist bloc countries have taken keen interest in this matter. Their emphasis is on the establishment of such a zone in Central Europe. USSR had also earlier proposed the Mediterranean as a nuclear-free zone. The Western bloc countries have, however, firmly opposed all proposals for denuclearization of any part of Europe. According to them, it would upset the balance of power in that area. They have, however, come to accept that it may be possible and useful to have such zones provided they satisfy certain basic criteria.

□Suggestions have also been made for establishing such a zone in the Indian Ocean. In 1964, the Cairo Non-Aligned Conference adopted a declaration which inter alia recommended the establishment of denuclearized zone covering not only land areas but also oceans of the world particularly those which were free from nuclear weapons. The question of denuclearizing oceans, however, poses certain basic problems like i) the definition of limits of such zone; ii) the exact connotation of the term denuclearization; iii) the question as to who should take the initiative, etc.

□Our position on the creation of nuclear-weapon free zones is based on our approach to the general question of disarmament and world peace. We consider that an agreement on nuclear weapon free zones must provide for verification to ensure that no clandestine transaction, regarding nuclear weapons takes place in such a zone. One of the preconditions for the establishment of such a zone is that the nuclear weapons Powers should undertake to respect the status of such zones and lend their full cooperation in implementing arrangements concerning their establishments. Since conditions for the establishment of such zone differ from continent to continent, it is not possible to devise a single formula or lay down principles which can cover all cases. In regard to the Indian Ocean, although we are in favor of having the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great powers conflict should be removed but

there are certain serious difficulties in making it a denuclearized zone.

□The Lusaka Non-Aligned Summit has recognized the importance of this measure and included it in its Declaration on Disarmament under "non-armament and Confidence-building" measures. It is, however, important to note that not all the nuclear-weapon States have so far given an undertaking respecting the denuclearized Status of even the Latin American area. The 25th session of even the UNGA has adopted a resolution urging them to do so as early as possible.