

Why Your Presence Is Needed At the United Nations on June 12

the **DANGER** *and the* **CHOICE**

SID PECK

The immediate threat of nuclear war exists because the Reagan Administration has publicly declared its immediate readiness to use nuclear weapons. This position was officially adopted as part of Presidential Directive 59 (Carter Administration) which sanctions the use (including the first use) of nuclear weapons in "limited" theatres of military action. Or, to phrase it another way, the Reagan Administration has made it abundantly clear that it is prepared to protect what it perceives to be vital US interests by any means necessary. That emphasized phrase, of course, refers to the use of tactical and/or strategic nuclear weapons, as well as other methods of mass destruction.

This public pronouncement is based upon the concept that a nuclear war is both inevitable and can be won. As the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (LCNP) stated: "...this strategy is likely to bring us closer to nuclear war. The insistence on a limited nuclear war option increases dramatically the prospect that nuclear weapons will be used in a crisis situation." It is a well-documented fact that the US government has, in the recent past, threatened to use nuclear weapons as military leverage in previous theatre areas of crisis with some success. The successful track record of the recent past in threatening to use nuclear weapons increases both the risk and the likelihood of nuclear war in the immediate future, because it is now the strategic policy of our government to use nuclear weapons and to use them first!

Speaking to the Preparatory Committee of the SSD-II (the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament) last October, Rear Admiral Gene LaRocque (Ret.), Director of the Center for Defense Information (CDI), declared: "Make no mistake about it... the US (is) planning, training and arming for nuclear war." The danger of nuclear war is, indeed, clear and immediate.

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1978, the United Nations appointed a Group of Governmental Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development

(GDD). This past winter the group issued its report. Some of their conclusions:

1) Fifty million people worldwide are engaged in military activities.

2) Military research and development is the single largest objective of scientific study and technological development. Eighty-five percent (85%) of all military research and development occurs in the US and the USSR.

3) The international traffic in arms totals between \$25-30 billion annually, with 75% of all such exports directed to developing nations.

4) The total annual expenditure for arms is more than \$521 billion—or 6% of the total world output. It is estimated that at the current rate, this figure will increase to 25% by the end of the century.

5) The arms race does not create job security or stimulate the civilian economy. Costs for arms are "dead-end" expenditures which inhibit capital investment, drain research talent and contribute to the general economic decline.

6) Conversion of military production to civilian use is essential for the development of economies and societies the world over. Disarmament and development are inseparable international programs.

In short, worldwide famine and communicable diseases ravage whole peoples in the southern hemisphere, while human labor and resources are diverted to the production of military armaments at the rate of one and a half million dollars per minute. Meanwhile, nearly one and a half billion people around the world live on incomes of less than \$150 per year and remain hungry from cradle to grave. In reporting the study to the UN Committee on Disarmament, Inga Thorsson concluded: "The arms race and underdevelopment are not two problems—they are one. They must be solved together, or neither will ever be solved."

The UN First Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-I)

In response to the urgings of the one hundred member-nations of the Non-Aligned Bloc, the General Assembly agreed to hold a Special Session on Disarmament in late May, 1978. The Non-Aligned Bloc was determined to raise the disarmament/development issue and to prevent the dangerous drift toward a nuclear conflict.

As the first immediate goal, SSD-I set out to eliminate the danger of nuclear war. In Article 18 of the Final Document of SSD-I, the General Assembly agreed that:

Removing the threat of a world war—a nuclear war—is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. (Humankind) is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation.

In addition, the SSD-I adopted a program of action calling for specific measures of implementation. Priorities for negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament were also determined. A negotiating body, the Committee on Disarmament, composed of forty (40) member-states, was formed in order to break the controlling deadlock of the nuclear weapons states.

But the progress of SSD-I was minimal. The arms race has spiraled and the danger of nuclear war has intensified. Although nuclear disarmament was given the highest priority, all five nuclear weapons states failed to begin genuine negotiations on any aspect of nuclear disarmament. UN Committee I—the Committee on Disarmament—has been reduced, at times, to a forum for discussion of marginal procedures rather than functioning as an important international negotiating group. Yet, the *Final Document of SSD-I* is a special achievement that truly expresses the hopes of humankind for a world disarmed and a planet at peace. It is a serious and inspiring document. Our political choice in this decade is to effectively implement the Final Document of the SSD-I or to passively resign ourselves to the final solution of a genocidal nuclear conflict.

Fortunately, the Final Document of SSD-I called for the convening of a Second Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-II) in 1982. It also called for a much greater role for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in the work of the Committee on Disarmament (CD) and the SSD-II. SSD-II gives all of us another chance.

The UN Second Special Session on Disarmament (SSD-II)

SSD-II will begin on June 7 and end on July 9, 1982. The Preparatory Committee of the SSD-II is mapping out the agenda of the session as well as receiving the appeals and presentations of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's).

NGO groups throughout the world will be submitting oral and written demands and will be meeting with their respective diplomatic and parliamentary missions to the UN, prior to the convening of the SSD-II. It will be absolutely essential for NGO's to do all in their power to influence the deliberations of SSD-II toward a

general and comprehensive program of disarmament. NGO's may differ on the priority of their demands, but there must be the concerned involvement of citizen groups in the decision-making process of the SSD-II. Without NGO involvement, the SSD-II is doomed to fail. With the involvement of international, regional, national and local organizations, there will truly be a *second chance* to implement the agreed-upon principles and proposals embodied in the Final Document of SSD-I.

The International Majority Movement

While it is necessary to do all that we can as NGO's or as individuals to influence the internal legislative process of SSD-II, our source of power in confronting the danger of nuclear war and global militarism rests in the development of an international mass movement that reflects the genuine will of the great majority of humankind for disarmament and development.

In this regard, the Japanese movement against nuclear weapons and for complete disarmament has served as a leading voice in the worldwide demand that *never again* shall nuclear weapons be used. They have staged determined mass actions against their own government for violating the three non-nuclear principles of non-possession, non-production and non-introduction of nuclear weapons. Because they are the only people to have experienced the ravages of nuclear weapons, they have insisted from the very beginning that there must be an international convention (accord) to outlaw the use of nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity.

The Japanese movement has also called on governments to adopt the three non-nuclear principles through establishing nuclear weapons-free zones throughout the world.

To express their determination, they plan to bring at least 1000 representatives of organizations in Japan to the SSD-II.

A mass movement of majority proportions recently has surfaced in Europe. The movement for nuclear and general disarmament has put forward a non-negotiable demand for a nuclear weapons-free Europe—East and West. The demonstrations of more than a million people across the face of Europe last fall have given inspiration and hope to all of us. European peace activists may not have experienced atomic weapons but they include generations who have experienced two world wars. They do not want Europe—or the planet—to become a site for nuclear conflict in a third world war. The European movement has greatly influenced the political direction of both governing and opposition political parties across the continent.

Our task as Americans is to build a mass

movement of majority proportions in the US. We can learn a great deal from the successful efforts in Japan and Europe. But our conditions are unique in one respect because, as a people, we have not experienced the devastation of modern warfare. It has been 125 years since war was waged on our soil. But, *for the first time*, our people now know they cannot have both guns and butter. We can only imagine the horror of a nuclear conflict. But we are feeling the reality of a declining standard of living. Unemployment is real; sky-high rents are real; the cutbacks in social and protective services, wages and jobs are real. The economy is militarily inflated and socially depressed. For many unemployed youth, male and female, a job with the military seems to provide the only relief.

The labor movement, in particular, has responded to the depressed condition of workers, minorities and women in the economy. Joining together with independent labor forces, Black and Hispanic groups, organizations of women and the small peace movement, the AFL-CIO organized a powerful demonstration of labor solidarity last September of nearly half a million persons. While this action represented a deep upsurge of laboring people, the central demands of the demonstration focused on the issue of *butter*—the cutbacks in the social economy. But this is a *no win* demand unless it is joined to the issue of nuclear and conventional disarmament. There can be no internal development without disarmament. The disarmament/development issues of the Southern Hemisphere are mirrored in the disarmament/development issues of South Bronx and South Boston—in every metropolitan center in the United States.

At the same time that working people in the metropolitan center are making the political connection between the militarized economy (guns) and a declining standard of living (butter), professional groups, women's organizations, religious formations and others are responding to the immediate threat of nuclear war. They have initiated a broad campaign for a bilateral freeze of nuclear war. They have initiated a broad campaign for a bilateral freeze of nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign has travelled on the main streets of every locality and reached out to people from all walks of life. The campaign has received an unprecedented response in its massive signature drive. It has already affected the political process with the public announcement that well over one hundred members of Congress have introduced a resolution in support of the Weapons Freeze proposal.

Another strong base of opposition to global militarism is expressed in the unyielding efforts of traditional religious and pacifist groups who are opposed to all wars.

In addition, there are many groups like the

Mobilization for Survival (MFS) who are steadfast in their opposition to imperial intervention ABROAD. From the government's point of view, these anti-interventionist groups suffer from a so-called "Vietnam Syndrome." From the perspective of the disarmament movement, they are a vital force in the development of a mass movement to oppose and resist the threat of nuclear war and the increasing militarization of the society.

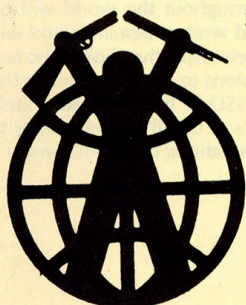
The Jobs with Peace Campaign has dramatized these issues by showing the connections between the declining standard of living for working people and the increased military budget. In its successful referendum campaign in Boston this past November, Jobs with Peace carried 72% of the vote in most wards of the city. The Campaign—now a national effort—is reaching out directly to laboring people with the message that job security and a decent quality of life in the urban sector depends on an economy that produces peaceful products for social use.

The idea of the June 12th march and rally is to connect what people are doing at a local level, whether it is with the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Petition or a Jobs with Peace Referendum, to the international mass movement that aims to dramatically reverse the arms race and drastically reduce the military budget in favor of human needs.

Therefore, we encourage groups and organizations working for peace and justice to continue what they are doing with the *added agenda* that there will be the convergence of all of these local efforts in a *huge national/international mass action on Saturday, June 12th, in New York City*, in support of the UN Special Session on Disarmament. We hope that thousands of people from local communities in the United States, from countries to the north and south of us, and those from overseas will come together in this powerful mass demonstration to demand an end to the threat of nuclear war and the beginning of a comprehensive program of international disarmament and development. We intend this massive gathering to be a message to the Reagan Administration that a unified mass movement for disarmament and peace will soon become a majority movement in our country as well. The occasion of the SSD-II provides this special opportunity for such an historic event to take place. It was April 15, 1967 when nearly a half a million North Americans demonstrated at the site of the UN to surface the beginning of a powerful mass movement against the Vietnam War. The immediate threat of nuclear war demands that we do no less on June 12, 1982.

Sid Peck, from Cambridge, Mass., is staff person at the International Peace Bureau in New York City.

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International Liaison Office / Bureau de Liaison International*
Riverside Church Tower #19 / 490 Riverside Drive / New York, N.Y. 10027
Phone: (212) 749-3810 / Cable address: InterLia NewYork

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