

*Disarmament
on the WCC agenda*

**POLICY DOCUMENTS &
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
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The Ecumenical Concern for Peace Prior to the First WCC Assembly in Amsterdam (1948)*

The first step towards a united ecumenical peace movement began at the World Peace Conference in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1905. Representatives from the German and British churches met and planned for an exchange of visits by church members to promote a better understanding between churches in Britain and Germany for fostering friendly relations between the two nations.

An international conference held in August, 1914 in Konstanz, Germany was interrupted due to the outbreak of the First World War. The delegates then transferred to London where they initiated what later came to be the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

During the war years, communication between the churches was difficult but three months after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles the World Alliance assembled delegates at Oud Wassenaar, Holland (1919), for the first Christian Conference after the war. The subject which absorbed the conference was a proposal for an ecumenical council of churches able to speak on the religious, moral and social concerns of humanity, as distinct from the concern for unity in matters of faith and order.

A Committee was formed to begin preparations for the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work. This met in Stockholm in 1925. The purpose of the meeting was to emphasize the churches responsibility to cooperate with all people of goodwill in working for peace and a better social order. A special committee was set up to carry out the work of the conference.

At the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State held in 1937, the proposal to join with Faith and Order to form a World Council of Churches was approved. A provisional committee for the future World Council of Churches was established in Utrecht in 1938.

In 1946, the World Council of Churches, in the process of formation, established with the International Missionary Council, the joint agency of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA). The CCIA was delegated responsibility to serve the churches as a source of information and guidance in their approach to international problems, as a medium of common counsel and action and as an organ in formulating the Christian mind on world issues.

When the International Missionary Council was integrated into the WCC (1961) the CCIA became the Commission on International Affairs of the WCC.

* Note: To save space and to avoid unnecessary duplication the full text of all WCC statements has not in all cases been included. In those cases where the statement has been excerpted or abbreviated this is indicated.



The First WCC Assembly, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (1948)
“War is Contrary to the Will of God”

The Amsterdam Assembly received and commended to the churches a report on “The Church and the International Disorder”. The report acknowledged that with the discovery of nuclear weapons “warfare has greatly changed”, and noted that Christian opinion was divided on the right response to the new situation;

“War as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man. We recognize that the problem of war raises especially acute issues for Christians today. Warfare has greatly changed. War is now total, and every man and woman is called for mobilization war service. Moreover, the immense use of air forces and the discovery of atomic and other new weapons render widespread and indiscriminate destruction inherent in the whole conduct of modern war in a sense never experienced in past conflicts. In these circumstances the tradition of a just war, requiring a just cause and the use of just means, is now challenged. Law may require the sanction of force, but when war breaks out, force is used on a scale which tends to destroy the basis on which law exists.

“Therefore the inescapable question arises – can war now be an act of justice ? We cannot answer this question unanimously... Three broad positions are maintained:

1. There are those who hold that, even though entering a war may be a Christian’s duty in particular circumstances, modern warfare, with its mass destruction, can never be an act of justice.
2. In the absence of impartial supra-national institutions, there are those who hold that military action is the ultimate sanction of the rule of law, and that citizens must be distinctly taught that it is their duty to defend the law by force if necessary.
3. Others, again, refuse military service of all kinds, convinced that an absolute witness against war and for peace is for them the will of God, and they desire that the Church should speak to the same effect.

We must frankly acknowledge our deep sense of perplexity in face of these conflicting opinions....”

WCC Executive Committee (1950) – Statement on the Hydrogen Bomb.

In February 1950, the WCC Executive Committee meeting at the Ecumenical Institute, near Geneva, made a statement on the hydrogen bomb, the announcement of which had been made only a few days before the meeting:

“The hydrogen bomb is the latest and most terrible step in the crescendo of warfare which has changed war from a fight between men and nations to a mass murder of human life. Man’s rebellion against his Creator has reached such a point that, unless staved, it will bring self-destruction upon him. All this is a perversion; it is against the moral order by which man is bound; it is sin against God.

All men have responsibilities before God as they face the grave issues raised by the hydrogen bomb and other weapons of modern war. Let each ponder in his conscience, be he statesman or scientist or ordinary



citizen, how far his own action or attitude contributes to the danger of world suicide; and what he must do to prevent it, and to bring the nations to understand and serve one another.

The governments of the nations have an inescapable responsibility at this hour. The world is divided into hostile camps through suspicion and distrust, and through the failure of the nations to bring their mutual relations within an agreed system of justice and order. As representatives of Christian Churches we appeal for a gigantic new effort for peace. We know how strenuously the governments have discussed peace in the past. But sharp political conflicts continue and the atomic danger develops uncontrolled. We urge the governments to enter into negotiations once again, and to do everything in their power to bring the present tragic deadlock to an end.

We urge:

1. That governments not only indicate readiness to enter into international consultations for the international control of armaments but that they manifestly take the initiative in pressing for such consultations.
2. That governments announce a policy of willingness to make a fresh start in these consultations and give tangible evidence of their desire to proceed in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.
3. That governments, in preparations for and in the process of consultation, repudiate the policy of seeking national advantage, to the disadvantage of other nations and if need be, take reasonable risk to secure international agreement.
4. That governments, by the exercise of their sovereign power, show their intent to delegate such authority to international agencies as may be necessary for effective multilateral control of armaments.”

The second Assembly, Evanston, Ill. USA (1954) (Excerpt)

At the Second WCC Assembly in 1954, a report entitled “Christians in the Struggle for International Community” was presented by the section on international affairs. It advocated effective international inspection and control of nuclear weapons, and the cessation of nuclear weapons testing:

“We..... call upon the nations to pledge that they will refrain from the treat or the use of hydrogen, atomic, and all other weapons of mass destruction as well as any other means of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

If this pledge should be broken, the Charter of the United Nations provides for collective action and, pending such international action, recognizes the right of national self-defence. We believe that any measures to deter or combat aggression should conform to the requirements of the United Nations Charter, and Christians should urge that both the United Nations and their own governments limit military action strictly to the necessities of international security.

Yet even this is not enough. The churches must condemn the deliberate mass destruction of civilians in open cities by whatever means and for whatever purpose. The churches should press through CCIA and other channels for the automatic stationing of UN Peace Commission teams in areas of tension to identify any aggression if it takes place. Christians must continue to press for



social, political and economic measures to prevent war. Among these should be the giving of strong moral support for the positive use of atomic power for the benefit of mankind.

We must also see that experimental tests of hydrogen bombs have raised issues of human rights, causing suffering, and imposed an additional strain on human relations between nations. Among safeguards against the aggravation of these international tensions is the insistence that nations carry on tests only within their respective territories or, if elsewhere, only by international clearance and agreement.”

WCC Central Committee (1955) – Disarmament and Peaceful Change

In 1955, the CCIA Executive Committee and WCC Central Committee accepted the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, while emphasizing the need to find ways of eliminating and prohibiting “atomic weapons”.

“Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy”

The prospect of the benefits which can come to mankind from the discovery of atomic energy is dimmed by the fear that its military use may lead to catastrophic destruction. As Christians we consider it the responsibility of all men to see to it that this power is used solely for positive and constructive purposes.

We therefore welcome the expressed desire of the United Nations General Assembly ‘to promote energetically the use of atomic energy to the end that it will serve only the peaceful pursuits of mankind.....’ We support the proposal to establish an International Atomic Energy Agency, and believe that it should be constituted within the framework of the United Nations. We commend the decision to convene the International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy to study ‘the development of atomic power and.... consider other technical areas – such as biology, medicine, radiation, protection, and fundamental science – in which international cooperation might most effectively be accomplished’ . We are encouraged by the manifest concern and diligent participation of highly competent scientists from many nations.

The present effort to place the benefits of atomic energy at the service of mankind is little hampered by the necessity of controversial provisions for inspection and control. There is thus offered an opportunity for nations to work together constructively and to remove some of the suspicions which have hitherto divided them.

Reduction of Armaments

In face of difficulties that may at times seem insuperable, we urge unwavering effort to devise and put into effect, under adequate inspection and control, a system for the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and all other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the reduction of all armaments to a minimum. At the same time we caution against oversimplified formulas which are pressed merely to secure propaganda advantage or superficial agreements. Reliance on such formulas could subsequently expose an unprepared world to greater danger.



Two tasks appear especially urgent:

1. To devise a system of inspection and control;
2. To find a starting point for the reduction of armaments.

Any system of inspection and control must be technically adequate and politically workable, so as to provide warning for other nations if any nation violates its treaty commitment. Since there is so much uncertainty as to what is scientifically necessary for reliable inspection and control, we suggest that the United Nations establish an international commission of scientists and technicians to identify the essential scientific requirements for an adequate system”.

CCIA Executive Committee (1956) Cessation of Nuclear Weapons Testing.

The CCIA Executive Committee issued the following statement in 1956 in support of efforts to stop nuclear weapons testing:

“It is of urgent importance that experimental tests of nuclear weapons should be discontinued under international agreement as soon as possible, taking into account the following observations:

1. It is questionable whether to abandon such tests unilaterally would serve peace and security. It might well disturb the balance of power which at present offers a safeguard against war and is a principal means of order among the nations.
2. For all parties to cease tests without an agreed arrangement for cessation and control would in no way guarantee security because anyone, by resuming experiments at a later date, would critically endanger the international situation.
3. Experimental tests are part of the armament effort. They cannot be discontinued without taking into account the constant relation between all armaments and the maintenance of the balance of power. Cessation should be brought under such adequate inspection and control as are requirements for every step in effective disarmament.
4. The United Nations, and especially the countries most concerned, must insistently work for an agreement embodying these requirements, an agreement of which the cessation or limitation of tests should be a part. At the same time, the churches are responsible for encouraging positive and constructive proposals for sound agreements on nuclear experiments such as will safeguard the health of the people and the security of the nations.
5. Meanwhile, as the basis of impartial international investigations, including that already initiated by the United Nations, the people should be promptly told what the effect of radiation actually is so that they may know how to choose, if they must, between the possible danger to health now and the treat of war if the present balance of power is disturbed”



WCC Central Committee, New Haven (1957) Statement on Atomic Tests and Disarmaments

In 1957, the WCC Central Committee adopted a statement on “Atomic Tests and Disarmament” by the CCIA Executive Committee. The statement brought together essential elements in a disarmament strategy, and again advocated a cessation of nuclear weapons testing:

“Introduction

The peoples of the world have been visited by a new fear. They are moved, indeed, deeply alarmed, by current tests of nuclear weapons. These to them appear to be a portent or shadow of world conflict. At the very least, these tests seem to them to carry potential and grave menace to health.

The hazards to health from nuclear experiments must be taken seriously. All people are affected in some degree by radioactive fallout. More important is the effect upon generations yet unborn. The degree of damage may thus far be comparatively small, but uncertainty itself gives rise to genuine anxiety. But fear alone is no sufficient basis for the pursuit of moral ends.

We must point out that this world-wide concern in which we share has deeper roots. Tests are taken to be a visible sign of preparations for atomic warfare. Vast areas could be depopulated by the powers of destruction now available and the dangers of fallout be multiplied a thousand fold. The main concern must always be the prevention of war itself, for the evil of war is an offence to the spiritual nature of man. But since any war carries increasing danger of becoming an atomic war, this task makes the prevention of atomic war, which shocks the conscience of mankind with a peculiar repugnance, all the more imperative.

The total problem involved is so baffling and complex that no man can speak with certainty. All must humbly confront the issues, for all are involved. The mounting stockpiles of atomic weapons will at some point actually be used. Yet, in the judgement of many, our present insecure peace rests mainly upon the possession of atomic deterrents on both sides of a divided world and upon the suicidal character of atomic war. This paradox does not relieve us of the need to examine our goals and the means thereto.

I. What is Needed ?

The objectives of a strategy to overcome the menace of atomic war are interrelated and interdependent. And they must be pursued in such a way as to safeguard as fully as possible the security of all nations. While they may be variously stated, we urge consideration particularly of the following:

- a. To stop, by international agreement, the testing of nuclear weapons;
- b. To bring to a halt the production of nuclear weapons, under such controls as will most fully ensure compliance;
- c. To develop measures which will reduce national armaments, nuclear and conventional, with provision for necessary safeguards as such measures are progressively taken;



- d. To accelerate international cooperation in the development of atomic power for peaceful purposes, under proper safeguards;
- e. To establish more effective mechanisms for peaceful settlement of international disputes and for peaceful change.

Together, these objectives form a framework for responsible action against the atomic threat as a whole. Each is important in itself, but more important in combination with the others. In this connection, we note the following:

A. Atomic Tests. It is important that compliance with agreements to stop testing nuclear weapons be verified internationally. Otherwise, distrust may in fact be increased. Further, such agreement should be related to general disarmament, whether as an integral part or as a first step, if subsequent disillusionment is to be avoided.

- A. Atomic Production for Military Purposes. Stopping the production of nuclear weapons is more fundamental than stopping nuclear tests. Any agreement to stop tests requires a further commitment to stop production. Measures undertaken to ensure compliance would constitute a major element in a broader system of disarmament.
- B. Measures for Disarmament. Partial disarmament measures must always be seen in relation to comprehensive disarmament. The whole range of the disarmament problem, including provisions for warning against surprise attack, must be dealt with as may be appropriate and practicable: conventional armaments, guided missiles, biological and chemical weapons as well as nuclear weapons. As progress is made towards disarmament, and international forces and instruments for peaceful settlement are established, the need to rely on atomic deterrents will be reduced.
- C. Cooperation in Atoms for Peace. Both the hazards of diversion of fissionable material to military purposes, and of waste disposal, need to be considered in relation to a broader system of atomic control and general disarmament. International safeguards against diversion may indeed grow in importance as the use of fissionable material for military purposes decreases.
- D. Peaceful Settlement and Peaceful Change. Ultimately true peace rests upon the continuing adjustment of conflicting interests and claims. To this end, international instruments must be strengthened and established, and must be related to the requirements of an international security system. But local conflicts may break out with the danger that atomic weapons may be used. Therefore, the nations must seek to avert such conflicts by timely negotiations and conciliation. If all these efforts fail, they must strive to deal with conflicts without recourse to atomic weapons.

II. Moving Forward

It is important to stress all of the objectives in their interrelationship. Yet simultaneous progress towards all of them seems improbable, until there is a much greater degree of international confidence. Is it safe to advance towards one or more without the others? Choices will have to be made, and they are hard choices. Any decision involves risk. But to make no decision may be even more dangerous.”



WCC Central Committee, Nyborg, Denmark (1958)

At its meeting in 1958 the Central Committee received two papers (i) a statement from the CCIA on disarmament and the cessation of weapons testing which reiterated the position adopted in 1957; and (ii) a 47 page study on Christians and the Prevention of War in an Atomic Age – A Theological Discussion, prepared by a Commission appointed by the Central Committee in 1955. The Central Committee received and approved the first statement and decided after lengthy debate that the study “should be distributed to the member churches as a stimulus to widespread reflection and discussion on the urgent issues which it raises for the faith and witness of the churches”.

a. Statement on Disarmament and the Cessation of Nuclear Weapons Testing (Excerpts)

“In the year since we last met, nations have not made decisive progress towards disarmament, although recent developments afford ground for hope. Many grave problems of peaceful change and settlement still remain unsolved....

... The suspension of tests seems more and more justified for these reasons: a) to prevent the increase of radioactivity in the atmosphere; b) to get started on mutual inspection which will be needed in other areas of disarmament, and c) to limit the danger of an uncontrolled spread of atomic armaments.

....For these and other reasons we have continued to advocate.... the suspension of tests at least for a trial period, so that a new hope may be built on truly secure foundations. But we must not deceive ourselves by resting content with suspension if it comes, for the subsequent steps in disarmament are at least as urgent and may well be more difficult...”

The Central Committee further adopted a brief statement:

“The governments producing atomic weapons have taken a first step towards bringing the testing of these weapons under international control. We welcome this evidence of the beginning of a better understanding among the nations. At the same time, we solemnly urge the statesmen of the world not to rest content with this beginning, but to show courage in pressing forward along the way now opened.

The cessation of atomic testing which we advocated a year ago should lead to diligent efforts to halt the production of nuclear weapons and to reduce existing armaments.

The achievement of these ends requires friendship and confidence between the nations. We need an ‘open society’ where people may meet freely and learn to understand and trust another. We appeal to the churches to help prepare the way to such an open society.”

b. Study of Christians and the Prevention of War in an Atomic Age

“In considering the prevention of war in an atomic age, it is essential to recognize this fundamental element: all of the ideological, economic, political, historical and cultural elements that go into human conflict, and human conflict itself, are intensified and made more dangerous by the threat of atomic war. Mankind permanently possesses the capacity of nuclear destructiveness, and human conflict therefore has a newly dangerous and



formidable character. The parties to the conflict may change as indeed they have in the past. The crucial element, however, is the present and the future generations of mankind, is the combination of human combativeness and nuclear destructiveness,. This latter opens the possibility of destruction which is uncontrollable and wholly indiscriminate. For this reason, the use of nuclear weapons in all-out war poses a more serious problem than the use of any other weapons. In this paper, the term 'all-out war' means a war in which the most destructive weapons are used to the full. Nuclear weapons are a more radical technological development than hitherto known in the history of war. This development is so important as to require analysis and description:

- a) First, this scale of destructiveness means that all physical objectives in that part of the world which is involved in war are destroyed indiscriminately. It is not possible to use nuclear weapons all-out and to select and destroy physical objectives with discrimination. In all-out nuclear war one cannot 'get' merely the armed forces and the war-making class, or the centers of production, or military installations. Everything is subject to destruction.
- b) Second, all-out war involves the indiscriminate destruction of political objectives,. It evades all dictates of policy, except one, namely indiscriminate destruction. What do order or freedom or justice mean in the wasteland resulting from a nuclear holocaust?
- c) Third, all-out war is uncontrollable. It is uncontrollable in space and in time as well. There is little reason to believe that in an all-out struggle the dirtiest of dirty bombs would not be used. All-out nuclear war is uncontrollable, save by its end result, mutual exhaustion.

Thus mankind is now faced with the fact that human conflict, whatever its forms and motivations, may erupt into a destruction which in the full sense of the word is indiscriminate, with an overall effect utterly disproportional to any issue or claim for which fighting can be justified. In our time, a profound and bitter conflict contains within it the very real possibility that this may happen. It is in such a situation that we must try to see our way.

As we do, we must take note of other factors. One is the element of deep and awestruck fear, of awakened conscience, of a sensitive anxiety on the part of many. Scientists and men of political responsibility are perhaps in the forefront of this awakening, doubtless because they are closest, day by day, to these dark and terrible realities. Yet this mood, unfortunately, is not the dominant mood among our peoples. Perhaps the most prevalent feeling is that of fear and helplessness. To most average people, the problems seem so big and complicated and far-removed that there appears little that they can do, even if they knew what to do. Perhaps it is this feeling on the part of the multitudes which is potentially the most dangerous of all the aspects of our present scene. Although one shrinks in instinctive horror from the prospect of such massive, indiscriminate and uncontrollable destruction, the question must be raised: precisely why is warfare of these dimensions bad? Three replies to that question may be made.



1. First, the uncontrollability of modern all-out war means that it cannot serve a moral purpose.
2. Second, modern all-out war is indiscriminate in its destruction.
3. Modern all-out war is so indiscriminate as to be unsupportable.

Is there a unique Christian reason why modern all-out war is intolerable? The answer to this lies in what, from our viewpoint, must be the Christian objection to the uncontrollability and indiscriminatedness of modern all-out war. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ tells us that his redeeming purpose with us is always discriminate.

God calls individual people in their particular times and places and conditions to faith and obedience. His purpose is that they should become part of the new creation in Christ. In any realm of human endeavor the uncontrollable and the indiscriminate are in contradiction to the will of God for us.....

The Prevention of War: Military Factors

“...The development of megaton weapons and their means of delivery represents an unparalleled crisis in the history of mankind. The megaton weapon includes a fusion reaction and its size is limited only by the adequacy of the means of delivery. Technologically it has an ‘open end’ that is, there is no limit to the power of the explosions which are possible, and this open end in the production of explosive power has been reached for the first time in the development of the fusion bomb. And as it can be made bigger and bigger, so its delivery can be made ‘dirtier’ and ‘dirtier’. To follow the policy of using weapons to the full is to fail to set any limit upon destructiveness. We cannot go on. A limit to this policy must be set somewhere. Since this limit is not now set by the limits of technological knowledge, it must be set by a decision of mind and will. It is irresponsible to rely merely upon the mutually deterrent effect which the possession of these or other weapons exercises upon nations now in opposition to one another. From an ethical viewpoint, the mere reliance upon this deterrence simply evades the issue. It is necessary to make the basic decision to work into other and broader disciplines which will give more meaning and content to the fundamental limit which is set.

Where shall the limit be set? We can expect that human conflict will continue and we must reckon with the possibility that it may break out into open fighting. Should this happen, in spite of every effort made to prevent it, it must not be allowed to develop into all-out war. Although nuclear armaments are possessed by nations of which Christians are citizens, Christians must never consent to their use of all-out war. We have pointed out that the destruction caused by this warfare is so massive as to escape control, indiscriminately obliterating all physical objectives as well as hope and ethics stands in opposition to this warfare. Although there are differences of opinion on many points, we are in agreement on one point. This is that Christians have no alternative but openly to declare that the all-out use of these weapons should never be resorted to. Moreover, we believe that Christians must oppose all policies which give evidence of leading to all-out war. Finally (although we would answer ‘no’) we ask: if all-out war should occur, does a Christian have any alternative but to accept a cease fire, if necessary on the enemy’s terms, and resort to non-violent resistance? We purposely refrain from defining the stage at which all-out war may be reached.....



The Commission is aware that this position is criticized by Christians who equally share our concern and objectives. It is said that the position indicated in the above paragraph is impracticable, that it favors the enemy by giving the strategy away in advance, and that it implies that perhaps one or two megaton bombs might be used, but does not specifically affirm this and insofar is somewhat ambiguous.

Within this position, a minority in the Commission has a reservation which they state as follows:

Without denying the necessity of seeking to limit an evil if it cannot be entirely abolished, some members of the Commission hold that it is not permissible to sanction or support the use in any circumstances of the H-bomb, the terrible nature of which is recognized by all.

These members apprehend that the destructive power of this weapon is so prodigious that it is certain, or at least very probable, that it could not be used without causing suffering and death to immense numbers of human beings, both combatants and non combatants. In its very nature it is a weapon of indiscriminate destruction. This makes its use an atrocity..... They consider that certain weapons are forbidden to a belligerent, even in an extremity, because they involve a scale of indiscriminate devastation necessarily destructive of the very objects the securing of which has hitherto been deemed to justify war on rational grounds. They hold that the H-bomb is in this category. It is the limiting case, and at this point they must say No.

This is a conclusion which many who are not Christians have already reached on prudential or humanitarian grounds which have no direct relation to the Christian faith. But those who are Christians are under a more compelling obedience. They are conscious that the development of modern warfare has brought out more starkly than ever before the contradiction between war and the Divine Commandment of Love. In the case of the H-bomb this contradiction is so great and palpable that it raises serious doubts of the validity of any line of reasoning which may be invoked to sanction the use of such weapons even if it has a thousand years of ecclesiastical history behind it. Christian men must ask whether the time has not come for them to take some decisive step to break the terrible circle of armament and counter-armament in which the world is locked. Some of our members think that the point has now been reached at which the Gospel which enjoins upon us the love even of our enemies, calls for new mode of action and sacrifice for the sake of saving the world. And to this call they believe that men are ready to respond.

There is no doubt but that these criticisms and this reservation must be taken seriously and fully studied and discussed. The Commission, however, does not wish to alter its own convictions as above stated. As the question is discussed in the light of the above or other criticisms, the Commission would press the point of its fundamental perspective, namely that a limit must be set somewhere.



..... The abolition of war is the goal to be achieved lest the powers of the atomic age destroy us, and these first steps are linked with the achievement of that end. Unless that goal is in mind, these first limitations have little meaning...

WCC Executive Committee, Geneva (1959)

Meeting in Geneva concurrently with the UN Conference on the Cessation of Tests, the Executive Committee stated:

“Ever since man unleashed the power of the atom, the people of the world have feared its threat of destruction and sought the promise which this development has offered. They have searched hopefully, but thus far without success, for steps by which to minimize the danger of war and to release power for peace.

The Conference on the Cessation of Tests now meeting in Geneva could break the current deadlock. The considerable progress achieved in the technical approach to the detection of tests should now make it possible for political leaders to reach constructive agreements.

Both the World Council of Churches and its members in many parts of the world have repeatedly pleaded in statements and representations for an approach to disarmament which could start from a controlled cessation of tests. Therefore, this Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, currently meeting in Geneva during days which are critical for the Conference, welcomes the efforts to this end now being put forth.

We realize that the question of international control is the crux. The powers of the control commission, as well as the composition of the inspection teams, are in dispute. Perseverance in the effort to resolve these difficulties is a responsibility which the negotiating governments bear towards all peoples.

It must be recognized that any agreement, however carefully framed, involves a measure of calculated risk for all parties. Yet in face of the atomic peril, so fraught with grave consequence for present and future generations, acceptance of such risk is surely justified. Moreover, every agreement is one more step in the struggle to allay suspicion and build confidence.

To cease nuclear tests is important in itself. To demonstrate that international controls are feasible in relation to the cessation of testing can, in the long run, prove even more worth while in the development of regulated and progressive disarmament.

In commending this statement to our member churches throughout the world, we urge them to do everything possible to build an informed public opinion about these issues which are vitally at stake, and to make such representations to their governments as they deem proper, especially in countries whose governments are directly involved in the negotiations on the cessation of tests. We further request the officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to bring this statement personally to the attention of the heads of the delegations at the current conference – the United Kingdom, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United States – and to pursue these objectives through every appropriate means”.



WCC Central Committee, Rhodes (1959)

In 1959, the WCC Central Committee reaffirmed its earlier statements on Atomic Tests and Disarmament and declared:

“We urge the powers not to resume tests unilaterally, in order that statesmen may have time to achieve agreements and the international situation may not deteriorate. A treaty to cease all tests – in the atmosphere, space, and underground – should be urgently sought not least since it will represent the beginning of specific controls, may lead to measures of disarmament verified by international inspection and control, and will help to eliminate dreaded risks to health.

Tests for peaceful purposes or for more certainly identifying possible underground explosions should henceforth be under international control. In particular, so long as international control is under discussion, powers which have not made tests as yet should not launch them anywhere for military purposes.

We affirm that no nation is justified in deciding on its own responsibilities to conduct nuclear weapons tests when the people of other nations, who have not given their consent, may have to bear the consequences. Therefore, we call upon each nation contemplating tests to give full recognition to this moral responsibility as well as to considerations of national defence and international security.

While emphasizing the importance of achieving promptly agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapons testing, we again declare that nothing less than the abolition of war itself should be the goal of the nations and their leaders, of the churches and of all citizens.

The attainment of this goal, with full regard for the claims of justice and freedom, constitutes a solemn challenge to our particular generation. We welcome the new turn in international events brought about by the decision of great powers to engage in consultations at the highest level.

We pray that every opportunity will be seized for a substantial contribution to the solution of outstanding problems, to progressive disarmament and to a new confidence among all nations.”

WCC Executive Committee, Buenos Aires (1960)

In 1960, the WCC Executive Committee adopted a statement which substantially forecast the terms of the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 at a time when scientific developments made it possible to identify and verify certain tests without on-site inspections. The statement was as follows:

“The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, in session at Buenos Aires, expresses appreciation of such progress as has resulted from persistent effort at the Geneva Conference, but cannot avoid uneasiness over the failure thus far to have resolved the differences which prevent the conclusion of a treaty. The importance of adequate inspection provisions, whether to ensure compliance with treaty commitments or to point the way to verified disarmament, must be recognized, and the present inability to distinguish the underground explosions of smaller nuclear weapons from natural disturbances ought not to be ignored. Nevertheless, the difficulties here encountered cannot and must not be regarded as insuperable. As



members of the Executive Committee, we therefore express our views on the kind of action which is demanded in the present situation.

We urge the governments concerned to continue to commit themselves to the objective of a comprehensive treaty which will include the cessation of all forms of nuclear weapons testing – in the atmosphere, space, underwater, and underground. This commitment will become more meaningful when it is uniformly supported in each government and fortified by an informed and vocal public opinion.

In order to honor such a commitment, we believe that governments should demonstrate their readiness promptly to negotiate a treaty covering all forms of testing which can now be detected. These would apparently include the larger underground testing of smaller nuclear weapons, at least for a specified period of time, on condition that arrangements be made for international cooperation in devising more adequate means of detection and for international inspection of explosions for peaceful purposes.

The concessions which will thus be required of both sides are in our judgement justifiable and imperative, if man is to act responsibly in this nuclear space age.

We welcome the apparent relaxation of international tensions, although we recognize the basic causes of suspicion and distrust have not been removed. The conclusion of a treaty to cease nuclear weapons testing, as we have conceived it, would contribute to greater confidence and provide for the forthcoming meeting of the Committee of Ten on Disarmament both a healthy climate and an agreed start on procedures for international inspection.”

The WCC Executive Committee further stated :

“Noting public announcements that the government of France is proceeding with nuclear testing in the Sahara, the Executive Committee reaffirms the position that, so long as international control is under discussion, powers which have not made tests as yet should not launch them anywhere for military purposes.”

WCC Central Committee, St. Andrews (1960)

Addressing itself to various aspects of the contemporary situation, the Central Committee stated:

“With respect to the cessation of nuclear weapons testing, the situation appears more promising. Some important differences are unresolved including composition of the control commission, tests in outer space, the duration of the moratorium on underground testing, and the details of a research program to detect underground explosions.

An agreement on the cessation of testing, with provisions for control, could beget a measure of confidence and set the stage for agreements in other fields including arms reduction.”



Third WCC Assembly, New Delhi (1961)

The reports of the Third WCC Assembly in New Delhi include three statements on the dangers of nuclear war:

A. The Effects on the Nuclear Arms Race on Human Dignity

“.....A long continued nuclear arms race can be expected to have grave effects on the quality of life within the nations engaged in it. How can feelings for human dignity remain unaffected by years of living with policies based upon the readiness to destroy centers of population in another country? The habit of thinking of persons as potential victims or potential destroyers in nuclear war will surely reduce sensitivity to their worth. Such sensitivity is blunted by callous use of abstract speculation concerning the millions who will die or survive in nuclear war, and by calculations concerning the percentage of all persons in future generations who will suffer from genetic distortions as a result of nuclear tests. Churches should keep reminding nations and governments of the long-term effects upon human life of preoccupation with nuclear armaments and the prospects of nuclear war.”

B. Disarmament

“..... The use of indiscriminate weapons must now be condemned by the churches as an affront to the Creator and a denial of the very purposes of the Creation. Christians must refuse to place their ultimate trust in war and nuclear weapons. In this situation the churches must never cease warning governments of the dangers and they must repudiate absolutely the growing conviction in some quarters that the use of mass destruction weapons has become inevitable. Christians must press most urgently upon their governments as a first step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, never to get themselves into a position in which they contemplate the first use of nuclear weapons. Christians must also maintain that the use of nuclear weapons or other forms of major violence, against centers of population is in no circumstances reconcilable with the demands of the Christian Gospel.”

C. An Appeal to all Governments and Peoples (Excerpt)

“.....Today, war itself is a common enemy. War is an offence to the nature of man. The future of many generations and the heritage of ages past hang in the balance. They are now easy to destroy, since the actions or miscalculations of a few can bring about a holocaust. They are harder to safeguard and advance, for that requires the dedicated action of all. Let there be restraint and self-denial in the things which make for war, patience and persistence in seeking to resolve the things which divide, and boldness and courage in grasping the things which make for peace.

To turn back from the road towards war into the paths of peace, all must renounce the threat of force. This calls for an end to the war of nerves, to pressures on small countries to the rattling of bombs. It is not possible to follow at the same time policies of menace and of mutual disarmament.



CCIA Consultation on Peace and Disarmament, Geneva (1962)

The Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi called for a consultation of Christians from various countries on the issues of disarmament and cessation of nuclear testing, with specialists present from the countries most involved, to explain their governments' policies. The consultation was held in Geneva in 1962, opening with a hearing leading representatives from the Eighteen-Nations Disarmament Committee of the United Nations.

The CCIA Executive Committee issued a report on this consultation (1962) which is reproduced in part below:

"Nuclear Tests

Nuclear weapons testing can be stopped, and it must be stopped if mankind is to be spared the threat to health and even more the increased danger of war created by this unholy competition. An agreement by the United States, the USSR, and the United Kingdom to cease tests would decrease the likelihood of others entering the field, but would be properly effective only if France and other governments capable of testing signed it as well.

Scientific discoveries have apparently made it possible to identify, by national detecting posts, testing in the atmosphere, in space, under water and the larger underground explosions.

Nations need demand only that minimum of verification which is shown to be scientifically necessary. In so far as smaller underground tests cannot be distinguished at a distance from natural disturbances, an international system of verification is still required to make the distinction. Furthermore, if a substantial number of national detection posts under an international system indicate that a nuclear explosion of any kind has occurred, the government of the territory concerned would be expected to invite international verification. Refusal to do so would be regarded as evidence that a nuclear test had in fact occurred.

There is a vicious circle wherein each side seeks to be the last to test. If there is no better way out, a future date may well be specified on which a treat would go into effect after which tests would cease altogether.

The main sanction to enforce an agreement lies in the knowledge that, if one party breaks its treaty obligations, other parties will consider themselves free to resume tests. In such a lamentable eventuality, resumption should be delayed at least long enough to permit study of evidence of a breach, and to seek remedial action through an expression of world opinion and the operation of international diplomacy""

Disarmament

Disarmament is not merely a technical matter. It is a political and moral issue of the first order. Politically it requires the readiness to abate local tensions, and for this purpose it is essential to develop more reliable, more objective and automatic international procedures and institutions to settle disputes and to remedy injustice by peaceful means. Moreover, such procedures and institutions must be readily available. Morally, agreements on disarmament will rely heavily on the profound conviction that it is humanely intolerable to continue to present unbridled armaments



competition. Disarmament obviously involves certain risks. Yet the continuation or acceleration of the armaments race carries with it a risk far more dangerous and threatening. A choice of risk is inescapable, and the obligation on mankind is to choose that risk which best promises to break the present impasse.”

WCC Central Committee, Rochester (1963)

Following the agreement on a Limited Test Ban Treaty, the CCIA Executive Committee, and subsequently the WCC Central Committee, adopted a statement on the test ban treaty and addressed a letter to the leaders of the three nuclear powers:

a. The Test Ban Treaty and the Next Steps

“The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches welcomes the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under-Water as the first constructive international agreement in the current nuclear stalemate.

The Treaty is a first step. It does not halt production or reduce existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons; but it may slow up the nuclear arms race and will diminish the health hazards from radioactive fall-out to this and future generations. Of itself it does not prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to nations now without them; but it does prohibit assistance to other nations in making tests in the environments which it specifically proscribes. It does not end the threat of nuclear war or outlaw the use of nuclear weapons; but it opens the way to further agreements and thereby reduces the threat of war.

The nations must therefore seize every opportunity to capture the advantages of this moment, and to explore possibilities of advancing from co-existence to the beginning of co-operation. General and complete disarmament is the declared goal. In whatever way the ultimate aim is defined, the following next steps towards establishing world peace merit both serious consideration and every effort for their achievement.

The immediate requirement is that public opinion should fully and urgently support governments which have advanced in this direction. The treaty should be ratified not only by formal signatures but in the wills of whole nations.

The full value of the Treaty depends on the adherence of all the nations in the world. In the nuclear age, to withhold assent on grounds of national influence or ideological doctrine is irresponsible. Ways must be found whereby France and China can associate themselves with the Treaty.

The Test Ban Treaty underlines the tendency for ultimate military power to be concentrated in a very few hands. This calls for new discipline and experiments in the sharing of international decisions and for the consideration of how the responsibility for nuclear defense can be shared within an alliance. In any case, the answer cannot be found in the possession by every nation of its own nuclear defense.

The Test Ban Treaty must be interpreted and applied not only in the letter but also in the spirit of its provisions. There is a grave responsibility on all parties not to invoke the right to withdraw from the treaty except in most extreme circumstances.



Co-operation in devising means of identifying underground testing should be vigorously pursued, so that in this environment also, nuclear weapons testing will be halted; and explosions for peaceful purposes including testing for scientific reasons should be undertaken only under international agreement and control.

The penetration of outer space opens a new area of high military consequence. If in this field mankind is not to face dangers equivalent to those he now seeks to escape from, co-operation of the parties to the present treaty is urgent.

Moreover, the parties should now explore with an open mind further co-operative steps, such as the use of mutual inspection teams to inhibit surprise attack and the establishment of nuclear free zones.

A non-aggression pact could well constitute a symbol of a new relationship. Its political implications should be carefully considered. If current proposals for such a pact are found unacceptable, a reasonable alternative to accomplish similar purposes should be diligently sought.

To bring about a durable peace to which the Test Ban Treaty may open the way, a lasting solution must be found for those great political problems and conflicts which still divide the world community and are a cause of insecurity and unrest.

The latest developments relating to the Test Ban Treaty inevitably isolate China more than ever from the rest of the world. This isolation in itself can be a new source of danger and suffering to China's neighbors as exemplified by her recent actions. Every opportunity should be seized to keep open channels of contact with China, and to bring her into the family of nations, so that she may accept the responsibilities and disciplines of its institutions.

New hopes for peace have stirred in men's hearts in these days. It is supremely the task of the churches to strive that these hopes be not betrayed. So they have the duty to press upon the attention of governments the considerations outlined herein which express in practical terms the aspirations of millions of our fellow men. They can urge the nations to accept reasonable risks in seizing every opportunity opened up by the agreement on the Test Ban Treaty, and, while prudently alert to any threat of hostility, to be equally alive to the possibilities of co-operation in goodwill".

- b. Letter from the Officers of the WCC Central Committee to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, The Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR and the President of the United States, dated August 31, 1963:

"The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, with representatives from churches around the world, is now in session, and has reviewed current progress towards peace and order. We have been very conscious of the hopes raised by the recent signing of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water.



The Central Committee has unanimously bidden us to inform you of their profound gratitude for this first step in breaking the nuclear impasse. In saying this, we are confident that we reflect the aspirations of millions of Christians in the churches of all continents.

The Officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs issued a statement on the day the Treaty was initialed, of which we enclose a copy. The Executive Committee of the Commission also prepared a more detailed statement, "The Test Ban Treaty and Next Steps" which was adopted by the Central Committee and which we now remit for your information.

In sending you this message of appreciation, we hardly need to emphasize that much remains to be done before the achievement of that world order for which our churches work and pray. We assure you of our continuing prayers that you and all statesmen on whose shoulders lie the burdens of decision will find it possible in this new atmosphere to move from an era of co-existence to one of co-operation for the benefit of mankind."

WCC Executive Committee, Odessa, USSR (1964)

Looking to possibilities of further action following the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the WCC Executive Committee commented in 1964 on "Problems and Opportunities Today":

"As members of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Odessa, we have noted the wide-spread use in governmental and intergovernmental circles of the Statement "The Test Ban Treaty and the Next Steps", adopted by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at Rochester in August 1963, and the warm welcome accorded it by many churches.

We have received a report that CCIA officers have recently transmitted it to the resumed Conference of the Eighteen-Nations Committee on Disarmament and, on the basis of it, have held consultations particularly with the Heads of Delegations representing the nuclear powers.

We welcome the relaxation of tensions between the major powers following the conclusion of the Limited Test Ban Treaty at Moscow last summer. Every opportunity should be seized to advance from competition in armaments to co-operation in disarmament. If the precarious détente of the moment is to become more firmly established and further agreements reached, serious obstacles must be overcome.

Proposals recently made by both sides can have vital meaning for international security. Among them are: to negotiate a non-aggression pact; to conclude an international agreement on the repudiation by all states of the use of force in solving territorial disputes and questions involving frontiers; to conclude an international agreement on the repudiation by all states of direct and indirect forms of the threat or use of force in their selfish political or economic interests and of aggression, subversion, or the secret supply of arms; to halt the production of fissionable material for military purposes and to direct nuclear production to peaceful uses; to establish inspection posts to safeguard against surprise attack; to limit nuclear striking capacity or nuclear delivery systems; to prevent proliferation of nuclear military power; to establish nuclear free zones; to



cease underground testing for military purposes. In a number of instances, the proposals are sufficiently similar that agreement is possible and should be reached.”

WCC Central Committee, Enugu, Nigeria (1965)

The Central Committee meeting in Enugu, Eastern Nigeria, in January 1965, included reference to nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive statement:

“Progress towards disarmament must be recognized as a major obligation of all governments and especially of those who possess nuclear weapons. While some encouraging developments have taken place, including the Limited Test Treaty of 1963, the armaments race in fact continues unabated. We are convinced that more can and ought to be done. France and China ought to be brought into the disarmament negotiations and agreements. The Test Ban Treaty ought to be extended to include underground testing. Other possibilities are the limitation of nuclear free zones as is currently proposed for Africa by the Organization for African Unity.

It is of highest importance that defense arrangements, as long as they are needed, whether national or regional, will be so fashioned as not to impede, but to facilitate progress towards disarmament. This holds true for conventional weapons, but has special relevance in the nuclear field. It is in the interest of all nations, and not least of the nuclear powers themselves, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear armaments. In this connection, the arguments for and against the multilateral force as originally conceived were taken into consideration. The constructive possibility of diverting money now spent for the manufacture of destructive weapons to the assistance of the developing countries is an additional incentive”.

WCC Central Committee, Geneva (1966)

The 1966 meeting of the Central Committee addressed itself to certain immediate problems of disarmament. It acknowledged the progress which had been made in the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and called for further measures especially a ban on underground tests:

“The Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 ought to be expanded to include underground tests. This may require a limited number of on-site inspections, or it may be possible to ban at least those tests which it is agreed can be detected and identified without on-site inspections. In the latter instance, scientific studies ought to be pursued under international auspices so that, as means of detection and identification improve, the threshold may be progressively lowered. Mankind expects and awaits progress in this area.

While the expansion of the Limited Test Ban Treaty would in itself deter the spread of nuclear weapons, there is need to set up special safeguards against proliferation. Here there must be greater readiness to think objectively, not only of the responsibilities upon the nuclear powers, but also of ways of meeting the reasonable expectations of the non-nuclear powers. This will require that the non-nuclear powers will be assured of protection against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, whether by informal or formal agreements; and that the non-nuclear powers, denying themselves the advantages of nuclear possession, will nevertheless have the benefits of the nuclear



powers, whether political or in terms of prestige, as well as those which involve peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The nuclear powers, on their part, must reverse the trend of nuclear weapons building and place at the disposal of all mankind greater nuclear resources for peaceful uses”.

World Conference on Church and Society (1966)

At the WCC World Conference on Church and Society, in Geneva in 1966, the participants reflected on the theme “Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of our Time”. The 420 participants from 80 nations approved a Report on “Structures of International Cooperation”, which included the following statement on nuclear war:

“Conclusions on Nuclear War

The development of military technology, and especially of atomic, radiological, biological and chemical arms and the means to deliver them, marks a decisive turning point in the history of mankind, of states and their wars. The frightful possibilities of indiscriminate war exterminating not only combatants but civilian populations as well, the impossibility of self-defense by smaller nations, the danger of annihilation of human cultures, the continuing danger for future generations from radiation – all this radically changes the situation of the states and their relations with one another.

This new and terrible situation forces Christians to re-examine previous thinking in the churches concerning war and the function of the state in relation to it. In Amsterdam in 1948, the First Assembly of the WCC declared, “War is contrary to the will of God”. At the same time it acknowledged three attitudes towards the participation by Christians in the evil of war, one of the three attitudes being that war might at times be a lesser evil. Today the situation has changed. Christians still differ as to whether military means can be legitimately used to achieve objectives which are necessary to justice. But nuclear war goes beyond all bounds. Mutual nuclear annihilation can never establish justice because it destroys all that justice seeks to defend or to achieve. We now say to all governments and peoples that nuclear war is against God’s will and the greatest of evils. Therefore we affirm that it is the first duty of governments and their officials to prevent nuclear war.....

The real problem is how the supreme task, to avoid nuclear war, can be carried out. The following measures would help:

- The changing of a mere balance of power into a community with institutions for the prevention of escalation of conflict between the main powers;
- The embodiment in a code of conduct of the discipline necessary to prevent war; step-by-step agreements concerning limitations on the use of war; the development of a new international law for the nuclear dimension;
- Control and inspection of armaments by international agencies to ensure an equilibrium of power and regulate the different phases of disarmament;
- An increasing role for the smaller powers in depolarizing international affairs.

The nuclear powers have a great common interest in not letting their precarious balance escalate into nuclear war. They also have a common interest in preventing nuclear proliferation and the escalation of local conflict.



The churches should add that they have something more in common: the duty to preserve the life of the people of this world, and to work for a world order which will transcend the present uneasy peace of the equilibrium of power. It is intolerable for the peace of the world to depend on a precarious nuclear balance.

Such disarmament measures as might be immediately implemented should be vigorously pursued in order to sustain the present armistice and release resources for the urgent task of economic development in the rest of the world. Patient and persistent negotiations on all these matters are the way to wider possibilities for settling outstanding questions between blocs. International agreements in this field should be honored, brought up to date, and extended.

The United Nations is the best structure now available through which to pursue the goals of international peace and justice. Like all institutions, it is not sacrosanct, and many changes in its Charter are necessary to meet the needs of the world today. Nevertheless we call upon the churches of the World to defend it against all attacks which would weaken or destroy it, and to seek out and advocate ways in which it can be transformed into an instrument fully capable of ensuring the peace and guaranteeing justice on a world-wide scale.

The United Nations has obvious limitations:

- It can exercise little influence in conflicts between the great powers;
- The process of decision-making in the General Assembly is weakened by lack of agreement.

But the United Nations has resources which should be more fully used:

- UN debates offer a corrective for national self-righteousness and unilateral action in world affairs;
- The UN offers a forum for continuous diplomacy, conciliation and mediation;
- The UN can contribute to peacekeeping operations and the elimination of local conflict;
- The UN machinery can be used as an instrument for the promotion of dynamic justice;
- The work done by the UN and its specialized agencies in the fields of human rights, labor relations, and social and economic conditions may form the basis for an international ethos in these fields;
- The churches should make use of their consultative status with the UN to bring their influence to bear.

We urge Christians and the churches, by every means at their disposal, to join those who seek to rouse the conscience of their fellow men concerning peace and justice. The life of the churches itself is the principal means but others will also be needed. These will vary: patient political effort and impatient protest, advocacy of feasible measures and protection of long-range goals, the creation of greater order and the transformation of existing orders will all be involved. Whatever the means, Christians must help to bear one another's burdens of loneliness and weakness, and support one another in their common witness.

A system to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be established in which all nations should cooperate; such a system should also be jointly controlled, open, and on a legal basis.



In this situation the churches, especially as an ecumenical community, can help. Real dialogue is needed; the tendency to absolutize ideologies must be challenged: an example of true community transcending the nations must be manifested; every conceivable means must be used to create a climate of confidence. We have not been able to explore these possibilities in detail. They represent urgent agenda for the churches of the World Council of Churches and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

In the atomic stalemate, small nations enjoy greater liberty to act for good or evil than before. A new world order will be impossible without their full cooperation, their willingness to renounce nuclear weapons and their discipline in the prevention of local conflict.

WCC Executive Committee, Windsor, England (1967) Support for a Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The World Council of Churches Executive Committee, meeting at Windsor, England in 1967, adopted the following declaration:

“The prospect of agreement between the major nuclear powers on a Non-Proliferation Treaty promises a further step forward towards controlling the nuclear threat to mankind, in the direction in which the CCIA has consistently pressed. It remains, however, to find a means of involving in the agreement every nation possessing nuclear arms, of providing safeguards for the non-nuclear states, as well as of sharing widely the advanced technology associated with the production of a nuclear armory”.

The Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, Sweden (1968)

A report entitled “Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs” adopted by the Assembly, included a statement on “further steps” to avoid nuclear war:

“..... The avoidance of atomic, biological or chemical war has become a condition of human survival. This is true not only because it would be suicidally destructive, but because, unlike ‘conventional’ war, nuclear war would inflict lasting genetic damage. The churches must insist that it is the first duty of governments to prevent such a war: to halt the present arms race, agree never to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, stop experiments concerned with, and the production of weapons of mass human destruction by chemical and biological means, and move away from the balance of terror towards disarmament.

In no way can the present nuclear stalemate be accepted as a lasting solution or as a justification for maintaining nuclear armaments. The churches should welcome agreement among the great powers in the non-proliferation treaty as an important step towards averting nuclear disasters, and all nations (including China and France) should be urged to sign it.

Further steps will be needed, especially the extension of the test-ban to underground tests, and the prevention of the establishment of anti-ballistic missile systems by agreement between the USA and the USSR.



The concentration of nuclear weapons in the hands of a few nations presents the world with serious problems:

- a. how to guarantee the security of the non-nuclear nations;
- b. how to enable these nations to play their part in preventing war, and
- c. how to prevent the nuclear powers from freezing the existing order at the expense of changes needed for social and political justice.

Since smaller nations are expected to accept the discipline of nuclear abstinence, the nuclear powers should accept the discipline of phased disarmament in all categories of weapons. At the same time, the nuclear nations should accept the right and responsibility of the non-nuclear nations to their share in vital decisions regarding their own security and the peace of the world”.

Consultation on the Christian Concern for Peace, Baden Austria (1970)

The Baden consultation (organized by the joint Roman Catholic-World Council of Churches Programme on Society, Development and Peace) examined the issues of violence, peace-making, nuclear weapons and conscientious objection. The following excerpts from the report call attention to the moral dilemmas of deterrence theory and peace.

Nuclear Weapons

“What should be the Christian attitude facing the problem of the production and the eventual use of nuclear weapons?.....

.....We cannot avoid dealing with the problem posed by the readiness of the two big nuclear powers to employ their heaviest weapons if their so-called strategy of mutual nuclear deterrence were to fail.

This strategy presents a disquieting prospect of an unstable ‘equilibrium of terror’, constantly threatened by the effort no one side or the other to keep ahead, or catch up, in the development of ever new and more effective systems, whether of passive missile defense, or more sophisticated vehicles of offensive delivery.

Some limited but encouraging progress has indeed been registered by the US and the USSR through negotiations on the control and limitation of such armaments, in regard, for example, to testing of weapons and the use of such weapons in space or on the sea bed, and in preventing the spread of such weapons to other powers. Even more significant steps may develop out of the current discussions on the limitation of strategic armaments.

We question, however, whether the rest of mankind can be satisfied by these uncertain prospects, and we therefore raise again the question of the ultimate responsibility of Christians to make every effort to require that such weapons are not in fact employed.

There can be no question among Christians that the employment of such weapons would never be justified on the scale not only made possible by the weapons themselves but in fact contemplated



by both sides if deterrence fails. The witness of recent assemblies of Christian thinkers on this point is unmistakably clear.....

It is perhaps unrealistic to expect, as was suggested earlier in this report, that either of the two great nuclear powers would unilaterally renounce the use of such weapons. Or even limit their further development and accumulation. But the danger of almost total destruction grows, and what might be called the moral legitimization or theological tolerance of the theory of deterrence renders inoperative the conscience of thousands of human beings on each side who stand ready upon command to activate these weapon systems, and help to justify staggering expenditures on new weapon systems.

A new concentration of Christian works for peace on this question seems to us to be urgently needed. The traditional theological teaching on war, which seemed realistic in the centuries in which wars were fought only with limited force, seems hopelessly inadequate to deal with the problems of destruction. Rather a serious consideration of the theological basic doctrine of war should induce the condemnation of nuclear war and every kind of complete destruction. The failure of the churches to resolve the dilemma of the morality of their possession (with conditional intent to use), as distinguished from the actual use of strategic nuclear weapons, has cost the Churches greatly in terms of credibility and moral authority.

CCIA Commission, Visegrad, Hungary (1973)

Meeting in Visegrad, Hungary in June 1973, the CCIA Commission adopted a statement, an excerpt of which follows:

“The churches have a special responsibility to help develop public opinion, so that each measure of arms control and disarmament is seen as a useful but limited step towards a world in which armed force would not be used except under strict international control...

We welcome the positive efforts in the field of limitations of arms and international security which have taken place during the recent period, both within the framework of the UN and bilateral relations between the USA and USSR. Negotiations for an effective Comprehensive Nuclear Test Band, the logical supplement to the SALT agreement, must be pursued. The obstacles to agreement on a complete system of verification should not be allowed to block such a treaty. Meanwhile, a moratorium on all testing, including the testing of new categories of nuclear weapons, should be worked out in which all nuclear powers, including China and France, should be urged to participate. An immediate consideration is the protection of populations from the effects of testing nuclear devices.

The ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly by those states who are on the threshold of nuclear arms possession, should be urged and supported.....



CCIA Commission Meeting, Geneva (1974)

The CCIA Commission, meeting in 1974, adopted the following position paper:

“Since a year ago, when the CCIA Executive Committee expressed at some length ecumenical concerns in the field of disarmament, the international situation in this regard has deteriorated. On the one hand, the painfully slow progress at various levels towards mutual and balanced disarmament seems to have ground to a halt. On the other hand, military expenditures mount, the trade in arms escalates, especially in the Middle East. The nuclear explosion in India warns that in the absence of effective nuclear controls, several additional countries will press to join the nuclear club. Thus, the churches need to speak again and more urgently...

.....Since the beginning of 1973, China, France, the USA and the USSR, India and the U.K. have made over 30 nuclear explosions, at least some of which add to the genetic damage to human life for all future generations.

Only Canada, East and West Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the USA and the USSR, among the dozen or more nuclear and potential nuclear powers, have so far ratified the Partial Test Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The recent failure of the Super Powers to agree on a Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty illustrates how disarmament efforts lag while the arms race continues to accelerate. Likewise the failure of the UN General Assembly to agree on and to prepare a World Disarmament Conference must be noted.

The world knows little about the SALT-talks between the United States and the USSR, an ongoing negotiation of the greatest importance. The Churches expect the two powers to be constantly aware of their tremendous responsibility, since their relations deeply affect the conditions of peace for all.

Churches and ecumenical agencies cannot themselves speak with authority on the technical aspect of disarmament, and must therefore rely for factual information on expert advice. Yet, the race in arms, like the closely related question of war, is too central to human welfare and survival to be left to the experts. The churches, and indeed all Christian people, have inescapable duties to inform public opinion, to press for reasonable and equitable steps towards genuine disarmament, and to work for those conditions which can foster a greater readiness to disarm”.

Ecumenical Hearing on Nuclear Energy, Sigtuna, Sweden (1975) “Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Weapons”

A Hearing on Nuclear Energy was held in June 1975 in Sigtuna, Sweden, sponsored by the WCC-sub-unit on Church and Society. The Hearing produced a Report which included the following section on the nuclear energy and nuclear weapons:

“The Hearing gave much attention to the question whether the extension of nuclear energy programs will contribute to the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Four critical issues were highlighted:

1. In most of the industrialized or technologically advanced countries, nuclear energy was developed on the basis of experience gained in the development of



2. nuclear arms technology. In the present situation this “coupling” may tend to be reversed: the extension of the facilities for the production of nuclear energy to countries with developed nuclear science programs may make it technically possible to construct nuclear weapons. The character of the nuclear program and which atomic weapons are envisaged; it is a matter of vigorous debate. In the last analysis, this might not even be decisive, since a country, determined to obtain nuclear weapons, can do so by several routes. Nevertheless it is apparent that its efforts would be facilitated by the wide extension of nuclear energy technology.
3. It is difficult on political and moral grounds to deny countries without nuclear technology the right to obtain it because of a fear that they might use it for the development of nuclear weapons. The proposition that the appropriation of nuclear technology would forever be a limited right, to be doled out by the present nuclear countries according to rules determined by their interest, is unacceptable. This would be an intolerable situation for many developing countries seeking to benefit from the peaceful application of nuclear energy and throw off technological domination by the already industrialized countries.
4. The major obstacle to nuclear disarmament is that the major industrial countries, already producing and possessing nuclear weapons, continue to regard them as indispensable for maintaining their power. Recent advances of military technology in the USA and the USSR may produce new instabilities in the strategic arms race between these two nations. The only convincing step towards preventing the nuclear arms race would be general nuclear disarmament by the present nuclear powers. This step would, however, become much more difficult if many yet non-nuclear countries were to obtain nuclear arms technology in the future, even if they do so on a very limited scale.
5. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is not a sufficient instrument to prevent nuclear arms proliferation since it is based on discrimination in favor of countries already possessing nuclear weapons. It is not surprising therefore that it is difficult to enforce and achieve its universal acceptance and that many nations, especially several with a potential nuclear weapons capability, have so far refused to subscribe to it.

It has not therefore fully prevented the spread of nuclear weapons (though Article VII of the Treaty encourages the formation of geographically extensive nuclear free zones).

It is part of the tragedy of our times that we see no simple way out of the present dilemma of our world; faced with the potentiality of nuclear energy and the fear of nuclear warfare. We are entirely agreed that nuclear weapons and nuclear warfare are a disastrous evil, and that by making nuclear arms, nations are playing recklessly with the future of humanity. It is not clear, however, that stopping nuclear energy programs will greatly reduce this hazard if countries are determined to equip themselves for nuclear war.

The churches and all other committed to a vision of justice and peace have a responsibility to sensitize people to these fundamental issues. Because of the fatalism about nuclear armaments which is a characteristic of our times, it is important to:



1. Press for changes of social, political and economic structures which would help reduce international tension and conflict, and promote justice;
2. Continue the struggle to persuade our countries to accept international control policies leading to effective disarmament;
3. Increase efforts to alert peoples to the enormous dangers, for all humanity and for future generations, of a nuclear war.”

The Fifth WCC Assembly, Nairobi, Kenya (1975)

The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Nairobi, made a major assessment of the churches’ role in issues of disarmament, and issued a statement on nuclear collaboration with South Africa.

a. The World Armaments Situation (Excerpt)

“Three decades after World War II, humankind is again armed to levels unequalled in history.....

The increased expenditure on arms is surpassed only by advances in military technology. Modern nuclear warheads have an explosive power of several millions of tons of TNT. Of equal importance are the improvements in speed and accuracy of delivery vehicles of nuclear weapons. In addition to the strategic nuclear weapons designed for international exchanges, the superpowers have developed a large arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons, thus reducing the potential importance of a threshold between conventional and nuclear warfare.....

In the past 25-30 years, several attempts to reduce the arms race have been made. Multiple UN resolutions calling for disarmament notwithstanding, only bacteriological weapons have been destroyed as a result of disarmament negotiations.

The interest for disarmament has been replaced by a concentration around the notion of arms control, i.e. controlling the advance in armaments. The Antarctic Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, and the Seabed Treaty, as well as the Partial Test-Ban Treaty, could be mentioned in this connection. Most notable is the five-year old nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to prevent the spreading of nuclear weapons. This Treaty also provides for the control of peaceful use of nuclear energy. Regrettably, several important nations have not signed or ratified the Treaty.

The SALT negotiations and agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States represent an effort of the two superpowers to accommodate each other in questions of quantities in lines of upward parity. The negotiations may have contributed to a better political atmosphere between the two countries, but have also channeled the strategic arms race primarily in the direction of improved qualities.....”

There are limits to how far the great powers, in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration, can develop relationships of partnership and co-operation, under conditions where weapons of massive destruction could be used.



b. An Appeal to the Churches (Excerpt)

“.....Christians must resist the temptation to resign themselves to a false sense of impotence or security. The churches should emphasize their readiness to live without the protection of armaments, and take a significant initiative in pressing for effective disarmament. Churches, individual Christians, and members of the public in all countries should press their governments to ensure national security without resorting to the use of weapons of mass destruction.

c. Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa

(The Nairobi Assembly issued a statement of concern regarding the role of certain governments and multi-national companies in the financing and construction of nuclear power plants in South Africa – especially since South Africa has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

“The WCC Fifth Assembly expresses its deep concern that certain governments and multi-national companies are becoming involved in the financing and construction of nuclear power generating plants in South Africa.....

The Assembly is..... concerned with the military implications of these nuclear developments, especially since South Africa is not a signatory power to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. South Africa’s military expenditures has increased from R255m (USD 300m) in 1965/6 to over R1000m (USD 1200m) in 1975/6; nuclear power plants and nuclear enrichment plants will facilitate development of nuclear weapons.....

“The WCC calls on its member churches in those countries involved to:

- a. Ascertain the extent of their own country’s commercial and governmental commitment to South Africa’s nuclear program;
- b. Make public the political and military implications and consequences of pursuing a policy of collaboration with the South African authorities;
- c. Challenge those companies and governments involved to revise their policies in the light of considerations which are broader than the commercial and economic criteria involved”.

CCIA Consultation on Militarism, Glion, Switzerland (1977)

The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Nairobi called upon the churches and the WCC to “raise consciousness about the dangers of militarism and search for creative ways of educating for peace”. The Central Committee in August 1977 endorsed plans for studies leading to an action-oriented program on militarism and disarmament, including a Consultation on Militarism. The Consultation at Glion, near Montreux in Switzerland in November 1977, was the first on this theme, with 42 participants from 29 countries. The Consultation presented the following recommendations for WCC action:

“The role of the WCC should.....be to alert its member churches to the situation described in this consultation’s reports, which should be distributed to the churches for



study and response. The churches should be asked to identify which issues they consider particularly important in their own situations, and to inform about their activities in this issue area.

On the basis of such exchanges of information, patterns of cooperation should be developed, for instance between churches of arms-producing and arms-purchasing countries.

Particular attention must be focussed on the internal manifestation of militarism, three of which are:

1. The nuclear arms race, the proliferation of nuclear weapons capacity, and the development of other arms of mass destruction.
2. The trade in conventional weapons, and the spread of military approaches to social problems.
3. The spread of technologies and of training in repression of internal opposition..”

CCIA Conference on Disarmament, Glion, Switzerland (1978)

The Conference on Disarmament, organized by the CCIA, was held at Glion, Switzerland in April 1978. The following excerpts from the Report relate to nuclear arms:

“The Armaments Race and Strategies for Disarmament

The nuclear arms race between the USA and the USSR has already produced a sufficient quantity of weapons to enable each side to destroy the other many times over. The race has now become one for superior quality and, if continued, will lead to the acquisition of a first-strike capability making full-scale nuclear war a probability.

Other recent developments, notably the miniaturization of nuclear weapons – the neutron bomb being an example – have increased the likelihood of nuclear war which might also be provoked by accident. Such a war would inevitably have worldwide effects, involving countries which have had no voice in the policy decisions which vitally concern their security and even their existence.

Consequently, our primary task today is to prevent the catastrophe of nuclear conflict between the two major powers. At the same time, we must press upon the USA and USSR the urgent necessity for measures of disarmament, first by the conclusion of the long-delayed comprehensive ban on nuclear tests – a measure which will limit further military research and development – and secondly by using the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) for agreeing upon substantial reductions in their nuclear forces. We also urge these two powers to proceed without delay to disengagement in Central Europe, where the large concentration of nuclear and conventional forces is a source of danger. There is another concentration of forces in Eastern Asia, with similar dangerous implications, and we trust that disengagement will be possible in this region as well.



Without measures of disarmament on the part of nuclear-weapon states, there is little prospect of preventing the further horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. A number of countries which already possess the necessary technology will use it for the production of weapons if they see no sign that the nuclear-weapon states are prepared to halt and then reduce the vertical proliferation which has taken place since the Non-Proliferation Treaty came into force in 1970.

Furthermore, both the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recognize the importance that countries deprived of other sources of energy attach to the use of nuclear energy to meet their urgent needs. The further spread of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes involves risks of which the authorities and public opinion must be conscious. The principal (though not the only) cause for anxiety is the possibility of the diversion of current nuclear technology and fissionable material from civilian to military purposes, or even to non-governmental groups pursuing private ends. This danger could be averted only through internationally accepted control measures with which both suppliers and recipients of nuclear technology and equipment scrupulously comply.

Some feel that these steps will not suffice to prevent the proliferation of weapons, and advocate that all further extension of the use of nuclear energy be halted; others feel that countries in urgent need of new sources of energy should be free to opt for nuclear energy, provided that both the government and the citizens are aware of the problems which it may pose for them.

Disarmament Strategies

The current arms race presents us all – churches, governments, and individuals – with a daunting but urgent challenge.

We urge the churches to combat modes of thought which rely on military solutions to political problems (by).....

- Entering into dialogue with those who despair, of halting the arms race, and more importantly, with those who accept the possibility of nuclear war. Those who undertake such encounters must be well informed on the facts of the current military situation, but must insist that, whatever the balance of power may be, nuclear war is morally unacceptable. They would be greatly helped by the lifting of the veil of secrecy which surrounds so much military preparation and is a powerful factor in promoting fear which might prove to be unfounded if more information were available;
- The promotion of a much greater volume of inter visitation across the lines of present political tensions, with a view to stressing the human and individual aspects of the principle of détente;
- The publication of balanced, factual information about those who are perceived as enemies and are often grossly misrepresented in the press;.....



Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts

The Only Alternative

In many World Council of Churches statements, especially in the messages of the World Council of Churches Assemblies, it has been declared repeatedly that war is a sin against the will of God and that it is incompatible with the purposes of God's design for the world. War in a nuclear age would mean the total annihilation of life and destruction of God's creation. Therefore, aware of the threat to the survival of humanity arising from the nuclear and conventional arms race, the presence of weapons of mass destruction, and the many conflict potentials in various parts of the world:

The peaceful settlement of all international conflicts as the only alternative to avoid war or use force must be generally recognized and accepted.

Theological Issues

The Christian Vocation of Peace-Making

"..... The peace we seek is a "warm" peace, not merely the absence of war, but a peace best defined in the Biblical word "Shalom", which expresses a positive state of justice, mutual respect for differences, welfare, health, security and a community embracing all humanity, in which there is loving concern for all.

Jesus Christ is our pattern of the ministry of peace-making. All Christians are called to this vocation and must exercise a ministry of peace-making in whatever sphere they are set. But special support needs to be given to those in a position to influence political decision-making for peace. Churches must not expect governments to give priority to peace-making unless they also make this a priority in their own programs....."

Security In a World Threatened by Annihilation

Security for humanity has its true basis in the loving will of God who desires that none shall perish and that all His creatures should enjoy the fullness of life. His Kingdom shall come and His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. In this confidence, Christians are freed from the burden of anxiety and are therefore able to work for peace and preserve hope even in the most hopeless situations.

Security concerns more than the individual. It involves mutual confidence and cooperation. Without trust, no genuine community is possible, but a community must also be open to critical questioning to avoid the abuse of power which threatens security for all.

False concepts of security blind the nations.

1. Security must be subordinated to the common good of society and humanity, and must not therefore be used as a justification for the violation of human rights.



Security is not found in the escalation of armaments nor in the promises of nuclear protection nor in the determination to obtain first strike capability.

2. We affirm the statement of the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society that “nuclear war is always the larger evil”. We cannot justify any use or threat to use nuclear weapons in the name of “security”. We also affirm that the use of threat to use so-called “conventional” weapons is not in accordance with the mind of Christ.

A complacency which suggests that nothing can be done about the arms race or that people are powerless to act is contrary to the faith of those who believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians must change complacency into concern by the presentation and interpretation of facts about the arms race and its terrible consequences.

Ecumenical Consultation on Nuclear Energy, Bossey, Switzerland (1978)

A second Consultation on Nuclear Energy, held at Bossey, Switzerland, in May 1978 was again concerned with Nuclear Power and the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Nuclear Power and Non-Proliferation

Among the various risks connected with industrial utilization of nuclear power, the possible diversion of fissionable material for use in atomic weapons is different from many others. A country by abstaining from the nuclear power can reduce to zero the risks of operational accident, waste disposal and economic performance, but proliferation of nuclear weapons can be effectively controlled only by International cooperation. Five categories of proliferation are of concern:

1. Vertical Proliferation - where nuclear weapon states add more weapons to their arsenal. When this happens, it becomes more difficult to deny non-nuclear weapons states the right to acquire them.
2. Horizontal proliferation – where countries without nuclear weapons acquire them. To reduce the chances of this, at least three problems have to be considered: a) the political incentive to have nuclear weapons; b) the technological know-ho and capability to fabricate them; and c) safeguards on fissionable materials.
3. Latent proliferation – where a country builds up the capacity to construct nuclear weapons and maintains a readiness to do so, but stops short of actual production for the time being. Strictly speaking this would violate the spirit but not the letter of the NPT.
4. “Subversive” proliferation by sub-national groups – where groups other than national governments acquire their own nuclear weapons, possibly through the theft of fissionable materials in plants or when transported between plants. This raises questions about methods to prevent theft, adequacy of monitoring techniques for its detection, and the impact of increasing security measures on civil liberties.
5. “Revolutionary” proliferation – where nuclear weapons belonging to a nuclear power are taken by other authorities following a seizure of power.

Although the dividing line between military and civil uses of nuclear power will inevitably overcome where there is a breakdown of constitutional government, wherever it is decided to embark upon civil nuclear power programs the strategies and military implications of such decisions cannot be avoided.



For a long time it was assumed that by every possible means the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be prevented by prohibiting additional states from having access to them. It was postulated that the fewer the decision centers that could command the use of such weapons, the smaller the risk that such weapons would be used. Considering the consequences of a nuclear war, non-proliferation of all types was a top priority concern for mankind. The debate was about how this can best be achieved.

Today the debate has changed because more states have now acquired the potential of making nuclear weapons and it is clear that stopping further proliferation requires both new approaches, and the adaptation of existing treaties and agreements to changing circumstances at all levels ranging from the international governmental level to the level of individual construction contracts”.

Six Possible Positions on the Proliferation Issue (Excerpt)

The following positions are identified as options advocated by particular groups. The Consultation was unable to agree on a specific position.

The first three positions start from a national perspective. The last three reflect an international starting point. The positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Different mixtures are possible. Each position is briefly outlined and criticized.

Position 1: Reducing Proliferation by stopping Nuclear Energy

This is the position of the anti-nuclear movement, including those in non-nuclear power countries who advocate avoiding the nuclear option, and those who see nuclear power as a last resort. The potential for all forms of horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons arising from the nuclear fuel cycle is the critical target of this position. Bypassing the nuclear (energy) option and making use of alternative energy sources would avoid proliferation and other problems. In many countries there are national movements working towards these ends.

Criticism

While not questioning the sincerity of such groups, their credibility for some, in particular those from non-nuclear developing countries, will depend on their ability to alter the nuclear drive, both military and civil, in the nuclear countries. Stopping the development of civil nuclear power programs will not inhibit horizontal proliferation.....

Position 2: Moratorium Approach

A call for a moratorium has emerged in many industrialized countries. The time period considered is usually 3-5 years.

Three reasons are given for this position: there is need for full public discussion on the energy future in general and on the role of nuclear power. Time is needed to assess and ascertain the security of various aspects of the nuclear system, e.g.



radioactive waste disposal; time is also needed to rethink conservation schemes and to evaluate renewable and other energy resources and technologies. In addition advocates of a moratorium argue that present safeguards are inadequate to prevent proliferation. They argue that a fair and effective international safeguard system needs to be devised before any further large-scale commitment to nuclear power.

Criticism

A delay of only 3-5 years is unlikely to result in any significant change in the availability of non-nuclear energy technologies as far as large-scale production is concerned.....

Position 3:

Participation-Reflection Approach

Somewhat different from the moratorium approach is the position that would tend toward depolarizing the nuclear debate, and reduce the rate of proliferation, by introducing a period (2 or 3 years) in which a broad public discussion on nuclear energy development is actively promoted by the governments. This argument is that active participation may postpone decision-taking itself, but will speed up implementation of the ultimately chosen option.....

Criticism

While this approach has a great deal to commend it in terms of the enhanced participation of the average citizen in the decision-making process concerning future energy supplies, there is a sense of unreality about the prospects for radical change at the level of national government. Everything depends on the possibility of whether a clearly stated international agreement can be negotiated.....

Position 4:

Some Nuclear Discrimination is Preferable to Further Proliferation

This position assumes that nuclear energy is here to stay, that proliferation of nuclear weapons arising from further sharing of nuclear technology is a serious threat. It assumes that a certain amount of discrimination is preferable to further proliferation of nuclear weapons. This position is consistent with the position of those who generally support the US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978.....

It aims at tightening the controls on access to sensitive technologies, in particular reprocessing, and to forego reprocessing for the time being, and necessarily requires re negotiation of some cooperation agreements between the US and other countries. This position has achieved some prominence in the Christian community in some industrialized countries (see for example the 1000 names signing the pledge in support of President Carter, Manchester Guardian, March 1977).

Criticism

In the eyes of many this position, while intending to be politically realistic, is morally and politically untenable because of its self-righteous implications.

Position 5:

Full Implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty – Access without Proliferation



This position implies support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the only existing international agreement, while at the same time seeking to assure the implementation not only of Art. III on control but also Art. IV on International Cooperation and access to peaceful nuclear technology. It also includes acceptance of Art. VI on nuclear disarmament. This position says yes to the exchange of nuclear technology and no to the spread of nuclear weapons, on the assumption that the two are separable. This position insists that Art. VI be implemented, thus in the long run removing the inherent discrimination of the Treaty and removing one motive for horizontal proliferation. One must recognize the difficulty in practice of this position, in view of the need to find balance between Art. II, IV and VI.

Criticism

The challenge to this position is to the assumption that nuclear power programs and weapons proliferation are separable even with full implementation of the NPT. The NPT system, even if strengthened, is inherently too weak to prevent proliferation. The spread of nuclear weapons, facilitated by nuclear power development, is almost inevitable. States party to the Treaty tend to put emphasis on the implementation of different Articles, but all Articles must be implemented, including Art. VI on disarmament. The solutions to the dilemmas of Art. III, IV and VI are not spelt out. The position neglects the possibility of proliferation by subversive groups. Only the passage of time would lead to confidence in the ability of official international controls seen against the increased risks of all forms of proliferation. It is precisely this period of uncertainty which adds to public anxiety on this and related issues.

Position 6:

International Right of Access without Discrimination

A further position which has emerged during this Consultation puts the emphasis on the right of access to technology including nuclear technology, the removal of discrimination in existing agreements, and the development of a new international control which would cover all countries. Those who hold this view do not accept that the choice is between proliferation or discrimination, because the abolition of discrimination will in fact eliminate many of the incentives to proliferation. It is maintained that this is a just answer to the problem of international sharing and control of nuclear technology.

Criticism

The challenge to this position sees a potential conflict between national sovereignty and international control. No structures of such international control are spelled out, therefore no judgements can be made as to whether this is possible. The weaknesses of present international monitoring systems which raise questions about whether any effective safeguards are possible at all are not considered. The denial of the facilities, even with international control over some parts of the cycle, is unrealistic. Although a few nuclear nations have exercised collective responsibility in relation to the nuclear balance, it does not follow that a large group of nations may be able to sustain the same kind of consensus over the balance of military power. If the latter proves to be the case,



then giving access to all forms of nuclear technology will destabilize the precarious peace under which the world must live.

**Statement by Philip Potter General Secretary to the Ad Hoc
Committee of the X Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly 12 June 1978
(Excerpts)**

It is a great privilege for me, on behalf of the World Council of Churches, to address you. The World Council of Churches, is a fellowship of 293 Orthodox and Protestant churches in over 100 countries....

..... The barriers caused by war and the armaments race have been a major preoccupation of the Council from its inception thirty years ago. The First Assembly of the Council in 1948 declared:

The Churches must also attack the causes of war by promoting peaceful change and the pursuit of justice. They must stand for the maintenance of good faith and the honoring of the pledged word, resist the pretensions of imperialist power, promote the multilateral reduction of armaments, and combat indifference and despair in the face of the futility of war; they must point Christians to that spiritual resistance which grows from settled convictions widely held, themselves a powerful deterrent to war. A moral vacuum inevitably invites an aggressor.

Through its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, which has consultative status with various U.N. bodies, the Council has indefatigably represented the churches in the concern for disarmament and has constantly sought to rouse the conscience of Christians to throw their weight with people of goodwill and governments in working for peace and justice. Christians, expert in the field of disarmament, have been mobilized and valuable contributions have been made. The Fifth Assembly, at Nairobi, of the World Council of Churches, in 1975 called for studies in depth on militarism and disarmament. Since then consultations have been held and their findings have been shared with delegates at this Special Session of the U.N. I may also mention that on Sunday, May 21, on the eve of your Special Session, churches throughout the world remembered you in their prayers to the God of Peace.

Qualitatively new elements

As Christians have grappled with the issues of disarmament, they have been painfully aware of the qualitatively new elements in the situation during this Disarmament Decade. The world has in fact become more insecure in these years.

First, considerably more material and human resources are being concentrated on the production of armaments. Science and technology, the preserve of an intellectual elite in both rich and poor countries, are now deployed by the alliance of those involved in the business, bureaucratic, political and military sectors to produce new and ever more lethal weapons at a prodigious rate. This is often done secretly in the corridors of power and beyond social control. Moreover, the dramatic increase in the number, variety, destructive power and cost of these armaments frustrates disarmament negotiations more than ever before because they change the nature of the problems which have to be faced.



Secondly, arms production and sale have become part of the national economic policy of the rich developed world, and therefore dictates political and foreign policies. Weapons-producing national and trans-national corporations have exacerbated this trend. This has meant a marked increase in the flow of arms to the poorer, developing countries which in the process become dependent clients of the powerful states and potentially widen the scope of armed conflict. For example, it is known that of the over 130 armed conflicts which have taken place since World War II nearly all have been in the Third World, and the powerful nations of the rich world have been involved in those conflicts. Disarmament has therefore become a truly global concern. Hence the necessity and timeliness of this Special Session of the U.N.

Thirdly, national security should be the instrument for promoting the social, economic and political rights of all people within the nation state. However, in a growing number of countries, it has become a doctrine which is used to justify military take-overs, the suppression of civilian political institutions and the violation of basic human rights. In the defense of "law and order", sinister instruments of torture, police and prison hardware, and sophisticated means of intelligence gathering have been produced and sold to minority and undemocratic regimes especially in the Third World. We are witnessing the increasing militarization of many of our societies and the tendency to extend a country's military, ideological and economic frontiers far beyond its national borders, all of which leads to greater insecurity. Moreover, in the name of national security, the mass media and educational institutions are frequently misused to foster a psychosis of fear and mistrust and to prevent any other way of looking at resolution of conflicts than in military terms.

Fourthly, overshadowing all these dangerous tendencies is the development of new generations of even more destructive conventional and nuclear weapons. There is a growing danger of nuclear proliferation and of lowering the nuclear threshold. The deployment of weapons through missiles, submarines and long-range bombers has enabled striking capability to reach all nations and peoples. Furthermore, the super-powers are now seeking to create an atmosphere in which "first strike" capability will sooner or later be turned to reality, and thus hasten the annihilation of the human race.

The Need for New Perspectives

In the face of this catalogue of accelerated insecurity, the churches cannot remain spectators and inactive. On the basis of their faith in a God, who in Jesus Christ wills that we should have life and have it in all its fullness, and in his purpose that the earth should be replenished and used for the well-being of all, Christians are called to bring new perspectives to bear on the issues of militarism and the arms race. I only have time to mention in a general way a few of these perspectives.

1. Disarmament is an integral part of the struggle for a just, participatory and sustainable society. The threat to peace of the arms race is inextricably related to the other prevailing threats to human survival – poverty, hunger, racial, political and economic oppression, the suppression of human rights, the despoiling of the environment and the wanton wastage of the resources of the earth. Disarmament and the search for a New International Economic Order are inseparable efforts towards peace with justice. Thus disarmament is not a technical, but a political and moral concern. A global approach to disarmament is needed. Everything which is done to achieve a more just economic order, to share material and human resources in an equitable way, and to facilitate the participation of all in the life of society is bound to contribute to eliminating the arms race and the militarization of society.
2. We must challenge the idol of a distorted concept of national security which is directed to encouraging fear and mistrust resulting in greater insecurity. The only security worthy of its name lies in enabling people to participate fully in the life of their nation and to establish relations of



- trust between peoples of different nations. It is only when there is a real dialogue – a sharing of life with life in mutual trust and respect – that there can be true security.
3. Christians are pledged to work for creating those structures and mechanisms by which disarmament can be sought boldly and imaginatively. The UN is the most effective forum for enabling the nations to work for that international security which will ensure national security, for the rule of law through covenants freely entered into and maintained by mutually agreed peaceful methods. Therefore, it is imperative that the role of the UN be extended and strengthened in the search for disarmament and for a New International Economic Order. One of the tragedies of our time is the way in which member states and the mass media which support them ignore and denigrate the work of the UN. The World Council of Churches, and its member churches stand pledged, as they always have done, to support the UN in all its efforts to promote peace and justice in our troubled, tortured world.
 4. Disarmament is not the affair of statesmen and experts only, but of every man and woman of every nation. We are dealing here with the issues of life and death for humankind. They are not technical, but human and therefore political issues. This means that every effort must be made to dispel the ignorance, complacency and fear which prevail. Political decisions can only be made when people are fully aware of the facts and are enabled to discern the options before them. This is a necessary function which non-governmental organizations can perform. The churches have a very distinctive role to play because they have the criterion of faith in the God of hope whose purpose is that all should be responsible for each other in justice and peace. Therefore they will continue to rouse the conscience of people and encourage them to demonstrate by attitude, word and act that peace and justice are not ideals to be cherished but realities to be achieved. The arms race is the decision and creation of human beings. Disarmament must also be willed and won by human beings.

The churches do not approach their task with any self-righteousness or naiveté. They are well aware that throughout their history they have often been so allied to the forces of disorder and oppression that they have promoted or connived in wars and in the war psychosis. They know their own divisions are symptoms and signs of the divisions in our world. To be instruments of reconciliation they are in fact endeavoring to become reconciled to each other.

It is in humility and hope that the churches participate in the efforts toward disarmament and a just society. They do so with the vision of the prophet, whose words are engraved on the Isaiah Wall just across the street from this building:

They shall beat their swords into plowshares
And their spears into pruning-hooks:
Nation shall not lift sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.

It is this vision of the conversion of the tools of death into the tools of life which inspires and activates the churches today. Our prayer is that this vision will inspire you in your deliberations and your peoples in the pursuit of peace and justice.”



WCC Central Committee, Kingston, Jamaica (1979)
Report on the Program on Militarism and the Armaments Race

In its "Report on the World Armaments Situation", the Fifth Assembly expressed its alarm at the qualitatively new developments in the arms race which, coupled with spiraling arms production and sales, pose a degree hitherto unimagined, the threat of global destruction. It issued a dramatic appeal to governments, but indicated too, as one participant in the Glion conference on disarmament said: "The churches can no longer urge the governments to place disarmament at the top of their agendas so long as they themselves give it such low priority on their own"

In an effort to heighten the awareness and concern of the churches, and to assess the nature of the present-day arms race, its causes and its consequences, the CCIA organized, on behalf of the WCC Program Unit on Justice and Service, a consultation on militarism (Glion November 1977) and a conference on disarmament (Glion April 1978).

The reports of these two meetings which have been circulated to the member churches demonstrated the dramatic and often qualitatively new characteristics of these phenomena. They also contain numerous recommendations for action.

In the meantime, the attention of the whole world was drawn again to the issue of disarmament through the Special Session on Disarmament (SSD) of the United Nations General Assembly which was held in New York during May and June 1978. WCC General Secretary, Dr. Philip Potter, addressed that meeting and an international ecumenical team organized by the CCIA followed its deliberations with care. Delegates had before them a summary of the reports of the WCC meetings on militarism and disarmament prepared specially for that occasion. An assessment of SSD was published, together with the final document of the session, and provided to the churches.

The Increasingly Critical Situation

The enormous gap between statement and intent, however, became almost immediately evident as governments have continued the arms race pace since SSD.

During the past six months:

1. Several nations have conducted either atmospheric or underground tests of nuclear devices, new nuclear weapons delivery systems are being planned or developed, construction of nuclear bases continues, nuclear stockpiles have grown, and trade in fissionable materials have increased;
2. Real and proposed military expenditures have been substantially increased to still more alarming levels;
3. Arms negotiations, like the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II), have slowed, and resistance to their ratification has grown, putting into question the SSD's hope for rapid progress in this field in the near future.

These recent developments, coupled with the rapidly increasing development, production and trade in sophisticated conventional arms, and growing militarism in many parts of the world, pose unprecedented threats to peace, security and the very survival of humanity.

So many technical and political processes have been set in motion, public opinion in many countries has been so distorted in favor of a perverted notion of national security, so much has been invested in efforts to



justify the nuclear arms race, that to reverse the trend would demand an equal investment of resources and imagination. Unless this is done in the coming decade, we have been told, these processes will lead almost certainly to a globally destructive nuclear confrontation in our generation. The question is: Where shall we find the resources and the will equal to this challenge in time?

More than half of the world's scientists are employed today by the military-industrial-technological complex. Massive political and economic structures have been created which depend upon and thus foment militarism.

As a result of these and other factors, masses of people have been blinded to the facts. Others have not even been exposed to them.

The Challenge to the Churches

This is a concern which involves every part of the lives of the churches. Militarism seeks out and invents "enemies", thus it attacks the ecumenical aim of unity of the Church and unity of humankind. Militarism seeks the support of the Church, thus it would distort our concepts of mission and evangelism. Militarism seeks control over science and technology, attempting to shape the future in accordance with its own distorted vision. Militarism distorts economic priorities, thus it poses the major barrier to the realization of the New International Economic Order and to development. Militarism tends to seek total social control, thus it blocks peoples' participation. Militarism promotes and feeds upon local conflicts, thus it is a major cause of refugee problems and man-made disasters. Militarism seeks control over the means of communication and educational institutions and seeks to promote secrecy. Militarism creates and sustains unjust class and racial structures.

The initial stages of this program on militarism and the armaments race have borne out the broad concerns of the Nairobi Assembly. These are indeed problems which demand the concentrated priority attention of the WCC, the churches and indeed of the whole world as we seek the establishment of just, participatory and sustainable societies.

The Inter-relatedness and Pervasiveness of These Concerns

The Consultation on Militarism was quick to point out that there is a legitimate concern of people to live in security. It showed that militarism is not isolated in the military itself, and identified legitimate, positive functions of the military. It is the perversions of these which have led to the present situation. And the consultation showed clearly that militarism is not limited to countries dominated by military dictatorships. It is a major factor in many democratic societies as well.

The dynamics of militarism and those of the armaments race are closely inter-related. No military regime can survive long without the supply of arms, and no military establishment can flourish in an environment without arms. The threat system established by the arms race and the violence in international relations serve to promote distorted interests of the military and to encourage militaristic tendencies.

Neither can concern for the nuclear arms race be separated from that for conventional arms. The latter becomes more sophisticated and more destructive every day, blurring the threshold between the nuclear and the conventional. The cost of procuring conventional weapons, and of training and maintaining the men who operate them, accounts for more than 80% of current world military expenditure, now amounting to



\$1 billion per day. Their massive transfers to countries in areas of tensions have exacerbated conflicts and helped promote the more than 130 local or limited wars which have been fought since 1945, and which have claimed almost as many victims as did the Second World War. We are told that the “nuclear deterrent” and placement of conventional weapons protect the peace and make the world more secure. The facts show that the nations are not at peace, and that the world is less secure today than ever before.

The Central Committee received and commended to the churches the “Report and Recommendations on the Program on Militarism and the Armaments Race”. The Central Committee urged:

“that the churches study with care the reports of the consultation on disarmament, which contain important detailed recommendations for action; among them, special attention is drawn to : the need for concerted attention to be given to nuclear disarmament especially in nuclear weapons-producing countries....”(See Appendix V for the complete text of the Report)

World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, Boston USA (1979)
Resolution on “Science for Peace”

The WCC Conference on “Faith, Science and the Future” held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1979, adopted the following resolution:

Science for Peace : A Resolution on Disarmament

“We, scientists, engineers, theologians and members of Christian churches from all parts of the world, participants in the WCC Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, now meeting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, acknowledge with penitence the part played by science in the development of weapons of mass destruction and the failure of the churches to oppose it, and now plead with the nations of the world for the reduction and eventual abolition of such weapons.

WHEREAS :

- The arsenals of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons already constitute a grave peril to humankind;
- Sharp changes by the super-powers towards a counter force strategy are so destabilizing that sober scientists estimate a nuclear holocaust is probable before the end of the century;
- There is widespread ignorance of the horrible experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the even greater implications of limited or global nuclear war with current and projected nuclear weapons;
- We are profoundly disturbed by the willingness of some scientists, engineers and corporations, with the backing of governments, to pursue profit and prestige in weapons development at the risk of an unparalleled destruction of human life;
- The waste of the increasingly scarce materials and energy resources of the world on the instruments of war means further deprivation of the poor whom we are commanded to serve;
- We grieve that so many of the most able scientists, especially the young ones, are seduced away from the nobler aspirations of science into the unwitting service of mutual destruction;
- To prepare local and national programs for the conversion to civilian use of laboratories and factories related to military research and production, and to provide for the retraining and re-employment of those who work in them;



- To resolve never again to allow science and technology to threaten the destruction of human life, and to accept the God-given task of using SCIENCE FOR PEACE.

WCC Central Committee, Geneva (1980) – Statement on Nuclear Disarmament

“Since the growing threat of nuclear war was a central issue at two major WCC conferences, the “Conference “Your Kingdom Come”, held at Melbourne, Australia in May 1980, and the 1979 Church and Society Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, the Central Committee adopted the following resolution:

The Central Committee heard the message from the Melbourne Conference which spoke of the “clouds of nuclear threat and annihilation” and that from the Conference on Faith, Science and the Future which reminded it that the gravest danger that humanity faces today is a nuclear holocaust. It is with a great sense of urgency that the Central Committee makes this statement.

Developments in the recent period have brought the world closer to the brink of a nuclear war. Unless the present trends are reversed or immediately halted, a nuclear war is now a distinct possibility. Many scientists are convinced that in the past year the hands of the clock have moved closer to the mid-night of nuclear war.

The tension between the United States and the Soviet Union has increased. They have each developed and continue to develop new generations of ever more devastating nuclear weapons. The dangers inherent in the development of these weapons within Europe have been heightened by the NATO decision to base new missiles possessing counter force qualities and exceptional accuracy.

In August 1980 the United States officially announced a new policy which contemplates a ‘limited’ nuclear war. This has further raised the anxieties about a nuclear holocaust. The current weapon program of the major powers, if not stopped, will pull the nuclear trip-wire tighter. The development of ‘nuclear war-fighting capabilities’ will increase the hair trigger readiness for massive nuclear exchange at a time when political tensions are increasing all over the world.

Many years ago the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union agreed to negotiate a treaty banning all nuclear tests. Regrettably no draft of such a comprehensive test ban treaty has been presented. Neither China nor France has indicated willingness to enter into such an agreement.

The deliberations at the Second Review Conference on Non-Proliferation Treaty currently being held in Geneva have highlighted the fact that the nuclear weapon states which have signed the treaty have failed to fulfil their obligations under the treaty to start nuclear disarmament, thus undermining the credibility of the non-proliferation régime.

The Central Committee urges all nuclear powers to: freeze immediately all further testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons; start immediately discussions with a view to making



agreements not to enhance the existing nuclear potentials and progressively reducing the overall number of nuclear weapons and a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

The Central Committee also urges an early ratification of the SALT II agreement.

In view of the possibility of nuclear war, the Central Committee urges the Madrid Conference (on European Security and Cooperation) to decide to start negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Guidelines for Action on Nuclear Disarmament

1. In adopting the Program for Disarmament and against Militarism and Arms Race, the Central Committee in January 1979 gave high priority to the issue of nuclear disarmament. The report from the Working Committee on Church and Society, following up the Science for Peace Resolution from the Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, has called for a “more striking style and high visibility program”. The Central Committee therefore urges member churches of the WCC to alert people in their countries to the urgency of the threat of nuclear war and to launch priority programs of church action in opposition to the nuclear arms race.
2. The Central Committee requests Church and Society and CCIA to arrange jointly an international Public Hearing on the current threat to world peace with special focus on the increased danger of nuclear war, where authoritative witnesses can be cross examined in an effort to assess the present situation; encourages CCIA to continue its efforts to contribute to broad public education regarding present danger of nuclear war; requests Church and Society to make approaches to bodies representative of the scientific community, its learned societies and institutions at international and national levels to discuss further the nuclear threat to peace and the role of science in bringing it to an end.
3. The Central Committee requests the General Secretary to set up a panel of leading scientists, statesmen, military experts committed to peace, and religious leaders to advise the WCC and the churches on issues related to nuclear disarmament, and to explore the possibility of having a World Day of Prayer, and Action in opposition to nuclear war in cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, other Christian organizations and other religions.

WCC Central Committee, Dresden, GDR (1981)

The following is the complete text of the statement adopted by the Central Committee at its meeting in Dresden, GDR, August 1981:

“Increased Threats to Peace and the Task of the Churches

1. The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in August 1980 expressed its concern that ‘ the gravest danger that humanity faces today is a nuclear holocaust’. The Central Committee, meeting in Dresden in August 1981, painfully aware of the destruction caused by bombing during World War II as tragically evidenced in this city and the continuing need to curb violence as a means of resolving international conflict, notes that



international relations have deteriorated during the past year and have become even more dangerous. There has been intensification of tension and the emergency of disquieting trends:

- Concerted attempts to make acceptable new strategies concerning the feasibility of nuclear war, and tendencies to consider the possibility of a limited nuclear conflict in which victory is assumed to be possible. In particular we are disturbed by the development and production in various countries of new dehumanizing weapons. The neutron weapon is the most recent and obvious example. It is a tremendous threat because it makes the use of nuclear weapons more likely, even against less developed countries. It is a further incentive to escalate the arms race and therefore makes disarmament negotiations more difficult. Even at this stage we urge that the manufacture of this and any other such weapons be stopped, that those already produced be eliminated and that no other nation decide to manufacture them;..
 - The inability, so far, to reach a positive conclusion to the post-Helsinki talks in Madrid on European Security and Cooperation reflects a deterioration in East-West relations which constitutes a setback to détente and a further obstacle to disarmament;
 - The continuation of violent conflicts in areas mentioned in earlier statements of the Central Committee;
 - The worsening economic crisis throughout the world with graver consequences for the poor nations resulting in tensions within and among nations;
 - The continuing stalemate in the North-South discussions on global economic issues leading to confrontation and the reduction in aid to developing nations in contrast with the scandalous increase of expenditures on the arms race.
2. The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, recognizing that urgent steps are needed for the prevention of a nuclear war and for the de-escalation of regional conflicts, appeals to all political leaders in the following terms:
- a. the leaders of the two military blocs should meet at the earliest possible time to begin serious negotiations aimed at disarmament, both nuclear and conventional. To facilitate this process they and other national leaders should consider what unilateral steps for disarmament could responsibly be taken;
 - b. the peace-keeping machinery of the United Nations and of regional organizations should be strengthened in the interest of confidence building and the settlement of disputes. Existing disarmament negotiations should be reactivated and intensified;
 - c. in order to ease tension and build confidence among the nations, the nuclear powers should jointly propose a resolution in the United Nations Security Council which would give guarantee to countries which decide to create nuclear free zones that these will be fully respected;
 - d. adequate preparation at national and international levels to ensure the success of the second special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly scheduled for mid-1982 is of the greatest importance;
 - e. the widening economic gulf between developed and developing countries undermines confidence and is a threat to peace and cooperation. The industrialized nations should fulfil the United Nations goal for international development assistance and should start to negotiate in good faith for a more just relationship between the North and the South;
 - f. the rights of people everywhere to seek changes in social, economic and political exploitative and unjust conditions must be supported.



3. The Central Committee has in the past recommended to the churches a number of concrete actions for disarmament and against militarism and the arms race. In light of the current, most dangerous situation, the Central Committee
 - a. reaffirms the tasks and responsibilities of the churches in the context of the present exposure of humankind to the unprecedented risk of terrible and perhaps irreparable destruction;
 - b. emphasizes the need to state more clearly the basis of involvement in the issues of war and peace in the context of the struggle for justice;
 - c. emphasizes also the need to articulate the concerns for peace in clear, basic, firm affirmations;
 - d. calls upon the churches now to:
 1. challenge the military and militaristic policies that lead to disastrous distortions of foreign policy sapping the capacity of the nations of the world to deal with pressing economic and social problems which have become a paramount political issue of our times;
 2. counter the trend to characterize those of other nations and ideologies as the 'enemy' through the promotion of hatred and prejudice;
 3. assist in de-mythologizing current doctrines of national security and elaborate new concepts of security based on justice and the rights of peoples;
 4. grapple with the important theological issues posed by new developments related to war and peace and examine the challenges posed to traditional positions;
 5. continue, according to the appeal contained in an earlier statement of the Central Committee, to call attention to the root causes of war, mainly to economic injustice, oppression and exploitation and to the consequences of increasing tension including further restriction of human rights;
 - e. Commends the many member churches who have made renewed calls to peace-making, started, reactivated or intensified their efforts for peace, disarmament and against militarism and the arms race. This has included such useful initiatives as programs of peace education and organization of events like 'peace week' or 'disarmament week';
 - f. Calls upon member churches to:
 1. intensify further their engagement in efforts for peace and join with others who seek to arouse the conscience of the public regarding the current threats to peace;
 2. Commit themselves to peace-making as continual witness through preaching, teaching and action;
 3. Promote bilateral and multi-lateral discussions among churches with a view to greater understanding among people and the reduction of mutual distrust and fear:
 - g. Commends the work of a large number of peace and disarmament groups and movements, old and new, around the world, in several of which large numbers of Christians actively participate in obedience to the demands of the Gospel. We call attention to the plea of the Central Committee in Kingston that serious attention be paid to the rights of conscientious objectors:
 - h. Commends to the churches the forthcoming WCC International Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament as an important occasion 'to search for ways in which churches, Christian groups and others can help promote a climate of thinking



- i. more favorable to nuclear disarmament and for practical ways by which they can most effectively contribute to it’;
- j. Urges the churches, in the context of the preparations for the Sixth Assembly, whose theme is ‘ Jesus Christ, the Life of the World’ to make commitment to peacemaking a special concern and to give emphasis to studies on issues related to peace, paying special attention to the underlying theological issues.

Central Committee Geneva, Switzerland (1982)

The Central Committee issued the following statement on the second special session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament, Geneva July 1982. (Excerpts)

“The Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSD II) has failed to reach agreement on any matter of substance after five weeks of deliberations which concluded on 10 July 1982..... Many groups, including the churches in different parts of the world, had worked intensively with governments and offered concrete, workable proposals for consideration by SSD II, on which world attention was focussed. The events organized by religious organizations an groups prior to and during the Special Session brought evidence of extensive commitment to disarmament.

In light of these factors, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Geneva, 19-28 July 1982 :

1. Regrets the inability of the Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament to respond to the widespread public demand for concrete measures to stop and reverse the arms race.
2. Notes with approval that SSD II did reaffirm the Final Document of SSD I , strengthened the UN Disarmament Fellowship Program, and launched a World Disarmament Campaign.
3. Urges the churches, in their continuing efforts to promote peace and disarmament, to continue to make use of the Final Document of SSD I which contains recommendations of lasting value, to cooperate wherever possible with World Disarmament Campaign, and to encourage governments to make adequate financial contributions to the Campaign.
4. Further urges the churches to intensify their efforts, in cooperation with the growing number of peace and disarmament movements in different parts of the world, to mobilize a forceful world public opinion by deepening their analysis of the issues and understanding of the political struggle and by promoting unity among groups with different viewpoints who share a common desire for peace and disarmament.
5. Reaffirms its fundamental conviction, despite the disappointing results of SSD II that the United Nations remain central to realizing global aspirations for peace and disarmament, without which effective measures cannot be achieved.
6. Urgently appeals to all governments, especially the governments of the two major nuclear weapon states, to show good faith and to respond to world public opinion by engaging in effective negotiations in the appropriate bodies to achieve a prompt freeze on the development, testing, production, deployment and stockpiling of nuclear weapons,; to proceed directly toward general and complete disarmament, and redirect energies and resources to the development of global justice.



7. Strongly urges the churches to devote special attention, wherever possible, to efforts with their own governments to gain their support to these ends.
8. Invites and urges faithful men, women and children everywhere to engage in earnest prayer that the leaders of the nations may be directed along the paths of peace.

Central Committee action on the Follow-up of the Amsterdam Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmaments, Geneva, July 1982

The Central Committee

- a. Received with appreciation the report from the Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament.....
- b. Commended the report, entitled "Before it's Too Late", along with the full record of the Hearing,.....
- c. Proposed to the churches that they pay special attention to the following points as developed in the report of the Hearing on which they should take clear positions:
 - A nuclear war can under no circumstances in no region and by no social system be just or justifiable, given the fact that the magnitude of devastation caused by it will be far out of proportion to any conceivable benefit or advantage to be derived from it;
 - A "limited" nuclear war is unlikely to remain limited, and therefore any contemplation of such "limited" use of nuclear weapons should be discouraged as dangerous from the outset;
 - All nations now possessing nuclear weapons or capable of doing so in the foreseeable future should unequivocally renounce policies of "first use", as an immediate step towards building confidence;
 - The concept of deterrence, the credibility of which depends on the possible use of nuclear weapons, is to be rejected as morally unacceptable and as incapable of safeguarding peace and security in the long-term;
 - The production and deployment of nuclear weapons as well as their use constitute a crime against humanity, and therefore there should be a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons and in weapon research and development in all nations, to be expeditiously enforced through a treaty;
 - All nations should agree to and ratify a comprehensive test ban treaty as a necessary step to stopping the further development of nuclear weapons technology;
 - All means leading to disarmament both nuclear and conventional, should be welcomed as complementary and mutually reinforcing – multilateral conferences leading to effective decisions, bilateral negotiations pursued with daring and determination and unilateral initiatives leading to the relaxation of tensions and building mutual confidence among nations and peoples;
 - The conviction expressed by the Public Hearing: "We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds (Report, p. 22) should become an official position for churches and Christians; such a position supports the struggle to



make one's own nation commit itself never to own or use nuclear weapons, despite the perils of nuclear vulnerability, and to persuade Christians and others to refuse to cooperate with or accept employment in any projects related to nuclear weapons and nuclear warfare.

Central Committee receives report on the program for Disarmament and against Militarism and the arms race, Geneva July 1982

1. The Program has identified and clarified the major issues in the area of militarism and the arms race, assisted churches in the development of programs, and facilitated exchange of experience among churches. Special mention may be made of the significant work in the following areas:
 - a. conceptual clarification and identification of features of the contemporary phenomenon of militarism;
 - b. correlation between militarism and violation of human rights;
 - c. nuclear disarmament (in collaboration with Church and Society);
 - d. theological issues.
2. The Unit Committee suggests the following areas for continuing work:
 - a. disarmament – nuclear and conventional;
 - b. new features of militarism;
 - c. peaceful resolution of conflicts;
 - d. new concepts of security;
 - e. the arms race and the economic order;
 - f. theological issues;
 - g. the particular impact of militarization on women and their contribution to peace;
 - h. the special impact of militarization on youth and their work for peace;
 - i. the special impact of militarization on children and education for peace;
3. The Unit Committee recommends that the Central Committee commend the reports and publications under this program to the member churches for study and appropriate action, especially in the context of their preparation for the Sixth Assembly.
4. The Unit Committee recommends to the Central Committee that in view of the urgency and importance of the questions related to peace, disarmament and development, and the expectations among the churches, the Sixth Assembly should give high visibility to them through presentations and discussions in plenary sessions.
5. The Unit Committee recommends that the main elements of the program and the areas identified for continuing work should receive high priority in the programs of the WCC during the post-Assembly period.
6. The Unit Committee has urged that the CCIA and the PCR explore further the relationship between militarism and racism with a view to highlighting the impact of militarism on the intensification of racism.

The Central Committee accepted these recommendations.



Report to the Central Committee on the Program for Disarmament and against Militarism and the Arms Race, Geneva, July 1982 (Excerpts)

This program grew out of several recommendations made by the Nairobi Assembly. Following two preparatory consultations on Militarism and on Disarmament, both held in Glion, Switzerland, in 1977 and 1978 respectively, a plan was adopted by the Central Committee in January 1979 for a “Program for Disarmament and against Militarism and the Arms Race”. The Central Committee emphasized “the need not only to denounce militarism and the arms race but to develop positive alternatives to the present destructive system.”.....

In its evaluation of the program, the Central Committee has underlined that the program “has identified and clarified the major issues in the area of militarism and arms race, assisted churches in the development of programs and facilitated exchange of experiences among churches”. In particular, the program has helped with the conceptual clarification and identification of the essential features of the contemporary phenomenon of militarism and of the growing militarization of societies. It has shown that there exists a close correlation between militarism and the violation of human rights, but also an inter relatedness between militarism and the arms race, and the difficulties of establishing a New International Economic Order. In fact, the present economic order is being supported by an underlying international military order. The program further has helped to sharpen the understanding of security, which in the light of the biblical notion of peace can only be security together in cooperation with others and not against them. Finally, the program has brought into evidence the development of a new culture of violence which has become an acute threat to peace. The program has led to the conclusion that the quest for peace and disarmament is an integral part of the struggle for justice and human dignity.

(full text to be found in “The Churches in International Affairs reports 1979-1982)

Sixth Assembly Statement on Peace and Justice, Vancouver, Canada, July/August (1983)

The following excerpts from this Statement relate to nuclear arms and militarism:

“(3) We still are moved to repentance as we consider with alarm the rapidity with which the threats to justice and survival have grown since we last met. The frantic race towards nuclear conflagration has accelerated sharply. In an incredibly short period of history, we have moved from the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the threat that they might be repeated elsewhere, to the likelihood, unless we act now, that life on the whole planet could be devastated. A moment of madness, a miscalculated strategic adventure, a chance combination of computer errors, a misperception of the other’s intention, an honest mistake – any one could now set off a nuclear holocaust.

(4) As we have been reminded dramatically during this Assembly, nuclear weapons claim victims even in the absence of war, through the lasting effects of nuclear bombings, weapons testing and the dumping of nuclear wastes.



(11) Rampant Militarism – Though the Council’s work on militarism since the Fifth Assembly (Nairobi, 1975), we have come to understand more fully the dire consequences for justice of the increasing reliance of the nations on armed forces as the cornerstone of their foreign – and often domestic – policies. Priorities have been dangerously distorted. Attention has been drawn away from the fundamental rights and needs of poor nations and of the poor within the rich nations. The number of military regimes has grown, contributing further to a largely male-dominated process of global militarization. Justice is often sacrificed on the altar of narrowly perceived security interests. Racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and ideological conflicts are exacerbated, corruption is rife, a spirit of fear and suspicion is fostered through the increasing portrayal of others as the enemy: all this further contributes to disunity, human suffering and increased threats to peace.

(12) We strongly reiterate the Central Committee’s appeals to the churches to:

- a. Challenge military and militaristic policies that lead to disastrous distortions of foreign policy sapping the capacity of the nations of the world to deal with pressing economic and social problems which have become a paramount political issue of our times;
- b. Counter the trend to characterize those of other nations and ideologies as the “enemy” through the promotion of hatred and prejudice;
- c. Assist in demythologising current doctrines of national security and elaborate new concepts of security based on justice and the rights of peoples;
- d. Grapple with the important theological issues posed by new developments related to war and peace and examine the challenges posed to traditional positions;
- e. Pay serious attention to the rights of conscientious objectors;
- f. Continue.... to call attention to the root causes of war, mainly to economic injustice, oppression and exploitation and to the consequences of increasing tension including further restrictions of human rights.

(14) Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts We call upon the governments to reaffirm their commitment to the United Nations Charter, to submit interstate conflicts to the Security Council at an early stage when resolution may still be possible short of the use of massive armed force, and to cooperate with it in the pursuit of peaceful solutions. We draw special attention to the United Nations “International Year of Peace” (1986) and the “World Disarmament Campaign”; urging the churches to use them as important opportunities for the strengthening of international security and the promotion of disarmament, peace and justice.

(15) Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament – It is now a full decade since there has been any substantial, subsequently ratified measure of arms control. Since our last Assembly, global military expenditures have tripled. This past year has marked a new peak of confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. There is the real prospect, if the current negotiations in Geneva between the USA and the USSR fail to prevent it, that the world stockpile of nuclear weapons may increase dramatically in the next decade. The growing sophistication, accuracy and mobility of new generations of weapons now ready for deployment or currently being designed make them more dangerous and destabilizing than ever before. The failure of arms control among nuclear-weapon states has made the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in practice, an instrument of invidious discrimination, incited the spread of nuclear weapons, and compounded the prospects for nuclear war in several areas of regional tension in the Southern hemisphere. Until the superpowers move decisively towards nuclear disarmament, efforts to contain nuclear proliferation are bound to fail.



(16) We call upon the churches, especially those in Europe, both East and West, and in North America, to redouble their efforts to convince their governments to reach a negotiated settlement and to turn away now, before it is too late, from plans to deploy additional or new nuclear weapons in Europe, and to begin immediately to reduce and then eliminate altogether present nuclear forces.

(17) We urge the churches as well to intensify their efforts to stop the rapidly growing deployment of nuclear weapons and support systems in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and to press their governments to withdraw from or refuse to bas or service ships or airplanes bearing nuclear weapons in those regions.

(18) The risk of nuclear war is compounded by the rapidly escalating reliance on conventional weapons. Stockpiles of non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction and indiscriminate effect are growing almost uncontrolled. The volume of highly profitable trade in conventional weapons has nearly doubled in the past five years, a very large part of it in the direction of the developing nations and regions where armed conflict already defies containment. The destructive power of these weapons steadily increases, blurring the distinction between conventional and nuclear warfare; and many nuclear disarmament strategies call for major increases in conventional arms production and deployment.

(19) Since the Nairobi Assembly, a number of consultations and conferences have been held by the WCC, providing churches with opportunities to deepen their understanding of these issues. From them have come valuable reports and recommendations to the churches for concrete action. The most recent was the Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament (Amsterdam, 1981). The published report contains careful, thoroughgoing analyses and spells out urgent tasks for the churches. We urge the churches once again to study attentively these reports and to pursue their recommendations.

(20) The Central Committee urged the churches to pay special attention to and take clear positions on a number of points developed in the report of the Amsterdam Hearing. We reiterate that appeal with respect to the following:

- A nuclear war can under no circumstances in no region and by no social system be just or justifiable, given the fact that the magnitude of devastation caused by it will be far out of proportion to any conceivable benefit or advantage to be derived from it;
- A “limited” nuclear war is unlikely to remain limited, and therefore any contemplation of such “limited” use of nuclear weapons should be discouraged as dangerous from the outset;
- All nations now possessing nuclear weapons or capable of doing so in the foreseeable future should unequivocally renounce policies of “first use”, as an immediate step towards building confidence;
- The concept of deterrence, the credibility of which depends on the possible use of nuclear weapons, is to be rejected as morally unacceptable and as incapable of safeguarding peace and security in the long-term;
- The production and deployment of nuclear weapons as well as their use constitute a crime against humanity, and therefore there should be a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons and in weapon research and development in all nations, to be expeditiously enforced through a treaty;
- All nations should agree to and ratify a comprehensive test ban treaty as a necessary step to stopping the further development of nuclear weapons technology;
- All means leading to disarmament both nuclear and conventional, should be welcomed as complementary and mutually reinforcing – multilateral conferences leading to effective



decisions, bilateral negotiations pursued with daring and determination and unilateral initiatives leading to the relaxation of tensions and building mutual confidence among nations and peoples;

(21) In addition, we urge the churches to press their governments to abstain from any further research, production or deployment of weapons in space; and to prohibit the development and production of all weapons of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect, including chemical and biological means.

(25) According to the 1980 Geneva Convention, the use of certain weapons of indiscriminate effect is forbidden under international law. We believe nuclear weapons must be considered within that category. We join in the conviction drawn by the Panel of the WCC Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament after it had examined the testimony of a broad range of expert witnesses:

“We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds. The nuclear weapon issue is, in its import and threat to humanity, a question of Christian discipline and faithfulness to the Gospel. We recognize that nuclear weapons will not disappear because of such an affirmation by the churches. But it will involve the churches and their members in a fundamental examination of their own implicit or explicit support of policies which, implicitly or explicitly, are based on the possession and use of these weapons”.

We urge the churches to press their governments, especially in those countries which have nuclear weapons capabilities, to elaborate and ratify an international legal instrument which would outlaw as a crime against humanity the possession as well as the use of nuclear arms. We ask the churches as well to urge their governments to acknowledge the right of conscientious objection to military service and to provide opportunities for non-violent alternative service.

(26) On the same basis, and in the spirit of the Vth Assembly’s appeal to the churches “to emphasize their readiness to live without the protection of armaments”, we believe that Christians should give witness to their unwillingness to participate in any conflict involving weapons of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect.

(27) It is with a deep sense of pastoral responsibility that we make these affirmations. To live up to them will be no simple matter for any Christian or church, but we recognize that the consequences of taking such positions will be far more serious for some than for others. We state these convictions not as a condemnation or in judgement of others, but confession our own weakness, calling on the churches and Christians to support one another in love as in these ways we seek together to be faithful to our common calling to proclaim and serve our one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Life of the World.

WCC Central Committee, Vancouver, Canada (1983)

A proposal was presented from the floor regarding NATO plans for the deployment of nuclear weapons, especially Pershing II missiles, and asking the WCC to call upon the churches in Western Europe to protest publicly against the unwillingness of the USA to consider seriously the Soviet negotiating proposals and against preparations for deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles.



The General Secretary proposed that there should be a Minute saying that the basic elements of this request were contained in the Assembly Statement on Peace and Justice (paragraph 16) and asking the General Secretary to follow up with the churches in Western Europe and the USA the question of the deployment of the new missiles in the context of this paragraph. This was agreed.

During the Assembly discussion on the Peace and Justice statement, it was proposed that the Assembly appeal to the leaders of the USA and USSR to meet urgently regarding the arms race. The General Secretary said that this might be accepted in principle. The following wording was proposed;

“In the context of nuclear threats and the growing arms build-up, a strong appeal be made to the leaders of the super-powers to take action urgently to find ways to stop the arms race and give strong support to negotiations with the aim of eliminating these threats. As a first step an appeal should be made for a meeting of the President of the USA and the President of the USSR to work out the outstanding issues of peace and disarmament”.

The General Secretary pointed out that the Peace and Justice Statement was a strong appeal to the churches and governments to do that. He suggested that the proposal be accepted in principle and followed up by the General Secretary and CCIA. This was agreed.

Sixth Assembly Resolution on the Pacific, Vancouver, Canada (1983)

The Assembly urges the member churches to strengthen their support for and solidarity with the Christians and churches in the Pacific in their struggles for political and economic independence and for a nuclear free Pacific, by concrete educational and advocacy activities, combined with a pastoral approach involving prayers and intercessions. It is recommended that the WCC programs involving the Pacific be intensified.

“..... urgent problems affecting the present and future Pacific societies:

- a. The continued nuclear weapon testing in French Polynesia, the effects of radiation on the health and environment of present and future generations in the Marshall Islands;
- b. Dumping of nuclear wastes by outside powers;
- c. Military, notably naval, manoeuvres undertaken by the great powers, which include nuclear weapons-carrying submarines, and which reinforce the militarization of the region;
- d. Threats on the indigenous Pacific cultural identities through colonial and neo-colonial structures involving transnational corporations, foreign media and tourism;
- e. Persistence of foreign domination in French Polynesia and Micronesia;
- f. The as yet unresolved problem of the self-determination and independence of the Melanesian people of New Caledonia”

WCC Central Committee Geneva Switzerland (1984)

The Vancouver Assembly and subsequent discussions identified several areas in which science-based technologies are playing a major role in shaping the future. New weapons threaten the economic and ecological sustainability The expansion of nuclear power to meet scarcities of traditional fuels is interpreted by some as an easy route to nuclear weapons proliferation (page 44 –para 1).



Program Proposal 1984-1989 CCIA (Excerpts)

“The following observations and suggestions should be taken into account in the further development of the program proposals:

Peace and Disarmament

- The occasion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 1985 should be utilized to build awareness among churches about the continuing proliferation of weapons by nuclear
- weapon states and the trends that lead to weapon-producing capacity among others.
- CCIA should collaborate with Church and Society in continuing the studies on energy with special reference to nuclear energy.
- Efforts should be continued to mobilize opinion for an early conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
- The proposed analytical studies on chemical weapons and the militarization of outer space are urgently needed as means of building awareness among churches.
- Among the various elements related to security, concern about national security doctrines should again be highlighted.
- The relationship between militarism and racism deserves special mention and developments in South Africa related to new types of weapons should be carefully monitored.
- Economic aspects of the arms race, especially the profit motive’s role in the arms industry, should be included among the elements.
- Psychological warfare, including the building of enemy image, should be given attention.
- The issues of the sovereignty and integrity of “small” states and the increasing trend of destabilization from outside should receive special attention.”

Mandate

The CCIA is mandated to be “a source of information and guidance to the churches in their approach to international problems and as a medium of counsel and action”. Within the WCC, as part of the Program Unit on Justice and Service, its chief function is to advise and assist in the formulation of WCC’s policies on international affairs.

4. Peace and disarmament – The mandate from the Sixth Assembly is to place the Commission’s work on peace, disarmament and militarism in the framework of the Council’s work for peace and justice. The program in this area would include : analysis of specific developments; analysis of responses of churches to peace and justice issues; further examination of theological issues; support to action groups/peace movements; exchange of experience among churches; cooperation with other non-governmental organizations, peace research institutes, etc.

Statement by Dr. Philip Potter on the Initiative of the Middle Power Coalition for disarmament 23 May 1984.

The General Secretary of the WCC, Dr. Philip Potter in a cable message to the Secretary General of Parliamentarians for World Order Nick Dunlop, expressed the Council’s support for the joint statement on 22 May of the Middle Power Coalition for Disarmament. Members of the coalition are: Prime Minister Indira Gahdhi, India; President Miguel de la Madrid, Mexico; President Julius Nyerere, Tanzania, Prime Minister Olof Palme, Sweden; and Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, Greece. In their statement,



appealing to the responsibility of the nuclear weapons' states, the government leaders pleaded with the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the United Kingdom, France and China to halt all testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, among other steps necessary to be taken to save the world from extinction.

Text of Dr. Potter's supporting statement:

"The World Council of Churches commends with deep appreciation the important initiative for peace taken by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, President Miguel de la Madrid, President Julius Nyerere, Prime Minister Olof Palme and Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu through their joint statement of May 22, 1984 on disarmament emphasizing the special urgency of nuclear disarmament.

Their 'common effort in the interests of peace' deserves whole-hearted support of all sections of people striving for peace at this time when the international situation is fast deteriorating and conflicts are escalating.

The WCC strongly endorses their call to the USA, the USSR, the UK, France and China to halt all testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems to be followed immediately by substantial reduction in nuclear forces'. The WCC recalls the VIth Assembly's appeal that such a step be taken expeditiously.

In endorsing the statement the Council reiterates its call to the churches to intensify their efforts for peace and justice in cooperation with others who seek to arouse the conscience of the public regarding the current threats to peace. The statement suggests specific actions which may be supported by churches and related movements to mobilize public opinion.

The VIth Assembly stated ' The frantic race towards nuclear conflagration has accelerated sharply'. The threat posed by the nuclear arms race to human survival knows no parallel in history. The race has to be stopped and the present trends reversed to preserve humanity and God's creation. Therefore, the Council welcomes the initiative of these leaders. God has made us and all creation and He requires us to seek peace, justice and dignity in a world where none need fear and every life is sacred'."

WCC Central Committee Buenos Aires, Argentina (1985)

The Central Committee issued the following statement for transmission to the member churches, and to adopt the recommendations on the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations (Excerpts)

"..... The strengthening of international institutions for peace and for the respect of international law is more urgent than ever. The difficulties inherent in a nation-state system of collective security, as manifested in the UN, and the unavoidable limitations must not be magnified or allowed to influence negatively perceptions of its potential. They must be overcome, as successive UN Secretary-Generals have repeatedly emphasized in their reports to the General Assembly,. Similarly, the regrettable and dangerous fact that conflicts persist must not be accepted as conclusive proof that the concept of collective security is defunct. Peace and survival in the nuclear age, made even more critical by the actual threat of the militarization of outer space, must impel the UN member states to work more effectively. Lack of political will on the part of member nations and imperfections in the structure must be overcome, because failure would entail unacceptable risk for the future of our planet.



The Central Committee meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 28 July to 8 August 1985:

- a. welcomes the Fortieth Anniversary of the founding of the UN as an occasion for the world community to rededicate itself to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, and to reaffirm the centrality of the UN in the conduct of international relations.
- b. Expresses its deep concern about the trend away from multilateralism and the reluctance of some UN member states to use the UN in tackling the most urgent problems facing humankind.
- c. Encourages governments to make timely and constructive use of the potentials of the UN and to increase their support for the Organization in order that it might be able to carry out its worldwide responsibilities more effectively.
- d. Urges the UN to make greater efforts for the improvement of its structures and functioning, including those related to voting, with a view to enabling newly independent nations to share power on an equitable basis within the intergovernmental system.
- e. Appeals to the nuclear weapon states to negotiate in good faith in the Conference on Disarmament to obtain tangible progress in disarmament measures, especially nuclear disarmament.
- f. Further appeals to all governments to cooperate actively in all initiatives leading to general and complete disarmament under UN auspices.
- g. Urges that churches be alert to the activities of their respective governments with a view to strengthening the capacity of the UN in areas such as the promotion and protection of human rights, the struggle against racism, the enhancement of the rights of women, aid to and protection of refugees and the realization of the new international economic order.
- h. Recognizes the invaluable work carried out by the UN specialized agencies and urges churches to maintain and develop the already active and creative relationships which exist between them, and to voice their deep concern about the trend of withdrawing support for and participation in some of these agencies.
- i. Calls upon the member churches to urge, wherever possible, their respective governments through informing public opinion and other appropriate means, to take the occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations to reaffirm their support for the UN as the principal organization of the world community in defense of the common good of humankind.
- j. (annex to Statement on the Fortieth Anniversary can be found on page 106) Minutes.

Letter from Dr. Emilio Castro to WCC member Churches on the Delhi Declaration, April 1985

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I am writing to share with you the text of the Delhi Declaration issued by six heads of government – The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, The President of Tanzania, Dr. Julius Nyerere; The President of Mexico, Mr Miguel de la Madrid; the President of Argentina, Mr. Raul Alfonsin; The Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olof Palme, and the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Andreas Papandreou – at the end of January. I had the privilege of participating in a follow-up meeting held in Athens at the invitation of Prime Minister Papandreou. I reported on this meeting to the WCC Executive Committee during its meeting last February.



This Declaration has been welcomed heartily by those engaged in efforts for peace and disarmament. It may be mentioned that, when the initiative by these heads of government was under consideration, the World Council of Churches was consulted and we welcomed it with a statement supporting their first declaration on 22 May 1984.

You will notice that the position taken in the Delhi Declaration, especially on nuclear disarmament is very similar to that of the WCC in its statement issued at the Sixth Assembly when we declared:

“There should be a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons and in weapon research and development in all nations, to be expeditiously enforced through a treaty.... All nations should agree to and ratify a comprehensive test ban treaty as a necessary step to stopping the further development of nuclear weapons technology..... In addition, we urge the churches to press their governments to abstain from any further research, production or deployment of weapons in space”.

(Statement on Peace and Justice)

The Delhi Declaration states:

“We reiterate our appeal for an all-embracing halt to the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Such a halt would greatly facilitate negotiations. Two specific steps today require special attention: the prevention of an arms race in outer space and a comprehensive test ban treaty.

Outer space must be used for the benefit of humankind as a whole, not as a battle-ground of the future. We therefore call for the prohibition of the development, testing, production, deployment and use of all space weapons. An arms race in space would be enormously costly and have grave destabilizing effects. It would also endanger a number of arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

We further urge the nuclear weapon states to immediately halt the testing of all kinds of nuclear weapons and to conclude, at an early date, a treaty on a nuclear weapon test ban. Such a treaty would be a major step towards ending the continuous modernization of nuclear arsenals”.

The present talks between the USA and the USSR here in Geneva assume great significance. While little is known so far about the deliberations, and progress may be slow, it is clear that failure of these talks would heighten tensions and further escalate the arms race. The Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty will be held in September in Geneva, and efforts are under way among many non-governmental organizations to make it an occasion to mobilize support for nuclear disarmament and specifically for a nuclear freeze.

While joining with other forces for peace in building public opinion for negotiated settlements and initiative for disarmament, it is important that the churches uphold these efforts in their intercessions.

In the name of Jesus, The Prince of Peace who has called us to His service, I remain....



Message from Dr. E. Castro to the Colloquium of the Group de Bellerive on Nuclear War, Nuclear Proliferation and their Consequences, Geneva, Switzerland June 1985

“.....You are meeting at one of the most crucial periods in human history, when the awesome choices confronting the world community will decide the destiny of humankind.

We face today some unprecedented moral issues. The subject of your deliberations have complex technical and political dimensions on which we as a Council of Churches do not profess to have special expertise or competence. And yet, in face of the inability to describe, to measure or even to image the consequences of the nuclear arms race, the decisions which need to be made are not technical in nature. They are human and ethical. The moral and ethical considerations with which we approach these issues are not exclusive to the Christian faith. Many of the world's communities share these profound concerns regarding the very survival of humanity and of all God's creation.

During the past years, the World Council of Churches has engaged in dialogue with scientists, political leaders and those involved in the peace movement. We have been challenged and inspired by the victims the arms race is producing even today. We have been encouraged by a growing awareness among large sections of our churches of the dangers inherent in the development of new generations of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

Under girded by our convictions that peace and justice are complementary concerns, the VIth Assembly of the WCC made the following affirmations:

- The concept of deterrence, whose credibility depends on the possible use of nuclear weapons is to be rejected as morally unacceptable and as incapable of safeguarding peace and security in the long term.
- The production and deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as their use constitute a crime against humanity, and there should therefore be a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons and weapon research and development in all nations, to be expeditiously enforced through a treaty.
- All nations should agree to and ratify a comprehensive test ban treaty as a necessary step to stopping the further development of nuclear technology.

Even as we discuss a halt to the arms race, new and disturbing developments are being conceived which would radically change the course of the arms race, projecting it far into the next century. The possibility of stationing weapons of both defensive and offensive nature in space could have an impact as serious in its consequences as was the development of nuclear weapons decades ago. We must strive together to avert this possibility.

Open Letter from Dr. E. Castro to President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, on the eve of their Summit Meeting 24 October 1985

May we take the liberty of addressing your Excellencies through this open letter on the occasion of your historic meeting in Geneva on 19 and 20 November. No summit of political leaders has ever evoked such great expectations and interest in the international community. No meeting between



leaders of the two most powerful nations has taken place at such a crucial time in world history. It is the human predicament of our times, reflected in anxiety about the very survival of humanity, and the awesome power and responsibility that your two nations hold that make this occasion one without parallel.

As a Council of Churches with more than 400 million people in our constituency living in countries in East and West, North and South, we are constantly made aware of the precariousness of the situation in different parts of the world and the deterioration in international relations in general. We share the agony of millions suffering from injustice, war and threats of war. As an organization whose basis is faith in God, we underline the profound moral and ethical considerations that need to preside in the discussion on the present state of affairs which tends to endanger creation itself. It is out of such considerations which are shared widely that we remind you of the obligations that your Excellencies have not only to the people of your two nations but to the whole world. We have requested our churches in all parts of the world to remember the meeting in their prayers.

We sincerely believe that your Excellencies can now take concrete steps towards peace. The nature of the relationship between your countries has such profound implications for the whole world that any improvement in your relations will have salutary effects in many situations. We may point out here one example, vis the Middle East. There are others also of great importance. But today, unfortunately, genuine efforts for justice and self-determination in many developing regions are distorted and vitiated and the sovereignty and independence of many nations affected because of the present state of international relations. Even a small measure of understanding between your nations can go a long way in reducing tensions and creating conditions for justice and peace. Can an end not be put to the language of belligerence and the idiom and style of cold war ?

Your meeting takes place on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, at the founding of which the hope was expressed that there would be an end to military alliances, competition for spheres of influence and balance of power. It is only natural that we all remind ourselves how far the world has fallen short not only of the ideals but of the commitments made by major nations.

The international community will be focussing its attention especially on what will be discussed at the summit with regard to the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race. The willingness of the United States to pursue negotiations on nuclear weapons has been appreciated. To instill confidence in millions who are yearning for a credible gesture for peace, an agreement between your countries in principle on a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is essential at this stage. In this connection we welcome the current unilateral moratorium by the Soviet Union and express the hope that it will be extended by the Soviet Union and reciprocated by the United States so that negotiations on a Test Ban Treaty can be finalized.

We are also deeply concerned about the increasing danger of militarization of outer space, bringing the world perhaps to the edge of the most far-reaching military threshold since the beginning of the atomic age. From the history of the arms race it is known that the only way to avoid a new race is to prevent its start. Once the race is underway, agreement becomes far more difficult and the winner enjoys only a few insecure moments of victory before the other side catches up. So we earnestly hope that the discussions at the summit will lead to a ban on weapons in the new theatre of outer space.



**Letter from Dr. E. Castro to member churches, national councils of churches
Regional conferences of churches and central committee members 24 October 1985**

You are aware that President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev will meet in Geneva on 19 and 20 November this year.

This will be a historic meeting for several reasons. It is the first time in six years that the leaders of the two countries are meeting. This period of six years has been one of the worst in terms of international relations. There is an unprecedented interest in the summit. Several churches and peace movements are preparing for it, making it an occasion for further mobilization of people for peace and disarmament. Our churches in the USSR and the USA have special programs related to the occasion. We here in the Ecumenical Centre, together with the Christian Community of Geneva, will celebrate a vigil of prayer on the evening of Tuesday 19 November.

We are enclosing a copy of an open letter we have addressed to the two leaders and request that you make this appeal known in your churches. We also request you to make every effort to see that your congregations remember the summit in their intercessions, preferably on Sunday 17 November.

WCC Executive Committee, Kinshasa, Zaire 1986

The UN declared 1986 the "International Year of Peace". During the meeting reference was made to the appeal of leaders of the Christian churches and of Jews, Muslims and Buddhists in the USSR to all believers in the world for a positive response to the statement made by General Secretary Gorbachev in January, proposing the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, the renunciation by the USSR and USA of a first strike and of the development of space weapons, and provision for international inspection. It was important that the statement be understood and supported.

The WCC Executive Committee made the following statement:

- "The United Nations has declared 1986 the International Year of Peace and the nations of the world are celebrating it. The fortieth session of the General Assembly of the UN specially stressed the role of non-governmental organizations including religious bodies in promoting international dialogue, cooperation and building up of trust and mutual understanding.
- During the past few years, mass movements and organizations for justice and peace in various parts of the world have succeeded in bringing about a wide awareness of the threats to peace that the world faces today. Several member churches of the WCC, national and regional bodies representing them and a number of organizations in which Christians actively take part, have made special plans for the International Year of Peace to kindle hope, to inspire mutual trust, to reduce tensions, to help nations negotiate with more give than take, and to promote greater awareness of our common security and our shared destiny as one human race.
- The Sixth Assembly of the WCC underlined clearly the relationship between peace and justice and stated "The peoples of the world stand in need of peace and justice. Peace is not just the absence of war. Peace cannot be built on foundations of injustice. Peace requires a new international order based on justice for and within all nations, and respect for the God-



given humanity of every person. Peace is, as the Prophet Isaiah has taught us, the effect of righteousness”.

The Assembly called us as a family of churches to covenant together to pursue justice, peace and the integrity of creation. In view of the new quality of threats to justice, peace and the integrity of creation, the new critical issues related to them, and the signs of hope, the churches are called to new forms of response at all levels of their life: local, national, regional and international.

At this point we would like to emphasize:

1. the relation between the arms race, socio-economic injustice and disruption of the environment;
 2. the urgent need to make earth and space free from nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction and to start nuclear disarmament now, and the equally important concern about militarization and its consequences;
 3. the need to rescue modern science-technology, humanity's basic tool from the service of war and profit and ensure its use to promote the best interests of humanity including the elimination of poverty;
 4. the need for implementing a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and stopping all testing of nuclear weapons forthwith. It is to be noted that on 20 February 1986 the USSR formally declared its willingness to accept on-site inspections and that there are now no technical barriers to a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
- In this connection, the Executive Committee of the WCC notes with interest the proposals on nuclear disarmament made by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR on 15 January 1986, at the beginning of the International Year of Peace. The three-stage proposal, with a view to eliminating all nuclear weapons by 2000, merits serious attention from all concerned for peace. The Executive Committee hopes that this proposal, along with other serious, reasonable and specific proposals from the other nuclear powers, will lead to decisive negotiated actions for eliminating nuclear weapons.
 - The Executive Committee welcomes the initiative of Pope John Paul II in calling for an intensive effort of prayer for Peace by Christians and other people of good will during the year.
 - The Executive Committee calls upon all member churches to observe 16 June 1986 as a World Day of Prayer and Fasting remembering the sacrifice, agony and travail of all who died in Soweto then years ago, and upholding the struggle for justice in South Africa.
 - The Executive Committee reiterates the call to the churches to continue to give special attention to the root causes of war, mainly to economic injustice, oppression and exploitation and to the consequences of increasing tension including violation of human rights. It urges the churches to intensify their efforts for peace in the International Year of Peace and to witness to peace and justice through prayer, worship and concrete involvement.



**Message from Dr. E. Castro to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
On Reagan-Gorbachev meeting at Reykjavik, 2 October 1986**

“...We give sincere thanks to you again for the warm welcome and all courtesies extended to us when the Executive Committee of the WCC met in your country last month.

We send you this special message as you uphold in your prayers the meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev which takes place in your country next week. We are confident that this will be an occasion for you to reaffirm your own commitment to peace and justice as you pray for the two leaders to take new and daring steps for peace. You may be assured that many other member churches of the WCC will also be remembering this meeting in their intercessions.

In the open letter that we addressed to the two leaders on the eve of their summit in Geneva last year we said:” The nature of the relationship between your countries has such profound implications for the whole world that any improvement in your relations will have salutary effects in many situations”. We welcome the apparent lessening of tensions in the last few days.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee in Reykjavik concern about the continuing nuclear arms race was expressed and the urgent need for an end to all nuclear testing emphasized. We hope that the meeting of the two leaders will lead to some definite steps with regard to nuclear disarmament.....

**XXXVII Meeting of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs,
Statement on Nuclear Testing, Les Avants, Switzerland, October 1986**

The Consultation on “Militarism and the Arms Race in the Context of the Struggle for Justice” held in connection with the Fortieth anniversary was an occasion for the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to consider again the alarming consequences of the nuclear arms race. Several recent developments have reminded us of the nuclear peril under which humankind has been living for the last forty years.

The World Council of Churches has repeatedly called for a halt to nuclear testing a comprehensive ban treaty, and for a cessation in the production and development of all nuclear weapons and delivery systems. These calls have been made because of the belief

- That God made us and all creation
- That God requires us to seek peace, justice and freedom creating a world where none need fear and every life is sacred.

The issue of bringing an end to all nuclear tests has become most urgent and crucial today. The complete abolition of nuclear weapon testing would prevent both the qualitative and quantitative developments which exacerbate the arms race.

The United States of America and the Union Soviet Socialist Republics, being two major nuclear powers, have special responsibility to initiate the process of nuclear disarmament by immediately halting their nuclear testing.



In this connection, The Commission welcomes the decision of the USSR to extend the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions until January 1987. It expresses the hope that other nuclear weapon states also will suspend their nuclear testing and thus have a general moratorium on nuclear testing and proceed towards a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It welcomes the offer made by the Six Nations (Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania) to help ensure adequate verification of a halt in nuclear testing.

The offer made by the six nations is part of a significant initiative which represents the conviction that all countries and all peoples should be actively involved in all aspects of disarmament.

In view of the urgency of the issue, the Commission hopes that all churches will intensify their efforts for peace and in particular for an end to the nuclear arms race.

**Statements and recommendations from the Glion Consultation on
Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation 7-15 November 1986 (excerpts)**

“Even though we are meeting in Glion in the tranquility of the Swiss mountains, we still hear the cry of God’s people.But these are not the only ones whose cry we hear, Even from the prosperous North there arise similar cries from those who are excluded from their societies’ prosperity. Both from the South and the North we hear the cry of fear for the future of humanity from people threatened by nuclear death and by the pollution which is the deadly by-product of technological development.

In these days, we have been reminded by our brothers and sisters from the South and the North, the East and the West of processes and events which must be taken seriously if we are to be credible in our witness to Jesus Christ as God and Savior. We name only three such instances to illustrate the point.

.....b. Our consultation took place shortly after the leaders of the two superpowers attempted to make a breakthrough in arms reduction by negotiations for the cause of peace. Although there were some small gains, by most accounts, the meeting at Reykjavik was another missed opportunity. For us in Europe, who are surrounded by weapons of death more powerful than all the weapons used in previous wars, the threat to life and to the future of our planet remains a frightening possibility”.

How do we interpret the Vancouver call to “engage in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant)

“.....4 The call issued by the Vancouver Assembly is based on the conviction that at this time the churches , despite their differences, should respond together to the threats in the field of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. If their voice is to be heard and their witness is to be credible, they need to speak and act together. In fact, the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation challenges each church at the deepest level of its witness to Jesus Christ and requires the strongest possible commitment on the basis of its faith and its understanding of the gospel and the church. The process proposed by the Vancouver Assembly will provide the churches with an opportunity for letting their commitments converge into one witness.....”



“..... In order to give expression to the common witness of the churches, it is recommended that there be a world convocation on justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.”

WCC Central Committee, Geneva, Switzerland January 1987

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches again calls the attention of the churches to some crucial aspects of disarmament and peace, at a time when there are new opportunities and fresh possibilities along with many developments which cause great anxiety. The Central Committee urges them to engage in earnest prayer that people of all nations commit themselves to building a world community of peace and justice.

1. We bear witness to God's peace given in the biblical vision of all peoples and nations dwelling together in community. It is the vision that guides us in seeking new opportunities for peace and gives us hope. The Sixth Assembly called us to be a family of churches covenanting together to pursue justice, peace and integrity of creation.
2. The WCC has affirmed on various occasions:
 - Its concern that the majority of the world's peoples and nations, though threatened, have no voice in the determination of policies;
 - Its distress that vast resources, both of wealth and scientific effort, are being diverted from basic human needs to armaments;
 - Its opposition to the arms race which cruelly destroys millions of lives in conventional wars, repressive violence and massive poverty;
 - Its concern about the numerous ongoing wars and armed conflicts causing suffering and death to millions;
 - Its support to the struggle against militarism;
 - Its opposition to nuclear war and its rejection of nuclear deterrence;
 - Its concern that the survival of humankind is dependent on the security perceptions of the nuclear weapon states.
3. Wars and armed conflicts using conventional weapons have up to now claimed the lives of many more people than have nuclear weapons. In addition, the increasing sophistication of conventional weapons almost blurs the distinction between non-nuclear and nuclear weapons. Therefore, ending the conventional arms race is also vital. In the field of nuclear disarmament some important developments have taken place in the recent past. There appears to be today a historic opportunity which if utilized can change the course of events. If this chance is lost there will be a new spurt in the nuclear arms race and the beginning of an arms race in outer space. At the meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Reykjavik, there was substantial progress in the discussions on nuclear disarmament and two nations came close to practical agreements on some important aspects. That meeting showed that nuclear disarmament is possible and that elimination of nuclear weapons is feasible. The two leaders were close to agreements on strategic weapons and medium range missiles. The urgency of negotiations on a complete ban on nuclear tests was recognized. There was sharp disagreement on the Strategic Defense Initiative of the USA.
4. While recognizing the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and massive reduction in conventional arms as the goal, the WCC has repeatedly called for the following intermediate steps:
 - A comprehensive test ban treaty which will be the litmus test of the real willingness to



- pursue nuclear disarmament;
- Cessation of production of all types of nuclear weapons and of production of fissionable material for weapon purposes;
- A comprehensive phased program for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

The issue of bringing an end to all nuclear tests has become most urgent and crucial today. The complete abolition of nuclear weapons testing would prevent both the qualitative and quantitative developments which exacerbate the arms race. It is essential to prevent further proliferation. The USA and the USSR, being the two major nuclear powers, have a special responsibility to assist the process of nuclear disarmament by immediately halting their testing. The Soviet Union had a unilateral moratorium on testing for eighteen months, which was widely welcomed. The French Government continues its testing in the Pacific blatantly ignoring the provisions of the Partial Test Ban Treaty and defying international public opinion.

5. Unless nuclear tests are stopped immediately a new generation of nuclear weapons will be begun. This is a matter of concern to the whole international community. The initiative taken by the Six Nations (Argentina, Mexico, Greece, India, Sweden and Tanzania) representing the aspirations of the millions around the world is commendable. They have underlined the importance of multilateral discussions on all aspects of nuclear disarmament. These nations have made specific proposals for adequate verification of any moratorium on nuclear testing.
6. There are other signs of hope too. The organized efforts of many peace movements, churches and young people and women, the principled opposition of governments like New Zealand to nuclear weapons and the initiatives of intergovernmental bodies like the South Pacific Forum for Nuclear-free Zone Treaties are most encouraging.
7. On the eve of the meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC in January 1987, the USA and the USSR have resumed talks in Geneva on nuclear space weapons. This provides an excellent opportunity to proceed towards practical and concrete steps for nuclear disarmament. In welcoming the resumption of these talks, the Central Committee appeals to the two nations:
 - To declare a moratorium on nuclear tests as a provisional measure that would enable negotiations towards a comprehensive test ban treaty;
 - To negotiate agreements on substantial reduction of strategic weapons and elimination of medium range missiles, with a definite timetable;
 - To take all necessary steps to prevent the development of space weapons and to strengthen the terms of the Anti-Ballistic Missiles Treaty.
8. The WCC specially appeals to the US government to respond positively to the initiatives of the USSR on moratorium on nuclear testing, to review its decision to exceed the SALT II ceilings and to reconsider its Strategic Defense Initiative. The WCC also appeals to the USSR government to reinstate and continue the moratorium on nuclear testing.
9. The Central Committee renews the appeal to the French Government to stop forthwith nuclear weapon testing in Polynesia.
10. In view of the importance of disarmament in the non-nuclear field and the link between nuclear and conventional forces, the Central Committee urges that negotiations be held especially between the two military alliances, NATO and Warsaw Pact, on conventional weapons and forces.
11. The Central Committee commends the initiative of member churches which have given special attention to these issues as urgent priorities in their efforts for peace. Several of them



have already taken clear positions on these issues and launched educational and public opinion campaigns. We urge the churches in the context of the call to strengthen their commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation:

- To intensify their engagement in efforts for peace by specifically working for an end to nuclear testing as an immediate priority ;
- To engage in bilateral and multilateral discussions among churches with a view to promoting common understanding and developing common strategies;
- To join other forces of peace for public education and efforts to influence policies of governments and intergovernmental bodies;
- To support the Six Nation Initiative and that of the South Pacific Forum.

It is recognized that there will be specific national issues of priority for individual churches.

12. The Central Committee asks the General Secretary to share with member information on the concerns in this statement, along with models of actions, studies and theological reflections of churches which have taken initiatives regarding the issues.

**Executive Committee Resolution on the agreement in principle
Between the USA and the USSR on the Elimination of Intermediate
Nuclear Forces, Atlanta, Georgia, USA September 1987**

The Executive Committee of the WCC, meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, from 21-25 September 1987, warmly welcomes the agreement in principle between the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of medium and short-range nuclear missiles of the two nations, announce on 18 September in Washington. This step, which envisages the complete elimination of one category of nuclear weapons, is of considerable significance.

The WCC and many of its member churches have for several years appealed to the nuclear weapon-states to take specific actions for nuclear disarmament. The Executive Committee hopes that further steps will be taken to stop and reverse the nuclear arms race.

The Executive Committee urges member churches to pray that this agreement in principle will be the beginning of new opportunities for disarmament and peace.

WCC Officers' Statement on the Washington Summit, 14 December 1987

The World Council of Churches welcomes the historic accomplishments of the Washington Summit of the leader of the USA and USSR. It congratulates President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev for manifesting a great sense of responsibility for the improvement of conditions for peace in the world.

The agreement to eliminate intermediate nuclear forces and thus an entire class of nuclear weapons is a significant achievement especially with the elaborate system of verification which augurs well for further steps in nuclear disarmament. The initiative already taken for making proposals for reducing strategic nuclear weapons is reassuring.



The WCC expresses gratitude for the initiative of President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev and also recognizes the efforts of the UN and its special agencies, churches and religious bodies, and the peace movements which have been active in urging disarmament. They will continue to press not only for further steps towards nuclear disarmament in Europe but also for the elimination of nuclear weapons and denuclearization in other parts of the world. Major powers including the USA and the USSR have considerable responsibility for this. It is equally important to intensify all efforts for disarmament in the conventional field.

We recognize that improving East/West relations will have profound implications for the developing regions of the world. Efforts for management of regional conflicts should not be at the expense of justice. The struggles for human dignity and justice in the Third World have to be seen from the perspective of the oppressed. The WCC maintains that genuine peace can be achieved only through justice.

The Washington Summit has shown that peace is possible. This season when the Christians prepare for the celebration of the Prince of Peace should be an occasion for renewed commitment to the realization of peace on earth and goodwill for all people.

**Statement of the CCIA to the Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly
On Disarmament, New York, USA, May/June 1988**

Mr Chairman, we value this opportunity to present the concerns for disarmament of the World Council of Churches through its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to this Third Special Session of the United Nations on Disarmament. The Council is a fellowship of over 300 Orthodox and Protestant member churches comprising over 450 million believers from all over the world whose lives are seriously impacted, in many negative ways, by the effects of the arms race and the militarization of our global society. Born 40 years ago in the wake of a devastating world war the Council has been an advocate for disarmament and conditions that nurture a just and peaceful global community. While the Council affirms unilateral initiatives and the current bilateral efforts of the two great powers which have taken some significant steps toward nuclear disarmament, it believes that comprehensive multilateral efforts preferably within the context of the United Nations, must be undertaken if a significant impact is to be made on the arms race.

In the limited time given for this testimony, among many concerns, we choose the following for emphasis. Firstly, even in the aura of a historic agreement to reduce intermediate range nuclear weapons the awful risk of nuclear war remains. We are painfully aware that this agreement can only reduce the nuclear arsenal by 3% . We would therefore, urge the pursuit of every possible effort to further reduce and ultimately eliminate these weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate the declaration of our most recent Assembly that “the production and deployment of nuclear weapons as well as their use constitute a crime against humanity, and therefore there should be a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons and in weapons research and development in all nations, to be expeditiously enforced through a treaty.... Only if such a comprehensive approach is taken to nuclear disarmament and complemented and reinforced by verification, can the possibility of nuclear holocaust be significantly reduced. We would encourage this session to establish a multilateral mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations to perform such verification functions for our global community.

Secondly, while we recognize the possibility of significant steps in the reduction of nuclear weapons, we cannot overlook the significant new dynamics in the arms race. We view with alarm the development of



“star wars” technology, chemical weapons, and the ever more deadly capacity of conventional weapons which blur the distinction between conventional and nuclear, and defensive and offensive weapons. Only through multilateral agreements banning the research, development and testing of these new weapons, can we effectively end this process.

Thirdly, we commend the gains made at the UN Conference to fashion an interrelated perspective on disarmament, development and security. Recognition of the multidimensional relationship between Disarmament and Development might give greater realism to our understanding of the real threats to national security. Further more, this Special Session might want to call for a program of conversion from military technology and production, to technology and production linked to human need, and the enhancement of the human community.

Fourthly, the blatant misuses of the concept of national security to justify repression, foreign intervention and spiraling arms budgets is of profound concern to us. Security cannot be separated from justice. True security for people demands respect for human rights, socio-economic justice, effective machinery for peaceful resolution of conflicts, and broad international cooperation in science, technology, economy and culture. This will insure common security for all peoples and nations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, as Christians we believe that war and the preparation for war is contrary to the will of God, that it violates humanity and the created universe, and that the current threat posed by the conventional nuclear arms race knows no parallel in history. Out of our religious heritage we struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We look toward the time when peacemakers might not only be called blessed, as in Matthew’s Gospel, but might be revered and honored; and when all might live in peace, “everyone under their vine and fig tree with non to make them afraid”.

(The statement was made by Dr. Lamar Gible, a Commissioner of the CCIA)

Central Committee Statement on some New Developments in International Relations, Hanover, FRG, August 1988

The Central Committee of the WCC in January 1987 called the attention of the churches to some crucial issues of peace and disarmament “at a time when there are new opportunities and fresh possibilities” for peace. As the Committee meets in 1988, it is gratifying to note that there appears to be the beginning of a new international climate for which the churches have been praying and working for a long time. While undue optimism may not be called for, the signs of hope are encouraging.

The two summit meetings between the leaders of the USA and the USSR in Washington and Moscow, in addition to some specific achievements regarding nuclear disarmament have led to reduction of international tensions in general and provided opportunities for peaceful resolution of several regional conflicts. Initiatives of several European countries also have to be commended.

There is increasing awareness that the only way to peace is through political negotiations and disarmament. The churches have been active in promoting this awareness by building relations of trust among people of different nations. The prayers and intercessions of the churches in many countries and exchange of visits among them during the recent period deserve mention. The role of the churches in the USA and the USSR in this connection has been commendable.



The Central Committee of the WCC meeting in Hanover, FRG, in August 1988 welcomes the new developments in international relations especially reflected in the general reduction of East-West tension and the opportunities for the resolution of conflicts in several regions of the developing world. The Committee welcomes especially the progress made by the UN and regional peace initiatives related to Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq war, Central America and Southern Africa and the new initiatives on Cyprus and Kampuchea.

The Committee calls upon the member churches

- To intensify their efforts for peace-making and for confidence-building among peoples, utilizing the new opportunities;
- To press for urgent steps for disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, highlighted at the Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament and specifically for successful conclusion of negotiations on strategic weapons and for reduction of conventional armaments in Europe;
- Actively support efforts for peaceful resolution of conflicts within nations and between nations, inspired by the prophetic vision of peace where “justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the fruit of righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness undisturbed security for ever”

WCC Central Committee, Moscow, USSR, (1989)

During this meeting, in the “Deliberative Sessions” one of the topics was “Biotechnology: Its Challenges to the Churches and the World”. It covered 5 areas; Genetic Engineering, Reproductive Technology; Environmental Effects; Impact on the Third World and Military Application – Here it was said that “Several countries are expanding their biological and chemical research programs which are coming to rely on genetic engineering techniques to develop biological warfare agents. Not only does the application of recent discoveries make possible the production of great quantities of biological warfare agents in a short time, but it also permits the creation of horrifying new substances. Scientists speak of the possibility of cloning “selective toxins” that affect specific racial or ethnic groups who are predisposed to certain disease patterns. Chemical warfare agents are among the most hazardous substances known, but the potential destruction of biological warfare is even greater. The dangers of biological warfare research have been noted by many in government, science and public health sectors, and warnings given that the use of recombinant DNA technology for crafting novel biological toxins could rival the potential destructiveness of nuclear weapons in coming decades.

Although the use of biological weapons is forbidden by the Biological Weapons Convention (1972), this has been largely ineffective in preventing an international build-up of biological weapons created primarily through genetic engineering. The Protocol of 1952 on chemical weapons has also been shown to be ineffective in prohibiting the use and accumulation of chemical weapons”.....

During the same meeting the Central Committee stated

“2. The Central Committee notes with appreciation the contribution of the European Ecumenical Assembly (Basel 1989) to the process of “Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation” ... In its comprehensive final document it called the attention of the churches, among other concerns, to three significant new developments in Europe;

- The Vienna Concluding Document of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation;
- The Single European Act 1992;



- The changes taking place in the Soviet Union and other European countries and the call for a “Common European House”.

The Central Committee notes the importance of the Basel Assembly’s final document and in particular the new hopes it provides for promoting, along with the Roman Catholic Church, the conciliar process for JPIC. It commends the Basel Assembly final document to the churches for study.”

Excerpts from the Basel Final Document 86. Peace.

- a. Since European Churches are convinced that war is against the will of God, everything should be done to develop further the international mechanisms of peaceful resolution of conflict between nations, through international agreements, recognition of international courts of law, etc. These efforts should be geared towards overcoming the institution of war. The promotion of peace must take priority over the prevention of war.
- b. We call upon the USSR, the USA, as well as the countries of Europe, to honor already existing treaties, to continue their negotiations for disarmament, to take steps in conventional disarmament, to reach an agreement on a comprehensive test ban for nuclear weapons, and to refrain from any military use of space and of the Antarctic. We welcome agreements such as the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty and call for their full implementation.
- c. We call upon all countries and governments in Europe to join forces and work together towards the goal, that the development, production, deployment, possession and use of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological or chemical, be condemned by international law and thus be brought to an end; moreover, that in this way the system of nuclear deterrence be overcome and be replaced by a different, less dangerous system of security. We strongly support the efforts of the United Nations and other international institutions towards global and regional security.....
(Basel Final Document, para 86)

Message from the World Council of Churches to the International Meeting on Nuclear Free Zones, 22 June 1989

“The World Council of Churches sends cordial greetings to the participants of the International Meeting on Nuclear Free Zones and wishes the meeting all success. The Council hopes the meeting will make a significant contribution towards peace and justice.

The meeting is taking place at an important stage in world history with dramatic changes in many countries of the world accompanied by a major improvement in international relations. This stage offers new prospects for peace with possibilities for specific steps for disarmament, both nuclear and conventional.

It is against this background that all efforts must be made to promote nuclear free zones especially in Europe. But they should be seen as part of efforts to build a world free of nuclear weapons. This would be possible only by creation of new and better political conditions assuring common security.

Such common security evolve from a concept intended to prevent war to a comprehensive approach to world peace, social justice, economic development and environmental protection.

The World Council of Churches is happy to note that there is not only a strengthening of the commitment to justice and peace on the part of the churches but also greater possibility of cooperation between churches



and other sectors of the society. The Council especially supports the work of the churches in the DDR for peace.

The Council makes use of this opportunity to reaffirm its opposition to nuclear war and its rejection of nuclear deterrence, bearing witness to God's peace given in the biblical vision of all peoples and nations dwelling together in community".

Report of the Consultation on Militarism and Disarmament, Geneva, Switzerland, 16-19 October 1989.

Major Recommendations

The following is a summary of the basic ideas/proposals that are commended to the churches in the context of developing a cooperative international church agenda for Peace and Disarmament for the 1990s.

Security

Central to the ministry of the church is for it to be a witness to the true nature and foundation of security. As a community of faith, we acknowledge that our security rests in God – in mutual respect among the children of God, and in the nurture of the earth which God created. Faith in God's security does not deny vulnerability or risk, indeed it welcomes both as instruments of the liberation that opens us to new possibilities.

We look with gratitude and excitement at the profound changes being brought in Europe and East/West relations, while at the same time we wonder when the new possibilities will include profound and sweeping changes in the relations between rich and poor, or when the repression funded and sustained by many nations of the world will give way to liberation.

The churches' acknowledgment that security is ultimately in God must be given institutional expression in God's creation. While we cannot now envision in detail the forms which these institutions should take, our faith establishes clear directions and objectives for the work of the churches' pursuit of peace and justice.

- State security policies must be directed toward a holistic concept of security which recognizes that the welfare of God's creation requires its transformation to harmonious interdependence.
- This in turn must be translated into a cohesive security strategy at the governmental level, that is comprehensive (i.e. includes economic justice, human rights, environmental protection, as well as protection from hostile forces or aggressors) and common (i.e. the recognition that one state cannot expect to achieve security while others remain insecure while giving due emphasis to disarmament and demilitarization)
- While each community must itself explore the nature of its contribution to the common good, certain collaborative tasks commend themselves:
 1. Disarmament depends fundamentally on international cooperation in the transformation of military systems and alliances into minimal defenses that deny all states the capacity for aggression and for the extension of military power beyond national borders;



2. Zones of Peace are transitional means of gradually liberating regions of the planet from the intrusive, repressive presence of nuclear weapons and high levels of conventional arms, and give evidence of a determined movement toward a global zone of peace;
3. Global Common Security Institutions – including UN Peacekeeping Forces supplemented by active peacemaking measures, multilateral institutions to monitor disarmament accords, a strengthened World Court, and others – must become the common objective and design of peoples and states throughout the 1990s.

While security is recognized as requiring comprehensive and common approaches our particular focus was on exploring ways of mitigating two extraordinary and related threats to global security, militarization and the continuing arms race.

Militarism

Militarism must be recognized as an idolatry. The way in which it is looked at shows that it is more than a system and even an ideology. It is disturbing to note the continuing spread of militarism cutting across rich and poor nations, capitalist and socialist, East and West, North and South. We strongly recommend to the churches that they mount a special, focussed campaign against militarism, perhaps including a special year of anti-militarism. Such a campaign can be effective only by clearly defining the legitimate role of the military and by emphasizing that it is not directed against military personnel. One key element of the work against militarism is disarmament, and it is especially important that the economic benefits that flow from disarmament be shared globally for the sake of enhanced global security.

An important factor to be taken into account is a new self-understanding of the role of the military. Even in countries where democratic transformation has taken place, the influence of the military is considerable and often a continuing threat. The penetration of the military into civilian areas of life is not often easy to reverse.

Disarmament

Recognizing the positive disarmament opportunities that have presented themselves, the churches are urged to make the 1990s a decade of radical disarmament to pave the way for a fundamentally new approach to international security in the next century. We can no longer avoid the truth that military arsenals have not bought security. Even the military might are debilitated rather than strengthened by the weapons they possess and produce.

- Nuclear : In pursuing nuclear disarmament, we call for the rejection of nuclear deterrence and remind the churches of the WCC's Vancouver Assembly declaration that the production, possession and use of nuclear weapons are a sin against God. Our goal must be nothing less than the abolition of nuclear weapons.
- Conventional : We are encouraged by developments related to conventional arms reductions in Europe, particularly by the stated intention of the parties to move toward less provocative



- military postures and to eliminate the possibility of surprise attack. Throughout the 1990s, churches should urge governments to reduce conventional weapons down to radically low levels and to advance the principles of non-provocative defense and to explore options for non-violent defense or security options.
- Arms Trade: The lack of attention to measures to control the international transfer of weapons is of special concern. The more lethal the weapons and the larger their number, the greater the violence and destruction by wars. The arms trade is out of control, and the consequences are seen in the extensive and devastating warfare that defiles our planet. This is a matter of urgent concern and we particularly urge churches in arms exporting and receiving countries to cooperate in exploring avenues to control this trade in death and destruction.

**Open Letter from the General Secretary to President Bush and President Gorbachev
On the Eve of Their Summit, 28 November 1989.**

On the occasion of your meeting near Malta at the beginning of December we would like to offer our best wishes for your deliberations.

You are meeting at an extremely important time. The sweeping changes taking place all over Europe mark a new phase in history after the end of the Second World War. There are today new possibilities for peace-making and for laying the foundations for a new international order. There are also fresh opportunities for promotion of justice and human rights.

We sincerely welcome the steps you have already taken in arms control and the negotiations for disarmament that are continuing. Your cooperation has already played a significant role in the resolution of some of the regional conflicts.

We take the liberty of drawing your attention to the understandable anxiety among large sections of people that superpower agreements should not lead to a new division of the world with adverse consequences for the vast majority of the world's population. There is also some anxiety about possible preoccupation with European matters at the expense of other vital issues. We are confident that you will take into account the expectations as well as the perspectives from different parts of the world.

Your Excellencies are meeting in the Mediterranean which is one of the most militarized of sea lanes in the world. Close to it is one of the most volatile and militarized regions, the Middle East. We do earnestly hope that peace in the Middle East will receive priority on your agenda. International efforts are urgently needed for the realization of the right of the Palestinian people in a comprehensive settlement that will also guarantee the security of the State of Israel. We hope that this summit will be an occasion to take new initiatives in this matter.

We pray for God's guidance in your deliberations.