

BUNDESMINISTERIUM  
FÜR  
AUSWÄRTIGE ANGELEGENHEITEN

DVR: 0000060

II-1683 der Beilagen zu den Stenographischen Protokollen  
des Nationalrates XVII. Gesetzgebungsperiode

WIEN, am 27. August 1987

Zl. 414.21/52-II.8/87

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Schriftliche Anfrage der Abgeordneten  
zum Nationalrat Blau-Meissner und Ge-  
nossen betreffend Konferenz der Verein-  
ten Nationen über Abrüstung und Ent-  
wicklung (Nr.821/J)

1987-09-02

zu 821/J

An den

Herrn Präsidenten des Nationalrates

Parlament  
1017 WIEN

Die Abgeordnete zum Nationalrat Blau-Meissner und Ge-  
nossen haben am 10.Juli 1987 unter der Nr.821/J an mich eine  
schriftliche Anfrage betreffend Konferenz der Vereinten Nationen  
über Abrüstung und Entwicklung gerichtet, welche den folgenden  
Wortlaut hat:

- "1. Sind Sie der Meinung, dass diese Konferenz zu bedeutungs-  
los ist, um von einem hochrangigen österreichischen Ver-  
treter wahrgenommen zu werden ?
- 2. Im Hinblick auf die Wichtigkeit der in der Konferenz be-  
handelten Themen
  - Rüstungskonversion
  - Abrüstung
  - Beschränkung der Waffenexporte in die Dritte Welt
 bitten wir um exakte Informationen und Unterlagen, welche  
Stellungnahmen die Bundesregierung zu diesen Fragenkomplex  
im Detail abzugeben gedenkt."

Ich beeohre mich, diese Anfrage wie folgt zu beantworten:

Zu 1:

Die österreichische Delegation bei der Internationalen  
Konferenz über Abrüstung und Entwicklung wird vom Generalsekretär  
des Bundesministeriums für auswärtige Angelegenheiten,

. / .

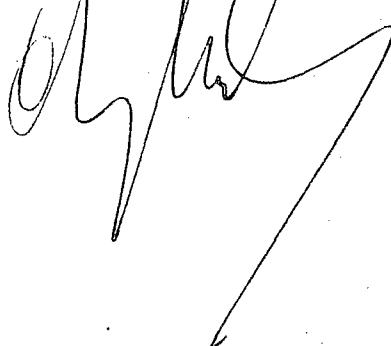
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Botschafter Dkfm.Dr.Thomas Klestil, bzw. nach dessen Rückkehr nach Wien vom Ständigen Vertreter Österreichs bei den Vereinten Nationen, Botschafter Dr.Karl Fischer, geleitet. Die überwiegende Zahl der anderen westlichen Industriestaaten nehmen auf der Ebene ihrer Ständigen Vertreter in New York an der Konferenz teil. Nur die nordischen Staaten sind auf Grund einer gruppeninternen Entscheidung durch ihre Aussenminister vertreten. Österreich hat damit auch durch die Auswahl des Delegationsleiters zum Ausdruck gebracht, welche Bedeutung es der gegenständlichen Konferenz beimisst.

Zu 2:

Die österreichische Stellungnahme zu den Themen der Konferenz kommt in der Erklärung des österreichischen Delegationsleiters in der Generaldebatte zum Ausdruck. Eine Kopie des Textes dieser Erklärung liegt bei.

Der Bundesminister  
für auswärtige Angelegenheiten:



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Erklärung von Generalsekretär  
Botschafter Dr.Thomas Klestil vor Interna-  
tionaler Konferenz über Abrüstung und  
Entwicklung am 25.August 1987 in New York

Mr. President,

The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations calls for the "establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". Today's realities, however, are quite different. During the three weeks duration of this Conference almost 50 billion dollars will be spent for military purposes. During the same period of time approximately 450 000 children will have died of hunger or lack of medical care.

This should serve us as a powerful reminder that the arms race and economic underdevelopment are still two of the most threatening phenomena of our time. To raise greater awareness of these facts and to draw the necessary conclusions from them are the main tasks of this conference.

Mr. President,

Your ability, knowledge and commitment to the objectives of this Conference augur well for its success. Let me assure you of the support of my delegation to fulfill your difficult task. Austria also recognizes the valuable work of the Preparatory Committee and appreciates the tireless efforts of its Chairman.

Mr. President,

The world today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced. Military expenditures have almost doubled during the first part of our decade and will soon reach a sum larger than the combined GNP of all African and Asian states. The continuous arms race does not make our world any safer. It represents a threat to every country and mankind as a whole.

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The supply of resources, talent and technological expertise for armament purposes contrasts to an ever more glaring degree with the incapacity of the international community to solve the problems of our world and to mitigate the poverty which afflicts large parts of humanity.

Mr. President,

While there is an obvious imbalance between military expenditures and the unmet basic needs of people, it becomes clear that the relationship between disarmament, development and security is a complex one. It does not lend itself to the simple solution of an automatic reallocation of resources. There are many ways in which disarmament, development and security can reinforce each other. However the elements of this "Triad of Peace", as it is often called, should rather be seen as parallel and distinct processes.

Mr. President,

Austria regards the promotion of a broader approach to the concept of peace and security as highly important and as a key issue of this Conference. The existence of non-military threats to national and international security should be more widely recognized. For many societies malnutrition, the lack of adequate medical care and education, as well as of economic and social opportunities create a serious threat to peace and security. A world where these problems prevail cannot possibly be a safe world.

Hence, strategies for peace and security must at the same time be strategies for development.

In the case of Western Europe, for example, peace and security were strengthened only after the Marshall plan had initiated a process of rapid development, social welfare and general prosperity.

In a pragmatic approach the recent Seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva has again underscored that

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a sustained global development effort should endeavour to provide for an environment where autonomous economic growth is encouraged. Only stable economic growth can, over time, significantly reduce the prevailing disparities between nations. To this end, if we interpret UNCTAD VII correctly, the role of the state and of the private sector, of donors and debtors, has to be newly defined.

Mr. President,

Evidently, there is no lack of ideas, studies and analysis on the relationship between development, security and disarmament. But as yet these concepts still need to be translated into practical political and economic action. To make such action possible the relevance of this issue must be more broadly perceived, especially by those with the power and responsibility to bring about the desired changes. Continuous and comprehensive information of the public is also of great importance. The mass media will have to play a crucial role in this regard.

Mr. President,

One of the main reasons for the wasteful arms race has undoubtedly been the ineffective implementation of the system of collective security as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. Without a functioning international system of collective security nations have to rely on their own defense.

Austria believes that the present "balance of terror" should be replaced by a system of collective security based on the firm support of the international community. Therefore, the strengthening of the United Nations is an essential step on our way to a more peaceful world. Hence, all attempts to weaken the UN or to play down its functions in the promotion of peace and security must be opposed.

Mr. President,

Austria has always been in favor of balanced and equitable reductions of armaments to the lowest possible level. We have also called

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for mutually acceptable modes of verification and compliance to ensure undiminished military security for all states. Presently, we see a sound basis for optimism as the two major nuclear powers seem to be at the verge of concluding the first real arms reduction agreement. Austria hopes that the remaining obstacles for such an agreement can soon be surmounted.

Mr. President,

There can be no doubt that the major responsibility for disarmament lies with the most strongly armed among the Great Powers. Their failure in the field of arms control would augur ill for the efforts of other countries. At the same time we have to realize that a continuing process of militarization in many other parts of the world also contributes significantly to the global arms race. This Conference therefore should encourage strategies which aim at the peaceful solution of conflicts at the regional level. Good neighbourly relations and a process of regional demilitarization, democratization and development promote peace and security more effectively than the further accumulation of arms.

Mr. President,

As to the questions of military budgets and arms transfers we do believe that an exact data base on both will be required.

Thus, we endorse all meaningful efforts to supply the United Nations with full and objective information on the military budgets of its Member States. The proposal of creating an "observatory" to follow the growth of military budgets should be thoroughly considered. In order to avoid duplication this should be done on the basis of the already existing Secretary General's Reporting System on Military Budgets .

Austria has participated in the standardized reporting system since its inception. We regret that so far only a few countries make their data available to the UN. We are, however, confident, that with a new look at openness more countries will make use of this valuable tool.

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Mr. President,

We note with deep concern that 70 % of all arms exports go from industrialized to developing countries whose military expenditures grow twice as fast as their GNP. In order to fully assess the impact of worldwide military spending on global economic development these arms transfers must be taken into account. Major efforts will be required in order to bring the arms trade under more effective international control.

Mr. President,

In order to reverse the arms race and to reallocate resources to development it is necessary to assess the resources involved, to make them more transparent and to demonstrate how conversion from military to civilian production could be achieved in an economically and socially beneficial manner.

Intensive research has been undertaken on that subject. Like in other countries in Austria too a pertinent report was published which indicated that conversion of defense industries is technically feasible and economically advantageous.

We can think of many different ways in which human resources, finance and technology devoted to purely military purposes can instead be used for peaceful purposes. One first concrete step in this direction has been the establishment of the UN Peace-Keeping Forces. The satisfactory accomplishment of their most delicate tasks point at other areas like emergency situations and regular development projects where resources can be reallocated in a more productive way.

Mr. President,

Numerous proposals have been made, both inside and outside the UN, concerning the question of establishing an international disarmament fund. It has been suggested that a significant part of the resources

released through disarmament should be put into such a fund. The Draft Final Document refers to the establishment of international financial mechanisms to facilitate the transfer of resources to socio-economic development.

As we are all aware there are still different views on the scope, the administration and the technical aspects of such mechanisms. We therefore believe that the idea of such international financial mechanisms still needs further study, especially with regard to institutional considerations and possible financial and economic implications.

Mr. President,

The problems we are dealing with at this Conference are severe. Due to their nature they cannot be solved within a short period of time. Further examination of the relationship between disarmament and development will be necessary. Within the framework of the United Nations this could take place during next year's Third Special Session on Disarmament. The establishment of a separate Conference mechanism should, however, be avoided.

Mr. President,

In the middle of our millennium man started to perceive himself as an individual, determined by reason and his own will. This was the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment.

Now, at the turn to the next millennium man is starting to realize that peaceful survival in a more complex, more interdependent, smaller and overpopulated world will not be possible without solidarity, sharing of responsibility and co-operation. This realization has led us to the threshold of what I would call a "New Age of Enlightenment".

Mr. President,

Time presses. Let us mobilize our ideas towards such a "Second Age of Enlightenment".