

UNGA FIRST COMMITTEE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON AD HOC COMMITTEES

-- The United States has learned that a number of governments plan to introduce a draft resolution in the First (Disarmament) Committee of the UN General Assembly that will seek to establish Ad Hoc Committees under the General Assembly.

-- Though a formal text has not yet been introduced, such a divisive proposal will sour much of the positive reform atmosphere that Member States have created through the revitalization of the First Committee over the past two years.

-- Under the newly accepted First Committee concept of thematic debate, any delegation can raise before the First Committee any issue that any government deems important. Setting up these Ad Hoc Committees would compromise this important practice before it can take root in the Committee.

-- Such Ad Hoc Committees also would compromise our common objective of getting the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to develop a program of work. Indeed, we understand that the draft resolution in question proposes to set up these committees in Geneva, rather than in New York.

-- The international community needs to continue to focus on getting the CD to work, rather than create another, "phantom" CD.

-- In fact, shifting CD issues to the First Committee likely will spell the end for the CD, and the supporters of this initiative would be fully responsible.

-- We also wish to make clear that the United States will NOT participate in any international body to whose establishment the United States does not agree.

-- Moreover, the United States will not consider itself bound in any way by any agreement emerging from such a body.

-- We do not conduct negotiations on vital issues of national and global security via majority vote. The mechanism envisaged by the sponsors of this resolution is one in which the vital security interests of all countries, including the U.S., could not be secured. This is yet another reason we would NOT participate.

-- Governments that wish to discuss CD issues in New York have ample opportunity to do so within the First Committee as it is currently structured, as well as in Geneva by applying for CD observer status if they are not already members.

-- The reasons for the existing impasse at the CD are no more soluble in New York than they are in Geneva. In fact, the outcome of this resolution will be to retard the very international nonproliferation and disarmament objectives that its sponsors seek to advance.

-- We thus urge your Government to oppose any proposal in the First Committee to establish such Ad Hoc Committees, and to take full advantage of the annual meeting of the First Committee to discuss fully issues pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security.