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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: MEASURES TO PROVIDE OBJECTIVE
INFORMATION ON MILITARY CAPABILITIES

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/39/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 29 December 1984, the General Assembly adopted resolution 38/188 C, the operative part of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;

"2. Calls once more upon all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, to consider additional measures to facilitate objective information on, as well as objective assessments of, military capabilities;

"3. Invites all States that have not communicated to the Secretary-General their views and proposals concerning such measures to do so as soon as possible, and those States that have already communicated such views and proposals to supplement them, as appropriate;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to ask the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies to consider the modalities of studying the question of measures to facilitate objective information on, and objective assessments of, military capabilities, in particular, among nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States;

"5. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session on the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution.

2. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of the above resolution, the Secretary-General reports that he has to date received replies from Australia, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Costa Rica, the Sudan, Sweden, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The replies are submitted herewith.

3. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of the same resolution, the Secretary-General has requested the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies to consider the modalities of studying the questions of measures to facilitate objective information on, and objective assessment of, military capabilities, in particular among nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, and provided the members of the Board with the necessary information in this regard. The Advisory Board has included the question in its programme of work and the results of its deliberations will be duly reflected in the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the Advisory Board.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

AUSTRALIA

[Original: English]

[15 April 1984]

1. Australia's record of providing public information on military activities and capabilities is a good one. Australia provides annually the military budget data requested by the United Nations in connection with resolutions concerning the reduction of military budgets. In this connection, it should be noted that Australia was one of 10 States to agree to assist the United Nations Group of Experts in its study on military budgets. The Annual Australian Defence Report gives a detailed account of the size, shape and equipment of the Australian defence force. A statistical manpower report is compiled monthly and released to the press. If it would be of assistance to the Secretary-General, Australia could provide a condensation of the information which is already in the public domain.

2. In our view, however, Australia is already doing more in providing information on military capabilities than many other States and Australia is glad to lend its full support to any efforts of the Secretary-General to encourage greater openness of information on these matters, particularly from the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States. Australia shares the view that the greatest possible openness of information is an important requirement for informed international consideration of arms control and disarmament matters.

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[15 May 1984]

The position of the Byelorussian SSR on this question was stated in document A/38/368 of 14 September 1983.

COSTA RICA

[Original: Spanish]

[13 February 1984]

Costa Rica, by an express provision of its Constitution, banned "the army as a permanent institution". In these circumstances my Government lacks the necessary basis for providing the information called for in General Assembly resolution 38/188 C.

SUDAN

[Original: Arabic]

[31 July 1984]

1. The Sudan has continued to uphold General Assembly resolution 38/188 C concerning measures to provide objective information on military capabilities, which was adopted in 1983. Its action is based on its increased concern about the threat to which mankind is exposed as a result of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, which has continued to heighten international tension and to hamper all efforts to establish international relations on a basis of peaceful coexistence and trust among States. It also impedes the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The arms race is incompatible with those principles, especially the principles of respect for sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.
2. The Sudan considers that the responsibility of commitment to the United Nations Charter and its provisions aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security and the saving of mankind from the scourge of war and destruction, as set forth in its preamble, is a responsibility that rests with all States Members of the Organization, but a primary responsibility is borne by the nuclear-weapon States, inasmuch as they possess the most dangerous type of weapons with the greatest power of destruction. Nuclear weapons have radically changed the concept of war and its nature and possible dangers and have weakened the concept of national boundaries, which no longer act, as they did in the past, as insurmountable barriers to avert the dangers of conventional war. Nuclear weapons have rendered the security of every State on this planet inadequate in the absence of general and complete nuclear disarmament, and have made the security of every people in the nuclear-weapon age linked with the security of other peoples.
3. In these circumstances, the lack of objective information on the military capabilities of States directly spurs on the arms race, besides contributing to the creation of a security climate characterized by doubt and uncertainty, increased fears and a lack of trust and increasing the hidden causes of misunderstanding, misestimation and miscalculation. By contrast, the provision of objective information on military capabilities, especially among nuclear-weapon States, would help to promote mutual confidence and to create an appropriate climate for disarmament negotiations.
4. The Sudan reiterates its belief that the adoption of an international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures would be an important means towards the goal of acquiring objective information on military capabilities, especially in the nuclear field. This measure would also promote a greater flow of information on the human and material resources which nuclear-weapon States devote to military purposes in a world beset by poverty, hunger and disease. The international system for standardized reporting represents a practical means of achieving transparency, comparability and verification in respect of military expenditures.

5. In this connection, the Sudan wishes to express once again its support for the French proposal for the establishment of an international satellite monitoring agency, which it feels would be one important measure to ensure the provision of objective information on security-related questions and verification of compliance with disarmament agreements.

6. The Sudan also takes this opportunity to express its support for all the initiatives put forward within the United Nations with a view to creating an appropriate climate for nuclear disarmament under effective international control through confidence-building measures. The Sudan affirms its belief in confidence-building measures and their effectiveness but considers that they must not be a substitute or pre-condition for disarmament or negotiations on disarmament, nor must they be a substitute for the necessary measures for general and complete disarmament laid down in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament.

SWEDEN

[Original: English]

[10 May 1984]

1. In the view of the Swedish Government much valuable information on military capabilities is already available in material furnished by Member States as a result of the United Nations work carried out within the context of earlier and ongoing studies on military expenditures. Further information has been made available by member Governments to the current United Nations study on military research and development. As pointed out in the Swedish Government's communications on these two studies, the Swedish Government attaches great importance to their results as they will facilitate objective assessments of, and objective information on, military capabilities.

2. The Government of Sweden notes with satisfaction that the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies will consider the modalities of studying the question of measures to facilitate objective information on, and objective assessments of, military capabilities, in particular, among nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States.

3. The Government of Sweden further wishes to draw attention to the objective information on military capabilities that is being provided by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

4. In the opinion of the Government of Sweden, objective information on military capabilities needs to be supplemented by international dialogue about perceptions of such capabilities. With a view to intensifying and broadening such international dialogue, the Government of Sweden, considering the United Nations to be the appropriate forum, has proposed a comprehensive study of concepts of security to be carried out by the Secretary-General with the assistance of qualified governmental experts.

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[10 May 1984]

The position of the Ukrainian SSR on this question is contained in document A/38/368 of 14 September 1983.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]

[27 April 1984]

The position of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on this question was stated in document A/38/368 of 14 September 1983.
