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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Objective information on military matters

Report of the Secretary-General

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\* A/42/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 3 December 1986, the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/59 B, entitled "Objective information on military matters", the relevant paragraphs of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"3. Urges all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States and other militarily **significant** States, to consider implementing additional measures based on the principles of openness and transparency **such** as, for example, **the international system** for the **standardized** reporting of military **expenditures**, with the aim of facilitating the availability of **objective information** on, as well as objective assessment of, military capabilities;

"4. Expresses its thanks to the Secretary-General for his report prepared in **conformity** with resolution 40/94 K;

"5. Invites all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General before 30 April 1987 the measures they have adopted to contribute to greater openness in military matters in general and, in particular, to improve the **flow** of objective information on military capabilities;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution;

"7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-second session an item entitled 'Objective information on military matters.'

2. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Secretary-General in a note **verbale** dated 5 January 1987 invited all Member States to inform him of **measures they have** adopted in application of the above-mentioned resolution. To date he has received replies from the following countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These are reproduced in section II below. Other replies will be published as **addenda**.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BULGARIA

[Original: Russian]

[13 May 1987]

1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is firmly convinced that, in present-day conditions, mankind has no choice but to halt the arms race and move ahead to true disarmament measures by, among other things, reducing military expenditure. A reduction in military budgets by all Member States would not affect the security of a single State. Such a reduction would release significant resources for peaceful applications, economic and social development.

2. As long ago as 1973, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed a proposal by the USSR for a ten per cent reduction in the military budgets of the permanent members of the Security Council, using part of the resources thus released to provide assistance to the developing countries; unfortunately, this resolution has been left unimplemented. On 5 March 1984, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty sent the member States of NATO a proposal to hold negotiations and reduce military budgets. There has been no satisfactory reply to this proposal. Bulgaria would like to draw the attention of the international community to the above proposals, and to the proposal sent by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty to the member States of NATO in April 1987 on the question of a moratorium on increases in military expenditure.

3. Bulgaria also takes a favourable attitude to the question of greater openness in military matters and has accepted the obligations spelt out in the document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. Those measures include prior notification and the submission of yearly calendars of military activities, the invitation of observers, and verification of compliance with the details of the agreement through, *inter alia*, on-the-spot inspections. Unfortunately, the group of Western States at the Stockholm Conference that supported the idea of "openness" in military matters would not agree to confidence-building measures relating to independent military activities by naval and air forces, which pose a special threat to the security of European States. In fulfilment of its commitments, Bulgaria on 15 December 1986 submitted through the appropriate diplomatic channels a yearly calendar of the military activities that will take place within its territory in 1987.

4. Bulgaria is convinced that an exchange of information and data on weaponry and armed forces is essential during negotiations and while carrying out the practical contractual measures resulting from such negotiations. It cannot, however, accept the suggestion that reporting military expenditure should be a prior condition for the start of negotiations.

5. The Bulgarian Government believes that disarmament is, first and foremost, an expression of States' political will, and that the absence of progress in negotiations should not be justified by the shortage of information on military

matters and military expenditure. Proposals calling for prior "openness" and the introduction of an "international system for the Bstandardized reporting of military expenditures" deflect the issue of reductione in military expenditure from its true purpose. Reporting military expenditure without engaging in talks will not yield an objective assessment of military potential, given the deep differences in the social and economic systems, structures and doctrines of nations' armed forces, and the lack of appropriate monitoring and verification measures. The reason for the growth in military expenditure is not the absence of information but the urge to attain military supremacy which some States openly manifest. The proposals by the USSR calling for the eradication of medium-range, battlefield and tactical missiles and the formulation of the key provisions of future agreements on strategic strike weapons, anti-ballistic-missile defence and nuclear testing afford heartening prospects of a start on the process of real disarmament.

6. The approach still being pursued by the United States and its supporters, relying on large-scale rearmament programmes, including the development of SDI and further refinements in conventional weapons, is in fact the true source of the constant growth in military expenditure and the deadlock in disarmament talks.

7. The Government of Bulgaria will continue to support all move6 within and outside the United Nations to end the arms race and to freeze and subsequently reduce military expenditure as an integral part of the disarmament process. It is from this perspective that it considers the place of and need for objective information on military expenditure.

#### DENMARK

[Original: English]

[12 Kay 1987]

1. Denmark has traditionally supported the idea that a better flow of objective information on military matters would contribute to a reduction in international tension, to the building of confidence among States and to the conclusion of concrete disarmament agreements. A larger degree of openness would thus be an important confidence-building measure that could facilitate disarmament efforts. For these reasons Denmark was a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 41/59 B entitled "Objective information on military matters", which was adopted by a vast majority of Member States of the United Nations.

2. Denmark has also consistently supported other proposals and efforts with the aim of facilitating the availability of objective information on military matters to the international community. An important erfort in this area has been the adoption by the United Nations of an international system for standardized reporting of military expenditures, which is now being used by an increasing, hut still too low, number of Member States. The United Nations reporting system contributes to greater transparency with regard to the military expenditures of Member States in different geographic regions and with different budgeting and accounting systems.

3. The Danish Government has since 1981 participated in this procedure of annually standardized reporting and has reported to the Secretary-General on the size of its military budgets. The Danish authorities have also a long tradition for openness on defence issues and have taken a number of initiatives aiming at disseminating information on military matters. These measures, which are described more in detail in Denmark's reply in 1986 to the Secretary-General on General Assembly resolution 40/94 K (see A/41/466), include annual reviews to inform about the goals and means of Danish defence, distribution of publications and audio-visual material and public arrangements such as exhibitions, "open houses", etc.

4. On the regional level Denmark participates actively in the process initiated by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Denmark welcomed the adoption in September 1986 of the Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. The Danish Government fully implements the provisions on confidence- and security-building measures contained in that Document and supports the establishment of further confidence-building measures as a significant step towards increased openness in military matters.

5. The Danish Government, having made considerable efforts to provide information on Danish defence matters, hopes that the ideas embodied in General Assembly resolution 41/59 B will gain widespread support among Member States. Increased participation in the United Nations reporting system by countries from all regions would be a significant contribution in this respect.

SWEDEN

{Original: English}

{4 May 1987}

1. The Government of Sweden shares the conviction that, as expressed in General Assembly resolution 41/59 B, a better flow of objective information on military capabilities could help relieve international tension and contribute to the building of confidence among States on a global, regional or subregional level and to the conclusion of concrete disarmament agreements.

2. However, it is important that this proposition be viewed in a broad perspective. The benefits from a better flow of information must be assessed on the basis of its actual role in interaction with other relevant factors. Information is not an independent agent behind political processes, but to a large extent a product of them. Information, however scrupulous it may be, cannot by itself solve underlying political problems.

3. Furthermore, it is not only military capabilities that are unevenly distributed among nations. The same holds true for national means to obtain objective information about existing military capabilities. It is therefore most appropriate that this resolution urges all States, in particular nuclear-weapon

States and other militarily significant States, to consider implementing additional measures with the aim of facilitating the availability of objective information on, as well as a detailed and balanced assessment of, military capabilities.

4. Yet, in the conviction that the international availability of and the exchange of information on military and other defence efforts would contribute to greater confidence among States and would help to facilitate future negotiations on substantive disarmament agreements, the Swedish Government has for its part actively supported various proposals to this effect and contributed to concrete efforts aimed at improving the information available to the international community.

5. One such effort was the elaboration and subsequent adoption by the United Nations of an international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, which is now being used by an increasing number of Member States with different economic systems and at very different levels of economic development. The Swedish Government is pleased to see that this system is being maintained and can only hope that a growing number of States will decide to participate in this reporting.

6. Upon the adoption of the reporting system in 1980, two successive United Nations groups of experts have studied the problems of international and inter-temporal comparisons of military expenditures and the modalities of constructing appropriate instruments for such comparisons. Through the voluntary co-operation of several Member States, additional information on this matter has become available in the course of these studies.

7. A related effort to collect information on economic and other resources devoted to military purposes was made by the United Nations Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. At the Group's request some Member States, including Sweden, submitted data on the numbers and kinds of military and civilian personnel employed in their military sectors and on the different resources and capacities of their defence industries.

8. In 1982 the General Assembly recommended a fuller and more systematic compilation and dissemination by Governments of data on the military use of human and material resources and military transfers. Also, member Governments were urged to follow up the United Nations expert study on "The Relationship between Disarmament and Development" with studies in their own countries.

9. The Swedish Government commissioned a study, to be conducted within the frame of unchanged security-policy goals and on the basis of an assumed future international disarmament process, of the implications for Sweden of the possibilities of reducing defence spending and converting military resources for constructive civilian use in such changed circumstances. The first report on this Swedish study was submitted to the Government in 1984, the second in 1985. The two reports, both entitled "In Pursuit of Disarmament: Conversion from Military to Civil Production in Sweden" have been transmitted to the United Nations. A government working group has been appointed to advance Sweden's efforts in the matter of the relationship between disarmament and development. In Sweden's judgement, it would be most valuable if also other Member States soon were to implement the 1982 General Assembly recommendations.

10. A recent multilateral endeavour to increase the flow of information in the disarmament field may also be cited here. At the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction a number of measures for the exchange of information in matters related to the Convention were adopted. This exchange of information includes, inter alia, data about laboratories and research centres, biological research related to the Convention and outbreaks of unusual diseases. The Swedish Government welcomes the adoption of these measures. Their implementation will enhance the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and thus contribute to strengthening its authority. The Swedish Government is thus participating in this exchange of information. While, for purposes of confidence building, the international perspective is clearly paramount, it might be added that access to objective military information also has an important national dimension.

11. The Government of Sweden believes that the traditionally broad and strong public support for its national security policy and for its defence effort, based on active and wide popular participation, is strengthened by a free debate facilitated by ample and accessible information. The Government's annual Bill to Parliament on Sweden's national defence is an important source of information as are also the Parliamentary proceedings and the reports of successive parliamentary Defence Committees. The most recent of these reports, covering the period 1987-1992, was published in February 1987. Other examples are the long-term and medium-term plans made public by the Supreme Commander, which contain information on the current status and further development of the armed forces, as well as similar plans provided by the civilian defence authorities. This openness in military and other defence matters is regarded as a corollary of the democratic political system and entirely compatible with Sweden's national interests.

12. Finally, in the opinion of the Swedish Government a better flow of information on military capabilities needs to be accompanied by a broad international dialogue about the evaluation and perceptions of such capabilities. Such a dialogue may be conducted at the global, regional or any other level.

13. With a view to facilitating such an international dialogue, and considering the United Nations to be the appropriate forum for its global dimension, Sweden proposed and participated in the study on "Concepts of security" (A/40/553). The objective of integrating an improved flow of information with a dialogue on perceptions of military capabilities and plans was also at the forefront of Sweden's proposal for the comprehensive United Nations expert study of the military use of research and development; the Swedish Government, on its own initiative, made a considerable amount of information available for this study. The same applies to Sweden's involvement in successive United Nations studies of military budgets (see A/40/421).

14. In a regional perspective, the 35 participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe convened a Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, which met at Stockholm from 17 January 1984 to 19 September 1986. The participating States agreed on the provisions of the "Document of the Stockholm Conference". This document includes a

number of confidence- and security-building measures that have a bearing on information on military matters. Experience of compliance with these provisions, which entered into force on 1 January 1987, is still limited, but so far generally favourable. The Swedish Government is convinced that the Stockholm Document Offer is a basis for the improvement of the relations between the participating States and for strengthening confidence and security among them. It is to be hoped, moreover, that it will also give an impetus to other negotiations on important arms limitation and disarmament issues.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

[Original: English]

(22 June 1987)

1. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recalls that its general views on this issue were made clear last year in response to General Assembly resolution 40/94 K (see A/41/466).
2. The United Kingdom remains convinced that the provision by States of objective information on military matters can have a beneficial effect - at global, regional and subregional levels - by helping to create a level of confidence, without which it is difficult to see how it would be possible to achieve the sort of balanced and verifiable agreements on a wide range of arms control and disarmament issues which the whole international community acknowledges as being a major goal.
3. In the United Kingdom, extensive information on military capabilities is provided in the form of an annual white paper, the Statement on the Defence Estimates. This Statement provides comprehensive coverage of the United Kingdom's defence policies and provides factual and statistical background on British defence activities, particularly defence expenditure, as well as the Government's views on defence and the international situation. All of this information is readily available to the general public in the form of a Government publication. In case other Member States - and particularly those with different social and economic systems - might find it of value as a model that they might choose to adopt, a copy of the 1987 Statement on the Defence Estimates has been lodged with the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.
4. The provision of reliable, objective information on military matters by Member States is vital if progress is to be made towards the aim - reaffirmed by consensus at the forty-first session of the General Assembly - of reducing military budgets. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/91 B, the United Kingdom has again this year completed the standardised international reporting instrument, designed to communicate to the Secretary-General military expenditures in a readily comparable form. The United Kingdom wishes to reiterate the importance that it attaches to the completion of the reporting instrument by a representative sample of States, and in particular by the major military Powers, and by a variety of countries from different regions and with different budgeting and accounting systems. The United Kingdom believes that maximum benefit from this exercise



cannot be derived in the absence of information from a number of countries with centrally planned economies, which could help balance the information that has been provided over a number of years by a representative sample of countries with free-market economies. The United Kingdom notes with satisfaction that certain States were able to adopt a less inflexible position on this item in the voting on resolution 41/59 B, as well as statements that suggest a readiness to act with greater openness and transparency.

5. Finally, the United Kingdom believes that once the General Assembly has received the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 41/59 B, consideration should be given to possible further action on this subject.

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