General Assembly

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
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NAVAL ARMAMENTS AND DISARMAMENT

Working paper submitted by Sweden

1. The continued exploration of the problems of naval armaments could usefully be based on some of the elements recognized as significant in last year's report by the Chairman to the Disarmament Commission as contained in document A/CN.10/102.

2. Thus, among the particular characteristics relative to the naval armament and naval forces are the following. A great part of naval operations takes place on the high seas, which are open for navigation by all. The freedom of navigation on the high seas should be exercised by all States, with due regard for the interests of other States in the peaceful uses of those seas.

3. It should be an understanding that the basic principles, on which the participants concurred according to the above-mentioned report, should all be applicable to the elements that participants may agree upon in the continued deliberations.

4. That would imply that any efforts directed towards arms limitations, disarmament and confidence-building measures at sea should proceed as an integral part of the overall objective of halting and reversing the arms race in general, and that disarmament measures in the maritime field should be balanced in their general military context and should not diminish the security of any State.

5. Another implication would be that universal and non-discriminatory verification would be recognized as essential for the proper implementation of agreed measures.

7. The recognized elements and basic principles are not sufficient to cope with some conflicting interests, which may arise in the exercise of the principle of freedom of navigation. The Disarmament Commission should therefore continue its substantive consideration with a view to facilitating the identification of possible measures in the field of naval arms reductions and disarmament, pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament, as well as confidence-building measures, taking into account the security concerns of States, with different naval capabilities and maritime interests.

8. Measures for naval disarmament should be addressed during the deliberations. In the short term, confidence-building measures may be an area where States could find some common ground. The possibilities of progress in this regard should therefore be addressed early in the deliberations. Also the significance of confidence-building measures for creating favourable conditions for progress in the field of disarmament underlines the advisability of addressing potential confidence-building measures at an early stage.

9. The importance of confidence-building measures has been emphasized in the report concerning the study on the naval arms race (A/40/535). Several measures of confidence-building character have been listed in the report and should be subject to discussion in the Commission. Under certain conditions, such measures would not only strengthen confidence but also directly enhance security. There is obviously no easy task to draw a sharp definitional line between confidence-building, on the one hand, and security-enhancing measures, on the other. For the purposes of a structured approach, it should however be enough to recognize that, in many confidence-building measures, there is an element of security enhancing.

10. Measures in the maritime field, as exemplified in the United Nations study, can thus be analysed and structured in relation to the security element involved. Below, an effort is made to group some potential measures in the maritime domain under headings relative to specific security objectives, which should generally be recognized as legitimate. Under the heading of each specified objective, categories of measures are arranged.

   (a) Objective: Peace-time security in relation to activities by military forces of many States operating at sea to avoid incidents and confrontation.

   Measures: Multilateral rules for prevention of incidents. Notification of naval major activities and observation of such activities.

   (b) Objective: Security for non-military activities at sea, such as shipping, fishing, off-shore activities.

   Measures: Rules guiding naval activities when in conflict with civilian activities, in accordance with the régimes of the high seas, exclusive economic zones, archipelagic and territorial waters.

   (c) Objective: "Seaboard security" - security of coastal States against threats and military power projection from the sea.

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Measures: General and regional rules such as notification of major naval activities related to surface vessels, submarines and amphibious forces. Measures relating to restraints on naval major activities could also be considered.

(d) Objective: War-time security at sea of vessels belonging to States neutral to a conflict.

Measures: Steps to improve international respect and awareness of existing international law with regard to the rights of vessels belonging to States, neutral to a conflict.

11. Limitations on all types of sea-borne nuclear missiles should be an integrated part of the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. As concerns sea-borne tactical nuclear weapons, various confidence- and security-building measures, such as special mission regulations, notification, etc., could be suitable for possible future negotiations.