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NAVAL ARMAMENTS AND DISARMAMENT

Confidence-building measures at sea; limitation and reduction of naval armaments

Working paper submitted by Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1. The beginning of nuclear disarmament, set in motion by the implementation of the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, progress in the negotiations on a 50 per cent reduction of Soviet and American strategic offensive armaments, while adhering to the ABM Treaty, and the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe have brought into focus the problem of reducing naval armaments. This is all the more so since the share of naval forces in the overall balance of forces is objectively growing. The extensive discussion of the issue of naval armaments and disarmament held at the United Nations Disarmament Commission and other United Nations bodies clearly shows that the naval component of the military forces of States should not be excluded from the overall disarmament effort. The time has come for naval forces and armaments to be accorded due place in the whole complex of disarmament problems currently negotiated on the multilateral level. The agreement reached at the 1921-1922 Washington Conference on the proportional limitation of the major naval Powers' naval forces and on the prohibition of the construction of new naval bases over a broad region of the Pacific Ocean is, *inter alia*, an example for further efforts to reduce and restrict naval armaments and activities on an agreed basis.

2. The objective of limiting and reducing naval armaments can be achieved stage by stage, naval confidence-building measures and measures to strengthen the guarantees of the safety of shipping to be considered as a first step in this direction. The immediate goal of such undertakings would be to reduce the danger

of military conflict and of the misunderstanding or miscalculation of military activities. Such measures should improve the degree of predictability by covering, as recommended by a number of States, such features of military deployment and activities which may be conceived as potentially threatening. An important first step towards enhancing confidence at sea is the publication of data on the national navies. This is a commendable approach with a potential for stimulating openness on naval matters and enhancing an exchange of information, as well as analysis of the concerns expressed by various parties. Such steps and the ensuing debate will promote the process of starting negotiations on confidence-building measures at sea, international guarantees for the safety of maritime communications and freedom of navigation.

3. The process of building confidence at sea could begin by adopting such measures as agreement on prior notification of movement and manoeuvres by naval forces and the associated air forces, invitation of observers to naval exercises and manoeuvres, limitations on the number and scale of military exercises, and also on the regions in which they would be held, and exchange of information on naval issues. The conclusion of a multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents on the high seas would be a concrete step of practical value for increased confidence at sea.

4. Also, with a view to strengthening confidence it is important to arrive at the best possible understanding of each other's intentions and achieve predictability in naval affairs. It would be useful to discuss States' concerns in this sphere and, in doing so, to compare the necessary data on naval capacity, engage in a discussion on the principles of the use of major naval forces and make a comparison of the objectives of naval exercises and manoeuvres.

5. The maintenance of the freedom of navigation and other uses of the sea is an important objective for all States. Measures to guarantee the safety of shipping could include, inter alia, the prohibition of exercises, manoeuvres and the concentration of major formations of naval forces in international straits and zones of intensive shipping and fisheries, as well as in the airspace above them. Subsequently, in circumstances of enhanced security and naval détente measures, consideration could be given to the question of establishing in sectors of the major international ocean routes zones of decreased density of armaments and increased confidence, and of withdrawing offensive forces and facilities from such zones. New and imaginative ways to ensure the safety of navigation lines and freedom of navigation should be employed, reflecting the positive trends in international politics and the increased role of the United Nations in international security and disarmament matters. The United Nations, which has a direct responsibility in dealing with threats to the freedom of navigation, could be utilized in a more concrete manner to prevent such threats, i.e., by establishing a United Nations naval force to be recruited from the navies of interested States, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council. It would be advisable to initiate, as a preparation for establishing the United Nations naval forces, a specialized study to be carried out by the Military Staff Committee.

6. The novel approaches to international security should comprise such measures as imparting a defensive character to military doctrines. The socialist States

support actively the idea to create, with the goodwill of all States concerned, such a situation in the seas and oceans in which neither side would possess the potential for a surprise attack on the other or for deploying large-scale offensive naval actions. Joint efforts should be undertaken to ensure that the military strength, armaments and organizational structure of States' naval forces are limited to the level of the requirements of defence and the protection of their friends and allies but are insufficient for the conduct of offensive operations. Proceeding from the above principle, parameters and limits for naval activity and armaments should be elaborated. The authors of the present paper suggest that such parameters be considered at the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and following a recommendation by the General Assembly at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

7. International security is directly influenced by the composition and the purpose of the naval forces. The desired defensive purpose of naval forces could be enhanced in particular by a reduction of aircraft-carriers and other ships with aircraft on board, vessels carrying sea-launched cruise missiles, amphibious forces (marine infantry) and the respective infrastructure. Therefore the authors suggest that the major naval Powers agree on a limitation of the regions in which their fleets' strike forces would be deployed, including limits on the deployment of amphibious forces, so as to reduce the threat of an attack from the sea. Special measures need to be agreed upon for reducing the threat arising from the accumulation of tactical nuclear weapons at sea, which increases the risk of nuclear conflict occurring.

8. The socialist countries advocate the elaboration of a reliable system of verification and openness in the naval sphere, of future agreements on confidence-building at sea and the limitation and reduction of naval armaments. Such measures could include the use of national technical means, measures based on co-operation, on-site inspections and an international verification mechanism under United Nations auspices. Naval bases and facilities abroad should be also open to international inspection. The Soviet Union is ready, on the basis of reciprocity with the United States and the other nuclear-weapon Powers, to declare whether or not its naval vessels entering foreign ports are carrying nuclear weapons. Under the same conditions, joint work could be undertaken on the establishment of technical means for verifying that naval vessels are not carrying nuclear weapons.

9. In the course of the discussion of the issue of naval armaments and disarmament at the United Nations, the majority of States have indicated that they share the understanding that certain measures for strengthening confidence and security at sea could be implemented at a very early stage. The reports of the chairmen of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/83, A/CN.10/102 and A/CN.10/113), the working documents submitted to the Disarmament Commission and to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament can serve as a sound foundation for continuing work in this field. All proposals made so far and all future ideas can be discussed at a multilateral meeting of military experts at the United Nations which can work out measures for strengthening confidence and a programme of action for the international community for curbing the naval arms race. This meeting could set the stage for the subsequent holding of a special international conference or meeting of the Security Council on these issues.

10. In order to put the naval issues on a practical track, it would be useful to prepare an updated United Nations study on naval problems, which would take new data into account and provide comprehensive coverage of extending confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans and of limiting and reducing naval forces and activities. The sponsors are ready to contribute to such a study.
