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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR DECIDING ON THE SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF
THE PROPOSAL FOR A STUDY ON DISARMAMENT RELATING TO CONVENTIONAL
WEAPONS

Working paper: India

1. In the present situation of the grave dangers posed to the very survival of mankind by the continuously escalating arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race and the lack of any meaningful progress in deliberations and negotiations in the field of disarmament, only a global approach to the problem can ensure right direction and correct priorities with respect to disarmament questions, including that of limitation and reduction of conventional weapons.
2. Such a global approach to the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons must be pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. The achievement of nuclear disarmament has been accorded the highest priority, and the achievement of nuclear disarmament measures can, under no circumstances, be predicated upon progress in conventional disarmament. Attempts at promoting such concepts as a "balance" or "linkage" between nuclear and conventional weapons would be misleading. The highest priority in disarmament negotiations has always been the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. Any approach to the question of limitation and reduction of conventional weapons, therefore, must not lose sight of this correct and comprehensive perspective.
3. A United Nations study on "all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces" can be undertaken only after the general approach to the study and its structure and scope have been fully discussed and agreed upon.
4. Any proposal for such a study would clearly need to take into account the primary responsibility for disarmament that rests with States having the largest military arsenals. The vast proportion of conventional weapons in both qualitative and quantitative terms, are produced, developed, retained and deployed by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies. Progress in measures relating to the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons between such States and their alliance arrangements would constitute the indispensable first step towards strengthening peace and security in the world.

5. In a United Nations study on conventional disarmament, while discussing the question of international trade in conventional weapons (or, conventional arms transfers, as it is now euphemistically called), all kinds of military alliance arrangements pertaining to conventional weapons would need to be carefully gone into: e.g., gifts, off-sets, deployments, prepositioning, co-production, standardization and technological co-operation. It would be one-sided to consider merely those transfers of conventional arms that affect the non-aligned and developing States which have only recently emerged from alien and colonial domination and continue to struggle in order to safeguard their hard-won independence. Furthermore, such a study should not limit itself to the superficial aspects of arms transfers but must address the underlying causes that lead to acquisition of arms by States. Consideration of the question of the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons should, therefore, be based on the principle of ensuring the security of all States.

6. None of the alliance arrangements pertaining to conventional weapons can be considered as either sacred or beyond the pale of an objective, comprehensive study on conventional disarmament. No Article of the Charter of the United Nations can be invoked to prevent a probe into various military alliance arrangements, including military doctrines regarding conventional weapons; nor can shelter be taken behind the argument of lack of effective verifiability.

7. Any partial, discriminatory study of conventional disarmament, besides being seriously flawed, would lack credibility and serve no useful purpose.
