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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

STUDY ON THE NAVAL ARMS RACE

Addendum

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AUSTRALIA

[Original: English]

[30 April 1986]

1. Australia welcomes the recently completed study on the naval arms race (A/40/535). The issue deserves close scrutiny as part of the arms buildup in many parts of the world. Efforts directed at arms control and disarmament and at establishing a safer, more stable world cannot exclude the naval component. Conversely, the naval arms race cannot be considered in isolation. Arms control in this field must be viewed in the context of the overall strategic balance and the requirements of regional security. The defence strategy of many countries, including Australia, places heavy reliance on naval capabilities. Disarmament measures in this area should be balanced in order not to diminish the security of any State.
2. Australia strongly endorses, in this connection, the conclusions of the expert group contained in paragraph 285 of the study. In particular, it is axiomatic that any global restrictions on naval forces should be numerically asymmetrical in order to maintain an overall balance in the military situation which is itself asymmetrical. The need for adequate verification procedures is also paramount.
3. The specific restraints and measures suggested in the study should be considered in this light. Some of the suggested constraints may prove suitable at particular times in particular regions. Their negotiation and implementation should be co-ordinated with other measures to maintain the overall strategic balance and regional security. Australia supported the attempts of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to negotiate mutual naval reductions in the Indian Ocean in 1978. It also supports an Indian Ocean conference on the question of the establishment of an Indian Ocean zone of peace. It is recognized, however, that agreements on reduction in naval deployments in the Indian Ocean cannot be negotiated without reference to military developments on the land of littoral States.
4. Australia would welcome mutually agreed limitations of the kind suggested in paragraph 287 of the study as part of overall weapons reductions agreements. For example, the numbers of SLBM launchers and nuclear warheads and related issues are within the ambit of the current super-Power strategic arms control negotiations which Australia strongly supports. Australia would like to see agreements on deep cuts in these and other components of nuclear weapon arsenals.
5. Australia supports the principle of agreed geographic restraints, where this corresponds to the wishes of the countries of the region concerned, and in full conformity with the United States Convention on the Law of the Sea, including in particular the freedom of the high seas and the rights of innocent passage. It also attaches importance in this connection to the sovereign right of States to decide for themselves such questions as access to their ports and airfields. The

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question of restrictions on nuclear-armed vessels is a particularly complex one, given the practice of all nuclear-weapon States of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on their warships and the difficulties of verification (any ship of any nationality would be physically capable of carrying nuclear weapons, and state vessels such as warships enjoy sovereign immunity). Australia for its part does not apply such restrictions.

6. These factors were taken into account in the negotiation of the Treaty of Rarotonga which established a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. The Treaty upholds the sovereign right of each country to decide for itself whether to permit vessels to visit its ports, as well as the rights of all States under international law to freedom of navigation.

7. The confidence-building measures suggested in the study may also have an important role to play. Australia particularly commends to Member States the reference in paragraph 298 to the promotion of trust and confidence by more openness concerning naval strengths. The negotiation of limitations would seem to be a futile task before reliable and comparable information on global naval capabilities and expenditures is available. Australia's commitment to greater transparency in this area is demonstrated by its practice of regularly making available to the United Nations information on its military expenditures. Australia urges more Member States to make such information available.

8. Other worthwhile confidence-building measures referred to in the study include international agreements to prevent incidents between naval forces on or over the high seas, similar to the existing 1972 agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States (paras. 242-243 of the study). Such measures can be important in reducing international tension and thus contribute to a climate in which States can reach agreement on arms control and disarmament.

9. Australia supports further consideration of the study and its recommendation in the Disarmament Commission and looks forward to playing an active part in the discussion of the item on the naval arms race during the forthcoming session. The suggestion in paragraph 306 of the study that the possibility of negotiations could be the subject of a preliminary analysis by the United Nations Disarmament Commission is worth pursuing, in Australia's view, but no time limit should be set on this analysis. Full-scale negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on such a relatively new, technically complex, area would be premature.

NORWAY

[Original: English]

[1 May 1986]

Norway supported the initiation of a comprehensive study on the naval arms race. Disarmament and arms control constitute an integral part of Norwegian security policy. For this reason of principle, it was thought that a better international understanding of all the issues involved in the field of naval arms

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reductions and disarmament, including confidence-building measures, would be a positive contribution to deliberations in the United Nations concerning international peace and security. Norway welcomes the completion of the study (A/40/535) which has taken up a number of important considerations regarding naval forces and the question of arms control and disarmament in the broadest sense. In some respects, it would seem that the study would have benefited from a more detailed discussion of the issues involved. For this reason, Norway would like to emphasize further some of the points of view referred to in the United Nations study as follows:

(a) In accordance with the mandate, the question of limitation and reduction of naval nuclear forces is given broad attention in the study, along with the emphasis on nuclear disarmament in general. Norway wishes to emphasize once again the need for nuclear arms limitations and reductions in general. The study may, however, seem to question indirectly the policies of States belonging to alliances, which in the absence of nuclear disarmament, rely also on these weapons in their defensive planning. Such implications are unwarranted. Norway would wish to recall, therefore, that it belongs to an alliance which has solemnly declared that none of its weapons will ever be used except in response to attack;

(b) General Assembly resolution 38/188 G of 20 December 1983 requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of qualified governmental experts, to carry out a comprehensive study of all the issues involved. From the outset, Norway has supported the comprehensive scope of the study. It is clearly important that the role of naval forces be examined in an overall military and political context. In particular, it must be stressed that the development of naval forces cannot be seen as isolated from developments as regards land-based and air-based weapons systems. Norway agrees, therefore, as is stated in the study, that naval forces are not independent of other military forces and that there is no such thing as an independent naval balance or parity;

(c) Developments regarding strategic nuclear weapons at sea are given close consideration in the United Nations study. The study is right in emphasizing the need for nuclear arms control and disarmament in general. When it comes to the discussion of strategic nuclear weapons at sea, it must be borne in mind, however, that the various components of the nuclear forces are assigned differing roles. Traditionally, therefore, some systems have been considered more destabilizing than others. Strategic nuclear forces at sea have, however, been considered part of a second-strike capability, and consequently not among the most destabilizing systems. According to the Norwegian view, reductions must be sought first of all in the most destabilizing systems while seeking both nuclear and conventional arms control in general and reductions to the lowest level possible;

(d) The mandate of the United Nations system focused also on the development of naval forces and systems. This is a most important aspect as regards the discussion of international security and stability in this field. For coastal States, developments over time in terms of an arms buildup take on added significance, especially in strategically important regions in an East-West perspective. In such areas, an arms buildup on the part of one party over a longer period of time will necessarily affect negatively security and stability in the

region. Norway, for its part, wishes to emphasize, therefore, the need for continued stability and security for all States, especially in strategically important regions between East and West. This is a responsibility that rests with all the countries of the region if security and stability are to be achieved at the lowest level possible of naval and armed forces. This should remain the principal objective of all the parties involved;

(e) The United Nations study refers to a number of quantitative and qualitative restraints which have been suggested. When discussing these and other measures, a number of considerations should be borne in mind. First of all, as referred to in the study, measures of arms control and disarmament, including confidence-building measures, should be balanced and should not diminish the security of any State. Second, the very different geographical situation of States involves different security needs in the maritime domain. Finally, Norway concurs, therefore, with the view that measures of naval arms limitations and reductions, including confidence-building measures - both nuclear and conventional - must be considered in the overall context of halting and reversing the arms race in general.
