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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERIFICATION IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

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INTRODUCTION

1. On 4 December 1986, the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/86 Q, entitled "Verification in all its aspects", the operative paragraphs of which, inter alia, read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"2. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General containing the views and suggestions of Member States on verification principles, procedures and techniques, and encourages all States that have not already done so to communicate to the Secretary-General, not later than 31 March 1987, their views and suggestions on verification principles as invited by the Assembly in its resolution 40/152 O;

"...

"4. Requests the Disarmament Commission to consider at its 1987 session, in the context of pursuing general and complete disarmament under effective international control, verification in all its aspects, including principles, provisions and techniques to promote the inclusion of adequate verification in arms limitation and disarmament agreements and the role of the United Nations and its Member States in the field of verification, and to report on its deliberations, conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-second session in 1987;

"5. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare for the Disarmament Commission at its substantive session in 1987 a compilation of the views received from Member States on this issue;".

2. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Secretary-General submits herewith the replies received from Argentina, Australia, Japan and Nigeria. Other replies will be issued as addenda. In this connection, it should be noted that the replies received from Member States during 1986 on the subject have already been transmitted to the General Assembly in accordance with its resolution 40/152 O, as contained in documents A/41/422 and Add.1 and 2.

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

ARGENTINA

[Original: Spanish]

[20 March 1987]

1. ~~It is important to recall that verification is considered by the Argentine Government to be an essential ingredient for the full effectiveness of any disarmament agreement.~~

2. In our comments on resolution 40/152 O adopted by the General Assembly at its fortieth session, we stated that certain conditions must necessarily be part of any system of verification, and they included the absence of any discriminatory features, unrestricted and open access to any information obtained, effectiveness and appropriateness of the system to the specific agreement in question, and so on.

3. The Argentine Republic, in the person of the President of the country, is a participant in the Six-Nation Initiative on behalf of Peace and Disarmament, together with the heads of State or Government of India, Greece, Sweden, Mexico and the United Republic of Tanzania.

4. This group held its second summit meeting in August 1986 in Ixtapa, Mexico, and on that occasion issued a document on verification measures, which bore directly on the critical issue of nuclear-weapon testing and set forth a specific offer of assistance in verifying a possible bilateral moratorium as a prelude to a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test-ban treaty, involving a number of steps such as:

(a) Verification of a moratorium in co-operation with the United States and the Soviet Union;

(b) Monitoring of the territories of the United States and the Soviet Union outside the test sites;

(c) Monitoring of the test sites (Nevada, Semipalatinsk, Novaya Zemlya);

(d) Possible inspection of large chemical explosions;

(e) Improvement of the monitoring capability of the members of the Six-Nation Initiative, independently of the United States and the Soviet Union;

(f) Holding of a series of discussions between experts from the six nations and experts from the United States and the Soviet Union.

5. This offer, which was published in full as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/41/518-S/18277) and of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/723, annex II), demonstrates that Argentina, in this instance jointly with the other sponsors of the Six-Nation Initiative, has borne out its views with a concrete proposal seeking to encompass the ideas mentioned above. By so doing, we believe that we have made a valid contribution reaffirming the relevance of the concept of verification as a basic element in confidence-building.

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AUSTRALIA

[Original: English]

[31 March 1987]

1. The Acting Permanent Representative has the honour to advise that the Australian Government considers effective means of verifying compliance to be of central importance to the process of arms control and disarmament. While the negotiation of arms control and disarmament agreements requires a degree of respect and a conviction as to shared interests among the parties, it remains the case that such negotiations - and the agreements that emerge - represent an act of co-operation between potential adversaries dealing with the most sensitive of all issues: national security. Simply to trust an adversary to abide by an arms control or disarmament agreement would not only be foolish, it would represent an abrogation of the States' foremost responsibility - protecting the nation's security.
2. Verification can be considered to perform several functions, but two would seem to be of particular importance.
3. An arms control/disarmament agreement can be described as an exchange in which each party purchases a degree of control over the threat posed by the other at the expense of limiting its own options to reciprocate or counter that threat. An agreement will be concluded when all the parties see a positive benefit/cost ratio and are confident that they can assess that the expected benefits of the agreement do in fact materialize.
4. One central function of verification, therefore, is to monitor the fulfilment of the benefit/cost bargain that motivated the conclusion of the agreement. Clearly, States will insist on arrangements that give them high confidence in their capacity to monitor the implementation of the bargain and to place primary reliance on their national capabilities to monitor compliance with the bargain. It is important to note that establishing an act of non-compliance by another party and, even more, assessing its significance for the nation's security is, in the final analysis, a matter of judgement, and States can be expected to resist reliance on others in making this judgement and determining an appropriate response.
5. In the view of the Australian Government a second vital function of verification is confidence-building. Stated simply, if nations not only comply with an agreement in fact but through their actions demonstrate the importance they attach to reassuring other parties of their compliance, then not only is the desirability of the particular agreement in question enhanced, but a crucial investment is made in nurturing the view that arms control and disarmament agreements can enhance security and that more far-reaching measures can usefully be considered. Conversely, if the experience with verifying compliance with existing agreements is an unhappy one, this can be - and indeed has been - highly destructive of the view that arms control and disarmament agreements have a legitimate place in security policy.

6. The emergence during the 1960s of a panoply of remote-sensing devices (the so-called "national technical means of verification") played an essential role in allowing the early breakthroughs on arms control. While the capabilities of these national technical means of verification have continued to grow, it has been clear for many years that they cannot by themselves support more far-reaching arms control and disarmament agreements and would have to be supplemented by various co-operative measures, such as data exchanges, avoiding as far as possible weapon-designs and modes of deployment that frustrate verification and on-site inspection.

7. The Australian Government believes that this emerging recognition that national technical means alone cannot support a process of increasingly ambitious agreements illustrates the supreme importance to the future of this process of greater openness and transparency. The Australian Government believes that there is a vital difference in terms of confidence-building between information volunteered and information extracted even if, in the latter case, there is an element of co-operation involved.

8. The prospects of new arms control and disarmament agreements will be greatly enhanced if the role of national technical means of verification can become more one of confirming compliance rather than the sole or primary means of establishing compliance. An essential prerequisite for this to occur is for all States to make available reliable and authoritative information and data on their defence posture and evolving military capabilities.

9. Multilateral and international means of verification will become an increasingly important issue in the coming years. One major reason for this is that with the diffusion of industrial and technological capabilities, a number of the priority objectives on the international arms control and disarmament agenda require essentially universal adherence if they are to be effective and durable. This is especially true if the objective is the complete elimination of a particular class of weapons or the total cessation of a particular activity, current examples being, respectively, a chemical weapons convention and a nuclear-test ban.

10. The international non-proliferation régime - and particularly the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards System - suggests the sort of régime that will be needed to ensure compliance with a chemical weapons convention. In those countries where IAEA safeguards are applied the system has proven to be an effective barrier to diversion of nuclear material and/or facilities to non-peaceful purposes. Its intrusive system of verification of non-proliferation undertakings enjoys wide acceptance.

11. In view of the far greater diversity and geographic spread of chemical industries, however, and the goal of a convention that bans the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons, the verification régime for a chemical weapons convention will be much more elaborate. The characteristics of the verification régime currently under consideration for this convention include permanent on-site inspection, systematic international on-site inspections on a routine basis, mandatory on-site challenge inspections and

the provision of data and monitoring of that data. Australia anticipates that the convention will provide for a graded verification régime, with the duration, frequency, intensity and persistence of monitoring varying according to the type and volume of chemicals involved, the characteristics of the chemical industry and the industrial capacity of the States parties to the convention.

12. A further prospective example of international verification is the global seismic network that will be needed to help monitor compliance with a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Australia has called for immediate action to put this network into place.

13. Beyond these specific examples of international verification régimes which derive from the particular character of arms control and disarmament objectives currently on the agenda, there has been a developing interest in international means of verifications as a general principle. The idea of an international satellite monitoring agency proposed by France in 1978 is perhaps the most prominent example.

14. The Australian Government supports the concept of international means of verification as an extension of the principle that, especially in the nuclear age, the issues of war and peace and global stability are the legitimate business of every nation, and that, together with the right to be heard on these issues comes the obligation to play a full role in making possible a more stable and secure world with a minimum level of armaments.

15. A number of the various systems that would constitute an international capability to monitor compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements raise complex political, technical and organizational questions that remain to be thoroughly explored. There is also the considerable cost, particularly if, as noted above, the major Powers are understandably reluctant for the foreseeable future to share their national technical means of verification. While a comprehensive international system to monitor compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements may not, therefore, be within reach in the short or medium term, particular capabilities - such as a global seismic monitoring network - could be acquired in the relatively near future.

JAPAN

[Original: English]

[21 April 1987]

1. Japan fully recognizes the importance of verification measures in ensuring the effectiveness of agreements on arms control and disarmament and engendering confidence among the parties concerned. From this point of view, Japan co-sponsored, at the fortieth and forty-first sessions of the General Assembly, resolutions 40/152 O and 41/86 Q concerning verification, and considers that it should be highly appreciated that these resolutions were both adopted by consensus.

2. In April 1983, Japan presented at the Conference on Disarmament a working paper (CD/379) entitled "Verification of compliance in arms control and disarmament agreements". It was a general study on verification, covering such matters as the basic nature of verification, verification approaches, problems involved in sanctions against the violation of agreement, and the kinds of verification measures. Japan believes that it will prove to be a useful material when the question of "Verification in all its aspects" is discussed at the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, in May this year, and hopes that at that session Member States, giving due consideration to their respective views, will be able to produce a common understanding to the greatest extent possible on various aspects of verification.

3. In order to avoid confusion at the coming session of the Disarmament Commission, upon discussion of this subject, it may be necessary to consider, and agree beforehand on, working guidelines on the matters under discussion. Japan suggests that it may be a useful step to explore to what extent a common understanding can be attained on the following matters:

(a) Definition of "verification". In this connection, terms frequently used together with "verification", such as "inspection" and "intelligence", should be defined and the concepts of such terms adjusted;

(b) Adjustment of the basic ideas concerning the purpose or role of verification;

(c) Systematic listing of matters conceivable as functions of "verification" and citing of instances conceivable as types of "verification".

Verification measures under United States-Soviet arms control agreements and IAEA safeguards under the Non-Proliferation Treaty régime, and the seismic detection network for verification following the prohibition of nuclear tests and various verification measures relating to the banning of chemical weapons, which are now under discussion at the Conference on Disarmament, will provide reference data.

4. The importance of verification in any arms control and disarmament agreement has already been recognized by the international community back in 1978, as evidenced at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (see resolution S-10/2, paras. 31, 91 and 92).

5. Japan considers that it is by no means useless to discuss through the Disarmament Commission's deliberations, in more precise terms, what "adequate verification" or "appropriate verification" actually means, though they are deemed important in general terms; for example, what extent of verification makes it "adequate" or "appropriate"? Provisions for verification, in themselves, may be specifically made in individual arms control or disarmament agreements, according to their respective nature and scope. In the meantime, it is not sufficient only to state that "adequate" or "appropriate" verification is important or necessary. Japan believes that if a study is made, in more specific terms, of the concepts of these terms and if a certain guideline is provided for the future negotiations on the conclusion of agreements, that will mean a step forward, particularly in deepening international understanding on the importance of verification.

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NIGERIA

[Original: English]

[9 April 1987]

1. The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria firmly believes that all States parties to international treaties and instruments in this sphere should actually respect their obligations. Nigeria is aware that the stipulations of certain disarmament agreements, to some of which it is a party, have not been fully complied with by all States parties, but it should like to deal with specific cases of non-compliance on their merit.

2. The Nigerian Government does not, therefore, wish to deal with this important matter in a way that might create any doubt about its conviction that the question of compliance is not an insurmountable obstacle to specific disarmament agreement. (