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### REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

#### Verification in all its aspects

#### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Addendum

#### CONTENTS

#### REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

	<u>Page</u>
United States of America .....	2

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[Original: English]

[2 October 1986]

1. The United States Government welcomes the opportunity afforded by General Assembly resolution 40/152 (0) to offer its views on verification principles, procedures and techniques to promote the inclusion of effective verification in arms limitation and disarmament agreements, and on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification.

2. Nations can seek attainment of national security in different ways. Among them are military programmes designed to meet the threats perceived. Nations also use diplomatic means to reduce, or at least limit, the threats that shape the requirements for such programmes. Agreements on mutual limitations or reductions of armaments, so structured as to add to security and international stability, are one of those means. In entering into such agreements, the parties voluntarily accept what, in effect, are restrictions on their freedom of action in the vital area of national security. It is self-evident that each of them can safely abide by those restrictions only if the other parties are also faithfully fulfilling their corresponding obligations. Non-compliance by one of the parties cannot but have adverse implications for the security of the others. No nation can afford to rely for its security on trust, especially when some - including one of the most powerful - countries maintain closed societies and cloak their military-related activities in a thick veil of secrecy. Also any activity that is deliberately in violation of an arms control agreement is likely to involve a special effort to conceal it. It is essential, therefore, that arms limitation or disarmament agreements provide for arrangements enabling each of the parties to have confidence that every other party is abiding by its commitments. It is such arrangements that the United States understands under the general term "verification".

3. Verification of arms control agreements serves a number of more specific purposes:

(a) Verification serves to build confidence of the individual parties, as well as of the international community at large, in the viability of an arms limitation or disarmament agreement. By providing evidence that the obligations assumed are in fact being fulfilled it can help create a political environment necessary for further progress in arms control;

(b) Verification measures that provide for investigation of ambiguous situations may, in clarifying the facts, reduce tensions and doubts regarding the viability of an agreement;

(c) By increasing the risk of detection and complicating any scheme of evasion, verification helps deter violations of an agreement;

(d) When violations are detected through verification, other parties have the opportunity to assess the effects on their security and to take appropriate and timely action in response.

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4. While verification arrangements are likely to vary in t specifics from case to case, it is the view of the United States that, to b ective, they must all rest on the following fundamental principles:

(a) The nature and extent of the arrangements should be governed by the requirements for determining compliance with the provisions of the agreement in question;

(b) They should be designed in such a way as to provide assurance not only that the agreed limitations or reductions are actually carried out but also that the resulting residual levels of forces or armaments are not exceeded, restructured or redeployed in a manner inconsistent with the agreement;

(c) They should have the capability of detecting covert or other activities contrary to the agreement;

(d) The elaboration of an effective verification system is the joint responsibility of all parties to the negotiations of an agreement;

(e) The specifics of the verification system, including the implementing provisions, should be spelled out in and constitute an integral part of the agreement;

(f) Each party to the agreement bears the responsibility to seek to ensure that the verification provisions are implemented by all parties.

5. Some have argued that verification is an encroachment on national sovereignty. On the contrary, verification measures, like arms control or disarmament measures themselves, are not imposed on States; they are negotiated and accepted by States in the exercise of their sovereign rights. Thus, in the final analysis, willingness of a State to accept effective verification reflects its assessment of the value of the substance and durability of the arms control or disarmament measures envisaged.

6. In resolution 40/94 L, adopted on 12 December 1985 by an overwhelming majority and without any opposing votes, the General Assembly stressed that any violation of agreements on arms limitation and disarmament not only adversely affects the security of States parties but can also create security risks for other States relying on the constraints and commitments stipulated in those agreements, and that any weakening of confidence in such agreements diminishes their contribution to global or regional stability and to further disarmament and arms limitation efforts. It also stated that compliance with arms limitation and disarmament agreements by States parties is, therefore, a matter of interest and concern to the international community. As compliance can be determined only by verification, it follows that, while specific verification arrangements are to be developed and agreed to by the States directly concerned, the very principle that arms limitation and disarmament agreements should be effectively verifiable also serves the interests of the international community at large. The United States is gratified that this fact was generally recognized by the adoption without a vote of General Assembly resolution 40/152 (0). The United States also hopes that the

support for that resolution by States currently engaged in arms limitation and disarmament negotiations was an indication of readiness by all of them to apply that principle in practice and thus promote progress towards agreement.

7. The United States would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Government of Canada for initiating General Assembly resolution 40/152 (0). Continued attention in the United Nations to the essential importance of the subject of verification would be a significant contribution to efforts at enhancing international stability through effective and viable arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

8. The United States believes that, in considering issues relating to verification, Member States will be greatly assisted by the comprehensive study on arms control and disarmament verification submitted to the Secretary-General by the Government of Canada. In addition to providing a thoughtful analysis of the fundamental purpose and importance of verification, the study offers an extensive overview of possible verification procedures and techniques, including those incorporated in existing arms control agreements, as well as those under discussion in ongoing negotiations or proposed but not necessarily generally endorsed elsewhere. While additional ideas for verification procedures and techniques can be expected to emerge over time, the United States finds the catalogue contained in the study quite comprehensive and would not wish to duplicate it here. It does believe it necessary, however, to point out that, as is evident from the extent of the catalogue, the primary obstacle to reaching agreement on effective verification is not lack of the necessary procedures and techniques. The difficulty lies in the fact that some States, while paying lip service to the principle of verification, have been unwilling to accept arrangements that would give that principle truly practical meaning.

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