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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE
IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/42/50.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 3 December 1986, the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/48 entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", the relevant operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"5. Invites the nuclear-weapon States and all other States to render their assistance in the establishment of the zone and at the same time to refrain from any action that runs counter to both the letter and spirit of the present resolution;

"6. Extends its thanks to the Secretary-General for his report containing the views of parties concerned regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East; 1/

"7. Takes note of the above-mentioned report;

"8. Requests those parties that have not yet communicated their views to the Secretary-General to do so;

"9. Welcomes any further comments from those parties that have already communicated their views to the Secretary-General;

"10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution;

"11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-second session the item entitled 'Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East'.

1/ A/41/465 and Add.1."

2. Pursuant to paragraphs 8 and 9 of the resolution, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 5 January 1987, requested all Member States to submit their views and further comments. To date, the Secretary-General has received replies from Bangladesh, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Israel, Oman, Panama, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United States of America. The replies are reproduced in section II of the present report.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BANGLADESH

[Original: English]

[4 May 1987]

Banladesh as a matter of policy supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world and believes that the establishment of such zones would help to achieve the goal of general and complete disarmament. Early implementation of such resolutions would help in the creation of a conducive atmosphere for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem.

DEMOCRATIC YEMEN

[Original: Arabic]

[24 March 1987]

1. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen has supported the efforts made by the United Nations for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a step along the path to general and complete disarmament under effective international control and not as a substitute for this ultimate goal to which we hope disarmament efforts will lead.

2. On the basis of this position, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen supported General Assembly resolution 41/48 concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as an extension of its support for all previous General Assembly resolutions on the same subject. It also supported Security Council resolution 487 (1981). This support on the part of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen is a clear reflection of its position and its efforts to spare this and other regions the hazards of nuclear weapons and nuclear destruction, to ease the tension in the region and to strengthen international peace and security. This position found concrete expression through ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the deposit of the instruments of ratification on 1 June 1979.

3. The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen's support for General Assembly resolution 41/48 and all resolutions relating to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is based on major fundamental steps of an urgent and practical nature set forth in those resolutions for the attainment of this objective, the most important of which are as follows:

(a) Inviting the parties concerned to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

(b) Calling upon all the parties concerned to place all their nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards;

(c) Declaring that it is essential that all parties concerned refrain from developing, producing, testing or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons or permitting the stationing on their territories, or territories under their control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices.

4. In the light of the reports concerning Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, which were confirmed by the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research submitted to the fortieth session of the General Assembly and earlier by the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Israeli nuclear armament (A/36/431), the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen believes that the first step towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East would be to rid the region of nuclear weapons and to secure Israel's compliance with the basic conditions laid down in United Nations resolutions and constantly reiterated, namely, Israel's adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the placing of all its nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards and its abstention from developing, producing, testing or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons and from permitting the stationing on its territory, or territories under its control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices.

5. Unless the region is made nuclear-weapon-free and assurances are officially issued by IAEA in this regard, efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East will continue to come up against a reality very remote from the achievement of this goal.

IRAQ

[Original: Arabic]

[10 April 1987]

1. The Republic of Iraq has persistently been an active participant in all initiatives aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. This position has been reiterated on numerous occasions and has been reflected in a whole series of actions taken by Iraq for the achievement of that goal. Iraq has supported all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations on this subject, and we affirm once again our earlier position set forth in document A/40/422/Add.1. We also stress the importance of ensuring that the region is first rid of existing nuclear weapons, through consent to measures of international verification of all nuclear installations in the region, whether through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or through adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Believing in the importance of the role of IAEA and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the world disarmament process, Iraq has taken speedy practical steps to place its nuclear installations under IAEA supervision and to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In the light of these facts, we emphasize

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once again that all nuclear installations in the region are subject to IAEA supervision except for the Israeli nuclear installations, which have large capabilities and which still constitute an obstacle to verification of the region's being entirely free of nuclear weapons.

2. Since the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of resolution 39/54, which requests all countries of the region to transmit their views to the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, Israel has not taken any positive step to implement this resolution or subsequent resolutions. On the contrary, Israel has persisted in pursuing a nuclear policy that has undermined all attempts made to achieve the goal. This policy is reflected in all the actions reported by international official and media sources. One such report was carried by The Times of London on 5 October 1986, under the headline "Secrets of the Israeli nuclear arsenal". On the basis of information, supported by photographs and data, furnished by the Israeli Mordechai Vanunu, who worked for a long time at the Dimona reactor, the newspaper stated that the Israeli Dimona reactor had the technical capacity to produce between 10 and 40 kilograms of plutonium a year and that this amount was sufficient for the manufacture of 10 atomic bombs. The nuclear weapons expert and nuclear scientist Theodore Taylor, said, after studying the data and photographs supplied by Vanunu that there could not be the slightest doubt that Israel possessed nuclear weapons and had had them for at least the past decade. The nuclear physicist Frank Barnaby also confirmed this. In the face of this information, it becomes impossible to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East unless the Israeli nuclear arsenal is removed and effective international supervision is ensured in order to verify that there are no nuclear weapons in the region.

3. Accordingly, Iraq believes that the international community and the United Nations must perform their duty by investigating the information and data released concerning Israeli nuclear weapons and by endeavouring to make Israel comply with the international resolutions adopted in this regard and that they must provide an opportunity for international supervision to ascertain what is going on inside Israeli nuclear installations and for Israel to uphold its credibility regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

ISRAEL

[Original: English]

[1 May 1987]

The Government of Israel reiterates its views as communicated to the Secretary-General in its letters dated 13 June 1985 (A/40/383) and 6 May 1986 (see A/41/465).

OMAN

[Original: Arabic]

[20 February 1987]

1. The Sultanate of Oman, like the other States of the world that are Members of the international Organization, shares the views of all peace-loving countries and is aware of the increasing importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. While it supports the concept of making the region of the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone of peace, it wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the fact that the increase in Israel's nuclear capabilities and Israel's refusal to place its nuclear installations under international supervision constitute a genuine threat to security in the region of the Middle East and hinder the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

2. The Sultanate, realizing the damage and instability that this may cause in the region, stresses the need for the redoubling of United Nations efforts and believes that the international community is called upon today to give serious consideration to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which would greatly strengthen international peace and security.

PANAMA

[Original: Spanish]

[17 June 1987]

1. Peace is more than the absence of war, the destructive and lethal potential of the arsenals of weapons which have been accumulated in the world in the nuclear era constitute a real threat to the survival of mankind, hence the international obligation to combine efforts in order to eliminate this threat.

2. The Government of the Republic of Panama, in international forums, has endorsed the legitimate right of States to construct plants for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and, in pursuance of that right, to have free access to technology without restrictions, exclusions, conditions or political reprisals. However, in order to prevent the use of nuclear energy for military purposes, the monitoring system of the International Atomic Energy Agency must be improved, the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be universally signed and ratified, and nuclear arsenals must ultimately be dismantled.

3. Notwithstanding the foregoing, we cannot fail to take into account the right of all States to protect their security, independence and territorial integrity, although the exercise of that right must not constitute a threat to the security of other States. In accordance with that principle, the Government of the Republic of Panama will support all efforts of the international community to secure the denuclearization of the world. It is necessary to stop the arms race, which is

absorbing financial resources that are vital for the developing countries and is endangering international peace and security, and to proceed immediately to general and complete disarmament within a framework of watchful supervision exercised by the verification machinery of the United Nations.

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

(Original: Russian)

[18 May 1987]

1. The Ukrainian SSR, on the basis of its fundamental policy in favour of strengthening peace and international security and eliminating the threat of nuclear war, believes that an important contribution to achieving this goal may be made by curbing the nuclear arms race and strengthening the régime of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, through, inter alia, the establishing of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. A certain amount of favourable experience has already been accumulated in proclaiming and maintaining such zones - in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco), and in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean (Rarotonga Treaty) - and work is under way on the establishment of nuclear-free zones in other areas.
2. It should be emphasized that there is particular significance in granting non-nuclear-weapon status to the Middle East in view of the fact that this region is a constant source of military tension where the opposing sides have high concentrations of armed forces.
3. A source of instability in the Middle East is the aggressive policy which is being pursued by Israel with the connivance of the United States against neighbouring countries of the region. This policy is clearly manifested in Israel's continuing raids against Lebanon and its armed aggression against peaceful nuclear installations in Iraq, an act which the General Assembly termed a violation of the Charter of the United Nations.
4. In these circumstances particular concern is engendered by Israel's nuclear aspirations, which have been confirmed by press reports, and also by the conclusions of United Nations studies on the question of Israel's nuclear weapons to the effect that Israel already has the technical capability to produce nuclear weapons and the means of delivering such weapons. It is alarming that Israel refuses to state clearly that it does not possess such weapons and to assume the obligation not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons.
5. The tension in the eastern and southern Mediterranean is also exacerbated by the constant show of force by naval groupings, the aggressive actions carried out by the United States against Libya and the policy of strong-arm pressure against countries of the region. Those Western countries which engage in military and nuclear co-operation with Israel and provide protection and support to their strategic ally, share responsibility for Israel's aggressive policy.

6. In this respect the situation in the Middle East is very similar to that in southern Africa, where, with the support of a number of Western countries, especially the United States, the racist régime of South Africa is also pursuing a policy of repression, State terrorism, aggression and destabilization of neighbouring countries and is striving to acquire nuclear weapons, thereby preventing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

7. The Ukrainian SSR fully supports the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and is in favour of proceeding to concrete actions to achieve it. An important step in this direction would be for all countries of the region which have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and also for all nuclear activities of these States to be placed under IAEA safeguards.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]

[9 April 1987]

1. The Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to General Assembly resolution 41/48 concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, has the honour to confirm the USSR's position of principle regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region, which was set forth in the Permanent Mission's note No. 512/H of 10 July 1985.

2. The Permanent Mission of the USSR to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[Original: English]

[7 May 1987]

1. The United States Government refers to General Assembly resolution 41/48 and wishes to offer its view on the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

2. For four decades the United States has supported international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As President Reagan has stated, "The United States will seek to prevent the spread of nuclear explosives to additional countries as a fundamental national security and foreign policy objective." This objective is shared by the overwhelming majority of States. In order to strengthen the barriers to nuclear-weapon proliferation, the United States advocates universal

adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which currently has more than 130 parties.

3. The United States has certain well-known criteria for judging the appropriateness and effectiveness of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an additional means of curbing nuclear-weapon proliferation. Among these criteria is the principle that the establishment of the zone should not disturb existing security arrangements to the detriment of regional and international security. The United States believes that steps to provide all the States in the Middle East with effective reassurance that the nuclear activities of their neighbours are for peaceful, non-explosive purposes only, would contribute to greater stability in this part of the world. Hence, in joining the consensus on General Assembly resolution 41/48, the United States expressed its support for the principle of establishing, under appropriate conditions, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

4. In this context, it should also be noted that the nuclear facilities of nations at peace are protected by the provisions of the United Nations Charter concerning the use of force; and that when nations are engaged in active hostilities, long-standing laws and customs of war prohibit attacks against facilities which are not legitimate military objectives, as well as attacks which would cause disproportionate civilian casualties. The United States believes that States should comply with existing international obligations.
