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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

International arms transfers

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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* A/44/150.

BULGARIA

[Original: Russian]

[6 September 1989]

1. Bulgaria has always been convinced that the expansion of uncontrolled international trade in arms carries with it a risk of conflict situations arising and of existing regional conflicts becoming intensified. In reviewing the question of international arms transfers, particular attention should be paid to their known and also their potential negative effects in regions where tension and regional conflicts threaten international peace and security as well as the national security of States. The uncontrolled acquisition of arms in quantities exceeding the reasonable requirements for national security purposes undoubtedly leads to harmful consequences for the processes of peaceful social and economic development of all peoples.

2. Bulgaria shares the basic ideas and proposals put forward in resolution 43/75 I, and voted for its adoption. At the same time, it considers that the results of the voting (110 in favour, 1 against and 38 abstentions) underline the accuracy of the judgement contained in the resolution itself "that arms transfers in all their aspects deserve serious consideration by the international community".

3. The Bulgarian Government wishes to emphasize that in each specific case a distinction must be drawn between the aggressors and the victims of aggressive policy. In this sense, limitations on international arms transfers must not infringe upon the inalienable rights of peoples to self-determination and free social choice.

4. In Bulgaria's view, the measures proposed in resolution 43/75 I, "International arms transfers", with a view to solving the problems in this area are interesting. More specifically, it considers worthy of attention the proposals concerning the examination by Member States of the ways and means of strengthening their national systems of control and vigilance concerning production and transport through their territory of arms, as well as those on examination on a regional basis of ways and means of refraining from acquiring arms additional to those needed for reasonable national security requirements, which may lead to uncertainty and instability in a region, and on the conclusion by exporting and importing States of agreements providing for more openness and transparency with regard to world-wide arms transfers.

5. The proposals concerning a study on the establishment of a universal and non-discriminatory basis of a United Nations system for supplying Member States with information on arms transfers merit further consideration. The efforts made by the Secretary-General in implementation of resolution 42/75 I, within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign, to compile and disseminate information concerning the question of arms transfers and their consequences for international peace and security would also be useful in this respect.

6. The Government of Bulgaria is firmly convinced that international arms transfers can and must be limited and placed under reliable political control. Transfers of the most up-to-date conventional weapons and the latest military technologies are particularly likely to have negative consequences for international peace and security. The reports of the risk of uncontrolled spread of highly accurate missile technology give grounds for particular concern in this respect. Together with the real threat of the proliferation of chemical weapons, this may prove to be a particularly destabilizing factor, especially in some of the potentially most explosive regions of the world.

7. Apart from study of the reasons for and mechanisms of international arms transfers, the most reliable way of substantially limiting them and reducing their negative consequences is through efforts directed towards the consistent application of the principles of the new political thinking. Regional conflicts are the major causative factor behind international arms transfers, and the positive experience of recent years has demonstrated convincingly that they can be solved by political, not by military, means.

8. Consistent application of the principle of reasonable sufficiency for defence and adjustment of the military structure of States to reflect military doctrines of a strictly defensive nature, which in practice means the inability to carry out a surprise attack or engage in large-scale offensive operations, will lead to a situation in which international arms transfers in their current form will most probably disappear. The political settlement of disputes and the constant enhancement of openness, transparency, predictability and confidence in the sphere of security must replace mutual mistrust. If this happens, the human and material resources expended as a result of regional conflicts and the arms transfers to which they give rise will be able to contribute to the peaceful economic and social development of countries.
