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General and complete disarmament: missiles

Missiles

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/59/50 and Corr.1 (and 2 and 3 for Arabic).

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 58/37 of 8 December 2003, entitled "Missiles", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further seek the views of Member States on the report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.
2. By a note verbale dated 27 February 2004, Member States were invited to communicate their views on the issue. Replies were received from Argentina, China, Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), Lebanon, Mexico and Venezuela, and are reproduced in section II below. Any replies received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Member States

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[4 May 2004]

1. With regard to operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 58/37, entitled "Missiles", the Government of Argentina reiterates the remarks made at the previous session in connection with the report of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles, prepared in 2000.
2. Concerning the request addressed to the Secretary-General to prepare a report to be submitted to the General Assembly under the item entitled "Missiles" at its fifty-ninth session, the Government of Argentina hopes that the report will indicate the need for a broad missile non-proliferation regime containing four areas:
 - (a) Legal and institutional aspects: this implies the negotiation of a binding convention including mechanisms of verification within the United Nations system;
 - (b) Cooperation to stimulate services for peaceful uses of space;
 - (c) Prohibitions against:
 - (i) The development, production and marketing of missiles with global and intermediate ranges;
 - (ii) Launch tests;
 - (d) The establishment of missile-free zones.
3. The basis of the negotiation of a regimen comprising missiles in all their aspects must be universal and non-discriminatory. The related preparatory process must call not only for the full participation of all States Members of the United Nations, but also the inclusion of all the multilateral and bilateral instrumentalities (existing or having existed within or outside the United Nations system) that have contributed to missile non-proliferation (inter alia, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC), the Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles in all their aspects (UNEG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) and the START 1 Treaty). All those experiments have contributed in various ways to non-

proliferation, though none of them has had or has the capacity to generate policies and related programmes that cover the question of missiles in all their aspects.

4. This position corresponds to a long-range vision that can develop only in the context of the United Nations and within the framework of a global conference on missiles in all their aspects, the preparatory process for which should be launched in 2007.

5. Lastly, our country would like to turn to account the efforts made by the international community through the adoption of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC)). It is hoped that the Panel of Experts will consider among its recommendations the need to call for the universalization of that mechanism.

China

[Original: Chinese/English]
[24 May 2004]

1. Currently, the issue of missiles in all its aspects, particularly the problem of proliferation of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile-related technology, has increasingly aroused broad attention and concern among the international community. However, so far there is no universally accepted international legal instrument or authoritative norm to address this issue. Therefore, the adoption of the resolution entitled "Missiles" by the United Nations General Assembly and the establishment of the Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles thereunder are of great importance.

2. China supports an important role for the United Nations in addressing the issue of missiles. At the invitation of the United Nations Secretary-General, China named an expert to the Panel of Governmental Experts, who took part in its work actively and constructively, and contributed to the completion of the first report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects in the history of the United Nations.

3. China holds that the report of the Panel has by and large reflected all parties' concerns, views and suggestions on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. The report is relatively objective, comprehensive and balanced. China supports in particular the following conclusions drawn in the report: that the issue of missiles should be addressed in connection with the global and regional security situation, and that the Panel has noted the role of the United Nations in the field of missiles, etc. We appreciate the arduous efforts made by the Governmental Experts in this regard. At the same time, we also regretfully notice that the Panel report fails to put forward any substantial and feasible proposals on how to deal with the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/37, the United Nations has again established a Panel of Governmental Experts to discuss the issue of missiles in all its aspects. China hopes that, on the basis of the previous work, the Panel could further explore the issue of missiles in all its aspects in a comprehensive and balanced manner, and bring forward some substantial proposals and measures.

5. China would like to reiterate that, given its complex and sensitive nature, the issue of missiles should be properly addressed in a comprehensive, balanced, non-

discriminatory and step-by-step approach within the framework of the United Nations on the premise of ensuring no diminution of any State's security, fully reflecting all parties' positions and concerns, and comprehensively considering global strategic stability and regional security circumstances. China is willing to make unremitting efforts and due contributions to this end.

Ireland (on behalf of the European Union)

[Original: English]

[25 June 2004]

1. At the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the States members of the European Union aligned themselves with the consensus on Assembly resolution 58/37, entitled "Missiles".
2. The States members of the European Union hereby wish to provide the following common reply to paragraph 3 of the resolution, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a Panel of Governmental Experts to be established in 2004 on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects and to submit a report for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.
3. As emphasized in the European Union's Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, adopted at the European Council in December 2003, the European Union stresses that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, such as ballistic missiles, are a growing threat to international peace and security. Specifically, development by several countries of concern of ballistic programmes, of autonomous capacity in the production of medium- and long-range missiles, as well as cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles are a growing cause of concern.
4. While the international treaty regimes and export controls arrangements have slowed the spread of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, a number of States have sought or are seeking to develop such weapons. The risk that terrorists will acquire chemical, biological, radiological or fissile materials and their means of delivery adds a new critical dimension to this threat.
5. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls, as well as to addressing the problems of regional instability and insecurity, and the situations of conflict which may lie behind many ballistic missile programmes. At the same time, the European Union stresses that, in addition, a global, multilateral approach to the problem is necessary. In this regard, the European Union welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).
6. The European Union considers that the establishment of globally accepted rules and practices to support ballistic missiles non-proliferation is essential and urgent. Therefore, the European Union strongly supported and participated in developing and launching in The Hague in November 2002, of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. The Code is an important tool against the growing proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. The Code establishes fundamental principles where previously

there were none and represents a crucial step towards a possible multilateral arrangement to prevent ballistic missiles proliferation.

7. Consequently, the European Union attaches great importance to the Code's universalization and is actively engaged in seeking to have it adopted by as many States as possible. Since its launch, the number of countries adhering to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation has grown considerably: today at least 114 countries adhere to it. In particular, the universalization and reinforcement of the Code is one of the priorities for the European Union diplomatic action set out by the Council Common Position of 17 November 2003, on the universalization and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery. The European Union will continue to work to convince as many countries as possible to subscribe to it, especially those with ballistic missile capabilities; work together with other subscribing States to develop further and implement the Code, in particular the confidence-building measures provided for in the Code; and promote, where possible and appropriate, a closer relationship between the Code and the United Nations system.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]

[27 May 2004]

With reference to note DDA/21-2004/MISL of 27 February 2004, Lebanon reaffirms the importance of the role of the United Nations in the field of arms regulation and disarmament, realizes the need to promote peace and security, expresses its support for the international efforts to combat the development and stockpiling of all types of weapons, particularly missiles, by seeking realistic options involving all parties to address this issue and, being convinced of the need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach towards missiles, emphasizes that the complexities involved in considering the issue of missiles in the conventional context must be addressed, it being understood that Lebanon neither manufactures nor possesses such missiles.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

[13 May 2004]

1. Mexico maintains its full support for the work being done on missiles within the United Nations framework, for it is convinced of the need to examine the subject within a balanced, non-discriminatory perspective that takes all aspects into account, in an inclusive, multilateral exercise that will make it possible to adopt legally binding measures to prohibit the use of missiles for military purposes.

2. Mexico views the report prepared by the Panel of Governmental Experts established by the Secretary-General under General Assembly resolution 55/33 A, of 20 November 2000, as a positive step in the examination of the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

3. Mexico encourages the governmental experts, who will be meeting throughout the first half of 2004 for the purpose of continuing their study of the question, to identify courses of action to be followed in the missile field, especially with regard to missiles having the capacity to transport nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; dual-use technologies and potential trust- and transparency-promoting measures to be adopted in that regard; and the role of the United Nations in this area. All these aspects should be included in a report which, this time, should incorporate specific recommendations.

4. The Government of Mexico considers that the essential aspects to be borne in mind include the need for inventories of existing missiles and the importance of international missile transfers being secure, so as to prevent any diversion for non-peaceful purposes.

5. It is a matter of concern that in the current international context, in which terrorist acts have taken place, the ground-to-air and air-to-air missile industries are gaining new momentum as peaceful nations that did not traditionally acquire this type of weaponry begin to add it to their military or civilian arsenals as an element of deterrence for the security and defence of their strategic installations. It is therefore highly important to ensure that missile acquisition is balanced and non-discriminatory and serves as a contributing factor, not a threat, to international, regional and subregional peace and security.

Venezuela

[Original: Spanish]
[18 May 2004]

The Government of the Republic of Venezuela considers the question of missiles a fundamental topic on the multilateral disarmament agenda of the United Nations and therefore supports any related initiative to promote the consolidation of peace worldwide in accordance with the principles of international law. The question of missiles is directly related to various aspects of the international disarmament regime, from nuclear to biological, chemical and bacteriological weapons. The regulation, control and non-proliferation of such weapons are consequently essential for guaranteeing global stability, and in this regard countries that manufacture such weapons have a primordial role to play. The Government of Venezuela considers that in order to bring about a safer and more peaceful world it is essential to strengthen the disarmament regime with regard to missiles and related areas. It therefore supports the work being carried out both by the Secretary-General and by the Organization's Department for Disarmament Affairs.
