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Item 62 of the preliminary list*

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

SECURITY COUNCIL

Forty-third year

Letter dated 16 June 1988 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring the following to your attention.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, reminding the United Nations of the provisions of paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 612 (1988) of 9 May 1988, once again reiterates its strong dismay at the failure of the United Nations to respond to Iranian requests for the dispatch of a team of experts to investigate the resumption of Iraqi use of chemical weapons in Marivan, Sardasht and Western Azarbaijan on 17 and 18 May 1988. These manifestations of the universally condemned Iraqi policy of resort to chemical warfare were in clear violation of paragraph 3 of resolution 612 (1988) which resulted in the martyrdom and injury of more than 537 people. My delegation brought detailed information with regard to these uses of chemical weapons by Iraq to the attention of the United Nations in its letters dated 19 and 25 May 1988 (S/19892 and S/19902 respectively).

Based on unanimously adopted resolution 612 (1988) - the first binding United Nations resolution devoted to prohibition of the use of chemical weapons - the Security Council has been duty-bound to take practical measures in order to implement the resolution in accordance with paragraph 5, which reads:

Decides to remain seized of the matter and expresses its determination to review the implementation of this resolution.

* A/43/50.

Regrettably - and despite the precedent of previous cases when the United Nations had responded to Iranian complaints by dispatching teams of experts - we are yet to witness any reaction from the United Nations vis-à-vis Iraqi resort to chemical weapons which took place only days following the adoption of resolution 612 (1988). The obligation of the United Nations to take effective measures is not only based on the decision of the Council in its resolution 612 (1988), but also emanates from General Assembly resolution 42/37 C which mandates the Secretary-General to investigate reports of the use of chemical weapons and inform all Member States of his findings.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the opinion that procrastination of the Security Council and the Secretariat has given the Iraqi régime the audacity to continue and escalate its criminal use of chemical weapons - most recently during the past four days - further eroding the authority of Geneva Protocol of 1925 and resolution 612 (1988). It is evident that the indifference of these United Nations organs is in serious disregard for the serious concerns about escalation in the use of chemical weapons being expressed by most delegations in the course of the third special session on disarmament.

Although most members of the Security Council have declared their readiness to implement resolution 612 (1988) and to take strong and effective preventive measures vis-à-vis Iraqi use of chemical weapons, certain members of the Council, motivated by their antagonism towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, are trying to prevent the implementation of this resolution by converting this principle of international humanitarian law into a political bargaining tool. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly expects that efforts be made by all pertinent bodies to prevent such political manipulations from creating obstacles for adoption of effective preventive and punitive measures against the use of chemical weapons by Iraq, which has shamelessly disregarded the most basic norms of international humanitarian law as well as Security Council resolution 612 (1988).

It is evident that further delay in dispatching the team of experts, particularly when the special session on disarmament is seriously concerned with the issue, would clearly illustrate the lack of seriousness on the part of the Security Council and the absence of co-ordination between different United Nations organs.

It is also clear that this delay, along with the most recent resorts to chemical warfare by Iraq - the details of which will be transmitted to Your Excellency as soon as possible - not only will cause relative disappearance of evidence of the latest Iraqi crimes, but also will erode the authority and credibility of international instruments, gradually decreasing the abhorrence of these horrifying weapons.