Fortieth session
Item 52 of the provisional agenda*

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

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 2
II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS .............................................................. 3
   Egypt ............................................................................................................................. 3
   France .......................................................................................................................... 5
   Iraq ............................................................................................................................... 6
   Israel ............................................................................................................................. 6
   Oman ............................................................................................................................ 7
   Qatar ............................................................................................................................. 7
   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ....................................................................... 7

* A/40/150.
1. On 12 December 1984, the General Assembly adopted resolution 39/54, the operative part of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Urges all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and, as a means of promoting this objective, invites the countries concerned to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

"2. Calls upon all countries of the region that have not done so, pending the establishment of the zone, to agree to place all their nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

"3. Invites those countries, pending the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, to declare their support for establishing such a zone, consistent with the relevant paragraph of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, and to deposit those declarations with the Security Council;

"4. Further invites those countries, pending the establishment of the zone, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing on their territories, or territories under their control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices;

"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. Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of all concerned parties regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East;

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

"8. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fortieth session the item entitled 'Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East'."
2. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of the resolution, the Secretary-General has to date received replies from Egypt, France, Iraq, Israel, Oman, Qatar and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which are reproduced in section II of the present report.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

EGYPT

[Original: Arabic]

[July 1985]

1. The Arab Republic of Egypt considers that disarmament, and nuclear disarmament in particular, is an urgent and pressing issue of extreme importance, inasmuch as the nuclear threat constitutes the greatest danger to the international community and the current international order. It considers also that the primary responsibility for alleviating the acuteness of this danger lies with the nuclear-weapon States, particularly the two super-Powers. Nevertheless, the nature and gravity of this threat make it incumbent upon all members of the international community to work together to face up to it, inasmuch as it is a world problem that cannot be eliminated completely save through close international co-operation.

2. Since Egypt believes that the achievement of nuclear disarmament requires a comprehensive approach, it has a firm belief in the need for non-nuclear-weapon States to undertake among themselves the necessary efforts to prevail upon the international community to move towards the attainment of this goal by preventing the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and the transfer of the nuclear-arms race to new regions of the world. This calls for the adoption of regional measures and arrangements, including the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the various parts of the world.

3. In this connection, the States of Latin America took the initiative, in 1967, of establishing the first populated zone free from nuclear weapons, and the international community adopted this approach in many resolutions and studies adopted by the United Nations, including the 1975 Group of Experts for the Study of the Question of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978. These resolutions and studies emphasized the following two major points:

   (a) The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements agreed upon by the parties is regarded as an important disarmament measure;

   (b) There must be due consideration for the special nature of each zone during the various phases of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

/...
4. On the basis of the above, Egypt has, since 1974, striven for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and has worked through the General Assembly for the development of this concept and its passage through various phases. Special attention should be drawn to General Assembly resolution 35/147 of 12 December 1980, which was adopted, for the first time, by consensus, and resolution 39/54 of 12 December 1984, which recalled the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in previous years, particularly with regard to the importance of adhering to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. States were further invited to declare their support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and to deposit those declarations with the Security Council.

5. Resolution 39/54 also stressed the importance of the role of the United Nations in the establishment of the zone. Indeed, it advanced the topic to a new phase, when it requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of all concerned parties regarding the establishment of the zone.

6. Egypt considers that this phase calls for concentration on the following:

   (a) The requirement that no measures or steps be taken that might impede the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East; the devolving upon both the nuclear-weapon States and the States concerned with the establishment of the zone of essential obligations in this regard, foremost among them commitment to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons or acquisition thereof;

   (b) The taking of steps to encourage or facilitate the establishment of the zone, such as prompt accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by all those who have not yet acceded to it, the application of the comprehensive safeguards régime to nuclear activities and a study of the question of an absolute undertaking not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

7. Egypt believes in the importance of the role of the United Nations in all phases, particularly with regard to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, on the basis of its primary responsibilities in the field of disarmament under Articles 11 and 26 of the United Nations Charter.

8. It believes further that the United Nations offers an appropriate and suitable forum for the submission of detailed proposals and positions concerning the establishment of the zone and for reaching agreement by the concerned parties on the relevant measures. Moreover, it is within the capacity of the United Nations to play an effective role in providing the necessary legal and technical expertise, in order to enable the concerned parties to arrive at arrangements relating to the zone. In addition, the United Nations has a special status that allows it to participate in the implementational and concluding steps and measures for the establishment of the zone. Egypt feels that, if the United Nations had responsibilities and a major role to play with regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the importance of its role and its responsibilities would be increased in relation to the region of the Middle East, in view of the nature, situation and special distinctive circumstances of the region.

/...
9. In the implementation of General Assembly resolution 39/54, Egypt accords particular attention to the role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and deems it necessary that he undertake during the forthcoming phase, specific actions directed at bringing about the necessary practical steps for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. His first step in this direction might be to seek the views of the concerned parties on the various elements relating to the establishment of the zone.

10. Egypt believes that the most important of these elements are as follows:

(a) The geographical scope of the region

Egypt considers it important that all concerned parties should belong to the region and should comprise, as a minimum, the Arab States, Israel and Iran;

(b) Scope of prohibition

This requires the definition of activities to be prohibited within the zone so as to achieve the goal of its establishment as a zone completely free of nuclear weapons and avert the dangers of an arms race and nuclear conflicts;

(c) Safeguards régime for the zone

That requires an investigation of the nature of the safeguards régime to be applied to the zone. Egypt feels that it is important to rely on the safeguards régime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as applied to the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

11. In conclusion, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt wishes to stress the utmost priority which it accords to the realization of the measures and arrangements aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and the tremendous responsibility devolving upon all members of the international community, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, in the task of sparing the world the horrors of nuclear destruction and channeling the limited resources to the prosperity of the peoples and the future of new generations.

FRANCE

[Original: French]

[8 August 1985]

1. In December 1984, France joined the consensus reached on resolution 39/54, as it had done the previous year on resolution 38/64.

2. France has, as it stated at the two special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament in May 1978 and June 1982, adopted a position of principle which is favourable to the establishment of nuclear-free zones provided that:
(a) All States in the zone agree among themselves to negotiate its practical details;

(b) Due account is taken of the special characteristics of the zone;

(c) The establishment of such a zone does not violate accepted international principles and, in particular, does not interfere with free movement in international airspace and international waters.

3. These principles were, for that matter, acknowledged by the international community in its adoption, by consensus, of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament (paras. 60, 61 and 62).

4. In declaring itself, at the United Nations, in favour of the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, France feels that such a zone might be of some value from the point of view of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region.

5. It should nevertheless be noted that, as the sponsors of the plan have themselves pointed out, there still remain today certain difficulties in the way of the establishment of such a zone.

IRAQ

[Original: Arabic]

[30 April 1985]

1. It should be taken into consideration that the Zionist entity possesses a stockpile of nuclear weapons, and this is an important factor hindering the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

2. This entity must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and must place all of its nuclear facilities under international supervision, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

3. Armed attack against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes is tantamount to an attack with nuclear weapons and the international community is, accordingly, required to take effective measures to prevent such an occurrence or the threat to use force in this field.

ISRAEL

[Original: English]

[13 June 1985]

See document A/40/383.
OMAN

[Original: Arabic]

The Sultanate of Oman, proceeding from its belief in the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, has endorsed all United Nations initiatives and resolutions in that connection as a step towards general and complete nuclear disarmament. The Sultanate of Oman sees no incompatibility between that and the rights of the States of the region to acquire nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

QATAR

[Original: English]

[23 July 1985]

1. The Government of the State of Qatar wholeheartedly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and is prepared to participate in any practical step towards the realization of this goal which has always been its declared policy.

2. The Government of the State of Qatar regrets that Israel, which alone has a nuclear capability in the region, has systematically opposed all efforts in this respect and has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This attitude does not only frustrate the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but has ominous implications for the cause of peace in the region and for world peace and security in general.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

[Original: Russian]

[10 July 1985]

1. The Soviet Union believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world would represent a substantial contribution to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and reducing the threat of nuclear war. It would help to curb the nuclear-arms race and strengthen peace and international security.

2. Implementing the proposals by various States for nuclear-weapon-free zones is of particular urgency now at a time when there has been a sharp intensification of activities by the militarist forces, which have set themselves the goal of further building up nuclear-weapon arsenals, extending the arms race into outer space and undermining existing international agreements on arms limitation.
3. The problem of granting nuclear-weapon-free status to particular areas of the globe is important in itself and especially relevant for the Middle East, where there is a substantial concentration of armed forces and a continuing danger of war. It is not difficult to imagine what serious consequences for peace both there and at the international level would follow from the possession of nuclear weapons by one of the States in that region. The further escalation of tension in the eastern Mediterranean and the aggressive policy conducted by Israel with the encouragement of the United States make it imperative to adopt urgent measures leading to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

4. The States Members of the United Nations are fully justified in expressing serious concern about the nuclear aspirations of Israel, which does not conceal its intention of acquiring nuclear weapons to establish its supremacy throughout the Middle East region. Thus, the study on Israeli nuclear armament prepared as early as 1981 by the United Nations definitively concluded that Israel has the technical capability to produce nuclear weapons and the means of delivering such weapons against targets in the region. The danger of the situation is aggravated by the fact that Israel persists in refusing to make clear declarations that it does not possess nuclear weapons and that it has no intention of acquiring such weapons. It ignores the decisions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency calling upon Israel to undertake not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons.

5. The General Assembly described Israel's armed aggression against the peaceful nuclear installations in Iraq as a violation of the United Nations Charter endangering peace and security in the region of the Middle East.

6. Responsibility for Israel's policy and actions lies entirely with those who encourage and support their "strategic partner".

7. The Soviet Union believes that the time has come to give practical effect to the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It is important for all States of the region to demonstrate a serious and responsible approach and to take concrete steps without delay for the promotion of that proposal. The achievement of that objective would be helped considerably by the adherence of all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and by the prevention of stationing of nuclear weapons on their territory or on territories under their control.

8. The creation of favourable conditions for granting nuclear-weapon-free status to the Middle East would also be facilitated by steps on the part of the States in that region to place all their nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

9. At the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the Soviet Union supported resolution 39/54 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. That resolution urges all parties concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal on that question and 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 would run counter to both the letter and spirit of the resolution.
10. It is perfectly clear that actions such as concentrating groups of military vessels in a show of force near the shores of Middle Eastern countries and pursuing collaboration with Israel in the nuclear field are contrary to the provisions of the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution and to other decisions taken by organs of the United Nations.

11. For its part, the Soviet Union confirms its readiness to contribute in every possible way to the implementation of the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to co-operate most closely in achieving that important goal with all interested States.