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COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The item entitled "Comprehensive system of international peace and security" was originally included on the agenda of the forty-first session of the General Assembly at the request of a number of Member States (A/41/191). At that session, the Assembly decided to continue consideration of this item at its forty-second session (resolution 41/92 of 4 December 1986).
2. At its forty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/93 of 7 December 1987, under paragraph 13 of which it called upon international and national non-governmental organisations and political and public figures in all countries to make their positive contributions to the development of a productive and meaningful international dialogue on the ways and means of promoting comprehensive security based on the Charter of the United Nations and within the United Nations framework. By paragraph 14 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to explore ways and means of organising an exchange of views on the subject among Member States and to report to the Assembly at its forty-third session.
3. In discharging such responsibilities, and in accordance with existing practice, the Secretary-General is sometimes requested by the General Assembly to carry out studies and present reports on various problems with the assistance of qualified experts or consultants, either in their individual capacities or on behalf of national institutions. In most cases, however, reports of the Secretary-General are drafted by the appropriate departments within the Secretariat.
4. In the present instance the Secretariat drew upon a wide variety of available sources to examine the views of Member States, non-governmental organisations and others on this subject. It undertook a careful and thorough study of all

statements and deliberations at the forty-first and forty-second sessions of the General Assembly, at its fifteenth special session, the third special session devoted to disarmament, in the First Committee and other subsidiary bodies and organs of the Assembly, as well as in the Security Council, The Secretariat also undertook informal consultations with the Chairmen of regional groups and individual delegations with a view to exploring ways and means of organizing an exchange of views on the matter. On the basis of paragraph 13 of resolution 42/93, a wide range of international and national non-governmental organizations, political and public figures were invited to contribute to the development of a dialogue on the ways and means of promoting comprehensive security based on the Charter and within the United Nations framework. The ideas and comments relevant to the subject contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organisation submitted to the forty-first and forty-second sessions of the General Assembly ^{1/} were also used in drafting this report.

5. In the course of its consideration of the ways and means of promoting an exchange of views on an important subject or issue, the United Nations has, over the years, made use of a variety of methods ranging from the appointment of formal committees to informal groups such as ad hoc committees and groups, contact groups, friends of the chairman or rapporteurs. There have been a number of such arrangements throughout the history of the United Nations. There include, for instance, the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organisation, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, the Special Committee on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States, the Special Committee on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Non-Use of Force in International Relations, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and others.

6. A debate took place at the forty-second session of the General Assembly on the modalities for undertaking a study on the concept of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. Suggestions formulated toward this objective included the use of outside expertise as well as the involvement of eminent personalities. In the end, however, the Assembly chose to request the Secretary-General to explore ways and means of organizing an exchange of views on the subject among Member States. In the preparation of the present report, therefore, the Secretary-General has relied on the expertise available to him in the Secretariat and on relevant documents.

7. Various opinions were expressed during the session on ways and means of approaching the subject of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. It was stated that the General Assembly could ask the Secretary-General to invite Member States to convey their comments to him on the subject. Suggestions were also formulated aimed at initiating discussions on ways and means to reinforce the effectiveness of the Charter through supplementary measures and norms, including the idea of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. Another suggestion was made according to which a concerted analysis should be undertaken of the implementation of the provisions of the Charter in order to determine those which have not been utilised to their full potential. The areas where new concepts and approaches have emerged should be clearly defined so as to ensure that international efforts in this regard were not to the detriment

or at the expense of existing norms and practices. It was proposed that thought be given to the possibility of convening a special session of the Assembly with a broad participation as the forum most competent to examine the issue of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. The subsidiary bodies of the Assembly, other United Nations organs and United Nations specialized agencies have also been mentioned as further appropriate forums for initiating a dialogue on those aspects of the subject which are relevant to their fields of activity. The Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with the task of dealing with international peace and security, could examine ways and means of carrying out the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter in the discharge of its responsibilities. A suggestion was made according to which the permanent members of the Council could hold consultations with the objective of formulating a code on peaceful relations and conduct in the field of international relations. The need was underscored for a wider use of the United Nations Military Staff Committee and United Nations peace-keeping force, specialized institutions, such as the United Nations University, were seen as appropriate organs for undertaking basic studies and organising gatherings on various aspects of the issue of security, and it was suggested that their conclusions and recommendations could be forwarded to the Secretary-General.

8. The views of those regional groups and individual delegations which were consulted informally by the Secretariat can be summarized as follows. A suggestion was advanced by a group of Member States that the question of the comprehensive system of international peace and security should be discussed in the First (Political) Committee and other Committees of the General Assembly during and outside the regular sessions, as well as by the Special Committee on the Charter, the Security Council and regional and intergovernmental organizations. It was added that the United Nations should take initiatives in this field and participate actively in introducing the dialogue on the question in various forums. The report of the Secretary-General should take into account the debate in the General Assembly at its forty-first and forty-second sessions. The exchange of views, which could be initiated at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, should be undertaken in such a way as to bring closer together the different concepts held on the issue. At the same time, the view was expressed that there was no need to introduce any new agenda item on the subject in the United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and that the existing agenda items should be examined in such a manner as to promote the concept of the strengthening of international peace and security. Another group of Member States stressed the opinion that the task of the Secretary-General was of a procedural nature, namely, to explore how an exchange of views might be organized. The Secretary-General's report was, therefore, not expected to deal with the substance of the subject. Furthermore, it was suggested that this task could be undertaken by the Secretariat itself. It was also stated that the existing bodies of the United Nations were competent and possessed the expertise to discuss questions relating to international peace and security. Consequently, any concrete proposals should be considered in the appropriate forums of the United Nations system. This group also maintained that the Charter contained the necessary ideas concerning international peace and security and anything that could lead to a redefinition of international security should be avoided. One Member State expressed its conviction that a wide discussion on the question of a comprehensive system of international peace and security, both at the

bilateral and the multilateral level, ● 8poaiaily during the forty-third session of the General Assembly, would serve a8 a moan8 of creating better understanding and co-operation. This Member State was also of the opinion that a constructive and non-coafroatatiaal debate on this question with a wide participation of Membrr States would bring the current practice of international relations closer to the integrated system of international peace and security ● n8hrin.d in the Charter, It ● mpha8i8od that there was a need to evolve a universally ● oaeptablo political languagr that could be used for reaching agreement on the most complicated issues. Another Membrr State ● mph88i8Od that the purpose of thr discussion on this item was to launch a broad international dialogur, above all within the United Nations, on thr way8 and means of ● aruring comprehensive security in military, political, ● coaomia, ecological, humanitarian, including human rights, and other fields on the basis of strict compliance with the Charter and an ● ahancod role and ● ffectivoae88 of the United Nations.

9. A number of international and national non-governmental organisations and political and public figures responded to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 42/93. In their ● 88i88i88 they indicated their interest in the subject and recognised the importance attached by the General Assembly to the role of non-governmental organisations in contributing to the developmant of a productive international dialogue on this mmtter. It was suggested by them that scholars whose research is relevant to the study Of a "new definition" Of global secu "ty should be consulted both by their respective governments and by thr world Organisation. The need was also undrrlined for growing oo-operation between the academic community, politicians and diplomats to broaden the scope of ● ctivitio8 conducive to global security; it was stated that this corresponded fully with idea8 ● xporred in the ● aual report of the Secretary-General on thr work of the Organisation, submitted to the forty-second session OF the General Assembly.

10. In the light of thr initial conrultationr hold by the Secretariat with the Chairmen of the regional groups and individual delegations as well as a close ● xamination of thr proceedings of thr forty-second session of the General Assembly, it became clear that delegations held differing views cn how to organize the exchange of views on a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

11. The Secretary-General ha8 noted that regional group8 and individual delegation8 have ● mpha8imod during the informal consultations that the subject of the comprehensive system of international peace and security be examined within the framework of the United Nations and it8 Charter, by the General Assembly, its subsidiary organs, by the Security Council, and by the specialised agencies. Furthermore, throughout tho informal coneultationr, certain delegations ● Xpr6886d their preference for an approach which sought to examine coarete proposals relating to the system of international peace and security. The Secretary-General further believes that, although they suggested varying approaches to the consideration of the subject, Member State8 were clearly in agreement on the desirability of strengthening the United Nation8 and increasing it8 ● ffectiveness. As regard8 the concept of comprehensive rocurity and the work of the Uaitod Nations, it ● pp@arr from the ● xchrngo of views and the informal consultations that further deliberations and consultations would be needed to bring about greater understanding and a wider consensus.

12. For his part, the Secretary-General stands ready to assist the General Assembly to discuss this subject either formally or informally and to undertake such studies on general or specific aspects of it as the Assembly would judge to be of assistance to Member States.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/41/1); and ibid., forty-second Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/42/1).
