

1. Arms Transfers

At the United Nations, following the UN Report on Transparency, an extensive debate took place in the First Committee during the 46th Session of the UNGA in the fall of 1991. Canada resisted the draft resolution sponsored by the European Community and Japan on several grounds. The main points of contention were the timing of the introduction of a voluntary UN register, and its scope. In regard to timing, Canada argued vigorously in favour of the earliest possible implementation of the register, which, for practical purposes, meant that states would report for the 1992 calendar year.

In regard to the scope of the register, Canada opposed efforts to enlarge it to include issues concerning weapons of mass destruction, arguing that such issues were under consideration in other fora, but strongly supported the inclusion of data on national procurement and holdings. This measure, Ambassador Peggy Mason argued, would "further enhance the equality of the two pillars of the register, transfers on the one hand and production on the other."⁶ Following the acceptance of these changes, Canada became a co-sponsor of the resolution, entitled "Transparency in Armaments."

The UN resolution contained the following key provisions:

- 1) Reporting first for the 1992 calendar year, Member States were called upon to provide annual data on their imports and exports of the following categories of weapons: battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles and missile systems;
- 2) the Secretary-General was mandated to form an expert group to consider the technical development and expansion of the register, and to report to the General Assembly in the fall of 1992;
- 3) the Conference on Disarmament was requested to consider as soon as possible issues relating to the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of armaments, and to elaborate means to encourage openness and transparency;
- 4) by 30 April 1994 States Members are called upon to present the Secretary-General with their views on the operation of the register, after which the Secretary-General will convene another group of governmental experts to advise on the continued operation and development of the register.

Although reporting to the register is voluntary, the large degree of support for the UN resolution has created an expectation that most states will report as required.

⁶ Remarks by Ambassador Peggy Mason to the First Committee of the General Assembly, A/C.1/46/PV.37: 38. See also: *Disarmament Bulletin*. No. 18, Winter 1991-92: 1-3.