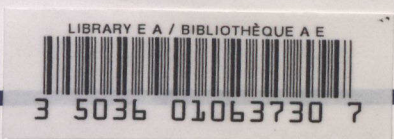


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# The Disarmament Bulletin

A review of Canada's arms control and disarmament activities

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## UN Arms Register Marks Triumph for Canada



As part of the UN arms register, countries are asked to report exports and imports of seven categories of weapons, including combat aircraft such as the Canadian CF-18 fighter jets pictured above at their base in Qatar during the Gulf War. Canadian Forces photo

A Canadian arms control initiative achieved a major success on December 9 when the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution establishing a global arms register. The resolution passed by an overwhelming 150 in favour, none opposed and two abstentions (Cuba and Iraq). China, Djibouti, Laos, Myanmar, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam did not participate in the

vote, along with six other small states which, it is believed, were simply not present in the General Assembly rather than opposed to the resolution. The UNGA First Committee had earlier adopted the resolution by a vote of 106 in favour, one opposed (Cuba) and eight abstentions (China, Iraq, Myanmar, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Singapore and Sudan). The increased support for the resolution in plenary was the result of extensive lobbying by Canada and other countries.

Canada first called for an arms register in the fall of 1990, when then-Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) Joe Clark told the General Assembly that Canada favoured the widest possible reporting to the UN of military expenditures, procurement and arms transfers. Current SSEA Barbara McDougall repeated the call at UNGA 46. Creation of a register has been a key component of Canada's action plan to prevent excessive build-ups of conventional arms, launched in February 1991.

Although endorsed by a number of international fora including the G7, the European Community and the Commonwealth, and recommended by a UN Group of Experts, establishment of an arms register was no sure thing. The register resolution, entitled "Transparency in Armaments," was the subject of intense negotiations in the First Committee. The most contentious issues were the following:

- timing of the register. Canada and many other countries insisted that the UN should take advantage of current political momentum and establish the register immediately, with first reports required for calendar year 1992 (the first practicable year for reporting, since countries must know at the start of

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