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AFRICAN MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY MEET
IN SIRTE, LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

A two-day meeting of African Ministers of Defence and Security to consider the proposal for an African Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact and the Libyan proposal on a "Treaty for a Common Defence and the establishment of a United Army for the African Union" was, on Sunday, 22 February 2004, declared open by the Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Brother Muammar Ghaddafi.

In his opening speech, the guide of the Libyan revolution, Col. Muammar Ghaddafi, drew the attention of the Ministers of Defence and Security, to the Libyan proposal on the establishment of a United Army for Africa, for the defence of the continent, which he had submitted to the Summit in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002 and also in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003. As envisaged, such an Army, once established, would replace national armies, thereby enabling AU member states, to utilize their scarce resources for addressing the other pressing challenges facing the continent.

The meeting adopted the Report of the 1st meeting of Ministers of Defence and Security held in Addis Ababa, on 20 January 2004, and made several recommendations for the consideration of the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, scheduled to consider the issues in Sirte on 28th February 2004.

The African Union plans to establish an African Standby Force with a capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts on the Continent, a Military Staff Committee and a Continental Early Warning System, within the framework of the new Peace and Security Council of the Union.

Sirte, 24 February 2004