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Agenda item 47

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Francisco CORREA (Mexico)

1. The item entitled "Reduction of military budgets: report of the Secretary-General" was included in the provisional agenda of the thirty-second session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/87 of 14 December 1976.
2. At its 5th plenary meeting, on 23 September 1977, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.
3. At its 7th meeting, on 18 October, the First Committee decided to hold a combined general debate on the items allocated to it relating to disarmament, namely items 33, 34, 38 to 49 and 51 to 53. The general debate on these items took place at the 7th to 27th meetings, from 18 October to 7 November. 1/
4. In connexion with agenda item 47, the First Committee had before it the following documents:
 - (a) Report of the Secretary-General prepared with the assistance of an intergovernmental group of budgetary experts appointed by him (A/32/194 and Add.1);
 - (b) Letter dated 27 April 1977 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/32/72).
5. On 11 November, Mexico and Sweden submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/32/L.24*), which was introduced by the representative of Mexico at the 35th meeting, on 17 November. The draft resolution read as follows:

* Reissued for technical reasons.

1/ For an index to statements by delegations on disarmament items see A/32/383.

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling that in its resolution 31/87 of 14 December 1976 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of an intergovernmental group of budgetary experts appointed by him, a report containing an analysis of comments provided by States in the light of the suggestions contained in the 1976 expert report on the reduction of military budgets, 2/

"Noting with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly in response to the aforementioned resolution, 3/

"Recognizing that the work set in motion by the General Assembly on the reduction of military budgets has reached a decisive stage and that successive expert reports have moved the whole exercise to a position where practical steps for testing and refining the proposed reporting instrument could now be taken,

"Noting that the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in May/June 1978 will provide an opportunity to consider the disarmament problem in a broad perspective,

"Noting further that at the special session several matters related to the reduction of military expenditures will be considered,

"Reaffirming its conviction that part of the resources thus released should be utilized for social and economic development, particularly that of the developing countries,

"Reaffirming also its conviction of the urgent necessity that the States permanent members of the Security Council, as well as any other State with comparable military expenditures, carry out reductions in their military budgets,

"Conscious that, without an accompanying process of co-operation among such States, it will not be possible to accomplish the ultimate objectives,

"1. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Group of qualified experts which assisted in the preparation of the report;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a background report on the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and transmit it to all Member States not later than 1 April 1978, compiling the proposals and recommendations put forward by the expert groups appointed by the Secretary-General and under General Assembly resolutions 3463 (XXX) and 31/87;

2/ A/31/222/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.I.6).

3/ A/32/194 and Add.1.

"3. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session the item entitled: 'Reduction of military budgets'."

6. On 17 November, Germany, Federal Republic of, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America submitted amendments (A/C.1/32/L.33) to the draft resolution which were introduced by the representative of the United States of America at the 37th meeting, on 18 November. The amendments provided for:

(a) The insertion, after the second preambular paragraph, of a new paragraph reading as follows:

"Recognizing the value of the availability of a satisfactory instrument for standardized reporting on the military expenditures of Member States, particularly of the States permanent members of the Security Council, as well as any other States with comparable military expenditures,"

(b) The insertion, after operative paragraph 1, of a new paragraph reading as follows:

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to ascertain those States which would be prepared to participate in a pilot test of the reporting instrument and to report on this to the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament;"

(c) The addition, at the end of operative paragraph 2, henceforth paragraph 3, of a new clause reading as follows:

"and containing information concerning the progress made in carrying out the task referred to in paragraph 2 above."

7. At its 37th meeting, on 18 November, the Committee voted on the amendments contained in document A/C.1/32/L.33 and on draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.24*, as follows:

(a) The first amendment (see para. 6 (a) above) was adopted by a recorded vote of 103 to 1, with 17 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Empire, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Swaziland,

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Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: China.

Abstaining: Algeria, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Mauritania, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(b) The second and third amendments (see para. 6 (b) and (c) above) were adopted by a recorded vote of 40 to 4, with 76 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Luxembourg, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Surinam, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: China, Mexico, Peru, Sweden.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cape Verde, Central African Empire, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

(c) Draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.24*, as amended, was adopted by a recorded vote of 109 to 2, with 11 abstentions (see para. 8 below). The voting was as follows:

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In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Empire, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: Albania, China.

Abstaining: Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Reduction of military budgets

The General Assembly,

Recalling that, in its resolution 31/87 of 14 December 1976, it requested the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of an intergovernmental group of budgetary experts appointed by him, a report containing an analysis of the comments provided by States in the light of the suggestions set forth in the 1976 report of the Group of Experts on the Reduction of Military Budgets, 4/

Noting with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General 5/ submitted to the General Assembly in response to the aforementioned resolution,

4/ A/31/222/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.I.6).

5/ A/32/194 and Add.1.

Recognizing the value of the availability of a satisfactory instrument for standardized reporting on the military expenditures of Member States, particularly of the States permanent members of the Security Council, as well as any other State with comparable military expenditures,

Recognizing that the work set in motion by the General Assembly on the reduction of military budgets has reached a decisive stage and that successive reports of groups of experts have moved the whole exercise to a position where practical steps for testing and refining the proposed reporting instrument could now be taken,

Noting that the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in May/June 1978, will provide an opportunity to consider the disarmament problem in a broad perspective,

Noting further that at the special session several matters related to the reduction of military expenditures will be considered,

Reaffirming its conviction that part of the resources thus released should be utilized for social and economic development, particularly that of the developing countries,

Reaffirming also its conviction of the urgent necessity that the States permanent members of the Security Council, as well as any other State with comparable military expenditures, carry out reductions in their military budgets,

Conscious that, without an accompanying process of co-operation among such States, it will not be possible to accomplish the ultimate objectives,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Group of Budgetary Experts which assisted in the preparation of the report;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to ascertain those States which would be prepared to participate in a pilot test of the reporting instrument and to report on this to the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a background report for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and transmit it to all Member States not later than 1 April 1978, compiling the proposals and recommendations put forward by the groups of experts appointed by the Secretary-General and under Assembly resolutions 3463 (XXX) and 31/87, and containing information concerning the progress made in carrying out the task referred to in paragraph 2 above;

4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets".
