



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/37/652
6 December 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-seventh session
Agenda item 40

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the First Committee

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Reduction of military budgets:

"(a) Report of the Disarmament Commission;

"(b) Report of the Secretary-General"

was included in the provisional agenda of the thirty-seventh session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/82 of 9 December 1981.

2. At its 4th plenary meeting, on 24 September 1982, 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 2nd meeting, on 29 September, the First Committee decided to hold a combined general debate on the items allocated to it relating to disarmament, namely, items 39 to 57, 133 and 136. The general debate on these items and on items 138 and 139, which were allocated to the First Committee by the General Assembly at its 24th plenary meeting, on 8 October 1982, took place at the 3rd to 28th meetings, from 18 October to 5 November (see A/C.1/37/PV.3-28).

4. In connection with item 40, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

- (a) Report of the Disarmament Commission; 1/
- (b) Letter dated 22 June 1982 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana from 31 May to 5 June 1982 (A/37/333-S/15278);
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General on the reduction of military budgets (A/37/418 and Add.1 and Corr.1);
- (d) Letter dated 11 October 1982 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Final Communiqué of the Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York from 4 to 9 October 1982 (A/37/540-S/15454);
- (e) Letter dated 19 October 1982 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the resolutions adopted by the 69th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held in Rome from 12 to 23 September 1982 (A/37/578).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.1/37/L.20

5. On 12 November, Austria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia, Ireland, Nigeria, Peru, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, the Sudan, Sweden and Uruguay submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/37/L.20), which was subsequently also sponsored by Mali. The draft resolution was introduced at the 34th meeting, on 16 November, by the representative of Romania.

6. At its 39th meeting, on 22 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/37/L.20 without a vote (see para. 12, draft resolution A).

B. Draft resolution A/C.1/37/L.22/Rev.2

7. On 12 November, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland, France, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Romania, Rwanda, the Sudan, Sweden and Uruguay submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/37/L.22 which was subsequently also sponsored by Germany, Federal Republic of, Ireland and Malta. The draft resolution was introduced at the 34th meeting, on 16 November, by the representative of Sweden.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/37/27 and Corr.1).

8. On 16 November, the sponsors submitted a revised text of the draft resolution (A/C.1/37/L.22/Rev.1), in which the tenth preambular paragraph, which read:

"Considering also that this study of the questions of comparing and verifying military expenditures should be followed by a practical exercise by which these questions may be further explored with a view to facilitating future negotiations on the reduction of military expenditures,"

was revised to read:

"Considering also that the study of this question should be followed by a practical exercise in order to explore it further with a view to facilitating future negotiations on the reduction of military expenditures,".

9. On 24 November, a further revised draft resolution was submitted (A/C.1/37/L.22/Rev.2), in which a new operative paragraph 10 was added, which read as follows:

"10. Requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements for the report on the Reduction of Military Budgets (A/S-12/7) to be issued as a United Nations publication and widely distributed;".

The remaining operative paragraph was subsequently renumbered.

10. In connection with the draft resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a statement on the administrative and financial implications (A/C.1/37/L.70).

11. At its 45th meeting, on 26 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/37/L.22/Rev.2 by a recorded vote of 98 to 13, with 8 abstentions (see para. 12, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Viet Nam.

Abstaining: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, China, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Zambia.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

12. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Reduction of military budgets

A

The General Assembly,

Expressing its deep concern about the ever spiralling arms race and growing military expenditures, which constitute a heavy burden for the economies of all nations and have extremely harmful effects on world peace and security,

Recalling that at its twelfth special session, the second special session devoted to disarmament, all Member States unanimously and categorically reaffirmed the validity of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the first special session devoted to disarmament as well as "their solemn commitment" to it, 2/

Reaffirming the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, according to which the gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually agreed basis, for example, in absolute figures or in terms of percentage points, particularly by nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, would contribute to curbing the arms race and would increase the possibilities for the reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, 3/

Recalling also the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, 4/ which provides that, during this period, renewed efforts should be made to reach agreement on the reduction of military expenditures and the reallocation of resources thus saved to economic and social development, especially for the benefit of developing countries,

2/ A/S-12/32, para. 62.

3/ Resolution S-10/2, para. 89.

4/ Resolution 35/46, annex.

Recalling further its resolution 34/83 F of 11 December 1979, in which it considered that a new impetus should be given to endeavours to achieve agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain, in a balanced manner, military expenditures, including adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned,

Having considered the report of the Disarmament Commission on the work accomplished during its session in 1982 on the item "Reduction of military budgets", 5/

Convinced that the identification and elaboration of a set of principles that should govern further actions of States in freezing and reducing military budgets could contribute to harmonizing the views of States and create confidence among them conducive to achieving international agreements on the reduction of military budgets,

Considering that the identification and elaboration of the principles that should govern further actions of States in freezing and reducing military budgets and the other current activities within the framework of the United Nations related to the question of the reduction of military budgets should be regarded as having the fundamental objective of reaching international agreements on the reduction of military expenditures,

Aware of the various proposals submitted by Member States and of the activities carried out so far within the framework of the United Nations in the field of the reduction of military budgets,

1. Declares once again its conviction that it is possible to achieve international agreements on reduction of military budgets without prejudice to the right of all States to undiminished security, self-defence and sovereignty;
2. Reaffirms that human and material resources released through the reduction of military expenditures could be reallocated for economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries;
3. Reiterates the urgent need to reinforce the endeavours of all States and international actions in the reduction of military budgets, with a view to reaching international agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain military expenditures;
4. Urges all States, in particular the most heavily armed States, pending the conclusion of agreements on the reduction of military expenditures, to exercise self-restraint in their military expenditures with a view to reallocating the funds thus saved to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries;

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twelfth Special Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/S-12/3).

5. Requests the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of qualified experts and with the voluntary co-operation of States, to undertake the task of constructing price indices and purchasing-power parities for the military expenditures of participating States; this task should encompass a study of the problem as a whole, which would include the following:
 - (a) To assess the feasibility of such an exercise;
 - (b) To design the project and methodology to be employed;
 - (c) To determine the types of data required, such as production descriptions, prices and statistical weights;
 - (d) To construct military price indices and purchasing-power parities;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to ascertain the willingness of States to participate and to enlist their voluntary co-operation;
7. Invites Member States to participate in the above-mentioned exercise;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to submit progress reports to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions, and a final report to the Assembly at its fortieth session;
9. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the group of experts with the necessary assistance and secretariat services;
10. Requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements for the report on the reduction of military budgets 7/ to be issued as a United Nations publication and widely distributed;
11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-eighth session the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets".
