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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA  
OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

REDUCTION OF THE MILITARY BUDGETS OF STATES PERMANENT MEMBERS  
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL BY 10 PER CENT AND UTILIZATION OF  
PART OF THE FUNDS THUS SAVED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Letter dated 25 September 1973 from the Minister for Foreign  
Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed  
to the Secretary-General

The Soviet Government proposes the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, as an important and urgent question, of the item "Reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries".

Significant favourable developments in the direction of international détente and improved relations between States on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence have recently been apparent.

The conclusion, early this year, of the Paris Agreements on ending the war and restoring peace in Viet-Nam represented an important contribution to improving the international atmosphere. Much remains to be done to ensure the full implementation of these agreements, but the most important step has been taken.

Significant changes for the better are occurring in the political situation on the European continent, as is demonstrated, in particular, by the work of the European Conference on Security and Co-operation, which is proceeding in a constructive spirit, and by the agreement reached to start negotiations on 30 October on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe.

In recent years, some progress has been made in curbing the arms race and in disarmament. The Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological Weapons and on Their Destruction has been concluded. The agreements between the USSR and the United States on strategic arms limitation are destined to play an important

role. The permanent Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War was concluded during the negotiations in June 1973 between L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and President Nixon of the United States, and a major step was thus taken to remove the threat of a nuclear catastrophe.

The principles of peaceful coexistence and co-operation between States with different social systems are becoming ever more firmly established in international relations, as is demonstrated by the increasing desire of States to resolve disputed international issues by peaceful means, the important and fruitful negotiations which have taken place between them during the past year and the useful and constructive agreements concluded between various countries.

These favourable developments in relations between States are meeting with broad approval everywhere. At the same time, one cannot but note that events are still occurring in the world which undermine international security. Hotbeds of international tension and military conflict still exist in several parts of the world. The arms race is continuing. Huge sums are being spent for military purposes, particularly in the economically most developed and militarily important States. Some developing countries are also being drawn into this arms race in one way or another. Large military expenditures are a heavy burden on the peoples of all countries; huge sums are being diverted from the requirements of economic and social development and from the task of satisfying people's vital needs.

The Soviet Government believes that, under the present conditions, the task of the United Nations lies in strengthening the progress which has been made in improving the international situation. It is most important that the political détente in the world should be accompanied by a military détente so that all States and peoples will enjoy the blessings that have been brought and will continue to be brought by the process now begun of effecting a general improvement in the international climate.

An effective means of achieving that goal would, in the view of the Soviet Union, be to reduce the military budgets of the permanent members of the Security Council, the States whose military spending is heaviest, and to earmark a certain part of the funds thus saved for assistance to developing countries. This reduction could amount to 10 per cent of the military budgets for 1973. Part of the funds obtained in this manner -- let us say 10 per cent -- could be used to assist developing countries.

This useful measure should, of course, be carried out with the participation of all States permanent members of the Security Council without exception. It is also desirable that a reduction in military budgets should be made by other States with a major economic and military potential.

The reduction in military spending should be carried out during the financial year following the adoption of an appropriate decision by the General Assembly. The funds set aside for economic assistance to developing countries should be provided, in the first instance, to those Asian, African and Latin American countries which, because of major natural disasters that have occurred this year,

particularly drought, have encountered serious difficulties in carrying out the most urgent economic and social projects.

Action to reduce military spending would also benefit the States carrying out such a reduction. They would have an opportunity to utilize substantial resources to meet the peaceful needs of their States and to raise popular living standards.

The distribution of funds among developing countries should be carried out on an equitable basis, having regard to the most urgent needs and requirements of the developing countries and without discrimination of any kind. An international committee could be established for this specific purpose on a temporary basis by decision of the General Assembly from among the States Members of the United Nations, with the participation of representatives of the developing countries, the permanent members of the Security Council and other States carrying out a reduction of military budgets. The committee would determine the amount of the funds to be allotted to various countries and the schedule for provisions of the funds.

The adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution appealing to States permanent members of the Security Council to reduce their military budgets by 10 per cent and utilize part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries and the implementation of such a decision would unquestionably help to lend a stable character to the process of improving relations between States and ameliorating the international situation.

I should be grateful if you would regard this letter as an explanatory memorandum within the meaning of rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and if you would circulate it as an official General Assembly document.

(Signed) A. GROMYKO  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the USSR

Draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Noting with satisfaction that, as a result of efforts made on a bilateral and regional basis, there has clearly emerged a trend towards the strengthening of peace, the reduction of tension and the settlement of disputed issues by peaceful means,

Considering that all States should take effective steps aimed at eliminating the hotbeds of military conflict which continue to exist in various parts of the world,

Believing that political détente in the world should be supplemented by military détente,

Noting that a reduction in military spending, while helping to limit the arms race and to bring about further improvement in the international situation, would at the same time make it possible to utilize substantial resources for the needs of the peaceful development of all States, including the provision of assistance to developing countries,

1. Recommends that all States permanent members of the Security Council should reduce their military budgets by 10 per cent from the 1973 level during the next financial year;
2. Appeals to the aforementioned States to allot 10 per cent of the funds released as a result of the reduction in military budgets for the provision of assistance to developing countries so as to permit the execution in those countries of the most urgent economic and social projects;
3. Expresses the desire that other States, particularly those with a major economic and military potential, should also take steps to reduce their military budgets and allot part of the funds thus released for the provision of assistance to developing countries;
4. Establishes a Special Committee, consisting of the following countries: ..., to distribute the funds released as a result of the reduction of military spending for the provision of assistance to developing countries and instructs this body to distribute the said funds on an equitable basis, having regard to the most urgent needs and requirements of the recipient countries and without discrimination of any kind, and to determine the amount of the funds to be allotted to various countries and the schedule for provision of the funds;
5. Requests the Secretary-General to give the Special Committee all possible assistance in its work;
6. Suggests that the Special Committee should submit a report on its work to the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly.