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Agenda item 60

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Kazimierz TOMASZEWSKI (Poland)

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 forty-second session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/57 of 3 December 1986.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 18 September 1987, 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 1 October, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on the disarmament items allocated to it, namely, items 48 to 69, followed by statements on specific disarmament agenda items and a continuation of the general debate, as necessary. The deliberations on those items took place between the 2nd and the 31st meetings, from 12 October to 3 November (see A/C.1/42/PV.3-31).

4. In connection with item 60, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Disarmament Commission; 1/

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on military expenditures in standardized form reported by States (A/42/573);

(c) Letter dated 14 April 1987 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of a proposal from the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty to the member States of NATO on the question of a moratorium on the increase in military expenditures (A/42/228-S/18811);

(d) Note verbale dated 16 June 1987 from the Permanent Mission of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the final communiqué of the Seventh Summit Conference of the Heads of State of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe, held at Maputo on 21 and 22 May 1987 (A/42/352-S/18930);

(e) Letter dated 23 October 1987 from the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe 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 Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the forty-second session of the General Assembly, held in New York from 5 to 7 October 1987 (A/42/681);

(f) Letter dated 2 November 1987 from the Permanent Representative of Czechoslovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué and the document entitled "Towards Increasing the Effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva" issued at the session of the Committee of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty, held at Prague on 28 and 29 October 1987 (A/42/708 and Corr.1).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/42/L.56

5. On 27 October 1987, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ireland, Nigeria, Peru, Romania, Senegal and Sweden submitted a draft resolution, entitled "Reduction of military budgets" (A/C.1/42/L.56), which was later also sponsored by Uruguay. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Romania at the 31st meeting, on 3 November.

6. At its 36th meeting, on 9 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.56 without a vote (see para. 7).

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/42/42).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

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

Reduction of military budgets

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned 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,

Reaffirming once again the provisions of paragraph 89 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, 2/ the first special session devoted to disarmament, according to which the gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually agreed basis, for example, in absolute figures or in terms of percentage, 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,

Convinced that the freezing and reduction of military budgets would have favourable consequences on the world economic and financial situation and might facilitate efforts made to increase international assistance for the developing countries,

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 of the General Assembly, as well as their solemn commitment to it, 3/

Recalling also that in the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second United Nations Disarmament Decade, it is provided 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, 4/

2/ Resolution S-10/2.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twelfth Special Session, Annexes, agenda items 9 to 13, document A/S-12/32, para. 62.

4/ See resolution 35/46, annex, para. 15.

Recalling further the provisions of its relevant resolutions, in which it considered that a new impetus should be given to the 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,

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,

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,

Noting that the Disarmament Commission, at its 1986 substantive session, agreed upon the above-mentioned principles except one, on which various alternatives were proposed by Member States, 5/

1. Declares again its conviction that it is possible to achieve international agreements on the reduction of military budgets without prejudice to the right of all States to undiminished security, self-defence and sovereignty;
2. Appeals to all States, in particular to 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;
3. Reaffirms that the 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;
4. Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue the consideration of the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets" and, in this context, to conclude, at its 1988 substantive session, its work on the last outstanding paragraph of the principles that should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets, and to submit its report and recommendations to the General Assembly not later than at its forty-third session;

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/41/42), para. 28.8.

5. Draws anew the attention of Member States to the fact that the identification and elaboration of the principles that should govern further actions of States in freezing and reducing military budgets could contribute to harmonizing the views of States and creating confidence among them conducive to achieving international agreements on the reduction of military budgets;

6. Urges all Member States, in particular the most heavily armed States, to reinforce their readiness to co-operate in a constructive manner with a view to reaching agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain military expenditures;

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