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Agenda item 40

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Alemayehu MAKONNEN (Ethiopia)

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-sixth session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/142 of 12 December 1980.

2. At its 4th plenary meeting, on 18 September 1981, 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 7 October, the First Committee decided to hold a combined general debate on the items allocated to it relating to disarmament, namely, items 39 to 56, 128 and 135. The general debate on these items took place at the 3rd to 26th meetings, from 19 October to 4 November (see A/C.1/36/PV.3-26).

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

- (a) Report of the Disarmament Commission; 1/
- (b) Letter dated 25 March 1981 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the resolutions and the final communiqué of the Third Islamic Conference, held at Mecca from 25 to 28 January 1981 (A/36/138);
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General (A/36/353 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2);
- (d) Letter dated 30 September 1981 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué of the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegations of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 25 and 28 September 1981, to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly (A/36/566-S/14713);
- (e) Letter dated 5 October 1981 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General containing the resolutions adopted by the 68th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held at Havana from 15 to 23 September 1981 (A/36/584).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

A. Draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.38

5. On 16 November, Austria, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Indonesia, Ireland, Nigeria, Peru, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sweden and Uruguay submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/36/L.38), which was subsequently also sponsored by the Niger and the Sudan. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Romania at the 33rd meeting, on 18 November.
6. At the 38th meeting, on 20 November, the representative of Romania orally revised the first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution by deleting the word "unprecedented" before the word "growing". At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.38, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 9, draft resolution A).

B. Draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.39

7. On 16 November, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Romania, the Sudan and Sweden submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/36/L.39), which was subsequently also sponsored by Rwanda. The

draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Sweden at the 33rd meeting, on 18 November.

8. At its 38th meeting, on 20 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.39 by a recorded vote of 102 to none, with 15 abstentions (see para. 9, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Congo, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, 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 States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: None.

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

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

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

Reduction of Military Budgets

A

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 consequences on international peace and security,

/...

Reaffirming the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, according to which 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 of reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, 2/

Reaffirming that it is possible to achieve continued and systematic reductions in military budgets without affecting the military balance to the detriment of the national security of any State,

Recalling 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,

Recalling the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, 3/ 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,

Recalling its resolution 35/142 A of 12 December 1980 in which it requested the Disarmament Commission to continue at its session to be held in 1981, the consideration of the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets" and in particular to identify and elaborate on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, keeping in mind the possibility of embodying such principles into a suitable document at an appropriate stage,

Having considered the report of the Disarmament Commission 4/ on the work accomplished during its session in 1981 and taking into account the proposals and ideas submitted by States concerning the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, as contained in the working document annexed to the Commission's report,

2/ General Assembly resolution S-10/2, para. 89.

3/ General Assembly resolution 35/46, annex.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/36/42).

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 which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military budgets and the other ongoing 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,

1. Reaffirms the urgent need to reinforce the endeavours of all States and international action in the area of the reduction of military budgets, with a view to reaching international agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain military expenditures;
2. Reiterates the appeal to 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;
3. Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue at its session to be held in 1982 the consideration of the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets", taking into account the provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/142 A as well as those of the present resolution and other relevant proposals and ideas, with a view to identifying and elaborating on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, keeping in mind the possibility of embodying such principles into a suitable document at an appropriate stage;
4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-seventh session the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets".

B

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned about the arms race, its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security and its deplorable waste of human and economic resources,

Alarmed by present tendencies to increase further the rate of growth of military expenditures,

Considering that gradual reductions of military expenditures on a mutually agreed basis would be a measure that would contribute to curbing the arms race and would increase the possibilities of reallocating resources, now being used for military purposes, to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries,

Convinced that such reductions could and should be carried out on a mutually agreed basis without affecting the military balance to the detriment of the national security of any country,

Reaffirming also its conviction that provisions for comparability and verification will have to be basic elements of any agreement to reduce military expenditures,

Recalling the fact that these matters are being studied by a group of experts established in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/142 B of 12 December 1980 and that this group is expected to submit its report before the second special session of the the Assembly devoted to disarmament,

Recalling further that a standardized system for international reporting of military expenditures has been recommended for use and that the first national reports have been received this year,

Emphasizing the value of a full implementation of such a reporting instrument and of its further refinement as a means to increase confidence between States by contributing to greater openness in military matters, which is particularly important for arriving at international agreements to reduce military expenditures,

Reaffirming also its conviction that the reporting of military data and the examination of problems concerning verification and comparability have the fundamental objective of making possible the conclusion of international agreements to reduce military expenditures,

Noting with appreciation the first report of the Secretary-General on these matters, 5/

Considering that the activities related to the reporting of military expenditures as well as to the questions of comparability and verification and other ongoing 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,

1. Stresses the need of increasing the number of reporting States with a view to the broadest possible participation from different geographic regions and representing different budgeting systems;
2. Reiterates its recommendation that all Member States should make use of the reporting instrument and report annually, by 30 April, to the Secretary-General their military expenditures of the latest fiscal year for which data are available;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to examine ways and means to make the collection and assembling of data on military expenditures, reported by States on the basis of the reporting instrument, an integral part of the regular United Nations statistical services and to arrange and publish these data according to statistical practice;
4. Also requests the Secretary-General to include these matters in his next annual report on military budgets to the General Assembly.
