Fortieth session
Agenda item 62

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Yannis SOULIOTIS (Greece)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled:

"Reduction of military budgets:

(a) Report of the Disarmament Commission;

(b) Reports of the Secretary-General"

was included in the provisional agenda of the fortieth session in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 39/64 A and B of 12 December 1984.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 20 September 1985, 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 9 October, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on the disarmament items allocated to it, namely, items 48 to 69 and item 145, followed by statements on specific disarmament agenda items and continuation of the general debate, as necessary. The deliberations on those items took place between the 3rd and the 32nd meetings, from 14 October to 8 November (see A/C.1/40/PV.3-32).

4. In connection with item 62, the First Committee had before it the following documents:
(a) Report of the Disarmament Commission; 1/

(b) Military expenditures in standardized form reported by States: report of the Secretary-General (A/40/313 and Add.1 and 2);

(c) Construction of military price indexes and purchasing-power parities for comparison of military expenditures: report of the Secretary-General (A/40/421);

(d) Letter dated 30 January 1985 from the representatives of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Delhi Declaration adopted and issued at New Delhi on 28 January 1985 by the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania (A/40/114-S/16921);

(e) Letter dated 15 February 1985 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/40/130-S/16958);

(f) Letter dated 12 August 1985 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the Lima Declaration signed on 29 July 1985 by the Heads of State of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Uruguay and Peru, and by the Special Representatives of Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Venezuela (A/40/544);

(g) Letter dated 19 September 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué adopted at the Sixteenth South Pacific Forum, held at Rarotonga, Cook Islands, on 5 and 6 August 1985 (A/40/672-S/17488);

(h) Letter dated 14 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Ministerial Regional Conference on Security, Disarmament and Development in Africa, held at Lomé from 13 to 16 August 1985 (A/40/761-S/17573);

(i) Letter dated 30 October 1985 from the representatives of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the joint message dated 24 October 1985 addressed to the President of the United States of America and the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania (A/40/825-S/17596);

(j) Letter dated 25 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Declaration issued on 23 October 1985 at Sofia by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (A/C.1/40/7).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.12

5. On 4 November 1985, Austria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Ireland, Nigeria, Peru, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, the Sudan, Sweden and Uruguay submitted a draft resolution entitled "Reduction of military budgets" (A/C.1/40/L.12), which was later also sponsored by the Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire). The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Romania at the 31st meeting, on 7 November.

6. At its 37th meeting, on 14 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.12 without a vote (see para. 10, draft resolution A).

B. Draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.16

7. On 5 November, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, the Sudan and Sweden submitted a draft resolution entitled "Reduction of military budgets" (A/C.1/40/L.16), which was later also sponsored by Samoa and Uruguay. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Sweden at the 29th meeting, on 6 November.

8. At the 37th meeting, on 14 November, the representative of Sweden, on behalf of the sponsors, orally revised operative paragraph 3, which had read:

"Draws the attention of all Member States to the study and its conclusions and recommendations"

to read as follows:

"Commends the study and its conclusions and recommendations to the attention of all Member States".

9. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.16, as orally revised, by a recorded vote of 96 to 13, with 15 abstentions (see para. 10, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece,
Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zimbabwe.


Abstaining: Algeria, Angola, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burma, China, Congo, India, Iraq, Jordan, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

10. 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 effects on world peace and security,

Reaffirming once again the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, 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, 2/

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

Recalling further the provisions of its resolution 34/83 F of 11 December 1979, subsequently reaffirmed in its resolutions 35/142 A of 12 December 1980, 36/82 A of 9 December 1981, 37/95 A of 13 December 1982, 38/184 A of 20 December 1983 and 39/64 A of 12 December 1984, 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 expenditure, 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,

Taking note of the report of the Disarmament Commission on the work accomplished during its session in 1985 on the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets", 5/


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

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 finalize, at its substantive session in 1985, the principles that should govern the actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures on the basis of the working paper annexed to its report, 6/ as well as other proposals and ideas on the subject-matter;

5. Draws anew the attention of Member States to the fact that the identification and elaboration of the principles which 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-first session the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets".

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned about the arms race and present tendencies to increase further the rate of growth of military expenditures, the deplorable waste of human and economic resources and the potentially harmful effects on world peace and security,

6/ Ibid., Supplement No. 42 (A/40/42), annex II.
Considering that a gradual reduction 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 detriment to the national security of any country,

Reaffirming its conviction that provisions for defining, reporting, comparing and verifying military expenditures will have to be basic elements of any international agreement to reduce such expenditures,

Recalling that an international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures has been introduced in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/142 B of 12 December 1980, and that national reports on military expenditures have been received from a number of Member States belonging to different geographic regions and having different budgeting and accounting systems,

Considering that a wider participation in the reporting system of States from different geographic regions and representing different budgeting systems would promote its further refinement and would, by contributing to greater openness in military matters, increase confidence between States,

Emphasizing that the above-mentioned activities and initiatives, as well as other ongoing activities within the United Nations related to the reduction of military budgets, have the objective of facilitating future negotiations aimed at the conclusion of international agreements on the reduction of military expenditures,

Recalling its resolution 37/95 B of 13 December 1982, in which it requested 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,

Having examined the report of the Secretary-General containing the study of the Group of Experts on the Reduction of Military Budgets, 7/

1. Takes note with appreciation of the study of the Group of Experts on the Reduction of Military Budgets;

2. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Group of Experts that assisted him in the preparation of the study;

7/ A/40/421.
3. Commends the study and its conclusions and recommendations to the attention of all Member States;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements for the reproduction of the study as a United Nations publication;

5. Invites all Member States to present to the Secretary-General, no later than 15 April 1986, their views regarding the study and to suggest further measures with a view to facilitating future international agreements to reduce military expenditures;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report containing the views of Member States received concerning this issue to the General Assembly at its forty-first session;

7. Also takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General containing the replies received in 1985 from Member States in the framework of the above-mentioned reporting system; 8/

8. Stresses the need to increase the number of reporting States with a view to the broadest possible participation from different geographic regions and representing different budgeting systems;

9. Reiterates its recommendation that all Member States should report annually, by 30 April, to the Secretary-General, using the reporting instrument, their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available;

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

8/ A/40/313 and Add.1 and 2.