Twelfth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE TWELFTH
SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda items 9, 10 and 11

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME
OF DISARMAMENT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE 1980s AS THE SECOND
DISARMAMENT DECADE AND CONSIDERATION OF INITIATIVES AND
PROPOSALS OF MEMBER STATES

Letter dated 28 June 1982 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith to Your Excellency a draft proposal of
my Government which calls for the convening of an international conference on
military expenditures.

I would be grateful if this initiative could be circulated as an official
document of the twelfth special session of the General Assembly under agenda
items 9, 10 and 11.

(Signed) Kenneth L. ADELMAN
Acting Permanent Representative
of the United States of America
to the United Nations
ANNEX

International conference on military expenditures

1. As long as some States continue to obscure their military expenditures behind a curtain of secrecy, it will be difficult to take practical steps in international consideration of military expenditures. In recent years, successive United Nations expert groups have developed a standardized instrument for reporting national military expenditures and have begun to develop techniques for comparison and verification. The United States has actively supported this effort and has publicly provided our military expenditure data to the United Nations, most recently on 11 August 1981 (A/36/353).

2. Unfortunately, to date only 15 other nations have submitted data using the United Nations standardized reporting instrument.

3. Therefore, in his 17 June address to the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, President Reagan proposed that an international conference be convened under United Nations auspices to build on past United Nations efforts to develop a common reporting and accounting system on military expenditures, including those pursued in the consideration of reduction of military budgets. We believe that such a conference would contribute towards building mutual trust and confidence and would be an important step in the process of disarmament. The relevant portion of the President's statement follows:

"The democracies of the West are open societies. Information on our defences is available to our citizens, our elected officials and the world. We do not hesitate to inform potential adversaries of our military forces, and ask in return for the same information concerning theirs.

"The amount and type of military spending by a country is important for the world to know, as a measure of its intentions, and the threat that country may pose to its neighbours. The Soviet Union and other closed societies go to extraordinary lengths to hide their true military spending not only from other nations, but from their own people. This practice contributes to distrust and fear about their intentions.

"Today, the United States proposes an international conference on military expenditures to build on the work of this body in developing a common system for accounting and reporting. We urge the Soviet Union, in particular, to join this effort in good faith, to revise the universally discredited official figures it publishes and to join with us in giving the world a true account of the resources we allocate to our armed forces."

(A/S-12/PV.16, p. 10)

4. The United States believes an international conference on military expenditures should:

(a) Review the progress of United Nations groups of experts, particularly as regards the reporting, comparison and verification of military expenditures;

/...
(b) Review the implementation of resolutions aimed at universal reporting of military expenditures according to the United Nations standard reporting instrument and examine the reasons for the lack of widespread reporting;

(c) Consider modalities for encouraging wider participation and achieving universal reporting;

(d) Consider possible means for further refinement in the standard reporting instrument and for the comparison and verification of data;

(e) Prepare new means for publicizing the submission of data in accordance with the reporting instrument;

(f) Consider ways in which accurate military expenditure information could be disseminated and used to promote peace and international stability and to increase openness on matters affecting collective security.