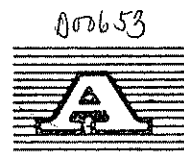


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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

Letter dated 15 May 1980 from the Permanent Representative of
the Socialist Republic of Romania and the Chairman of the
delegation of Sweden to the Disarmament Commission

We have the honour to transmit, herewith, a working paper on freezing and reduction of military expenditures and to request that it should be issued as a document of the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) Teodor MARINESCU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Socialist Republic of
Romania to the United Nations

(Signed) Curt LIDGARD
Ambassador
Chairman of the delegation of
Sweden to the Disarmament
Commission

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

WORKING PAPER

FREEZING AND REDUCTION OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES

Background

According to reliable sources the world's total military expenditures showed a steady increase throughout the 1970s and have now reached an estimated yearly value of about \$US 450 billion.

At its tenth special session (SSOD) in 1978, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a final document pointing at this "enormous consumption of human and material resources". It was regarded that a situation was being created that "aggravates international tensions, sharpens conflicts in various regions of the world, hinders the process of détente, exacerbates the differences between opposing military alliances, jeopardizes the security of all States, including the non-nuclear-weapon States and increases the threat of nuclear war" (para. 11).

In the light of this, the question of freezing and reducing military expenditures should have a very high priority.

In recent years, the General Assembly has repeatedly dealt with the question of the reduction of military budgets which has been reflected in numerous resolutions. The prominence given to this subject at the SSOD, of which the Final Document bears witness, further shows the importance and great interest that Member States attach to this problem.*

A system for international reporting of military expenditures has been proposed by a group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General and is now being tested in accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/67 of 1978.

In spite of the initiatives taken and of efforts deployed by many States, no concrete negotiations have yet taken place on the reduction of military budgets.

At its thirty-fourth session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus - on the proposal of Austria, Indonesia, Ireland, Mauritius, Niger,

* The resolutions adopted from 1973 to 1979 were the following: 3093 A and B (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973; 3254 (XXIX) of 9 December 1974; 3463 (XXX) of 11 December 1975; 31/87 of 14 December 1976; 32/85 of 12 December 1977; S-10/2 of 30 June 1978; 33/67 of 14 December 1978 and 34/83 of 11 December 1979. The Final Document of SSOD contains in para. 125 (a, c, k, l, p, v, x, bb, ee) concrete proposals that Member States made in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets.

conclusion of agreements on the reduction of military expenditures, to exercise self-restraint in their military expenditures, which would conform with the appeal contained in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 34/83 F.

The Declaration should rest upon a number of basic principles, such as:

- the need that the process of freezing and reduction is started by the most heavily armed States;

- the conviction that reductions could and should be carried out without affecting the military balance to the detriment of the national security of any country;

- the understanding that verification should be achieved through adequate measures satisfactory to all parties concerned.

All these and other principles would have to be thoroughly examined in all their aspects by the United Nations Disarmament Commission. After the main elements have been established by the UNDC, the UNGA might take proper action thereon.

2. Unilateral measures, for instance in the form of declarations by national parliaments or Governments to freeze or reduce their military expenditures could no doubt play an important role in promoting the conditions for international agreements on freezing and reduction of military expenditures.

Countries taking such unilateral actions may choose to identify specific economic and social projects or activities which are financed totally or partly from funds freed by reducing their military expenditures. By demonstration this might create a thought-provoking impression on other countries stimulating them to follow the example.

In view of all the possible positive effects that unilateral measures could have, the General Assembly may recommend the Member States and in particular the most heavily armed States, to consider the possibility of taking individual initiatives in this field.

3. International agreements to freeze and reduce military expenditures constitute the final and most operative type of action proposed in this context. Such agreements may be concluded either on a global, regional or bilateral basis. It is well understood that such agreements should neither affect the military balance nor create unilateral advantages for any States or group of States.

The conclusion of agreements of this kind implies the solution of a range of problems. It is not the purpose of this paper to make concrete suggestions as to the form and content of future agreements. Thus, the rest of this section is limited to a presentation of some principal matters and certain problems which ought to attract further attention.

(a) The principles on which the joint commitment in the form of a Declaration - as mentioned above - is supposed to be founded, should also be followed in

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Nigeria, Peru, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sweden and Uruguay - the resolution 34/83 which emphasizes 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". Through the same resolution, the United Nations Disarmament Commission was requested to examine and identify, at its 1980 session, effective ways and means of achieving such agreements.

II. Freezing and reduction of military expenditures as a disarmament measure

The Final Document of the SSOD stresses that "gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually agreed basis, for example, in absolute figures or in terms of percentage points, particularly by nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, would be a measure that would contribute to the curbing of 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" (para. 89).

Due to their specific characteristics such measures would:

- exert constraints on all types of military activities, thereby restricting - not only certain kind of weaponry - but each country's military potential as a whole;
- lead to actual reduction also in such fields where it would be difficult to arrive at agreements in physical terms;
- reinforce and develop the confidence among States and contribute to the improvement of the international climate, thereby promoting further political decisions in the field of disarmament;
- result in the slowing down and, finally, the cessation of the arms race;
- represent an immediate economic relief for all States and could also release substantial resources for increasing international assistance to the developing countries.

III. Action to promote the freezing and reduction of military expenditures

1. A joint commitment to be embodied in a Declaration of the Member States of the United Nations, expressing their political will to adopt, individually or collectively, effective measures to freeze and subsequently to reduce their military expenditures would constitute an important step in the field of disarmament.

The Declaration should contain the commitment of all Member States, pending the

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negotiating and implementing international agreements on freezing and reducing military budgets. Beyond this, the level of reduction and the time period during which the reductions shall be effected must also be stipulated in a multilateral agreement. On the other hand, the distribution of these reductions among different military items and activities should be left to each State to decide for itself as long as the aggregate of the reductions meets the total level agreed upon.

Another important principle is that part of the resources freed as a consequence of measures to freeze and reduce military expenditures should be ~~reallocated to the benefit of the developing countries.~~ This is in the full conformity with the Final Document of the Special Session (see i.a. paras. 16 and 35).

(b) Verification through adequate measures satisfactory to all Parties of the fact that States Parties comply with the stipulations of the agreement is an important issue which must be given further study. Defining and reporting military expenditures is a matter to which much work has been devoted during the last few years with promising results. A reporting instrument with a special matrix for different kinds of military expenditures has been elaborated by a group of United Nations experts in pursuance of resolution 3463 (XXX) F 1975. As earlier mentioned this instrument is now being tested in conformity with resolution 33/67 of 1978. It is assumed that this system for defining and reporting military expenditures, as well as the problems of comparing military expenditures between different periods of time and between different countries, will be further examined with a view of facilitating future negotiations about reductions.

(c) Concerning the form of the agreement, one may envisage the possibility of concluding a framework (general) agreement with subsequently adopted additional protocols or agreements.

IV. Further steps that the United Nations may consider

The United Nations should have the central role in guiding and stimulating negotiations to freeze and reduce the military budgets and all Member States should co-operate in order to reach acceptable solutions to all aspects related to the problem of freezing and reduction of military budgets.

At the thirty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission is supposed to present its conclusions on ways and means of achieving agreements to reduce military expenditures and to suggest further United Nations action in this field. At the same time, the General Assembly will have the report of the Ad Hoc Panel on Military Budgeting at its disposal.

The General Assembly, considering the above-mentioned questions as well as any other relevant initiatives and proposals, may entrust the Disarmament Commission with the task of working out the main elements of a joint commitment, in the form of a Declaration, to be further elaborated and negotiated on the basis of later recommendations of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly may also request the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to study all fundamental elements of an international agreement to freeze and reduce military expenditures.