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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BANGLADESH

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By resolution 35/142 A the General Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission to study at its 1981 session the problem of the reduction of military budgets and identify and elaborate the principles which would govern the activities of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures. The same resolution invited the States to communicate to the Secretary-General their opinions and suggestions on the subject.

The Government of Bangladesh from its very inception has been a strong advocate of general and complete disarmament. Convinced of the fact that ever-increasing armaments are depleting the world of its scarce resources and thereby creating more impoverishment in the world economy, the Government of Bangladesh has supported in all fora all initiatives towards the reduction of armaments and military budgets. While concurring with all efforts towards the reduction of military expenditure, Bangladesh has always upheld the concept of undiminished security of all nations.

The Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 stresses that the reduction of military budgets would increase the possibility of transferring the resources utilized for military purposes towards development in the field of economic and social development, particularly in the developing countries. By resolution 34/83 F, the General Assembly underlined the necessity of renewed efforts aimed at achieving agreement for reducing and freezing military budgets. It requested the Disarmament Commission to identify the modalities through which this objective could be attained. At the same time, the General Assembly, by its resolutions 33/67 and 35/142 B, initiated a process of examination of certain technical aspects linked with the comparative studies of

military budgets and verification with a view to facilitating future negotiations on agreements to freeze and reduce military budgets.

During the debate at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, it was noticeable that there was a profound preoccupation on the part of various countries, especially the middle and small developing countries, concerning the increase of military budgets, and a desire for urgent measures for reducing or freezing the military budgets. Of primary importance in the position of the small developing countries was the fact that the positive influence of the reduction of military expenditure would be an increase in confidence among States and the improvement of the international political climate leading to the reinforcement of the process of détente. In spite of the views expressed by most of the countries, military expenditure continues to increase, having a negative influence on international peace and security. At present any efforts in this direction continue to be befuddled by the complex international situation and the absence of political will on the part of the militarily significant countries to get down to effective negotiations on the reduction of military budgets.

In this regard, the United Nations should make attempts to harmonize the efforts of the international community with a view to creating conditions for increase of confidence among States and to encourage the formulation and solidification of the political will which is necessary for initiating any effective negotiations aimed at freezing or reducing military budgets. One of the possibilities through which the United Nations could act in this direction would be the adoption of certain principles which could promote negotiations first of all among militarily significant States.

Against this backdrop, the Government of Bangladesh believes that the principles which should govern the activities of States in the field of freezing and reducing military budgets may contain the following aspects:

- (i) Particular reference should be made to the Charter principles which govern the basic relations among States;
- (ii) Mention should also be made of the Charter principles on the question of the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and how the increase in the military budgets and expenditure frustrates the efforts of the United Nations in this regard;
- (iii) It is important to underline the positive result that will accrue out of the freezing and reduction of military budgets in the shape of international peace and security as well as social and economic development;
- (iv) It should be pointed out that international security as well as security of individual States are reduced rather than increased because of increased military expenditure; it should be mentioned that all measures aimed at freezing and reducing military budgets should lead to the maintenance of equilibrium of forces, within an international or regional framework, at a reduced level;

- (v) Freezing and reduction of military expenditure should in no way affect the right of States to equal and undiminished security and should not create any unilateral advantage for one group of States or the other;
- (vi) In the process of the reduction of military budgets, the following categories should be kept in mind:
  - (a) Arms of mass destruction;
  - (b) Development of new systems of weapons;
  - (c) Military technology;
  - (d) Nuclear armament;

(e) Since the existing military situation tends to create tension and other cognate problems, it is necessary that measures of freezing and reducing military budgets should start from the militarily significant countries. In this regard all measures at freezing and reduction of military expenditures should be followed up and accompanied by adequate verification measures considered satisfactory by all parties. In order to become effective, all verification measures should respond to the specific requirements of each accord on freezing or reducing military budgets, and concrete modalities of verification should offer all States reciprocal confidence;

(f) It should be clearly expressed that all resources released following the freeze or reduction of military budgets would be diverted towards specific areas of economic and social development;

(g) A proportion of the resources thus saved should be utilized for financing the development of the countries concerned and the other part should be transferred for supporting development activities of developing countries in general and least developed countries in particular;

(h) In this regard the central role of the United Nations has to be reaffirmed in the negotiations for freezing of reduction of military budgets. The special role of the United Nations has been given in the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, in the resolution adopted by consensus relating to military budgets as well as in other documents of the United Nations. The Government of Bangladesh sincerely believes that to attain that goal the principles of freezing and reduction of military budgets should enjoy the consensus of all States. It is only on the basis of consensus that these principles can offer the minimum framework necessary to increase the confidence among States which can finally lead to the expression of their political will to engage in concrete negotiations for freezing and reducing military budgets. This document should be further elaborated by the Disarmament Commission and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament.

