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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL
AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARMAMENTS RACE AND ITS
EXTREMELY HARMFUL EFFECTS ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Letter dated 12 July 1970 from the Permanent Representative of Romania
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania,
I have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-fifth
session of the General Assembly of an item entitled:

"Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely
harmful effects on international peace and security".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,
an explanatory memorandum is attached herewith.

(Signed) Gheorghe DIACONESCU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Romania
to the United Nations

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The alarming proportions which military arsenals have assumed suggest a world in which stockpiles of weapons and particularly, weapons of mass destruction, have long exceeded the super-saturation point. Nuclear weapons, accumulated in quantities capable of destroying mankind many times over, chemical and bacteriological weapons and so-called conventional weapons constitute a permanent threat to the lives of nations and of civilization itself on this planet. Nevertheless, the armaments race, a permanent source of tensions, a sterile diversion of material wealth and human energy to non-productive purposes, is continuing at an ever-increasing pace.
2. The magnitude and dynamics of military expenditure eloquently illustrate the point. For example, from the beginning of the last century until the end of the last decade, more than \$4 trillion were spent on armaments. In the past six years alone, \$1 trillion were spent throughout the world on weapons production and the maintenance of armed forces. With the massive expansion of military budgets, they now exceed \$200,000 million per year, whereas in 1962 they were estimated at \$120,000 million. Unless vigorous measures are taken without delay to reduce military budgets, to stop the armaments race and make concrete progress towards disarmament, military expenditure is likely to absorb another \$2.5 trillion during the 1970s.
3. The armaments race constitutes one of the heaviest burdens which peoples everywhere have to bear.

In our era, when the right of nations to live in freedom and dignity is being so strongly reasserted, the manifold - economic, social - development of all peoples is an imperative of progress. The achievement of that major objective everywhere in the world calls for the mobilization of all human energies and material resources. However, the armaments race absorbs a substantial portion of the wealth of mankind and diverts it from peaceful uses at a time when scores of peoples are living in poverty and undernourishment and vast areas of the globe are economically and culturally underdeveloped, deprived as they are of the benefits of modern civilization.

It is also a well-known fact that armament-related activities and war preparations involve scores of thousands of scientists and research workers, specialists and technicians in efforts to perfect weapons of destruction, thus preventing them from using their intelligence and knowledge to promote the material and spiritual progress of society and the well-being of peoples.

4. This enormous waste of wealth and talent, which is detrimental to the economic and social life of all States, has an even greater impact on the developing countries, where the need for skilled personnel and the lack of material and financial resources are most keenly felt.

A reduction in military expenditure, the end of the armaments race and gradual progress towards general disarmament would create vast opportunities for the effective support of action to ensure the economic and social advancement of the developing countries.

5. Because the armaments race is fouling the international political climate, sowing tension and mistrust in relations among States and constitutes a threat to world peace and security, it is detrimental to the vital interests of all peoples of the world.

6. Thorough consideration, in all its aspects, of the complex phenomenon of the current armaments race would facilitate a better understanding and a comprehensive evaluation of its negative consequences at all levels and of the great dangers with which it is fraught, and would make it possible to draw certain conclusions on the basis of which practical measures could be devised to slow down and halt this senseless competition. The Romanian Government is convinced that it is absolutely essential at this time for all States and all Governments to make a determined effort to work out effective disarmament measures which would reduce and eliminate the threat of war, particularly nuclear war.

7. The Romanian Government believes that the economic and social consequences of the armaments race and the grave threat which it poses to international peace and security are questions which merit the attention of the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session. This session, which marks a quarter of a century since the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations, should seriously consider - with the participation of all States Members - the fundamental problems facing the world today, among which the armaments race and disarmament are of primary importance.

8. In the light of these considerations, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania requests the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations of the item entitled:

"Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on international peace and security".
