assigned to it by the Assembly. It recommended that Member States consider the matter further with the aim of reconciling the differences.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION. By a resolution on the study on conventional disarmament, adopted on 9 December, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish a Group of Experts on All Aspects of the Conventional Arms Race and on Disarmament relating to Conventional Weapons and Armed Forces. It asked the Disarmament Commission to complete in 1982 its consideration of the general approach to the study, its structure and scope, and to transmit its conclusions to the Group of Experts. The Assembly agreed that the Group should pursue its work after the Disarmament Commission met, taking into consideration such conclusions as the Commission might submit and, if necessary, its 1981 deliberations. The Secretary-General was requested to submit a final report in 1983.

The Assembly adopted the resolution by a recorded vote of 114 to none, with 26 abstentions. The text, sponsored and revised by Denmark and incorporating an amendment by Brazil, was approved in the First Committee on 25 November by a recorded vote of 98 to none, with 21 abstentions.

The initial draft resolution would have had the Assembly request the Secretary-General to initiate the work of the Group, taking the Commission’s 1981 deliberations as guidance, and to submit a progress report in 1982 prior to the final report in 1983. As the sponsor, Denmark, explained it, this would have meant that the Group would begin work as soon as the resolution was adopted. After objections by some States that the Disarmament Commission should be given another chance to agree on the mandate, the text was revised by Denmark to allow the Commission to complete its consideration of the matter before the Group met. The revised text was further altered to incorporate a Brazilian amendment inserting the words “if necessary” before the reference to the Commission’s 1981 deliberations.

Commenting on the original Danish draft, Brazil, India and Peru saw it as eroding the competence of the Disarmament Commission, to which the Assembly had assigned responsibility for working out the general approach, structure and scope of the proposed study. Emphasizing their support for enhancing the Commission’s role, these States called on others to avoid actions that might adversely affect that role. Brazil and India recommended that the draft resolution be withdrawn so that the Commission could give further consideration to working out generally approved guidelines for the study.

Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Spain and the United Kingdom, the last speaking for the EC members, supported the original Danish proposal. The United Kingdom said the Assembly should not impose upon the experts detailed guidelines on every aspect of their work, and that delaying action on the study and referring the matter back to the Commission could detract from the standing of that body. The Federal Republic of Germany thought that, in deciding on its organization of work and mode of operation, the Group would find useful and sufficient the guidelines that could be derived from the list of topics presented in the Commission; a later substantive input to their work by the Commission was not ruled out. Spain commented that returning the question to the Commission would be tantamount to preventing the study from being carried out.

Explaining their positions on the revised text, a number of States which voted in favour, including the Bahamas, Ecuador, Pakistan and Peru, agreed that it had removed the preoccupations which the initial version had created regarding the Commission’s mandate to work out the general approach to the study. Italy expressed confidence that, if the Commission experienced difficulties, the Group of Experts would be in a position to pursue its work. The United States assumed that expenditures in connection with the proposed study would be made without prejudice to the zero-growth budget policy of the United Nations.

India, which abstained in the vote, felt that, although the revised text addressed some of its preoccupations, the study should be undertaken only after the Commission had fully discussed and agreed on guidelines. The USSR also abstained, stating that the proposed guidelines given in the Commission’s report were one-sided in that they emphasized such questions as the nature of military alliances, political doctrines, data collection and questions related to the qualitative aspects of the conventional arms race, instead of focusing on the task of promoting disarmament.

Several States commented favourably on the potential usefulness of the study. Nepal, for example, believed that it could form the basis for efforts to control international conventional arms transfers. Egypt said the study must recognize that nuclear disarmament took priority; it should take into account the root causes of the conventional armaments race and it should not be used to infringe the rights of peoples and States to self-determination, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Nor-