

other Commonwealth countries except Ceylon, Ghana and India, voted with the majority. In his statement, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Smith, said that it would not be timely for the Assembly at the thirteenth session to consider Chinese representation because international tension resulting from military action in the Taiwan Straits did not afford a proper atmosphere for discussion.

Disarmament

The disarmament problem is perhaps the most important issue discussed to date at the session. Of the six questions on the agenda relating to disarmament five were, on the advice of the General Committee, allocated by the Assembly to the First, or Political and Security, Committee. After some discussion, the First Committee adopted by a vote of 50 to 9, with 19 abstentions, a United States compromise proposal to consider in priority and simultaneously the following three items: (1) the question of disarmament, i.e. an item proposed by the Secretary-General; (2) the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests; and (3) the reduction of the military budgets of the U.S.S.R., the United States, the United Kingdom and France, these latter two items being proposed by the Soviet Union.

The debate in the First Committee on these aspects of disarmament lasted for about three weeks with the participation of a total of 63 delegations. An unusually large number of draft resolutions and of amendments to these resolutions was proposed for the consideration of the First Committee. The discussion was influenced by the imminence of the talks on nuclear tests and the conference of experts on surprise attack due to convene in Geneva, respectively on October 31 and November 10.

In the voting on October 31, the principal Western resolution covering all aspects of disarmament and co-sponsored by 17 powers, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, was adopted by 49 votes to 9, with 23 abstentions. Under this resolution, the Assembly was to urge the Powers holding talks in Geneva to "make every effort to reach an early agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests under effective international control" and "not to undertake further testing of nuclear weapons while these negotiations were in progress". In view of the opposition expressed by members of the Committee, the Soviet Delegation withdrew its draft resolution which would call on the powers conducting nuclear tests to halt them immediately.

The First Committee also adopted unanimously on October 31 an Indian-Yugoslav resolution on the question of surprise attack. Essentially, this resolution expressed the hope that the widest possible measure of agreement will be reached at the Conference of Experts in Geneva to study the practical aspects of minimizing the possibility of surprise attack. A somewhat similar resolution submitted by Austria, Japan and Sweden concerning the three-power negotiations on nuclear tests was adopted by 52 votes to 9 with 19 abstentions. The Committee rejected by a vote of 39 to 10, with 32 abstentions, the Soviet proposal on the reduction of military budgets.

The Committee then turned to the question of the composition of the Disarmament Commission and decided, without a dissenting vote, that for 1959 the Disarmament Commission should consist of all 81 members of the United Nations, as proposed by India and Yugoslavia, instead of 25 countries as decided at last year's session.