

Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee

1967 SESSION

THE 1967 session of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) lasted from February 21 through December 14, 1967, with a two-month recess from March 23 to May 18. A most noteworthy step was the tabling on August 24 of parallel draft texts of a Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the United States and the U.S.S.R. Co-chairmen. As had been the case since the U.S. and the Soviet Union presented their respective proposed texts in 1965, non-proliferation in general, and the draft treaty in particular, were the main topics of discussion in the Committee. During the course of the session, an interesting debate also took place on the technical aspects of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. This was initiated by the Swedish delegation, and the other participants were the U.S., British and Canadian delegations. The exchange was not conclusive but served, nevertheless, to clarify a few notions and to identify political and scientific problems related to a comprehensive test ban.

After the tabling of the draft NPT, all Committee members expressed their views on it and several of them proposed amendments to the draft text. The Co-chairmen did not go beyond very general comments on the proposed amendments before the December recess, but they made it clear that they had been engaged in revising their text to take the amendments into account. The session ended on a note of uncertainty as to the Co-chairmen's intentions, owing to their lack of specific responses to the various suggestions made by other members.

Non-Proliferation

At the beginning of the 1967 session, there was a feeling in the ENDC that at last the time was ripe for the conclusion of a treaty to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, a project first proposed in 1961 by the Irish Foreign Minister. The United States and Soviet Co-chairmen had both consulted their allies extensively on it during the previous year and they were known to be near agreement on most points to be covered by the Treaty. The non-aligned delegations had expressed their views concerning the Treaty provisions, notably in a joint memorandum in August 1966, which set out basic principles for the Treaty subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly. However, a month after the beginning of the session, the U.S. Co-chairman proposed that the Committee recess for two months in order to give his Government time to consult its allies on the drafting of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This was agreed to very reluctantly by the non-aligned members, led by Sweden and