



How Canada and Others Voted at the Fortieth Session of the United Nations

The following article was prepared by the Arms Control and Disarmament Division of the Department of External Affairs.

The fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 40), which met from September 17 to December 18, adopted 66 arms control and disarmament (ACD) resolutions (20 of them without a vote). This number represented approximately 25 per cent of the total of 259 resolutions adopted at the session.

Since the first United Nations Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD I) in 1978 when a consensus was reached on a Final Document which set out guidelines relating to arms control and disarmament issues, there have been two noticeable trends:

- (a) an increase in the number of ACD resolutions; and
- (b) a greater fragmentation of views on

The wide divergence of views regarding the 66 ACD resolutions adopted is evidenced in the voting record of the following countries, which include representatives of the various geographical groups:

| | YES | NO | ABSTAIN | ABSENT |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| Tanzania | 63 (95.5%) | 0 | 3 (4.5%) | |
| Mexico | 60 (91%) | 0 | 5 (7.5%) | 1 (1.5%) |
| USSR | 59 (89%) | 3 (4.5%) | 4 (6.5%) | |
| Greece | 57 (86%) | 0 | 9 (14%) | |
| Sweden | 54 (82%) | 0 | 12 (18%) | |
| Argentina | 54 (82%) | 0 | 12 (18%) | |
| India | 48 (73%) | 1 (1.5%) | 16 (24%) | 1 (1.5%) |
| China | 48 (73%) | 0 | 15 (22.5%) | 3 (4.5%) |
| Japan | 42 (64%) | 8 (12%) | 16 (24%) | |
| Canada | 41 (62%) | 12 (18%) | 13 (20%) | |
| Federal Republic of Germany | 36 (55%) | 12 (18%) | 18 (27%) | |
| USA | 29 (44%) | 27 (41%) | 10 (15%) | |

(Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania are the countries which issued the six-nation joint appeals to the two superpowers regarding nuclear weapons and outer space.)



Delegates in United Nations First Committee voting on arms control and disarmament resolution.

UN Photo

ACD issues as indicated in the move away from consensus.

In the period from 1978 to 1985, the number of ACD resolutions increased from 41 to 66. At the same time, the number of these resolutions adopted without a vote dropped from 43.9 to 30 per cent. (The 30 per cent represents a slight improvement from the low of 27 per cent reached in 1983 at UNGA 38 and the 28.6 per cent at UNGA 39.)

At the 1985 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) last May, Canada joined others in expressing concern about the implications of these trends during the discussion of the role of the United Nations in disarmament (which will continue at UNDC 1986). In its view, attention had to be paid to the growing demands that arms control and disarmament were making on the General Assembly and its First Committee which dealt with these issues. The First Committee could not