

PART A

Chapter 1: COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

Arms control and disarmament

The hopes for new advances in disarmament negotiations aroused by the United Nations Special Session devoted to disarmament in 1978 were disappointed in 1979. SALT II was signed and a negotiating text for an agreement banning radiological weapons was tabled by the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. in Geneva, but there was no breakthrough in the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban and on the destruction of chemical weapons. By the end of the year, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had increased dramatically the possibility that SALT II would not be ratified.

In response to the stimulus of the Program of Action of the Special Session, the position of Adviser on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs officially came into being at the beginning of the year. A good start was achieved during the balance of the year through the convening of a consultative group of representatives of interested non-governmental organizations, the financing of Canadian research on behalf of the United Nations study on disarmament and development, and the sponsorship of educational activities by interested groups and organizations. A Disarmament Newsletter is to be published as well.

The new Committee on Disarmament (CD) began its work early in the year in Geneva. The main distinguishing features of the CD are the addition of eight new, mostly neutral and non-aligned members and the institution of a rotating monthly chairman to replace the former co-chairmanship of the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. In the light of these changes, France decided to take up its seat in 1979. (China, by then the only nuclear weapon state not to have done so, took up its seat on the CD early in the 1980 session thereby bringing the Committee up to its current complement of 40 members.)

The CD agenda for 1979 included the following issues:

1. Nuclear test ban
2. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament
3. Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons
4. Chemical weapons
5. New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons.

Two of these issues—nuclear test ban and chemical weapons—were already the subject of negotiations between

the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. (with the U.K. participating in the test ban talks). In neither case were the negotiating powers enthusiastic about a role for the Committee, and efforts to involve the Committee, which were supported by Canada, were rebuffed. Progress reports were made by the negotiating powers to the Committee, but these indicated that difficult issues of verification remained unsettled in each case. The Committee did establish a working group to examine the assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons. Proposals by the Soviet Union for a negotiating framework to begin the process of nuclear disarmament were rejected by Western members of the Committee as unrealistic. For its part, Canada continued to draw attention to the importance of negotiating an agreement to cease the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, thus emphasizing the need to move progressively towards stopping a build-up of nuclear arms. None of the nuclear weapon states, however, is ready to begin such negotiations. The CD operates by consensus, in recognition of the reality that disarmament issues cannot be settled by majority voting procedures.

The revived United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), open to membership by all UN members, also made its debut in 1979. Its principal work was to consider a framework for a Comprehensive Program for Disarmament (CPD). The goal of General and Complete Disarmament (GCD) has been the foremost objective of the UN since the end of World War II, but it was not until the Declaration of the 1970s as a Disarmament Decade that a step-by-step approach towards that goal began to take concrete form. It took an intensive period of four weeks in New York for the UNDC to begin to draw all the strings together in a document called "Elements of a Comprehensive Program for Disarmament". The Program itself is to be negotiated by the CD, but there is little prospect of early agreement on a comprehensive approach of this kind.

The First Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA XXXIV), apart from the perennial arms control and disarmament resolutions, continued to follow up the Program of Action of the Special Session. In all, thirty-nine resolutions were adopted dealing with disarmament questions, eighteen focusing on nuclear issues, eleven on non-nuclear issues, and ten on procedural matters. Canada again co-authored with Poland the Resolution on Chemical Weapons and shepherded its initiative on fissionable ma-