

Arms control and disarmament

Although no major arms-control and disarmament agreement was reached during 1977, the year was one of intensified international effort in several important fields, both in the United Nations context and outside it. In this sense, work accomplished by the international community in arms control and disarmament was, in effect, preparatory to, and aimed at ensuring the success of, a number of major steps forward expected in 1978. Canada's own efforts intensified in a number of areas, reflecting the Government's determination to do what it could to contribute to real progress and to ensure that momentum was not lost.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)

The most urgent and important arms-control issue now under negotiation remains the long-sought additional agreement between the two major nuclear powers to curtail the strategic-nuclear-arms race and begin the process of reducing nuclear arsenals. It is essential to the improvement of East-West relations and the continued development of *détente* that the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. agree to limit the further growth and refinement of strategic nuclear arms, in order to enhance the stability of the strategic balance and so reduce the risk of war.

In 1972, the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. signed initial agreements on the limitation of strategic nuclear arms (SALT I), and in 1974, at Vladivostok, they reached an understanding on the outlines of a further agreement, SALT II. New proposals were put forward by the U.S.A. in early 1977, and by the end of the year negotiations had progressed sufficiently to give rise to optimism that agreement on SALT II might be reached early in 1978.

Both in NATO and through bilateral channels, Canada was able to register support for early agreement on measures that would halt and eventually reverse the nuclear-arms race.

Non-proliferation

Because of its own advanced capabilities in nuclear technology, Canada has recognized its special responsibility in the field of non-proliferation and has assigned it a high priority. Canada continued its efforts to broaden and reinforce the international non-proliferation system. At the thirty-second General Assembly, Canada co-sponsored a resolution, which received wide support, calling upon those states that had not done so to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or at least accept IAEA-administered safeguards on their entire nuclear programs.

Canada was active in supporting, together with the U.S., a proposal for a Nuclear-Fuel-Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) program, and was chosen co-chairman of INFCE's working group on fuel and heavy-water availability. INFCE is exploring, on a co-operative basis in the international community, ways of reducing the particular proliferation risks inherent in the nuclear-fuel cycle and in the growing international production and transfer of plutonium (See also "Economic and technological affairs".)

Nuclear testing

During 1977, the U.S., Britain and the U.S.S.R. began negotiations to end nuclear testing, recognizing that such cessation need not await the participation of all nuclear-weapon states. To date, the negotiations have centred on the questions of verification, whether all explosions should be banned, including so-called peaceful nuclear explosions, and whether the treaty should come into effect without the participation of all nuclear-weapon states. The three-power negotiations are aimed at reaching agreement on the key elements for a treaty. The Geneva Disarmament Conference would then undertake the multilateral phase of negotiating a test-ban treaty.

With negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty under way, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution, co-sponsored by Canada, setting the objective that negotiations leading to such a treaty be successfully concluded in the near future.