

Throughout the discussions on non-proliferation, near-unanimity existed on the urgent need for a non-proliferation treaty, although differences were expressed over the elements to be embodied in a treaty. The view that a treaty should embody a mutual balance of responsibilities and obligations, as between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, was repeatedly advanced by non-aligned spokesmen. Canada joined Western and Communist states in pointing out that, while there was validity in this argument, a non-proliferation treaty should not be delayed by attaching further conditions. Another issue receiving attention was that of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. In view of the fact that the technology involved in weapons explosions and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes is indistinguishable, Canada supported a United States suggestion that nuclear-weapon powers provide a nuclear service under international supervision and at a reasonable cost for legitimate civil projects whenever peaceful explosions become economically and technically feasible.

General and Complete Disarmament

There is general agreement that in the disarmament field the ultimate goal is general and complete disarmament under effective international supervision. The annual UN debate on general and complete disarmament focuses attention on this objective and provides an opportunity for the introduction of new proposals. In the discussion this year, General E. L. M. Burns emphasized the importance of initiating a process that would produce increasing mutual confidence and stressed the value of a step-by-step approach, including a non-proliferation treaty, an underground test ban, and a cut-off of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) tabled a draft resolution calling on the ENDC to exert new efforts to reach agreement on general and complete disarmament under effective international control and to report to the General Assembly on the progress achieved. After discussion, the draft resolution was approved in committee and went to plenary session, where it passed by a 98 (including Canada) to zero vote, with two abstentions (Cuba and France).

Iran introduced a draft resolution that appealed to all states to consider allocating a small proportion of their military expenditures to the UNESCO literacy campaign and to study the possibility that military expenditures be reduced and the savings allocated to the objectives of the United Nations Development Decade. Due to the lack of forewarning and the limited time available for discussion, this draft resolution was not pressed to a vote.

Draft resolutions introduced by several East European countries under the general and complete disarmament item tended to inject a propagandistic note into the Committee's discussions. One of these, sponsored by Poland and the Ukraine, called upon all states to refrain from sending aircraft carrying nuclear weapons beyond national frontiers. This resolution attracted little support and was withdrawn.