

Human Environment

The United Nations General Assembly, by deciding to convene a Conference on Human Environment to be held in 1972, formally directed its attention to a new area of universal concern -- the problems of human environment that effect man's physical, mental and social well-being. It was recognized that, while modern industrial and technological developments offer unprecedented opportunities to change and shape the environment of man to meet his needs and aspirations, they involve grave dangers if not properly controlled, such as the growing problems of water and air pollution. Reflecting Canadian concern and experience with these problems, the Canadian delegation to the twenty-third session stressed Canadian interest in the question of human environment and support for holding a United Nations conference on the subject.

In the Canadian statement, an effort was made to underline the dangers of ignoring the effects of industrialization on human environment and to urge that prevention should form an integral part of development plans--a particularly appropriate consideration for developing countries in seeking to avoid environmental abuses already suffered in developed countries.

Disarmament

International arms-control and disarmament discussions continued during 1968 in two principal bodies, the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) at Geneva and the United Nations General Assembly. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are also transmitted to the ENDC for its consideration and the latter reports to the Assembly. The most important work accomplished by the ENDC and by a resumed session of the General Assembly in 1968 was the successful conclusion of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which has been under intermittent negotiation for several years. Some of the non-nuclear powers, dissatisfied with various aspects of the NPT, took the initiative in having the United Nations convene a Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States in August to consider the security, economic and developmental implications of the Treaty.

Resumed Twenty-Second Session of UN General Assembly

The idea of a treaty to prohibit an increase in the number of powers possessing independent control of nuclear weapons had been discussed for at least a decade, but detailed negotiations did not begin until 1965. By the beginning of 1968, all the main obstacles to an acceptable draft treaty had been overcome except for the provisions concerning verification procedures or safeguards. The main point at issue was whether the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should be specified in the treaty, as the U.S.S.R. insisted, or whether the treaty should also admit similar systems established by other organizations, such as EURATOM. On January 18, the co-chairmen of the ENDC tabled a complete draft treaty containing a safeguards article which was a compromise between the positions of the United States and the U.S.S.R. The co-chairmen had also taken into account amendments proposed by other ENDC delegations which had received strong support. After further