

INTRODUCTION

Outside the United Nations (UN) and state governments, the yearly tracking of the contents of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) arms control and disarmament (ACD) resolutions is not common. What is published in Canada is limited in scope. The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, for example, publishes a table in December each year showing skeletal information about these resolutions. The Arms Control and Disarmament Division of External Affairs annually publishes a slightly more detailed table in its Winter/Spring edition of Disarmament Bulletin. However, neither publication includes a review of the contents of any of the resolutions other than that which the Arms Control and Disarmament Division incorporates on a few that are introduced by Canada as lead sponsor.

In the past this void was filled by the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament. However, the Centre has not published anything on this subject since 1986. This study continues from where the Centre left off and reviews the past two sessions of the UNGA's consideration of ACD resolutions. It also includes an accounting of the final voting record of Canada for the past few years and makes observations, based on the data compiled, about Canada's position on the UNGA ACD resolution voting process. In addition, general comments are made about this process based on the record of consensus that has been achieved since the First UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978.

The value of tracking the contents of UNGA ACD resolutions on a yearly basis may be measured according to a variety of criteria. First, as the body of such data is compiled over time, interested individuals are afforded the opportunity to compare the contents of various resolutions from year to year. Second, such information, in combination with voting results, may shed light on Canada's ACD policy as it is acted upon and expressed both domestically and internationally. It also lays the foundation for future analyses wherein such factors as changing administrations and the nature of East-West and North-South relations may be incorporated. Furthermore, publications such as this help to contribute to our understanding of the nature of international relations and the role of the UN in international society. Lastly, they may also shed light on the perceptions entertained by various governments about their views on international and national security, and how stability in global and regional relations can be fostered.