

talks between the two superpowers. Negotiations for a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons tests (CTB), and the prohibition of chemical and of radiological weapons have dragged on inconclusively. The only arms control agreement reached by the middle of 1981 concerned Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects. The Treaty contains three protocols which provide for banning:

- incendiary attacks on cities and other areas of concentrated civilian population, even when they contain military targets;
- booby traps attached to the sick or wounded, food and drink, kitchen utensils and toys, and at grave sites and medical facilities;
- weapons that scatter fragments made of materials such as glass or plastic which do not show up on x-rays.

This is a very modest step in the context of overall disarmament. On the other hand, it shows that agreements can be reached even when the international situation is tense. Such events as the invasion of Afghanistan, the Polish crisis, the hostages at the US Embassy in Teheran, or the growing tensions between Israel and her Arab neighbours did not prevent a successful negotiation. Perhaps the pressures of UNSSOD II will lead to other positive achievements.

In the wake of UNSSOD I, a number of expert studies on various aspects of disarmament and the arms race have been commissioned. They should add to our knowledge and perhaps, provide new ideas as well.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Of course, UNSSOD II will not take place in isolation, and its debates and results will be affected by the current international situation. While it is impossible to forecast exactly what factors will influence the session, these are obviously important:

1. Relations between the two superpowers. By May 1982, we should know whether they will continue the SALT process and whether they can limit the introduction of new