

II POLITICAL AND SECURITY

Disarmament

On December 16, 1955 the General Assembly passed a resolution urging the powers principally involved to continue their efforts towards reaching agreement. In accordance with the suggestions contained in that resolution the Disarmament Commission met on January 23, 1956, and agreed to reconvene its sub-committee (Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the U.S.S.R.). The period from then to the adjournment of the eleventh session of the United Nations General Assembly on March 8, 1957 was not one in which major concrete steps towards disarmament were achieved. Nevertheless, some progress was made towards narrowing the gap between the positions of the Western powers and the Soviet Union.

At the opening meeting of the sub-committee in London on March 19, 1956 the United Kingdom and France presented a "synthesis plan" for the reduction of armaments which would be developed in three stages. The plan was essentially similar to the previous joint initiatives of the United Kingdom and France concerning the outline of a comprehensive programme of disarmament and took into account recent Soviet proposals and statements of position. At the second meeting, the United States submitted two working papers. The first suggested that the five members of the sub-committee should agree to carry out an exchange of technical missions with a view to developing the means for control and inspection. The second proposed the setting up of limited and designated areas in the United States and Soviet Union, in which inspection and control tests might be carried out. On March 27, the Soviet Union tabled a new set of proposals under the general title of "Agreement on the Reduction of Conventional Armaments and Armed Forces". The main proposal envisaged the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in two stages to be completed in two years after an initial freeze of armament and manpower levels. At the end of the second stage the force levels for the United States, the Soviet Union and China would be 1,500,000 and for France and the United Kingdom 650,000. A second proposal, described as "separable" from the foregoing, suggested the creation of a limited zone of inspection in Europe including the territory of both parts of Germany and of adjacent states. A further "separable" proposal called for the immediate prohibition of nuclear tests, such steps as might be necessary to ensure that no atomic weapons be included in the armaments of troops in German territory, and the reduction of military budgets of states by 15 per cent over the previous year. After considering these and other proposals and working papers the sub-committee adjourned its session on May 4. It had not by this time reached any substantive conclusions, and its report merely transmitted to the Disarmament