

– the various French proposals for studies on (a) an international satellite-monitoring agency, (b) an international institute for disarmament research, and (c) the creation of an international disarmament fund for development to be financed by a sort of tax on military spending;

– the Soviet proposals for a complete “freeze” on the quantitative and qualitative build-up of both nuclear and conventional weapons;

– the U.S. proposals for the provision of monitoring equipment and sensors for border surveillance and the creation of a United Nations peacekeeping reserve force;

– the proposals by the Netherlands, Sri Lanka and others for studies of the possibility of establishing an international disarmament organization or authority;

– the appeal of the Secretary-General for countries to divert one-tenth of 1 per cent of their military budgets for the purpose of disarmament efforts.

Finally, the decision to hold a second special session (probably in 1981 or 1982) will provide an opportunity to review the progress made and to revise the program of action and the machinery established. It will also provide some stimulus to greater efforts in the meantime and help keep the momentum going.

Negative side

On the negative side was the failure of Presidents Carter and Brezhnev to attend the session, provide any effective leadership or make any major new proposals. Nor did they report any substantial agreement on a comprehensive test ban or in the SALT negotiations. In fact, the impression was widespread at the session that the two super-powers were dragging their feet on both substance and machinery.

While the active participation of France and China in the special session was welcomed, their announced desire to narrow the gap between them and the two super-powers led to their adopting rigid stances against a nuclear test-ban and limitations on the nuclear-arms race.

There was also a negative reaction at the Assembly and among the public to the holding during the session of a NATO summit meeting in Washington, where agreement

was announced on a long-term program to increase armaments.

Apart from the announcement by Canada of its previous decision to remove all nuclear weapons from Canadian forces and territory, and the announcement by Iran that (in response to the appeal of the Secretary-General) it was diverting \$7 million from its military expenditures as a gift to UNICEF, there were no announcements or any national unilateral actions to limit or reduce armaments or military expenditures.

Finally, one of the most disappointing aspects of the special session was the very poor coverage and absence of reporting about it by the public press and other media. While both governmental and non-governmental interest and participation were very high, the public had almost no way of knowing what was happening at the session. Only the *Disarmament Times*, published daily during the session by a group of non-governmental organizations, provided a source of continuous information and opinion about the proceedings. Perhaps the lack of interest by the media was in part due to the absence of fireworks and the fact that most of the time of the session was devoted to the rather dull work of reconciling conflicting texts in numerous private drafting groups.

It is rather early to make a definitive assessment of the special session. While the results were not as good as they ought to have been, they were certainly more encouraging than many observers had expected. On balance, they were very definitely on the positive side. For the first time, the entire world community had been able to agree on a detailed work plan for comprehensive disarmament.

The feared confrontation between the non-aligned and the two super-powers and their allies did not materialize. On the contrary, a real dialogue developed between the non-aligned countries and the heavily-armed ones and between the non-nuclear and the nuclear powers. The high-level diplomacy led to a serious and constructive debate on all aspects of disarmament and to a consensus that, if it did not satisfy everyone, at least provided an agreed program of action and more

effective machinery for implementing it. The disarmament process received a new impetus and new opportunities were created for real progress. Whether advantage is taken of these opportunities, only time and the second special session will tell.

Disappointments and satisfactions

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ment Committee, which will be an organ of negotiation, the Commission will have an incentive and deliberative role and will include all the UN member states.

“What a plethora of committees and organs!” some will exclaim. Others will remark “plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”. Both comments are partly right and partly wrong. Partly right because, as was explained above, the items on the disarmament agenda have scarcely changed since 1945; partly wrong because the international community can neither ignore the unreasonable amounts being spent on arms nor remain silent in the face of the absurd escalation of the arms race. The voice of international morality does make itself heard through the medium of these 119 states and agencies meeting in special session.

This, of course, does not help a great deal in a world in which, too often, the law of the jungle wins out over the elementary principles of international justice. However, there is no better remedy than to remind ourselves that there is a way out – the way of disarmament.

Although the remedy is quite simple, administering it is a much more delicate operation. The position of the West in matters of security and disarmament has always been that there can be no *détente* without security. Canada, in the position put forward by its Prime Minister, speaking on May 26, 1978, before the tenth special session of the General Assembly, favoured a policy of gradually cutting off the life blood of the arms race. Four basic proposals were put forward with this policy in mind. The first called for a total ban on nuclear testing; the second for a cessation of ballistic flight tests for strategic