

Disarmament at the UN General Assembly

SIX arms-control and disarmament topics were discussed by the First (Political) Committee at the twenty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. Of these, four originated in reports of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC)—namely, the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Item 28), General and Complete Disarmament (Item 29), the Urgent Need for the Suspension of Nuclear and Thermonuclear Tests (Item 30), and the Elimination of Foreign Military Bases in the Countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Item 31). Under Non-Proliferation, there were discussions of the report of the ENDC on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States. Discussion of General and Complete Disarmament, in addition to the report of the ENDC on this subject, also covered the Report of the Secretary-General on the Effects of the Possible Use of Nuclear Weapons and on the Economic and Security Implications for States of the Acquisition and Further Development of These Weapons. The Committee also debated at somewhat greater length the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Item 91) and a draft Convention for the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons (Item 96).

On September 27, Canadian arms-control and disarmament policy was outlined in a statement in the general debate by the Honourable Paul Martin, the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Mr. Martin began by noting three recent accomplishments in the field of arms control: the approval of the Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the conclusion of the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the tabling in the ENDC on August 24 of identical draft treaties on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. After noting the beneficial effects of the two earlier agreements, Mr. Martin stressed the urgency of concluding a treaty to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons, which would help to prevent a new nuclear arms race, greatly reduce the danger of nuclear war and contribute to conditions in which the nuclear powers could address themselves to reducing their nuclear arsenals. With regard to the proposed treaty, Mr. Martin reiterated Canada's view that it would inhibit neither the collective defence arrangements nor the civil nuclear programmes of non-nuclear signatories. He noted that since civil and military nuclear-explosive technologies were indistinguishable, the treaty should prohibit non-nuclear signatories from developing so-called peaceful nuclear explosive devices provided suitable arrangements could be worked to make nuclear explosive services for peaceful purposes available to non-nuclear states. He made the point that non-nuclear signatories of the non-proliferation treaty should, at the same time, have some assurances