

Assembly at its last session invited the CCD to consider as matters of priority, and the record shows that this wish was respected. With what degree of success is, of course, another matter.

I should like to offer some comments on these two issues. First, because in the view of my delegation it has greater significance, let me treat the question of a comprehensive ban on testing nuclear weapons. For several years now, the Canadian delegation, like most others here, has been convinced that the most constructive and immediately available contribution to the deceleration of the arms race and to the promotion of arms control which would be made multilaterally through the CCD would be the negotiation of a treaty providing for the complete cessation of nuclear-weapons tests. The considerations that have led us to this position are well known. First, by placing an obstacle in the way of the development of new varieties of nuclear weapons, such a ban would be a factor in slowing the nuclear-arms race. Second, such a ban would be a measure of self-restraint by the nuclear powers, consistent with the obligations and spirit of the non-proliferation treaty; it would thus serve to strengthen this important instrument. Third, a comprehensive test ban, adhered to by all nuclear powers, would eliminate from the world a source of anxiety about threats to the environment. A comprehensive test ban would thus contribute to the safety of this planet, not only today but for the generations to come.

The CCD's consideration of the test-ban issue has been lengthy, detailed and frequently constructive, but it is striking that, notwithstanding the undertakings of the nuclear powers in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the initiative has always come from its other members, never from the super-powers. This year, for instance, the most that was achieved was a meeting of technical experts to review developments related to the complex problems of verifying an underground test ban. This meeting was called, not at the initiative of any of the nuclear-weapon states but at the urging of the delegation of Japan. Once again, as was the case in past meetings of this kind, only two of the nuclear powers on the CCD, the United States and Britain, participated; disappointingly, the Soviet Union again held to the line that it would only join in promoting scientific exchanges in the field of seismic monitoring of underground nuclear-weapon tests as part of an accepted comprehensive test-ban treaty. In short, nothing that occurred this year in the CCD -- whether statements, working papers, or participation in technical discussions -- produced any evidence of a change of position by any of the nuclear-testing states.

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