

tee to make their contribution to the disarmament process. Disarmament problems would thus be dealt with on an uninterrupted, year-round basis.

France and China, which had not in the last 20 years participated in the disarmament work, both played an active role at the special session. France indicated its readiness to join in the negotiations. Even China, which had never before done more than repeat routine criticism of the two superpowers (especially the Soviet Union), took an active part in the deliberations of the session and hinted that it might soon also participate in the negotiations. Both France and China, however, made it clear that they would continue nuclear testing and the building-up of their nuclear arsenals in order to reduce the gap between them and the nuclear super-powers. Hence, as pointed out privately by some observers, France's participation in the negotiating body may set back the negotiations by two or three years, and China's by five to ten years. But it is clearly necessary to involve all the nuclear powers in the disarmament efforts. The sooner they become involved the sooner will the world be able to come to grips with all of the problems in a substantial way rather than in piecemeal efforts to deal with limited steps.

The mere fact of the holding of the session and of the necessity of preparing for it stimulated governments to think more seriously about the problems and to come up with new ideas and some modest but important actions. The Soviet Union and France, for example, announced their signature of the relative protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and Argentina announced its ratification of the treaty. Thus important steps were taken to complete the treaty and a new impetus was given to the idea of nuclear-free zones and to a regional legal approach to non-proliferation.

In addition, in support of the idea of non-proliferation, the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain gave some qualified assurances that they would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. Although these assurances were regarded as inadequate by the non-nuclear powers, they were an indica-

tion that the nuclear powers were at least becoming conscious of the need to provide security assurances to states that would forego the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union also made a step forward in Brezhnev's announcement on April 25 that it would never use nuclear weapons except in case of aggression against itself or its allies by another *nuclear power*. This was a somewhat less restrictive pledge than that of the United States, which had undertaken not to use nuclear weapons except in case of aggression against itself or its allies by any state, whether nuclear or non-nuclear.

Awareness heightened

The session heightened awareness of the increasing threat to survival posed by ever-growing arsenals and arms technology. It also enhanced world consciousness that the condition of the developing world must be very substantially improved and that there was an inescapable link between disarmament and development, as well as between disarmament and international security.

Greater emphasis was given to the role of the United Nations, and to the expansion of information and educational activities. It was decided that an advisory board should be created to help the Secretary-General with disarmament studies, that non-governmental organizations should be given a larger role and that the United Nations Centre for Disarmament should be strengthened.

Owing to the impossibility of overcoming the deep divisions between the opposing points of view, the program of action was less comprehensive and specific than many delegations would have liked. The Declaration did, however, emphasize that "highest priority" must be given to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war. It also expressed the conviction that the world must "proceed to disarmament or face annihilation". In addition, the program did set out a considerable list of nuclear-disarmament measures. For the first time in the postwar disarmament efforts, specific calls were made for the reduction of conventional arms (which consume the largest part of military budgets) and limitations on their international transfer.

Another important positive result of the session was the flood of new ideas and proposals that were presented. While these cannot be translated into immediate action, they will generate new currents of activity, including study, debate and the identification of possible areas of agreement that are bound to benefit the disarmament process.

One of the important new ideas suggested was the "strategy of suffocation" of the strategic arms race between the super-powers, and indeed of all nuclear powers, proposed by Prime Minister Trudeau in order to arrest the nuclear-arms race in the laboratory. The integrated four-point strategy included: (1) a comprehensive test ban to prevent the development of nuclear-explosive devices; (2) a ban on "the flight testing of all new strategic delivery vehicles", which "would complement the ban on the testing of warheads" (this was the first time that any country had officially proposed such a ban which is essential to the halting of the technological arms race); (3) a ban on all production of fissionable material for weapons purposes; and (4) an agreement to limit and then progressively to reduce military spending on new strategic nuclear-weapons systems.

The Canadian initiative attracted wide interest and was supported by several countries, though there was no immediate response from any nuclear-weapon state. It will undoubtedly be studied carefully, and more will be heard about it in the future.

New initiatives

More than two dozen initiatives (including the Canadian one and variations of more long-standing proposals), which were too novel to be included in the program of action, were listed as items for further study and will be transmitted to all bodies dealing with disarmament. It is also, of course, possible that some will be presented again (and perhaps approved) at the forthcoming thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly. Among the more important of these initiatives are the following:

— the Indian proposals for an absolute ban on the use of nuclear weapons and for a moratorium on further testing of nuclear weapons;