

Sovereignty

A number of participants alluded to the developing view within the international community that governments ought not be allowed to mistreat their citizens, deprive them of basic human rights or resist international aid on the basis of national sovereignty. The question was posed: "Who decides when a country's sovereignty can be breached?" Participants were reminded that it is only the media that make us aware of gross excesses on the part of governments...

Suggestions for Canada

The plenary discussion revealed the necessity of informing all Canadians of the wide range of humanitarian and other activities currently being carried out by non-governmental means, which quite appropriately deserve to be placed under the peacekeeping umbrella. The importance of the media in stimulating public awareness was stressed. Also emphasized was the positive result to be gained through co-operation with organizations currently

working in the field, and through the implementation of effective follow-through programs. Some participants spoke of the need for an early warning system involving the collection, collation, interpretation and dissemination of information.

It was suggested that Canada:

- 1) take the lead in ensuring that the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs better coordinate its activities;
- 2) participate in the much-needed redesign of UN agencies' mandates, to take into account the changing international situation;
- 3) spearhead the creation of a UN organization to deal with internally displaced persons, who now outnumber refugees; and
- 4) play a greater part in the lifting and detonation of land mines. It was mentioned that ten people (seven in Senegal, three in Somalia) have been lost to land mines in the last 30 days.

Though the enormity of the difficulties confronting the UN was not discounted by participants, some "success stories" were also brought up in discussion. Notable

among these were the UN operations in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Namibia.

Rapporteur's Remarks

Clearly we are in a new peacekeeping age. New, enhanced and innovative approaches to education and training are required. The diversity of approach and backgrounds of members of the new peacekeeping coalition ensures a rich diversity of skills upon which the Canadian government can call.

There were a number of good suggestions for future research and action. Proposed subjects for research included a peacekeeping early warning system, techniques of preventive diplomacy, and sovereignty and peacekeeping. Ideas that could be translated into projects include the development of prototype peacekeeping training and more interchanges between the Canadian Forces and humanitarian organizations. Most important, seminar participants demonstrated the firm conviction that Canada should continue to make a significant contribution to international peace, security and stability. ■

First Committee Considers Disarmament Machinery

The UN First Committee met from March 8 to 12 in New York to reassess the multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery, including ways and means of enhancing its functioning and efficiency. The reassessment was driven in part by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's October 1992 report entitled *New Dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post-Cold War Era*. This report and Canada's written response to it (see *Disarmament Bulletin* 20) formed the

basis of much of the discussion at the March session.

Resumed session produces mixed results.

Canada found the session disappointing insofar as there was little movement towards better integrating arms control and disarmament issues into the broader international peace and security agenda. Canada argued that arms control is part of a wider process of promoting less reliance on weapons and more reliance on coopera-

tive mechanisms for creating and enhancing peace and security. We put forward suggestions on how to better join the consideration of disarmament and political-security issues in a single General Assembly committee.

However, several states expressed reluctance to more clearly engage the arms control process with broader issues. They also hesitated at trying to improve integration of the various components of the arms control machinery — the First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) — to improve functioning

and efficiency, although the consensus resolution produced by the session does call for enhancing dialogue and cooperation among the three.

On the positive side, the First Committee made progress in reinforcing reform within the UN disarmament bodies. There was support for continued rationalization of the First Committee's work. There was also strong support for the UNDC's cur-

rent role and its reform campaign. Definition of the CD's role, agenda and composition, and its place in the disarmament machinery, proved more complex. The First Committee resolution encourages the CD to reach early agreement on the expansion of its membership.

The resolution also urges the Secretary-General to strengthen the Office for Disarmament Affairs to carry out its mandated tasks. The Secretary-General must report to the 48th session of the General Assembly, scheduled for this fall, on what measures he will take. There was some discussion of whether the Office should remain located in New York or be moved to Geneva. Canada strongly favours keeping the Office in New York.

The First Committee also considered the Security Council's role in disarmament but came to no agreement. The Secretary-General's suggestion that the Council should play a more pro-active role, particularly on non-proliferation, received the support of many countries. However, others argued against overloading an already busy Council. ■