

mittee on Disarmament began its work on March 14 and met throughout the year, with a recess during the disarmament debate at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly. (Immediately before the commencement of the negotiations, the French Government stated that it did not intend to be represented, and it has not taken part in the Geneva talks to date.) Although the Committee is not formally a subsidiary body of the United Nations, it has reported regularly to the Disarmament Commission and the General Assembly and has taken into account recommendations by the latter. The United Nations has provided conference facilities in Geneva.

The resumption of international disarmament discussions in a new negotiating body, after a long and unproductive interval, was encouraging in several respects. The work of the Committee held out better prospects of success than its predecessors, not only because of its revised composition, which permitted a broader and more representative expression of world opinion through the participation of the eight non-aligned states, but also because the major powers had agreed to a joint statement of principles which defined the goals of the disarmament programme and set down guidelines for their achievement. Procedural improvements—notably the decision that the United States and the Soviet Union would serve as permanent co-chairmen of the Committee—were also influential in facilitating orderly work in the Committee and in providing for close consultation between the two major powers on whose agreement any system of disarmament would depend.

Although the Committee did not succeed during the year in drafting final agreements on specific measures of disarmament, it was more successful than had been the case in earlier negotiations both in singling out common elements in the proposals put forward by the Western and Communist states and in isolating remaining differences. The need for a careful and detailed discussion of all the factors involved in preparing a comprehensive disarmament programme was made apparent by the early stages of the Committee's work and it was recognized by the General Assembly that the negotiations should continue until agreement was reached.

In addition to discussing a treaty on general and complete disarmament, the Committee undertook the task of assisting the three major nuclear powers to reach agreement on cessation of nuclear weapons tests, a subject which had earlier been dealt with for the most part in private meetings of the three powers. The examination of this topic, both in plenary meetings of the Committee and in a sub-committee of the nuclear powers, brought forward a range of ideas designed to resolve the differences between existing positions—notably, the important compromise proposals submitted jointly by the eight non-aligned members. Although agreement was not reached by the end of 1962, an exchange of letters between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchov, initiated late in December, brought renewed hope that an agreement could be worked out in the new year.