

disarmament and the regulation of armaments as set out in Articles 11 and 26 of the Charter. Canada took an active part in the work of the UN Atomic Energy Commission set up in 1946. It was the first act of the then established General Assembly of the United Nations. It also took part in the work of the Committee on Conventional Armaments and all the succeeding commissions and committees that have been set up under the United Nations to deal with disarmament questions.

In 1978 at UNSSOD I, meaning the first United Nations Special Session, the present Committee on Disarmament was set up with 40 members. There was an enlargement progressively over the years and Canada is a member of that committee on disarmament, which has a majority of non-aligned states and all of the nuclear weapon states; France and China, for the first time in 1979 and 1980, I guess it was, joined the work. The committee and its working groups observed the consensus rule. That means that any one of the 40 countries can veto action by the committee.

The Committee on Disarmament (CD), has working groups on a chemical weapons treaty, a radiological weapons treaty, negative security assurances* and the drafting of a comprehensive program of disarmament. The Committee on Disarmament is too little known in Canada. Its work is not often reported in the Canadian media. In recent years its documents have not been as readily available to researchers as have those of the United Nations. Its future will be one of the subjects discussed at the Second Special Session. The committee must cope with the difficulties inherent in its sheer size. Its work is inevitably influenced by the degree of confidence between the two superpowers and the extent of progress in their bilateral negotiations.

First
Committee
work

Now I should like to refer to the work of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. This is the main deliberative body on disarmament questions. Meeting for about two months each autumn, it passes resolutions by majority vote, which are not binding. Last year there were over 50 resolutions on disarmament matters. The debates and resolutions of the First Committee of the General Assembly are an important influence on international public and government opinion. My observation is that both Eastern and Western delegations make considerable effort to influence the 120 or more neutral and non-aligned delegations.

The General Assembly has also set up a Disarmament Commission composed of all member states which meets for about four weeks each spring to study in greater detail subjects referred to it by the Assembly.

In 1959 the General Assembly adopted general and complete disarmament as a basic goal of the United Nations. Both the Soviet Union and the United States submitted comprehensive proposals which were marked by a mixture of idealism and Cold War rhetoric. Although general and complete disarmament was retained as a lofty United Nations objective, it was increasingly recognized by East and West that such a goal could only be reached on a step-by-step basis and through the improvement of East-

* Negative security assurances involve the establishment of agreements whereby countries without nuclear capability would not be susceptible to nuclear attack.