

large weapons, and such tests would be very difficult and expensive to conduct underground. To the extent that the value of a 100-megaton weapon is largely psychological, as an instrument of intimidation, there would, in fact, be a desire to make a show of the explosion.

But the United States had given ample indication that, if it resumed testing, the tests would be conducted underground. This meant that the choice before the Russians was not between taking the blame for resuming testing and waiting awhile for the U.S. to take the blame, but the narrower choice of starting atmospheric testing before or after the U.S. had announced that it would resume underground tests. This option was made narrower still by the modest but noticeable degree of U.S. success in its efforts to convince the world that it was the Russians who were blocking the test-ban treaty; that there could be no assurance, in the absence of a control system, that the Russians were not conducting secret underground tests; and that therefore, as a result of Soviet intransigence, American resumption of underground testing was becoming unavoidable.

"Appropriate Decisions"

The "appropriate decisions" Kennedy had promised if a break in the Geneva deadlock failed to develop were not expected to include an immediate announcement of testing, underground or otherwise. The immediate announcement on this point was expected to go no further than to state that we would have to resume underground tests fairly soon in the absence of a change in Russian mood. This would be a shade stronger than previous announcements merely restating the fact that we could not accept the unpoliced ban indefinitely but without stressing that a decision was near. As was suggested by Kennedy's reference to "decisions" rather than "a decision," the announcement, however phrased, would not have been limited to talk of resuming testing; indeed it apparently would have included an offer to sign a treaty barring at least atmospheric tests, the tests which are of the most concern because of the fallout hazard and for which a ban can be effectively policed even without a formal control system. And again, the announcement was likely to include an offer to submit the whole question of what would constitute an adequate control system to a commission appointed by the U.N.

No one in the Administration thought that all of this would lead the world to welcome an American resumption of underground testing, but there were indications that the elaborate display of Western patience at Geneva, including several modest, but new, concessions made as late as last week, was winning some sympathy for the Western position. As noted, this made it somewhat less tempting for the Russians to delay taking the decisive move first, in the hope of reaping a propaganda advantage by forcing the U.S. to break the ban. In a sense, the result has been a victory for the Administration and its insistence on following a patient policy rather than rushing into testing as soon as it became clear the Russians did not intend to agree to a meaningful treaty. But it is a victory with such depressing consequences that no one is particularly anxious to celebrate it. The most that can be said is that things would have been just so much worse if the Russians had been able to point to American underground testing as the excuse for atmospheric testing.

Meanwhile, on the question of disarmament and the test ban, the Administration has been sticking to its policy of "walking the extra mile" to keep open the hope for agreement. In this field propaganda and genuine interests are so deeply intertwined that it is rarely possible to separate the two. There is a good deal of both in Kennedy's announcement that the need for a new U.S. Disarmament Agency, now before Congress, is more urgent than ever; in the lack of any hurry for the U.S. to make the inevitable announcement that we, too, must resume testing; and in the continuing plan to press the whole issue at the U.N. But given the current Russian mood, it appears futile to look for results, for the present, anywhere but in the realm of propaganda. —H.M.

Educational Television in Court

Noncommercial, educational television, which has developed a small, nationwide network unaffected by audience ratings or advertisers' interests, sought a legal remedy last week for Federal Communications Commission policies that give commercial stations priority for the few vacancies left on the very-high-frequency band. The VHF band is the sole access to most of the nation's TV sets.

The occasion for legal action was

FCC decisions favoring commercial operation of new channels sought by Pennsylvania State University and the Rochester (N.Y.) Area Educational Television Association.

In a petition filed with the Court of Appeals in Washington, the Joint Council on Educational Broadcasting, representing a number of major educational organizations, joined with the Rochester group in an attempt to block the FCC's Rochester decision, which was a final one. Simultaneously, Pennsylvania State University petitioned the court to direct the FCC to reconsider a preliminary decision which favors establishment of a new commercial outlet at Johnstown, Pa. In each area, it was pointed out, there are now two VHF commercial stations in operation, and decisions favoring establishment of a third do not conform with the FCC's avowed policy of encouraging the growth of educational TV.

The impetus to seek relief from the court came from a number of factors which have enhanced educational TV's potential outside the classroom and placed its growth over the next few years directly against a substantial barrier. The barrier is founded on the view of a majority of the Commissioners that, although educational TV merits the official blessings with which it has been showered, its growth on VHF must be subordinated to the fostering of competition between commercial stations. Accompanying this view is the assumption that competition between commercial television organizations is more likely to produce quality than is competition between commercial and noncommercial television.

In the long run, there will be plenty of room for commercial as well as noncommercial television, for the only direction for substantial expansion lies on the ultra-high-frequency band (470 to 890 Mc/sec), which provides 70 channels, in contrast to the nearly saturated VHF band (54 to 216 Mc/sec), which contains 12.

Increased availability of channels that can be widely received could lead to programming, such as has developed on FM radio, aimed at segments of the audience uninterested in mass entertainment. But until there is a break in a circle made up of limited UHF broadcasting because of few UHF receivers, and few UHF receivers because of little UHF broadcasting to receive, the question arises of who gets the few remaining outlets that reach the bulk of existing TV

sets. These outlets come into being usually when the FCC agrees, as it did in the Rochester and Johnstown cases, to open new channels on the VHF band by permitting substandard spacing. While educational broadcasters are pleased with the long-range prospects of ample space on the UHF band, they feel that FCC policies require them to enlist their limited resources in the FCC's program of breaking the UHF circle.

The goal of expanded UHF broadcasting is being pursued by the FCC in a number of ways, including a proposed program of "de-intermixture," which is intended to bring all-UHF broadcasting to communities where UHF is now broadcast, usually at a great disadvantage, in competition with VHF. In addition, the FCC has asked Congress to require manufacturers to equip new sets for UHF, a proposal that has received little congressional support, while the "de-intermixture" proposal has stirred protests from various congressmen and from at least one complete state delegation.

Congressmen from rural districts find VHF, with its generally longer range, useful for reaching their rural constituents and are concerned about how long it would be before UHF facilities would be available for this purpose. Some of the protesters are not well informed about the problem and have not looked into the availability of answers, but, finding the present arrangement satisfactory, are reluctant to change. In addition, the existing VHF stations in areas where the band is filled are not receptive to moving to a band that would have room for competition.

Underlying the court challenge to FCC's inhospitality to educational TV's growth on the VHF band is the fact that educational TV is successful on most of its active outlets (the bulk of these are VHF) and that its prospects for increased financial support are now greatly heightened by widespread revulsion toward what comes over the commercial channels.

Operating as a "fourth network," some 50 educational TV stations, supported largely by private grants, contributions, and state aid, are affiliated through the National Educational Television and Radio Center. By swapping films, tapes and pooling resources, they have maintained a high level of public service and have frequently presented distinguished fare. This "fourth net-

work," if it could expand to additional channels that reach the public, could fulfill Walter Lippmann's suggestion that the answer to the ills of TV "is to devise a way by which one network can be run as a public service with its criterion not what will be most popular but what is good."

A bill to provide each state with Federal assistance for the construction and improvement of educational TV facilities has been approved by the Senate each year for the past three years. While it has been cleared by committee it has never come to a vote in the House but its prospects for next year are considered bright. This, too, has provided pressure for removing FCC obstacles to VHF channels for educational TV.

The maintenance of the obstacles cannot to any substantial extent be blamed on the commercial TV industry, for, if nothing else, when the question arises of who is to get a new community outlet, commercial or noncommercial interests, the existing commercial stations are not displeased to see it go to an organization that will not compete for advertising. One of the major networks, for example, came out strongly at House hearings for federal aid to educational TV.

The principal source of the obstacles blocking educational TV's expansion on the VHF band is in the extreme conservatism of the present majority of FCC commissioners, who are firmly tied to inflexible notions on the issue of public versus private operations on the airways. With the absence of substantial congressional interest in the future of educational television, the FCC's present majority casts doubt on the accuracy of Chairman Newton Minow's forecast that "... if there is not a nationwide educational television system in this country, it will not be the fault of the FCC."

The plaintiffs in the two court actions, pleased by Minow's support but doubtful of his prophecy, are seeking a way around the FCC.—D.S.G.

Salt-free Water

The President will shortly sign a bill providing long-term authorization for a saline water conversion program. Both House and Senate have passed bills authorizing \$10 million a year for this

project, about 6 times as much annually as is now being spent. Even at \$10 million a year, the program is relatively small as major federal research and development programs go, but it has attracted a good deal of attention. An economical method of converting sea water to fresh water would be immensely useful for this country, which faces a water shortage in the decades ahead, and would revolutionize the economies of a good many countries which have always faced chronic water shortages. The most efficient plants now available can process salt water at a cost of about \$1 per thousand gallons, but this is still 3 times too much for drinking water, and nearly 10 times too much for irrigation water. Kennedy has drawn attention to the project in several speeches, and he sent a message to Congress requesting the expanded program.

Foreign Aid Appropriations

The House Appropriations Committee demonstrated last week that Administration leaders had been unduly optimistic when they assumed that the newly passed foreign aid bill would impose upon the committee a moral obligation to reduce its traditional antagonism to foreign aid spending.

Even before the bill had passed both houses, an appropriations subcommittee headed by Rep. Otto E. Passman, of Louisiana, had made substantial cuts in the accompanying money bill. In backing up Passman, who is openly hostile to foreign aid, the full committee illustrated once again why the Administration wanted long-term foreign aid and the financing of this aid through Treasury borrowing. The basis of the Administration's argument for this method was fear that the Appropriations Committee would behave in just the fashion that it did.

The reductions voted by the committee, which sent despair and astonishment through the Administration, consisted of \$896 million from the \$4.2 billion foreign aid bill, plus refusal to permit the Administration to use \$96 million carried over from the last fiscal year.

In the annual melodrama of foreign aid appropriations, the script calls for a great deal of this to be restored on the floor of the House, but just how much will be restored is, of course, never certain; nor is this system conducive to the long-range planning which