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Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

**Order of discussion of agenda items (A/C.1/844, A/C.1/
L.281, A/C.1/L282) (continued)**

1. Mr. GALLIN-DOUATHE (Central African Republic) said that the problem of nuclear weapons control had been under discussion for many years. The positions taken by the greatest atomic Powers, however, were too far apart to allow any hope of an immediate solution. The resumption of nuclear tests at the initiative of the Soviet Union had poisoned the atmosphere both physically and figuratively, and no serious progress towards peace would be possible while such tests were being carried out. It was urgently necessary that the suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests should be continued, and agenda item 73 must therefore be given priority. Those considerations would determine his delegation's vote at the end of the procedural debate.

2. Mr. BA (Mali) said that his country was experiencing the effects of radio-active fall-out from bombs exploded in the Sahara, and that it intended to submit reports on the subject to the United Nations. The cessation of nuclear explosions was thus a matter of the greatest interest to Mali. Nevertheless, it had no confidence in the idea of a moratorium, since an agreement of that kind offered no guarantee and could be violated with impunity: the disregard for the United Nations expressed by the President of France was indicative of the danger. To discuss a moratorium in isolation would therefore be pointless. It must be considered within the framework of general and complete disarmament. The question of disarmament necessarily included the problems of the suspension of nuclear tests, of a treaty to ban such tests and of the prevention of the dissemination of nuclear weapons, and it was therefore essential that it should be tackled first. It had been said that the question was very complex and that a solution would take many years. But it was precisely because of its complexity and its importance that efforts to solve it must begin forthwith.

3. If that procedure was not adopted, the next best thing would be to discuss the moratorium proposed by India. The treaty advocated by the United States and the United Kingdom could be considered later, since although their proposal was important, a treaty took a considerable time to prepare. But whatever arguments were put forward for those proposals, the fact remained that they were concerned merely with specific aspects of the basic problem of disarmament. In the opinion of his delegation, representing an uncommitted country, the only answer was to disarm imme-

diately and completely, since the continuance of the nuclear arms race was both a danger to mankind and a waste of resources which could be used for development.

4. Mr. LOUM (Senegal) said that his country, like other young African countries, was preoccupied with its national development and could only achieve its objectives in an atmosphere of international peace and harmony. That was why Senegal had from the beginning opposed nuclear tests and had protested strongly when they were carried out on the African continent. In a body such as the General Assembly it should be possible to find a solution which would save mankind from disaster. Senegal was an uncommitted country, but it was committed to the cause of peace, and therefore welcomed the inclusion of the Indian item. The Senegalese delegation also considered that agenda item 72 should be given priority.

5. Mr. MOD (Hungary) said that the joint declaration of basic principles for disarmament negotiations agreed on by the Soviet Union and the United States (A/4879) had led the world to expect that the General Assembly would immediately take action leading towards a treaty on general and complete disarmament. The logical thing would have been to place disarmament first on the agenda without further ado. An attempt had been made, however, to give the question of nuclear tests priority, the underlying aim being to minimize the importance of disarmament. But the question of tests could only be solved within the framework of general and complete disarmament.

6. In his delegation's view, to give priority to the question of nuclear tests would do nothing to allay the fears of mankind or to reduce the danger of war. The first reason for that view was the policy of France with respect to nuclear tests—a policy applied with the tacit agreement of the other Western Powers. The second was that existing stocks of nuclear weapons were already sufficient to destroy the entire human race. To suspend or ban tests would not, therefore, eliminate the danger of an atomic war, nor, indeed, of other forms of war, so that nothing would be gained by giving the question of nuclear tests priority. It was said that the matter was a simple one, on which agreement would be easily reached. But everyone knew that the negotiations on the question which had been going on for years had just reached a deadlock, so that the outlook in that respect was bleak.

7. There were much better prospects in the field of disarmament, since a basis had already been laid by the joint declaration. A convention on disarmament would entail lengthy negotiations, but practical measures could meanwhile be adopted to reduce international tension. Eight such measures had been proposed by the Government of the Soviet Union in its memorandum of 26 September 1961 (A/4892). For example, the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the NATO countries and the Warsaw Treaty countries, the

freezing of military budgets and the renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons were measures which would strengthen confidence among States and should be acceptable to all.

8. What mankind expected from the Committee was specific and constructive action to eliminate forever any possibility of war. The way to fulfil those expectations was to embark without delay on a discussion of the question of disarmament on the basis of the joint declaration by the Soviet Union and the United States. For those reasons his delegation would support the Soviet proposal on the order of agenda items.

9. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that the only question before the Committee at present was the priority to be given to agenda items 19, 72 and 73; it would be improper to discuss whether the various items should be considered separately or together until the question of priority had been decided. Items 19 and 72 were both "cold war" items; he did not wish item 73, which his Government had introduced, to be discussed in a "cold war" context.

10. The questions of disarmament and of a treaty to ban nuclear tests had each been referred to a special body; the Committee should consider them after it had reviewed the work of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament and the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests, respectively.

11. It had been argued that once agreement was reached on disarmament, there would be no need for either a test-ban treaty or the suspension of testing. In the meantime, however, agreement could be reached on a new test suspension, which was urgently needed at a time when atomic radiation and world tension were increasing with each passing day. A suspension of testing would not interfere with efforts to write a test-ban treaty or to achieve disarmament; it would, on the contrary, further those efforts, since continued test explosions and the accompanying recriminations would hardly be conducive to negotiation.

12. The Hungarian representative, echoing the position taken by the United Kingdom some years before, had stated that a suspension of testing would be useless and had no relevance to disarmament. Admittedly, such a suspension would not constitute disarmament, but it would be a step in that direction. He recalled the warning uttered in 1960 by Mr. Kurchatov, a distinguished Soviet scientist, that continued nuclear testing at the 1956-1958 rate would cause several million persons in each future generation to contract hereditary diseases. The rate of testing since the recent resumption had been four or five times that of the earlier period.

13. He agreed with the United States representative's view that first priority should be given to the question of nuclear testing, but not with his conclusion that the Committee should deal first with a test-ban treaty. When the three major nuclear Powers had been unable to reach agreement on a treaty over three years of negotiation, it could hardly be supposed that the First Committee, with a membership of 100, would be able to do so.

14. The United Kingdom representative had said that a draft treaty banning tests was already in being. However, examination of the records of the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests—of which, unfortunately, only one copy was available for consultation by the members of the Committee—showed that there was agreement on eighteen

points and disagreement on ten. Moreover, the points on which agreement had been reached were for the most part general matters of principle, while there was still disagreement on the vital points of detail. It was to be hoped that the remaining divergences of opinion would be bridged, but in the meantime the testing of bombs was continuing.

15. The United States representative had said that a mere suspension of testing would provide no guarantees of compliance. But the only alternative to some degree of mutual trust was war. Moreover, the draft treaty itself stipulated that any party would have the right to withdraw if it found that the treaty provisions were not being fulfilled. Thus, even a formal test-ban treaty could not provide absolutely binding guarantees.

16. The Carnegie Endowment had pointed out in one of its publications^{1/} that both East and West tended to frame their disarmament proposals with a view to scoring propaganda victories and putting the other side on the defensive; thus, disarmament negotiations had in effect become a weapon in the cold war. He believed that item 73 should be discussed separately from the other two disarmament items, so that it would not be caught up in cold war manoeuvring of that kind, and requested that it should be given priority.

17. Mr. DEAN (United States of America) said that most of the representatives who had spoken had recognized the desirability of discussing items 72 and 73 together, regardless of how they were listed. He wished to make two proposals with a view to reconciling the main positions which had been taken on the question of procedure. First of all, he was submitting an amendment to the Indian proposal (A/C.1/L.282) to the effect that the word "listed" should be substituted for the word "discussed".^{2/} Secondly, he wished to revise the United States proposal (A/C.1/L.281) so as to provide that item 72 should be listed as the second item on the Committee's agenda and should be discussed simultaneously with item 73.^{3/} He hoped that the Indian delegation would accept those proposals.

18. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that he could not comment on the United States proposals until he had seen them in writing. However, it remained his delegation's position that the question of priority should be settled first, after which the Committee could decide whether to discuss the various items separately or together.

19. Mr. PAVICEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the views of his Government on disarmament were too well known to require detailed explanation during the procedural debate. General and complete disarmament was the crucial problem of the present day, and only by solving it could the world escape from an increasingly dangerous situation. Nevertheless, it seemed most sensible to begin the Committee's discussions with an item which could give concrete results in the shortest possible time while at the same time helping to establish conditions for further progress in the field of disarmament. Nuclear tests were harmful and disquieting, so that it would be logical to give priority to the question of a moratorium on such tests, of whatever kind, and by whatever country they were

^{1/} See Joseph Noguee, *The Diplomacy of Disarmament* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *International Conciliation*, No. 526, January 1960).

^{2/} Subsequently circulated as document A/C.1/L.2840.

^{3/} The revised proposal was subsequently circulated as document A/C.1/L.281/Rev.1.

carried out. Besides eliminating the danger of radiation, a moratorium would have a salutary effect on the arms race and would create more favourable conditions for negotiations on general and complete disarmament. A decision to suspend nuclear tests would not, moreover, prejudge any negotiations regarding such tests or on disarmament itself. For those reasons his delegation supported the Indian proposal to give priority to agenda item 73 (A/C.1/L.282) and hoped that it would obtain general support.

20. Mr. AUGUSTE (Haiti) suggested that the Committee had spent too much time on procedural debate; moreover, members had in fact in some cases raised questions of substance. The issue was not as difficult as it seemed. Disarmament was admittedly an extremely important question, but it was also a very old one. Men had always accepted the danger of war, despite the sufferings it brought. But the discovery of nuclear weapons had altered the situation. A small mistake could now involve the world in the most destructive war it had ever known. Still worse was the invisible injury caused by radio-active fall-out, which occurred whether there was war or not. The world's greatest enemy was, therefore, nuclear weapons as such.

21. Agenda items 72 and 73 dealt with the same problem—how to eliminate the dangers inherent in nuclear weapons and tests. Item 73 implied a return to the moratorium formula; but the weakness of a voluntary moratorium like the one which had recently been ended was that it lacked legal backing. The obvious need was for international control, with which item 72 was concerned. Although some might question the practical worth of a treaty, it would at least represent a more binding obligation than a gentleman's agreement.

22. For those reasons his delegation was in favour of the procedure advocated by the United States, namely, that agenda items 72 and 73 should be considered together.

23. Mr. PADILLA NERVO (Mexico) said that there was no valid reason why the Committee should not follow the precedents it had established at previous sessions in dealing with several disarmament items, and consider two or more items together in the general debate, on the understanding that specific proposals and draft resolutions would be given separate consideration. Accordingly, its first procedural decision should be whether priority should be given to the question of disarmament or to the question of nuclear tests. Then, following the general debate on items 72 and 73—if it was decided to debate them simultaneously—the Committee could decide on the priorities to be given to the draft resolutions submitted on those items.

24. Mexico believed that the items on testing, items 73 and 72, should be taken first, and that they should be discussed together. It had consistently opposed nuclear tests by any nation and for any military or political reasons whatsoever. Its main and continuing concern was with the effects of nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosions; and those effects were such as to render all types of tests morally unjustifiable. Fall-out was a universal danger; and it was not aligned with either ideological bloc. Its harmful somatic and genetic effects had been confirmed by scientists throughout the world: after three years of study, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had reported that even the smallest amounts of radiation could have harmful effects on present and

future generations, and had concluded: "...all steps designed to minimize irradiation of human populations will act to the benefit of human health. Such steps include the avoidance of unnecessary exposure resulting from medical, industrial and other procedures for peaceful uses on the one hand and the cessation of contamination of the environment by explosions of nuclear weapons on the other."⁴/The Powers carrying out tests were in fact exceeding their national sovereignty and assuming an international responsibility.

25. That being so, Mexico believed that nuclear testing should be ended immediately and that the Powers concerned should pledge themselves to prohibit tests for all time. A General Assembly resolution to that effect would have great moral force even though it would offer no guarantee against unilateral violations, as the recent resumption of test explosions had shown. Consequently, an internationally binding treaty guaranteeing the permanent cessation of tests was essential.

26. On the other hand, there were numerous precedents to justify the adoption by the Assembly of a resolution dealing both with a test suspension and with the need for the nuclear Powers to enter into a contractual obligation to discontinue testing on a permanent basis, under effective international control. Such a resolution, adopted unanimously at the sixteenth session, would at least have the merit of reflecting world opinion.

27. For all those reasons, the Mexican delegation felt that agenda items 72 and 73 should be taken first. It believed that every effort should be made to persuade the nuclear Powers to sign a treaty banning tests under international control. It regarded general and complete disarmament as the *sine qua non* of peace, and hoped that the agreement on principles arrived at by the United States and the Soviet Union (A/4879) would soon be followed by negotiations aimed at reaching agreement on a disarmament treaty. In that connexion, the great Powers should be urged to agree on the composition of the organ in which those negotiations could take place, so that they might be resumed as soon as possible.

28. Mr. BENITES (Ecuador) said that while the insistence of the USSR that the broad issue of disarmament, which included the specific question of nuclear testing, should be taken first was unexceptionable on grounds of logic, it failed to take account of realities: to await an agreement on general and complete disarmament before seeking an end to nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosions would be both dilatory and unrealistic. The Indian proposal to work from the simple to the complex and from the specific to the general was sounder, since a ban on testing was a matter of great urgency; moreover, it was reasonable to assume that agreement to eliminate an immediate danger to human life—radio-active fall-out—could be reached more quickly by the great Powers than agreement on a very broad programme of general and complete disarmament.

29. The Indian proposal that the Committee should take immediate action on the suspension of nuclear tests and the United States motion that first consideration should be given to the conclusion of a treaty banning such tests were complementary, and thus easily reconcilable. Moreover, the Indian proposal

⁴/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Supplement No. 17, chap. VII, para. 54.

was sufficiently general in nature to include the possibility of a test ban treaty, and the United States had quite logically asked for a combined discussion of both questions. In the circumstances, the delegation of Ecuador saw no difficulty in supporting the proposal that items 72 and 73 should be taken first and should be discussed together, on the understanding that priority in the voting on specific proposals and draft resolutions would be given to those relating to the Indian item. The Committee would then be free to consider how a test suspension could be made legally binding upon the Powers concerned.

30. Mr. VELAZQUEZ (Uruguay) said that his delegation believed that items 72 and 73 should be taken first, and that they should be discussed together in the general debate, on the understanding that specific proposals and draft resolutions would be dealt with separately and that the Committee would decide the priorities to be assigned to them at the resolutions stage.

31. It was generally agreed that both items aimed at the same objective: to bring about the cessation of nuclear tests and to prevent their being resumed. Indeed, item 73 was actually composed of two parts: the first called for the suspension of tests, while the second referred to the obligations of States to refrain from their renewal. In connexion with the appeal for a test suspension, the Committee would recall that the General Assembly had adopted resolutions on that subject at previous sessions; and those resolutions, notwithstanding the recent resumption of tests, were still in force. However, previous resolutions had not bound the nuclear Powers to refrain from a renewal of testing, and in that respect, the Indian proposal introduced a new element. The only way to establish such an obligation would be to prevail upon the nuclear Powers to enter into a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons tests under effective international control; an Assembly resolution which merely called upon the Powers concerned to suspend tests would be in the nature of a recommendation and would have only moral force. Thus, item 73 necessarily assumed action on item 72, and the Uruguayan delegation saw no reason why the two items should not be debated together.

32. Mr. DEBAYLE (Nicaragua) observed that while his delegation viewed with sympathy the proposal for re-establishing a moratorium on nuclear testing, it considered that such a moratorium would not be sufficiently binding on the States concerned, and that what was really needed was a legally binding treaty guaranteeing the permanent cessation of nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosions. Accordingly, Nicaragua supported the proposal to give priority to the urgent need for a treaty to ban tests under international control (item 72).

33. He urged the Committee to place moral considerations above political interests: no nation, however powerful, had an absolute right to direct human destiny or to contemplate the annihilation of human beings. If it did so, it was contributing to its own destruction.

34. Mr. QUAISON-SACKEY (Ghana) said that while his delegation would normally have favoured the procedure followed at the fifteenth session, that is, discussion of all the disarmament items on the agenda under the general title "Question of disarmament", it now felt, in view of the recent resumption of nuclear testing, that priority consideration should be given to item 73. The Committee should immediately urge the nuclear Powers to commit themselves voluntarily, once again, to refrain from nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests. The United Nations should supervise the fulfilment of that commitment and could convene an emergency or special session of the Assembly if tests were resumed by any party. The Indian item should be discussed and a decision taken on it before decisions were taken on any other proposals.

35. Some States, including his own, had been unjustifiably accused of not exercising their moral responsibility in the matter of the recent test resumption. That accusation was unfounded; the Government of Ghana was strongly opposed to nuclear tests and wished to impress its abhorrence of testing upon all the nuclear Powers. Two wrongs did not make a right, and his delegation would continue to urge those Powers to refrain from further tests.

36. Mr. SOW (Chad) supported the Indian proposal for priority consideration of item 73, since an immediate cessation of nuclear tests, accompanied by a pledge on the part of the great Powers not to resume them, would allay the wide-spread fear of atomic fall-out and create a calmer atmosphere in which progress could be made towards a disarmament treaty. His delegation appealed to the nuclear Powers to demonstrate their goodwill by agreeing to give first consideration to the Indian item. Discussion of the United States item on testing and of the item relating to general and complete disarmament should follow immediately thereafter. While a moratorium was obviously not a treaty, it would be better than nothing, and would enable the Committee to begin its work in a more serene atmosphere.

37. Following a brief exchange of views on procedure, in which Mr. COOPER (Liberia), Mr. GEBRE-EGZY (Ethiopia), and Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) took part, the CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers would be closed at the beginning of the next meeting, and urged representatives who intended to submit proposals to place their names on the list.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.