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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda items 73 and 72:</i>	
<i>Continuation of suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests and obligations of States to refrain from their renewal (continued)</i>	43
<i>The urgent need for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons tests under effective international control (continued)</i>	43

Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

AGENDA ITEMS 73 AND 72

Continuation of suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests and obligations of States to refrain from their renewal (A/4801 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.283/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.288) (continued)

The urgent need for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons tests under effective international control (A/4799, A/C.1/L.280, A/C.1/L.288) (continued)

1. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that he was in agreement with certain parts of the statement made at the previous meeting by the United States representative who had in effect recognized the intrinsic importance of a cessation of testing. The question was what the Committee was going to do at that stage. Should it wait until March 1962 when, according to the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom and the United States (A/C.1/L.280) the negotiating committee would report to the General Assembly on the state of its work, and, in the meantime, refrain from taking any action on the need to put an end to nuclear explosions? On the contrary, it was essential that there should be an immediate cessation of nuclear tests.

2. The position of India had been misrepresented by some members of the Committee. The Government of India was not opposed to control of a nuclear test suspension or to a binding obligation not to resume testing. On the contrary, it held the view that any binding agreement should be open to signature by all Members of the United Nations, even those which were not yet producing nuclear weapons, that any agreement should be the prelude to the total prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction and that no type of explosion should be excluded. That was the meaning of the Indian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.283/Rev.1).

3. It was evident, however, that no binding agreement could come about except by the long and difficult process of negotiation and under the pressure of world public opinion. The necessity for a treaty in the future, therefore, did not preclude taking a position in the meantime and attempting to bring about a cessation of

tests, the importance of which had been recognized by the United States representative in his statement at the previous meeting.

4. It was indispensable that the United Nations should be informed of all the facts relating to the question. Unfortunately the Disarmament Commission had become no more than a label and no longer even served the function of transmitting reports on the state of negotiations, so that the General Assembly had not been kept informed.

5. From 1946 onwards, notwithstanding the objections sometimes from one side and sometimes from another side, the General Assembly had continued to call for the total prohibition of weapons of mass destruction. In 1958 the Assembly had urged the States that had tested nuclear weapons to make every effort to reach early agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests under effective international control (resolution 1252 A (XIII)). At the fourteenth session, it had urged the States concerned to continue their voluntary suspension of nuclear tests and had expressed the hope that they would intensify their efforts to reach an agreement on the prohibition of such tests (resolution 1402 (XIV)). At its fifteenth session, the Assembly had adopted two resolutions (resolutions 1577 (XV) and 1578 (XV)) in which it had taken note of the progress made during the Geneva negotiations and had urged the States concerned to make every effort to reach agreement as soon as possible. At that time, the two sides had stated that, despite certain points of disagreement, it was likely that agreement would be reached. It appeared, however, that the disagreement had been far wider than had been thought and that the points of agreement were more general. The Assembly had also, in its resolutions adopted at the fifteenth session, urged the States concerned to continue their voluntary suspension of nuclear tests.

6. The fact, however, that there had been a violation of the moratorium, first by the Soviet Union and subsequently by the United States, did not mean that the moratorium should be abandoned.

7. As early as 1954, the delegation of India had suggested the conclusion of a test suspension agreement, or rather a "standstill" agreement, but from the outset, the United Kingdom, for one, had vigorously opposed that proposal. It had been argued that a test suspension was not disarmament, and that, furthermore, as for radiation effects, a little more or less made no difference. It had also been held that detection was impossible. Those arguments had been repeated each year, sometimes by one side and sometimes by the other, and no progress had been made along the lines laid down by the General Assembly.

8. In resolutions it had adopted since the voluntary suspension of nuclear tests, the General Assembly had requested the States concerned to continue the suspension of tests. The position of India on that matter

had remained constant—contrary to that of the principal Powers concerned—and it would not stop asking for a test suspension until it was no longer required by the situation, either because a treaty had been signed or because disarmament had become a reality. That was also the position of those States which did not belong to power blocs and of a large number of new Members from Africa and Asia.

9. The Soviet Union was now taking the position that a test suspension could not be a matter for a separate treaty, and, presumably, that even a voluntary suspension was not desirable outside the scope of a general agreement on disarmament. That position was redolent of certain views held by the United Kingdom in 1958. But it was a great disappointment to see the drastic reversal in the Soviet Union's position with respect to an initiative which it had been the first to take according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.^{1/} As early as 11 September 1956, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Bulganin, in a letter to President Eisenhower, had expressed the view that it was possible to separate the question of ending tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons from the general problem of disarmament, and to solve it independently, since scientific progress, by making it possible to detect any explosion, would eliminate the need for international agreements on the control of a test suspension.

10. At the end of 1958, the Soviet Union, at Geneva, had tabled a draft treaty for an immediate and unconditional ban on nuclear tests; soon afterwards, the United States, in turn, had offered a working paper on the question. On the basis of those documents, the negotiators had reached agreement on a number of articles providing, *inter alia*, for the prohibition of tests and the establishment of a control machinery including a commission, a conference of parties to the treaty and a detection system.

11. Unfortunately, that promising beginning had not led to positive results. The following year, yielding to the pressure of government scientists, the Western Powers had sought to restrict the scope of the proposed treaty because, in their opinion, the monitoring system did not provide absolute guarantees with respect to underground tests. But by that time, the position of the Soviet Union had hardened, and it was insisting on a total ban on tests. It was then that the United Kingdom and the United States had stopped insisting that the prohibition of tests should be linked with general disarmament—as if they were preparing the way for the Soviet Union to take over their position—although they continued to insist on the establishment of an effective inspection system.

12. During the third phase of the discussions, the Soviet Union had rejected the proposal made by the United States and the United Kingdom in April 1959 for an agreement banning tests only in the atmosphere and under water (he noted that a somewhat similar proposal, for a ban on tests in the atmosphere, even without control, had been made in September 1961 by the United States and the United Kingdom following the regrettable and disastrous resumption of testing by the Soviet Union). The Soviet Union had declared itself ready to accept a gradual system of inspection and control if the Western Powers would agree to give

up their foreign bases and withdraw their troops from foreign soil. Thus, the Soviet Union had gradually introduced the disarmament issue, which had been dropped by the other side. With regard to inspection, it was clear from the United States Congressional Records of 1960 that the possibility of carrying out inspections by remote control instead of manned control stations had not been studied carefully enough. That therefore was a solution which should be given very serious thought.

13. During the fourth phase, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom had proposed that the parties should undertake joint underground tests in order to perfect a system of control. The Soviet Union, at that point, had agreed to accept the United States plan for a limited test ban, provided that the Western Powers agreed to a moratorium on small-scale underground tests. At that juncture, India had protested both to the Soviet Union and the Western Powers with regard to their acceptance of underground tests because it considered that agreement on that aspect would vitiate a solution of the problem. The United States and the United Kingdom had subsequently agreed to the moratorium proposed by the Soviet Union, provided the Soviet Union accepted international inspection and control. But, in May 1960, the United States had announced its intention to carry out a series of nuclear and non-nuclear blasts, which, it stated, had no military objective, and the Soviet Union had claimed the right to on-site inspection of that series, known as "Project Vela".

14. During the fifth phase, covering July and August 1960, the United States had accepted the principle of a fixed quota of on-site inspections. The question of the number of inspections to be carried out had been one of the principal difficulties and had finally been settled. The parties had agreed that the control system should be fully operational six years after it became effective.

15. During the last phase, extending from March to August 1961, France, after proclaiming a policy of "atomic isolation", had carried out a total of four nuclear tests in Africa—by no means a small number in terms of that country's resources. The Soviet Government had thereupon declared that it would resume testing unless the United States and the United Kingdom induced France to abandon its nuclear test programme. Then, after the Vienna meeting between the President of the United States and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Soviet Union had stated that the question of nuclear tests should be taken up as part of general and complete disarmament. Finally, on 29 August 1961, the Soviet Union had announced that for a number of reasons, including the safeguarding of its security, it intended to resume testing. It was obvious that the tests were of a military nature and had been prepared long in advance. Indeed, there was no doubt that similar preparations had been made on both sides—a fact which suggested that neither party had really intended to stop testing. In support of that contention he cited numerous statements made by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and by various individuals in the United States. Both sides professed to have only the welfare of mankind at heart, but mankind could do very well without that sort of protection.

16. He wished to place particular stress on the question of the effects of radiation, inasmuch as the radioactivity recently released into the atmosphere was

^{1/} Joseph Noguee, *The Diplomacy of Disarmament* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *International Conciliation*, No. 526, January 1960), p. 263.

equal to that produced by all the explosions set off in the past. It had been stated in 1958 by the National Planning Association in the United States that, if 250 nuclear or thermo-nuclear bombs with a combined yield of 2,500 megatons were dropped on cities, industrial projects and airfields throughout the United States, the number of victims could be estimated at 36 million dead and 57 million injured on the first day; there would be a steady rise in the number of dead due to the delayed effects of radiation, and it was estimated that by the sixtieth day there would be 72 million dead and 21 million injured.^{2/} Nuclear testing alone was expected to claim a large number of victims. According to a statement published in France in October 1959, on the basis of data provided by five prominent American, Japanese and French scientists, as a consequence of the radio-active fall-out from the nuclear bombs exploded up to that time more than 1 million persons would die and 1,250,000 abnormal children would be born. Furthermore, up to that date 140,000 children had already been born abnormal as a result of nuclear tests. It had also been acknowledged by United States scientists that it would take more than 1,000 years for mankind to recover from the genetic effects of the fall-out from a single Bikini-type bomb. Finally, The New York Times had disclosed that the total fission yield of the test explosions carried out by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union totalled from 90 to 92 megatons, which meant that 4,500 to 4,600 kilogrammes of fission products dangerous to human health had been released into the atmosphere.

17. He cited other excerpts from articles and technical reports showing that both Western and Soviet scientists recognized the gravity of the danger to which mankind was exposed as a result of nuclear testing.

18. With regard to the Indian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.283/Rev.1), the objection had been raised in some quarters that an appeal to States for the cessation of nuclear testing was either meaningless or else indicative of a desire to have no controls; in other words, a mere cessation of testing would not be binding. He wished to point out that the cessation of testing would be only a first step and that even a formal treaty would not afford absolute guarantees: article 22 of the draft treaty prepared by the United States and

the United Kingdom (A/4772) provided that, in practice, if one party declared that another party was not observing the provisions of the treaty, the former party could be relieved of all obligations.

19. Some delegations had taken the position that now was not the time to address an appeal to the countries concerned. The Soviet Union, however, was planning to explode a 50-megaton bomb and the United States reserved the right to make preparations for tests in the atmosphere, even though it promised to halt its tests if the Soviet Union did the same. Thus, the present moment possibly offered the last opportunity to take a first step towards the destruction of nuclear weapons without waiting for a treaty, which might take some time to write.

20. With regard to the preparations required for underground nuclear tests, he read out portions of a White House statement of 26 October 1956, of the record of an inquiry conducted by the United States Senate, and of an article published on 12 August 1961 in the Christian Science Monitor, all of which showed that such preparations called for the expenditure of a great deal of effort and money. He also recalled Mr. Stevenson's reference to even more terrible weapons. The development of weapons would merely serve to increase the danger of war.

21. He hoped that the United States, which had vigorously opposed the Indian draft resolution, would recognize that his delegation had merely sought, in a spirit of complete objectivity, to place the realities of the present situation before the Committee.

22. Mr. Khrushchev, for his part, had announced his intention to explode a 50-megaton bomb, declaring that it was necessary to do so in order to ensure the security of the Soviet Union and protect its people. Mr. Stevenson had said the same thing in different words and had announced that the United States was going to carry out large-scale explosions. However, since President Kennedy had asked the Soviet Union to abandon its test explosion, there was no reason why the United Nations could not make a similar appeal of its own. It was essential to break the vicious circle. Action to halt nuclear explosions must not be made to await the conclusion of a treaty between two parties which were unable to reach agreement and one of which wished to take up disarmament first. His delegation therefore urged the Committee to give careful consideration to the Indian draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

^{2/} National Planning Association, Special Project Committee on Security through Arms Control, 1970 Without Arms Control: Implications of Modern Weapons Technology (Planning Pamphlet No. 104, Washington, D.C., May 1958), pp. 13-14.