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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.2, A/C.1/L.288/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.291) (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/Rev.1) (continued)

1. Mr. QUAISON-SACKEY (Ghana) said that although the development of terrible weapons of mass destruction had made the abolition of war essential to the survival of mankind, the great Powers were unable to agree on disarmament measures, and were using disarmament negotiations for propaganda purposes. It was in the hope of promoting serious, patient negotiation that his delegation, at the previous session of the General Assembly, had sponsored the draft resolution that had become resolution 1578 (XV), which had urged early agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests and the continuance of the voluntary suspension of testing, and had supported the similar draft resolution that had been adopted as resolution 1577 (XV).

2. The Soviet Union had justified its resumption of testing as a measure which would restrain aggression and thus lessen the danger of war, while the United States had warned that it might have to resume tests in the atmosphere in order to protect its own security and that of the world community. In view of the danger to human health posed by the testing of nuclear weapons, it was difficult to feel grateful for such concern with world peace and security. Both the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, in its report submitted in 1958 (A/3838), and the World Health Organization^{1/} had stated that exposure to even small doses of radiation, if continued for long periods of time, might well result in substantial genetic and somatic damage to human beings.

3. It was in the light of those considerations that his delegation had joined India in sponsoring draft resolution

^{1/} See Bo Lindell and R. Lowry Dobson, *Ionizing Radiation and Health* (World Health Organization, Public Health Papers, No. 6, Geneva, 1961).

tion A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2, which urged the nuclear Powers to refrain from further test explosions pending the conclusion of binding agreements on testing or general and complete disarmament. The sponsors of the draft resolution were not minimizing the urgent need to ban tests under effective international control; however, the suspension of testing was a necessary first step in that direction. Unlike the first moratorium, which had been purely voluntary in nature, the one now proposed would have the authority of the General Assembly behind it. The United Nations could not refrain from making such an appeal merely because similar appeals had gone unheeded in the past; if it did so, it would be denying its very reason for existence. Those who flouted such appeals for the sake of their national interests would be judged by mankind.

4. With regard to the eight-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.288/Rev.1) which appealed to the Soviet Union to abandon its announced intention to explode a 50-megaton bomb, he wished to recall that the President of Ghana had appealed to Mr. Khrushchev on 18 October to postpone forthcoming Soviet tests until another effort could be made to secure general agreement on the banning of nuclear weapons.

5. At the fifteenth session, Ghana had joined with other delegations in introducing a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.264)^{2/} which, generally following the lines taken by the President of Ghana in his address to the General Assembly,^{3/} had called upon all States to refrain from carrying out nuclear or ballistic weapons tests in Africa; to eliminate, and refrain from establishing, bases or launching sites in Africa intended for use in testing, storing or transporting such weapons, and to regard the African continent as a denuclearized neutral zone. In the knowledge that Ghana, which was currently making a determined effort to create better living standards for its people, would not be spared in a nuclear war, his delegation was now, on its own behalf and that of Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, the Sudan and the United Arab Republic, reintroducing the aforementioned draft resolution, which had been circulated as document A/C.1/L.291.

6. Mr. CHAKRAVARTY (India), introducing the second revised version of his delegation's draft resolution (A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2), said that it differed from the first revised version mainly in that the expression "internationally binding obligations" had been replaced by "internationally binding agreements". The reason for that change was that internationally binding obligations already existed, in the form of General Assembly resolutions, although the States concerned had not complied with them. In addition, Ghana, Nepal and the United Arab Republic, had joined in sponsoring

^{2/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Annexes, agenda items 67, 86, 69 and 73, document A/4680, para. 17.*

^{3/} *Ibid.*, *Fifteenth Session (Part I), Plenary Meetings, Vol. 1, 869th meeting.*

the second revised version and Ethiopia had indicated its wish to be added to the list of sponsors.^{4/}

7. At the previous meeting, the United States representative had said that his country had observed the moratorium and had not prepared for testing, whereas the Soviet Union had broken the moratorium and had prepared for testing; and on those grounds he had objected to the Indian representative's alleged attempt to equate the position of the two countries. The Indian delegation had not made any such attempt, but had merely presented the facts. There was no doubt that the Soviet Union had prepared for its current series of tests, and the fact that the United States had resumed underground tests soon after that series had begun suggested that it too had been making preparations for some time. The United States representative had also said that Project Vela was being carried out with the entire consent of the Soviet Government. His delegation was not aware that such consent had been given. All that the records of the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests showed was that at one time there had been agreement that some underground tests might be carried out under the joint supervision and control of the negotiating Powers, but that when preparations for those tests had been started, the United States had not agreed to the Soviet Union's taking part in the control and supervision of the nuclear part of the project. Furthermore, despite what the United States representative had said, there had been reports in the United States Press that several of the tests were intended to provide information for the improvement of weapons. If those reports or the records of the Geneva Conference were inaccurate, they should be corrected by the appropriate authorities.

8. In his delegation's view, the resumption of testing was evidence of a drift towards a nuclear arms race which might end in disaster. The Soviet Union had announced its intention of exploding a 50-megaton bomb, and at the 1171st meeting the United States representative had indicated that unless a treaty was signed promptly, the Soviet testing would result in further testing by his country. It was in order to halt such frightful rivalry that the four sponsors had submitted draft resolution A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2. His delegation was opposed to the request for priority made by the sponsors of the eight-Power draft resolution. It objected to the explosion of a 50-megaton bomb as it did to all nuclear tests but felt that by limiting its appeal to one particular test, the Committee would in effect be sanctioning tests below the 50-megaton range and would thus be going back on its previous resolutions. Admittedly, the test in question was unprecedented in size, and the resulting danger from fall-out would be exceptional. But draft resolution A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2 called for the immediate suspension of all tests, and was specifically designed to prevent further pollution of the atmosphere. In the hope of achieving an immediate moratorium, India had urged that agenda item 73 should be given priority and discussed separately, but the Committee's decision to discuss items 72 and 73 jointly had led to a regrettable delay.

9. It had repeatedly been said that the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2 would be ineffective. The United States and the United Kingdom had made it clear that they would not agree to the suspension of tests without a treaty to ban them under effective international control. The Soviet Union was not prepared

to consider a suspension except as part of a treaty on general and complete disarmament. France had not even felt itself obliged to observe the recent voluntary moratorium. The views of the nuclear Powers were thus clear. But that was no reason why the other Powers should not appeal for a moratorium pending the conclusion of agreements on tests or on general and complete disarmament. Although the non-nuclear countries could not impose their will on the nuclear Powers, the latter could not be entirely insensitive to public opinion.

10. It was not true to say that India wanted only an uncontrolled moratorium. But his delegation could not accept the idea that the suspension of tests must wait on the conclusion of a treaty, which might be a long process. If, on the other hand, a treaty could be signed within thirty days, as the United States representative had said, there could be no objection to agreeing on a moratorium for that period.

11. It was unreasonable to think that if an appeal for the immediate suspension of all tests was not likely to be heeded, an appeal to refrain from exploding a 50-megaton bomb had greater prospects of success. Furthermore, there was no way of telling accurately whether a particular explosion was of the order of 50 megatons. At the 1173rd meeting the representative of Cyprus had spoken in favour of the eight-Power draft resolution on the ground that the Soviet test was imminent. But the aim must be to stop all tests, both future and present, not just by one Power but by all, and in all environments, for all tests had one purpose, the development of new and more destructive weapons.

12. He therefore urged that the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2 should retain its priority over the more limited eight-Power draft resolution. However, he wished to make it clear that his delegation had no objection to that draft as such, in its revised form (A/C.1/L.288/Rev.1), the Indian amendments (A/C.1/L.290) having been accepted by the sponsors.

13. Mr. WEI (China), supporting the eight-Power draft resolution, said that the Committee was not called upon to determine whether the nuclear bomb exploded on 23 October had in fact been the 50-megaton blast announced by Mr. Khrushchev. Its duty was to appeal to the Soviet leaders to stop conducting any further tests of multi-megaton nuclear super-bombs.

14. The Soviet Union's resumption of nuclear testing was contrary to its own professed judgement, for Soviet scientists and officials had been among the most vociferous advocates of the prohibition of such tests. Since 1958, when the nuclear Powers had agreed on a voluntary test suspension, the level of radiation due to fall-out throughout the world had steadily dropped. As a result of the resumed Soviet tests, huge quantities of radio-active debris had again been injected into the atmosphere, and sharp increases in fall-out had been reported in many countries: the representative of Norway had told the Committee at the 1174th meeting that the level of radiation in his country was already higher than that reached in 1958.

15. Mr. Khrushchev was fully aware of the grave consequences of the resumption of nuclear weapons tests. In January 1960 he had told the Supreme Soviet that the State which was the first to violate the moratorium would cover itself with shame and would be condemned by the peoples of the world. Yet the Soviet Union had not only violated the test suspension, but had exceeded all past records in the rate of test ex-

^{4/} Document A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2/Add.1, dated 24 October 1961, indicated the addition of Ethiopia to the list of sponsors.

plosions carried out and the amount of fall-out produced. The multi-megaton bombs which the Soviet Union was testing were monstrous weapons: a single one of them would completely wipe out any city on earth, cause death and destruction within a radius of tens of miles and shower radio-active debris over hundreds of miles. As *The New York Times* had stated in its editorial of 20 October, the "megaton monster" was primarily a terror weapon.

16. Since much of the territory of mainland China lay in the zone most sensitive to Soviet nuclear weapons tests, it would receive unusually heavy fall-out. Although the Chinese communist régime supported the Soviet resumption of testing, the Chinese people everywhere were against it, and strongly protested against the explosion of such deadly multi-megaton bombs.

17. The General Assembly was morally obliged to take immediate action. It should tell the Soviet Union that the whole world was against the Soviet resumption of tests, and urge it to cancel its test of a fifty-megaton bomb. Such a test would not enhance Soviet military or technological prestige, and would cause untold damage to mankind. Cancellation of the test would prevent the further aggravation of international tension and facilitate negotiations on disarmament. In the circumstances, the Committee should adopt the eight-Power draft resolution by as large a majority as possible.

18. Mr. BROOKS (Canada) said that since the submission of the draft resolution introduced by Denmark (A/C.1/L.288), of which Canada was a sponsor, the Soviet Union had exploded the largest thermo-nuclear device ever to be detonated. The General Assembly could not keep silent before the prospect of an even more powerful explosion being carried out at a future date; the Canadian delegation believed that the peoples of the world, including the citizens of the USSR, counted on it to issue a vigorous appeal to the Soviet Union to stop the further contamination of man's environment.

19. The eight-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.288/Rev.1) was not intended to compete with the draft resolution introduced by India (A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2). It had been introduced because the threat posed by the testing of nuclear weapons of the magnitude indicated by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Khrushchev, a threat already borne out by the explosion of 23 October, demanded immediate action on the part of the Assembly. It was evident from the procedural road-blocks that had been thrown up by a number of communist delegations that the USSR did not relish having to reject or ignore an appeal from the Assembly. It was untrue that the eight-Power draft resolution, as the Soviet representative had alleged, was NATO-inspired; it was inspired only by the demand of the peoples of the sponsoring countries that testing of such monstrous and militarily purposeless weapons should be stopped. It would be regrettable if the divisions sown in the Committee by the Soviet Union prevented the prompt consideration of the eight-Power draft resolution. However, the statements made by the delegations which were free to represent the opinion of their peoples would stand in the record as an indictment for all to read and remember.

20. Mr. ANUMAN RAJADHON (Thailand) said it was urgent that the Committee should take immediate action in support of the eight-Power draft resolution.

Within the next few days the Soviet Union might detonate a nuclear device with a destructive power of unprecedented magnitude; the explosion on 23 October of what was reported to be a 30-megaton bomb indicated that it was testing bombs of increasing power according to time-table.

21. Although Thailand was a small country which might not be directly affected by radio-active fall-out from Soviet bomb explosions, it could not remain indifferent to the terrible threat they posed to human life. Surely the Soviet Union itself was aware of the destructive and contaminating effects of the bomb it was testing. Thailand urged all members of the Committee to join in a solemn appeal to the Soviet Union to stop testing super-bombs.

22. Mr. SCHWEITZER (Chile) said that the majority in the Committee evidently felt that although nuclear testing was only one aspect of disarmament, it was an urgent question which warranted priority consideration. For its part, Chile shared the alarm expressed by the Government of India at the possibility of tests being resumed by countries at present still observing the moratorium, and its conviction that a solemn appeal to refrain from testing addressed to the nuclear Powers would be supported by the overwhelming weight of world opinion. It also agreed with India that an appeal from the General Assembly would act as an effective restraint on States contemplating a unilateral resumption of testing.

23. The Government of Chile was deeply concerned at the quickening pace of war preparations and, particularly, the resumption of nuclear explosions. It agreed with the United States and the United Kingdom as to the urgent need for a treaty banning nuclear tests under effective international control. The conclusion of such a treaty would stop the dangerous proliferation of nuclear weapons, relieve anxiety concerning fall-out and constitute an initial advance towards controlled disarmament, and would be a first step towards building mutual confidence and reducing the danger of war.

24. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile had told the General Assembly during the general debate (1019th plenary meeting), the small countries, confronted with the threat of total destruction through nuclear war, could not continue to rely solely on the action of the major Powers. They were in duty bound to exert every effort to avert a general holocaust. As a Member of the United Nations, Chile regarded that as an ineluctable responsibility, and its conduct during the current session would be guided by that policy of active pacifism. It would co-operate in any initiative aimed at re-establishing international peaceful co-existence, and would support any proposal having as its object the abolition of nuclear tests and the re-establishment of the principle of the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only.

25. In the prevailing state of international tension, it was the urgent duty of all nations to seek to reduce the risk of war. The fact that national security interests were being placed above the interests of mankind as a whole was therefore discouraging, and should be pondered by Members of the United Nations who wished to remain true to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

26. He deplored the fact that the useful work being carried out at Geneva on a test-ban treaty had been brought to a standstill by the Soviet Union's unilateral

resumption of testing. In the circumstances, it was essential that the parties concerned should be persuaded to resume negotiations. There was no incompatibility between calling upon the nuclear Powers to cease nuclear tests, as advocated by India, and calling upon them to conclude a test-ban treaty, as suggested by the United States and the United Kingdom. A vigorous condemnation of tests might be a step towards their ultimate abolition; in any case, it would have a beneficial moral effect. Moreover, the Assembly would disappoint the hopes of peoples everywhere if it failed to manifest its disapproval. On the other hand, it should guard against creating the illusion that such an expression of disapproval would be sufficient to ensure the permanent discontinuance of testing; that objective could be achieved only by means of a treaty imposing obligations on the parties. The world could no longer depend on goodwill.

27. Both the Indian proposal and the United Kingdom-United States proposal recognized the need to convert a voluntary test suspension into a mandatory cessation of testing; the objectives of both proposals could be incorporated in the decision to be taken by the Committee. Consequently, his delegation saw no difficulty in urging both a suspension of tests and the conclusion of a treaty which would make the suspension binding upon the parties.

28. An agreement such as that sought by the Committee was perfectly possible. In that connexion he recalled that the Antarctic Treaty, signed at Washington, D.C., on 1 December 1959 by the four nuclear Powers—France, the United Kingdom, the USSR and the United States—and by Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, Japan, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa, provided for the prohibition of nuclear explosions and of the disposal of radio-active waste in the Antarctic region. Following that example, the nuclear Powers could agree to prohibit such explosions progressively in all regions of the world.

29. Chile would support the United Kingdom-United States draft resolution (A/C.1/L.280) providing for a treaty banning tests under effective international control.

30. Chile would also vote in favour of the appeal to the Soviet Union sponsored by eight nations (A/C.1/L.288/Rev.1), and in view of its exceptional nature would support the request for its being given immediate priority. The eight-Power draft resolution did not conflict with draft resolution A/C.1/L.283/Rev.2, which Chile would also support.

31. Mr. JIMENEZ (Panama) said that in view of the gravity of the situation and of the approaching explosion by the Soviet Union of a 50-megaton bomb, every effort should be made to limit debate on the draft resolutions now before the Committee and, in particular, on the question of what priority each should receive.

32. His delegation unreservedly endorsed the statement made before the General Assembly on 25 September (1013th plenary meeting) by the President of the United States, Mr. Kennedy, who had proposed that disarmament negotiations should be resumed at an early date and should continue until a programme of general and complete disarmament was agreed upon and put into effect.

33. The conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear weapons tests should take precedence over general and complete disarmament and should be given the highest

priority, since given a spirit of goodwill it would not require much time.

34. In a world divided between two groups of States which held opposing views on freedom and human dignity, it was incumbent upon the smaller countries to play an increasingly active role in asserting their convictions and principles.

35. His delegation supported the motion to give priority to the eight-Power draft resolution, and also supported the draft resolution itself.

36. Mr. DE LEQUERICA (Spain) observed that the harmful effects of nuclear explosions on present and future generations were recognized by everyone. Whether all the facts and figures that had been given in the Committee were exactly accurate was not of great importance; the essential situation had been stated clearly by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/3838, chapter VII, paragraph 54). The only disagreement was on what was to be done to deal with the situation. The Soviet Union, for example, considered that the suspension of nuclear tests could not be discussed outside the framework of general and complete disarmament. The Committee had already shown what it thought of that view by its decision to consider the question of tests separately; but further comment would not be inappropriate.

37. The banning of nuclear tests differed from disarmament in that it would not alter the existing balance of power. It would merely require States to renounce possible future weapons, which would be much easier for them than to give up weapons they already possessed. Moreover, to achieve even partial agreement on the clearly defined issue of a treaty to ban tests had taken three years of negotiations. Those negotiations had been abruptly broken off at the point where the parties involved had been closest to agreement. It was legitimate to ask, therefore, what hope there was of reaching agreement if the relatively simple question of nuclear tests was to be tied to that of general disarmament, which would involve a real revolution in international relations. The recent series of tests had been proceeding at the rate of twenty in one month, as compared with an average of five per month before the moratorium, and it had been said that the fall-out they had produced was equivalent to two-thirds of the total produced by previous tests. In those circumstances, it was obvious that the world could not wait for an agreement on general and complete disarmament: the question of prohibiting tests must be dealt with separately.

38. There were two courses which could be followed with respect to nuclear tests. Either the Committee could aim to achieve a moratorium immediately, or it could try to bring about, as soon as possible, a formal prohibition having legal force and bearing effective guarantees. Experience showed that a moratorium, even if backed by the moral force of an Assembly resolution, would be broken as soon as one great Power considered that its international position was in any way threatened. The Soviet Union had not hesitated to carry out the present series of explosions despite the fact that it had voted in favour of such a resolution. General declarations were never sufficient to prevent States from taking action when they felt that their security was at stake. Thus the only solution was a treaty. A legal contract was the only instrument recognized by the international community as binding, and it was only through such an instrument that a system

of guarantees and controls could be set up to prevent States from violating their commitments. Such guarantees were essential if States were to renounce their means of self-defence. Those considerations would determine his delegation's position when the Committee came to a vote.

39. As regards the eight-Power draft resolution, his delegation could not accept the argument that it was inappropriate to make an appeal to only one nuclear Power, the Soviet Union. The moral position of East and West could not be equated. It should be remembered that although after the Second World War the Western nations alone had possessed the atomic bomb, they had not used it to impose their will. Those nations upheld the moral and legal traditions to which Spain adhered, and it supported their stand on the question under discussion. His delegation would therefore vote for the eight-Power draft resolution.

40. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus), replying to the Indian representative, said he had not attempted to argue in his statement at the 1173rd meeting that the imminence of the Soviet 50-megaton test was the only consideration by which the Committee should be guided in its present discussion. He had stated that the Committee should deal now with the imminent danger posed by the actions of one of the two major blocs, and that the danger presented by the other side could be dealt with in the further course of debate. The same sense of urgency had prompted his delegation to support the moratorium on testing proposed by India and to support priority for the Indian item, even though the question of a test-ban treaty was far more important, since such a treaty would be more effective and more lasting. In objecting to the appeal relating to the 50-megaton bomb, the Indian representative was weakening his argument on behalf of a moratorium.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.