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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 44TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAIK (Pakistan)

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A/C.1/35/PV.44
26 November 1980

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 34, 35, 44 AND 48 (continued)

Mr. HANDL (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): At yesterday's afternoon meeting the Committee was presented with document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1, which contains a draft resolution on carrying out an investigation into various reports appearing in the mass media pertaining to what is called the alleged use of chemical weapons. In our view, the approach laid down in this draft resolution should at the very least prompt some perplexity. In fact, in accordance with this document the United Nations is to be involved in activities which are completely extraneous to it and, moreover, which run counter to the high principles on which it was founded.

The draft resolution suggests that that the General Assembly be turned into a sort of bureau to check press reports and reports appearing in the mass media in general. In other words, we are talking here about the United Nations assuming the functions of a censor. It is suggested now that the General Assembly investigate reports into the alleged use of chemical weapons. Tomorrow, perhaps, another subject for such investigations might be found. This is an attempt to push the General Assembly down a very slippery path indeed. If this draft resolution is adopted a dangerous precedent will be created, according to which, merely on the grounds of reports appearing in the press concerning any deviations from generally-recognized rules and norms in any region of the world, an investigatory group could be set up which would have to travel to that region to check these kinds of reports. All this can be considered only as an excuse for interfering in the internal affairs of States on any pretext.

(Mr. Handl, Czechoslovakia)

Naturally, we are all concerned about the strict and undeviating observance of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. This is also true of other international agreements in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. However, we do not believe that the General Assembly is entitled to adopt a resolution containing provisions which would in fact supplement or change the provisions of these international legal instruments. Such a method must perforce subvert the meaning and role of these instruments, which were elaborated and adopted as the result of protracted negotiations among States.

Of course, the draft does contain some provisions which do not give rise to any doubt regarding the need to abide by the Geneva Protocol and the need for all States to accede to it. But these positive points lose their whole meaning against the backdrop of operative paragraphs 4 and 5 of the draft resolution. There it is a question of creating an investigatory group with an extremely vaguely formulated and, hence, unlimited mandate. The group would be asked to seek out and find evidence on the reported use of chemical weapons. It is easy, then, to conclude, that faced with this sort of evidence one can deduce anything one likes, including new reports appearing in the press with similar contents. On the other hand, evidence to prove groundless reports, as we see it in the draft resolution, can be sought ad infinitum and never found since the real facts showing the groundlessness of these reports can be ignored.

Thus, in particular, studies conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross on the Kampuchean border have come up with results, as the representative of Viet Nam said here yesterday. The representatives of that authoritative organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, examined people with suspicious burns and found no trace of chemical agents having been used. We are being told now that too few people were investigated here and that the International Committee of the Red Cross should continue that work until someone with traces of chemical poisoning is found.

(Mr. Handl, Czechoslovakia)

There is, finally, another matter. Which press reports in particular concerning the possible use of chemical methods should be checked by this proposed expert group? Recently these kinds of reports have come mainly from three regions of the world, namely South-East Asia, Afghanistan and, quite recently, the Middle East.

(Mr. Handl, Czechoslovakia)

Therefore we should like to know whether the sponsors of the draft resolution intend to investigate reports regarding the use of chemical weapons in war, in inter-State conflicts, or do they think their task is to check any reports concerning the use of chemical means of warfare within certain States or any States. If we are talking about verifying any reports, what should the attitude be to reports that in combating disorders in certain States wide use is made of the CS irritant, which, again according to some reports, not only can cause serious damage to the organism but in certain amounts can lead to death. We cannot exclude the fact that in one newspaper there were reports that during recent disturbances in Miami, Florida, not only was tear-gas used but much more dangerous chemical agents were used too. Were those reports investigated also? We do not insist on an immediate answer to this. If the sponsors of the draft resolution need some time, we are quite prepared to give them as long as they need to answer the questions.

Mr. MENZIES (Canada): It had been my intention yesterday to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39 on behalf of a number of sponsoring delegations. However, it is with some regret that I must now state that we, the sponsors, have decided to withdraw draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39. In withdrawing that draft resolution I wish to underline that Canada, as I said in my statement to this Committee on 27 October, considers verification a central issue in all meaningful arms control agreements and therefore an important subject for the attention of the Committee on Disarmament as the multilateral negotiating body. We continue to hope that the Committee on Disarmament will decide to take up that part of its permanent agenda under which verification issues may be considered.

Canada and the other sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39 are convinced that that draft resolution would have commanded wide support in this Committee. It is equally clear that amendments submitted without prior consultation on 22 November as A/C.1/35/L.52 would change what was a procedural draft resolution into a substantive one, thus changing the very nature of the draft resolution. Those amendments cannot obtain the wide measure of support that the draft resolution as submitted seemed assured of receiving. The sponsors of the original draft resolution believe that much more time will be required to achieve prior understanding on a draft resolution that would command broad support. Instead of continuing along a path which would divide rather than unite, I am formally withdrawing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39.

Mr. KOH (Singapore): Mr. Chairman, may I begin with three preliminary remarks. First, as this is the first occasion on which I have had the pleasure of speaking here, may I confess my great pleasure at seeing you in the Chair. Secondly, I should like to join many preceding speakers in conveying our very sincere condolences to our Italian colleagues on the loss of life and devastation which have occurred in their country as a result of the earthquake. Thirdly, I should also like to convey my sincere condolences to my Canadian colleagues on the passing of the former Governor-General of Canada, Mr. Jules Leger.

I should like to speak briefly on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1.

As we all know, in 1925 the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare was signed in Geneva. The Protocol entered into force on 8 February 1928. The Protocol forbids the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases in warfare. Although the Protocol constitutes an important landmark in mankind's quest for chemical disarmament, it is deficient in several respects.

(Mr. Koh, Singapore)

First, although the Protocol forbids the use of such weapons it does not prohibit their retention. Secondly, in ratifying the Protocol or in acceding to it many countries formally reserved the right to employ these weapons against non-parties or in retaliation. Thirdly, there exist differences of opinion concerning the scope of the prohibition under the Protocol, especially as regards the legality of the use in war of certain chemical agents. Fourthly and perhaps most important, there is at present no established international machinery for investigating reports of activities outlawed by the Protocol and by the rules of customary international law.

In the period since the Second World War there have been disturbing reports concerning the use in various armed conflicts of chemical agents prohibited by the Geneva Protocol. In the case of the Viet Nam war, for example, the use of such chemical agents as Agent Orange by the United States has been fairly well documented. More recently we have all read reports alleging that chemical weapons have been used in certain military operations in different parts of the world. My delegation has no means of verifying those reports. We feel, however, that we have an obligation to call for an impartial investigation. We therefore support the request to the Secretary-General to carry out that investigation with the assistance of qualified medical and technical experts. If the investigation by the Secretary-General shows that the allegations are unfounded then the reputations of certain countries will have been cleared. He who is innocent need have no fear of an impartial investigation. For these reasons my delegation will give its support to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1. Seven delegations have today submitted, in document A/C.1/35/L.57, 13 amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1. In view of the fact that those amendments have only appeared this morning and in view of the fact that they are so extensive and numerous, my delegation will reserve its position on them.

I hope it is not inappropriate for me to conclude by referring briefly to developments in recent years on this question of chemical disarmament. In 1974 an agreement was reached between the United States of America and the USSR to prepare a joint initiative with respect to the conclusion of an international convention dealing with the means of chemical warfare. On 7 August 1979 the two super-Powers submitted a joint report to the Committee on Disarmament on the progress of their negotiations.

According to that joint United States-USSR report, progress in their bilateral negotiations has been achieved in five areas. First, they have agreed that the ban on chemical warfare will be comprehensive. Secondly, they have agreed that the prohibited substances will be defined on the basis of a general purpose criterion, supplemented chiefly by the criterion of toxicity. Thirdly, it was agreed that the means for chemical warfare as well as the means of their production will have to be declared immediately after a State becomes a party to the convention and destroyed or dismantled within ten years. Fourthly, it was agreed that an international consultation committee, with a permanent secretariat, will be established for the purpose of verification. Fifthly, it was agreed that on-site investigation could be carried out in certain cases.

According to the joint United States-USSR report, there are three important questions which remain outstanding. The first of these is whether the activities to be banned should explicitly include research and testing, planning, organization and training as well as the use of chemical weapons. The second outstanding question is whether there should be any systematic on-site verification of compliance. The third question is what kind of confidence-building measures could be taken before and after the entry into force of the chemical warfare convention.

Up to this point, the convention concerning chemical warfare has been negotiated bilaterally between the United States and the USSR. We wish to express our appreciation to the United States and the USSR for the progress they have achieved in their bilateral negotiations. They have brought us a considerable way towards the conclusion of a convention on chemical warfare. Since the convention is intended to be a generally

(Mr. Koh, Singapore)

acceptable multilateral treaty it is important that at an appropriate time the negotiating process should be transformed from a bilateral into a multilateral one. Therefore I would conclude my statement by asking the two super-Powers, as well as the other members of the Committee on Disarmament, whether the time has come for such multilateral negotiations to begin.

Mr. ZARIF (Afghanistan): The delegation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has reviewed draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1, which has been under consideration in this Committee. It deals with a very important question concerning the need to preclude the use of chemical weapons. This question is of particular importance to my country, since during this year it has repeatedly been the victim of the use of chemical weapons by bandit units.

The use of such weapons by bandits shows that they are ready to resort to most vile methods in the struggle against their own people to attain the objectives set them by their foreign masters. The Afghan Government has repeatedly drawn the attention of world public opinion to the facts related to the chemical war against Afghanistan. Here I should like to draw the attention of representatives to document A/35/430, dated 9 September 1980. Besides the case, which has become widely known, when United States chemical grenades were seized in Herat Province early this year, potent poisonous agents were used last June against students of some Kabul girls' schools and colleges. The agents used affect human organisms in a manner similar to nerve gases. Significantly, in using poisonous gases, the bandits chose victims among the civilian population, which had no idea of means and methods of protection against chemical attack. This list of crimes could well be made longer.

All these are indubitable facts. The Government of Afghanistan has material evidence that the bandits have used chemical munitions produced in the United States. Moreover, the Afghan Government, as is well known, has expressed its readiness to conduct, together with competent representatives of the world community, an investigation of all facts related to the use of such chemical weapons.

(Mr. Zarif, Afghanistan)

Representatives of the World Peace Council and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization who visited Afghanistan have been able to see for themselves which chemical weapons are used by terrorist bands. The resolutions adopted at conferences where those representatives participated have justly condemned the actions of bandits and of those who supply them with chemical weapons.

However, the United States and other countries supporting the bandits decided to ignore the aforementioned invitation since they were far from being interested in such an investigation. Instead, they instigated all kinds of "reports" about the use of chemical weapons by Soviet troops which are stationed in Afghanistan at the request of its Government and in accordance with the treaty that Afghanistan has concluded with the Soviet Union. The provocative nature of those reports is self-evident. They are designed to divert attention from the actual facts concerning the use of chemical weapons against Afghanistan. Here and there reports by Western newsmen have appeared about interviews with bandits who described coloured clouds of poisonous gases. The coloured clouds have apparently been invented for the reports to sound more convincing. However, everyone who is acquainted with literature on chemical weapons available to the public at large knows that no coloured clouds are formed when such weapons are used. The Afghan delegation declares most categorically that all those reports are pure lies.

(Mr. Zarif, Afghanistan)

Now it is suggested that these reports be "investigated". That is what the authors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 call for. Why? For what reason is it suggested that this exercise be undertaken after its initiators refused to go to Afghanistan at the request of the Afghan Government? Why, inter alia, have they never, during the current United Nations General Assembly session, approached us with their doubts or expressed at least a willingness to discuss the issue while they were engaged in speech-making and behind-the-scenes preparation of a draft resolution on the question of investigation? Why, finally, speaking about the so-called impartial investigation, does the draft resolution refer only to those reports which are difficult to confirm? It should be made perfectly clear that the authors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 propose dealing not with the facts that they were able to verify, but with the task of making their slanderous concoctions more convincing, since the actual state of affairs is of little interest to them. In proposing to establish machinery to investigate reports about the use of chemical weapons, they never say a word about the need to deal carefully in the first place with the declarations and reports made by States which are the victims of such weapons.

In view of all this, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan cannot accept many of the provisions of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1. It also has serious doubts about the sincerity of its authors. Therefore, we shall vote against the draft resolution.

However, my delegation decided to associate itself with a number of other delegations in presenting some amendments to the present text.

Mr. SOLA VILA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation would like to make perfectly clear its position on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1. That draft resolution was introduced yesterday afternoon by the delegation of New Zealand, and a number of other States are also sponsoring it.

(Mr. Sola Vila, Cuba)

First I should like to say that we have given careful and well-deserved consideration to the various draft resolutions which have been submitted to the First Committee in the course of the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, regardless of the final position to be taken by my delegation on each draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 unfortunately places us in a very unusual situation because of the origin of the intentions set forth therein, the developments that have occurred and its harmful implications for the international situation, which is sufficiently complicated already.

The press and various international organizations not so very long ago provided unassailable proof of the indiscriminate use of chemical weapons throughout Indo-China by the United States, and even today fresh and alarming evidence is from time to time brought to light of the consequences of those genocidal acts. Nor can we forget that some of those who would convince us today of the inoffensive and impartial nature of the document before us were either passive or active accomplices in that insane criminal venture of tragic memory.

The people of the world cannot have such a short memory. Nor can we ask this Committee, which is devoted to the search for better means of achieving disarmament and international security, to take account of all sources of information, which are still largely manipulated, if not orchestrated, by those in the same capital in which the wars of our time are prepared and from which they are directed. My country, like all the others that have broken the bonds of traditional dependence, has during the last 21 years experienced these capricious and cyclical stories. First they are produced, then they circulate with surprising speed and then they disappear as quickly as they appear, depending upon the political circumstances in the centre of imperialist power. And this will continue to be the case as long as there are imperialist Powers and countries that challenge their domination.

(Mr. Sola Vila, Cuba)

It is dangerous, of course, to involve our Committee and our Organization in these manoeuvres. In the opinion of my delegation honest, impartial and well-intentioned concern for strict respect for the Geneva Protocol of 1925 would have led to means which were more appropriate, less controversial and more likely to lead to positive and realistic results, if indeed there is a desire to settle conflicts and not to exacerbate them.

Even now that the wolf is disguised as Little Red Riding-hood, the idea contained in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 retains its markedly political nature. As a consequence, my delegation can only take a clearly political position with regard to this document and oppose its adoption as at present drafted.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation would like to make a few comments to explain the significance and the scope of the amendments in document A/C.1/35/L.52, and we should like to explain the objective that we are pursuing through these amendments.

Perhaps the amendments will not really serve any useful purpose inasmuch as a few moments ago draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39 was withdrawn. I say, perhaps they will not serve any useful purpose because, for the reasons that I am about to put forward, I am not convinced that this is indeed the case.

When my delegation studied draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39 for the first time - and I must confess that that was only last Friday, in view of the tremendous number of documents with which we have been inundated - we found in it one objective worthy of praise, and this appears in the first and the last lines of the first preambular paragraph, wherein we read that there is a need to reduce tensions and to strengthen peace and security in the world.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Although we are sure it was not the intention of the sponsors of the draft resolution, it appears that in its present form the draft resolution, if adopted, would have been tantamount to a revision of the Final Document, albeit by indirect means. We are convinced that this could not have been the intention of the sponsors. This problem could perhaps have been resolved very easily by using language from the Final Document, which after a great deal of work was adopted by consensus.

"Conscious of the need to reduce tensions and to move through..." is the language to be found in the first preambular paragraph, and then comes the definition of the objective towards which we must move. However, language could perhaps have been used which in substance and practically in form as well corresponded to the language of paragraph 43 of the Final Document.

As will be recalled, paragraph 43 of the Final Document, at the beginning of the Programme of Action, states:

"Progress towards the goal of general and complete disarmament can be achieved through the implementation of a programme of action on disarmament, in accordance with the goals and principles established in the Declaration on disarmament." (resolution S-10/2, para. 43) This is what we propose, give or take a word or two, for the first preambular paragraph.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The second preambular paragraph would have remained in its present form. We think it is perfectly accurate to say that the Assembly regrets:

"the evident deterioration of confidence in international relations which has significantly reduced the ability of nations to make progress towards those objectives".

That paragraph, as I say, would have remained in its present form. On the other hand, the third and fourth paragraphs would have been deleted. With the new wording that we would have put in the first preambular paragraph, we felt that the third and fourth paragraphs were no longer required. We did, however, suggest that a new third preambular paragraph be added. It should read:

"Noting that in the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed on 17 June 1925 and in force since 8 February 1928 (Geneva Protocol) no provisions are made for procedures for verifying the implementation of its provisions:".

That is the text proposed in our amendment as the third preambular paragraph.

As regards the only operative paragraph of the draft resolution, we suggested that it be replaced by the two which appear in document A/C.1/35/L.52. What we wanted to do here was to bring the text into line with the letter and spirit of the Final Document, and we also wanted to bring it into line with the letter and spirit of point IX of the so-called Decalogue of the Committee on Disarmament. That point appeared in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament adopted on 11 April 1979. In a general manner it defined the terms of reference of the Committee. Point IX, as you are aware, is drafted in the following way:

"Collateral measures; confidence-building measures;" - and here comes the language relevant to the matter before us - "effective verification methods in relation to appropriate disarmament measures, acceptable to all parties concerned;" (A/35/27, p. 3)

So we wanted the first operative paragraph to ensure the implementation of that provision. We tried to achieve that by the wording of document A/C.1/35/L.52.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The second operative paragraph suggests that a similar procedure be followed in regard to a matter that is rightly of concern to a number of delegations which have taken part in our debate - I am referring to the Geneva Protocol - and the purpose would be to fill the gap left in the Geneva Protocol by means of talks aimed at achieving something that in this case too already exists, not something that has to be negotiated, namely what is set forth in the Final Document and in point IX on the working methods of the Committee; first the definition of, then acceptance of, effective means of verification - relating in this particular case to the Protocol - acceptable to all the parties concerned.

My delegation regrets that it is not in agreement with the representative of Canada. It would appear that he feels that these amendments would have made substantive a draft resolution he thought was procedural. But I believe that the nature of the amendments is identical to that of the original proposal: either we can consider that the original proposal was procedural, in which case the amendments would be procedural; or we can consider that the original proposal was substantive, in which case the amendments are substantive; or we can consider that the original proposal was a mixed proposal, part substantive and part procedural, in which case the amendments would also be mixed amendments.

Mexico is convinced that it is appropriate in any convention, agreement or treaty on disarmament to make maximum efforts to ensure that there exist as comprehensive and effective verification procedures as possible. As usual, we have tried by use of facts to prove the authenticity of our position. The Tlatelolco Treaty, banning the use of nuclear weapons in Latin America is, in my opinion, of all the agreements, conventions or treaties on disarmament which exist at the present time, the one which has the most comprehensive and effective international system of control and verification. Furthermore, we are convinced - and I think the Final Document makes this perfectly clear - that these procedures, these systems, precisely because they do concern so closely the sovereignty of States, are matters which cannot be imposed. They are matters which must be agreed upon in peaceful talks and negotiations, as lengthy as necessary, in compliance with the norms set forth in the Final Document.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Furthermore, we believe, as we have said on many occasions in discussing nuclear tests, that perfection is not of this world that it is not possible to create systems which give absolute proof that each and every instance of failure to comply with a treaty will be detected, will be established beyond a shadow of a doubt. I think one needs a balanced approach, if I may put it that way. As far back as 1972, eight years ago, the Secretary-General quite rightly made a statement which has since then been quoted ad nauseam, and what he said then appears quite rightly in the appendix of the study of four experts which has been distributed to us this year. He said that we should ask ourselves whether the risks involved in a minor violation of a provision are not much smaller than the risks which one runs when one demands perfection as in the case, to which the Secretary-General was obviously referring, of nuclear weapons tests.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

To revert to the matter before us, my delegation has believed and, frankly, continues to believe that, with the goodwill and the good faith of all the parties, it would be possible in this case to take a step forward, even if it is a very small step, by reaffirming in general terms what the Final Document already states in this respect, that is, that the Committee on Disarmament, as stated in the operative paragraph 2 which we have proposed:

"as far as the priorities of its work on its agenda item entitled 'Chemical weapons' permit... endeavour... to explore the possibilities of reaching agreement on appropriate verification procedures, acceptable to all parties concerned, to fill the gap" - which, unfortunately, exists - "in the Geneva Protocol in that respect." (A/C.1/35/L.52, p. 2)

The debate we have had this morning shows that any decision we adopt on this matter must be one which can at least command general support. I do not believe we have had any topic which has been as controversial in all our deliberations and has given rise to such strong statements as this one. However, my delegation still hopes that it will be possible to reach a text commanding general support. Hence my delegation would like to reserve its right under rule 122 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which states:

"A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended. A motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any member."

My delegation, then, reserves the right to reintroduce the proposal contained in document A/C.1/35/L.39, on the understanding that, if it is reintroduced under that rule, it would immediately be subject to a revision. But that revision would not exactly correspond to the text of the original proposal had the amendments proposed by Mexico in document A/C.1/35/L.52 been incorporated in it.

I gather from what the representative of Canada said that in these amendments there are perhaps some points on which the sponsors of the original document (A/C.1/35/L.39) are not in agreement.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Hence my delegation, reserving its right that I have just mentioned, would like first of all to consult both the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.39 and the various representatives who spoke here this morning to ascertain whether there is a possibility of introducing a text which, in substance, would reflect the Mexican amendment but in which all the other amendments which were necessary and acceptable to my delegation would also be incorporated, taking into account that the proposal should be based, first, on something in keeping with the Final Document and, secondly, on something consistent with a constructive proposal capable of general agreement. If that were possible, my delegation would, I repeat, avail itself of the rule I have read out and immediately introduce a revised version of the proposal based on the results of those deliberations.

I wish to take this opportunity to say, as I have just explained, that in my delegation's view any text approved here on this matter of verification - whether in abstracto or with regard to the application of a treaty - can have the desired constructive effect only if it is acceptable to all parties concerned, as stated in the Final Document and the rules of the Committee on Disarmament.

If this is not achieved my delegation, much to its regret, will have to abstain both on the amendments presented to us this morning in document A/C.1/35/L.57 and on document A/C.1/35/L.43/Rev.1 to which those amendments apply.

The CHAIRMAN: As no other representative has expressed a desire to speak at this time and since consultations are still proceeding on some of the proposals on which decisions have yet to be taken, I propose, if the Committee agrees, that we should adjourn now to permit more time for those consultations before our meeting this afternoon at which we plan to complete the decision-taking procedure.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I just wanted to inquire if we could hold the vote now on some of the draft resolutions on which consultations have not been and will not be held. We do not see the need of adjourning the meeting now when much remains to be done.

I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that you have taken a look at the list of draft resolutions we have to take action on, and the Soviet delegation is certainly ready to take action on any of those remaining.

Mr. DABO (Guinea) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, in connexion with the proposal you just made, following the statement made by the representative of Mexico, I think it would be interesting for the Committee to know whether the delegation of Canada accepts the proposal that has been made to permit subsequent consultations. Also it might be interesting for the Committee to know whether the sponsors of the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.57 agree to consultations.

Mr. MENZIES (Canada): The intent of our draft resolution was of a general character, in terms of drawing the attention of the Committee on Disarmament once more to the importance of verification as a broad, general requirement in the panoply of measures required dealing with disarmament and arms control. The amendments introduced and very fully and ably explained by the representative of Mexico introduce a specific issue which has been recognized in other draft resolutions before the Committee, namely, the lack of any means of verification or checking up on the chemical weapons protocol, and it was not our intention in the original draft resolution which we submitted in A/C.1/35/L.39 to be as specific as that.

(Mr. Menzies, Canada)

It appears therefore that the intention of the representative of Mexico is to create a bridge between our draft resolution of a general character, a draft resolution of principles, and other draft resolutions which are before the Committee dealing with the subject of chemical weapons; and it may be very difficult to work out a text that would satisfy all members of this Committee in the course of a lunch-hour consultation bringing together perhaps four draft resolutions with rather different intent. Subject to consultation with the other sponsors, I must say that I see some difficulty in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: Since it appears that it is the intention of the Committee to continue this meeting and proceed to voting, as proposed by the representative of the Soviet Union, then I shall begin the voting procedure with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20. This draft resolution has 10 sponsors and was introduced by the representative of Mexico at the 43rd meeting of the First Committee on 25 November 1980. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the voting.

Mr. MARTIN (New Zealand): For several years the New Zealand delegation has taken an active part in preparing and sponsoring draft resolutions which have called for the speedy conclusion of a treaty to achieve the discontinuation of all test explosions in all environments for all time. We wish to reiterate our firm and unequivocal support for the earliest possible conclusion of such a treaty. That is what operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 calls for - a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Operative paragraph 4 (a), on the other hand, calls for the negotiation, not of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, but only of a treaty to prohibit all nuclear-weapon tests.

It has also long been New Zealand's hope that the nuclear-weapon States would see their way to suspending their testing programmes without waiting for the conclusion of negotiations and entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We have in the past supported calls for a comprehensive moratorium of this kind, for example, resolution 33/71 C. We would have been willing to do so again this year, but that is not what draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 proposes.

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(Mr. Martin, New Zealand)

It advocates only a partial moratorium, a moratorium that does not cover all nuclear-weapon States and one that could be interpreted as condoning so-called peaceful nuclear explosions.

For these reasons New Zealand will abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation would like to make the following statement in explanation of its vote on A/C.1/35/L.20.

We note that this draft resolution reflects the idea of establishing a moratorium on nuclear tests as a measure that would promote the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear weapon test ban. As members know, the Soviet Union, speaking at this session of the General Assembly, made a proposal that all States - and I repeat, all States - that possess nuclear weapons should refrain for one year from conducting any nuclear explosions.

We propose that because we believe that this would create in particular a more favourable climate for completing negotiations on the comprehensive test ban.

The Soviet delegation notes with regret that the provision in operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 does not take into account the position of the Soviet Union, particularly regarding the participants in the moratorium and its timing. During consultations we made efforts in a constructive spirit to elaborate a generally acceptable formula on this matter. But our opinions were not taken into consideration by the sponsors of this draft resolution. In those circumstances, the Soviet delegation will be unable to support draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 and will abstain in the vote.

Mr. NOLAN (Australia): Delegations will be aware that Australia has long stressed the urgent need for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty. We see such an agreement as a necessary further restraint on existing nuclear arsenals and a further major obstacle to the spread of nuclear weapons.

It is therefore with regret that the Australian delegation will be forced to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.20. The Australian delegation cannot accept a draft resolution which by calling only on some States to agree to a moratorium on nuclear testing excludes other nuclear-weapon States. Operative paragraph 5, even when coupled with operative paragraph 3, has that effect.

(Mr. Nolan, Australia)

Australia has long called for a fully verifiable comprehensive test ban, and we were disturbed to see that under operative paragraph 5 the ban would apply to "all nuclear-weapon tests" thereby leaving open the question of so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. A comprehensive test ban, to be effective, must be truly comprehensive; it must cover all States, all environments and all tests.

Operative paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 make the draft resolution selective and therefore, in the Australian delegation's view, inadequate. It is the view of the Australian delegation, which we have repeated on many occasions, that a comprehensive test-ban should indeed be comprehensive.

Our stand on comprehensive test ban issues has made the decision on this draft resolution a particularly hard one for us to take. However, for us to have voted in favour would have indicated a willingness by Australia to entertain the idea of a ban on nuclear testing applying to only some nuclear-weapon States and to only some types of nuclear tests. We wonder how many States really accept such selective results.

In an effort to enable the Australian delegation to vote in favour of this draft resolution, we approached the sponsors and requested that they amend the draft resolution in order to make the ban truly comprehensive and thereby, we believed, in conformity with the wishes of the international community. We regret, however, that our views were not considered.

As I said before, we shall therefore be abstaining in the vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now put to the vote draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

- In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia
- Against: United States of America
- Abstaining: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 was adopted by 95 votes to 1, with 35 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those delegations that wish to explain their vote.

Mr. LEHNE (Austria): The Austrian delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.20. That vote reflects the Austrian Government's awareness of the overwhelming need for an early conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty as the next step towards attaining control of both vertical and horizontal proliferation.

We are also convinced that a moratorium on nuclear explosions could create beneficial conditions for the successful conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on that issue. The Austrian delegation would like to point out, however, that it has certain reservations concerning two aspects of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20.

Operative paragraphs 3 and 5 urge different categories of nuclear-weapon States to assume different kinds of obligations. The Austrian delegation has doubts as to whether such a differentiation between nuclear-weapon States, which could be interpreted as allowing certain States to continue certain forms of testing, really helps to advance our common objective - the halting of all testing in all environments by all nuclear-weapon States.

The Austrian delegation would also have welcomed the unambiguous inclusion of so-called peaceful nuclear explosions in the operative part of the present draft resolution.

Mr. VENKATESWARAN (India): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.20 on the cessation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons. We wholeheartedly support the proposal for the setting up of an ad hoc working group in the Committee on Disarmament at its very next session to begin multilateral negotiations on a treaty for the prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests.

However, my delegation would have preferred it if the call in operative paragraph 5 for the immediate cessation of all nuclear weapon tests pending the conclusion of such a treaty had been addressed equally to all nuclear-weapon States rather than only to the three parties engaged in the trilateral negotiations, since this would have reflected more faithfully world opinion on this important issue.

Mr. WRIGHT (Niger) (interpretation from French): I wish to explain why the delegation of Niger abstained on this draft. I should like to say at the outset that Niger naturally agrees with all the endeavours of our Organization to put an end once and for all to all nuclear explosions, whether in the atmosphere, in outer space or under water.

However, my delegation regrets that we were unable to support this draft resolution because we do not believe that a new treaty banning all nuclear tests would change anything in this unfortunate situation that has existed for 20 years now, since we elaborated the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water.

We consider that we should not be in this situation today if the three depositary States of the first Treaty had respected the terms of that Treaty in the first place.

Mr. ERDEMBILEG (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): The Mongolian delegation abstained in the vote on this draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20, in view of the fact that it cannot support some of its provisions.

In operative paragraph 5 there is a recommendation which is addressed only to the States depositaries of the relevant Treaties, and there is an appeal to them to bring to a halt without delay all nuclear test explosions, either through a trilaterally agreed moratorium or through three unilateral moratoriums, as a temporary measure until the new comprehensive test ban treaty enters into force.

As we see it, the deficiency of this draft resolution consists in the absence of an appeal addressed to all nuclear States without exception - I repeat, all nuclear States without exception - to agree on a moratorium.

The Mongolian People's Republic believes that all States possessing nuclear weapons should, as a manifestation of goodwill and in order to create more favourable conditions for completing the preparation of a comprehensive international test ban treaty, refrain for a definite period of time agreed among them from conducting any nuclear explosions.

Therefore we are in favour of such a moratorium, which all nuclear-weapon States, including China, should observe. China, as members know, continues to carry out nuclear tests in the atmosphere in close proximity to the southern borders of the Mongolian People's Republic.

To reaffirm the staunch position of the Mongolian People's Republic, I should like to quote a recent statement of the Great People's Khural of the Mongolian People's Republic approved at its regular session on 21 November 1980, in support of the statement of the World Parliament of the Peoples for Peace in Sofia. This important document, I may say for

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

members' information, will shortly be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly of the United Nations. This statement of the Mongolian Parliament emphasizes:

"Against the backdrop of the ceaseless efforts on the part of Governments of many countries to achieve a full and comprehensive ban on nuclear tests and the outlawing of these dangerous weapons of mass destruction, the activities of the Peking hegemonists appear particularly provocative as they continue their nuclear tests in the atmosphere, contrary to the provisions of the well-known international Treaty of 1963 and in the face of the protests of peoples and countries throughout the world.

"The Great People's Khural of the Mongolian People's Republic, expressing the will of the entire Mongolian people, decisively protests against the criminal and irresponsible activities of Peking, which threaten the life and health of millions of people throughout the world, and the Khural demands of the Chinese authorities that they once and for all put an end to nuclear tests in the atmosphere."

Thus the Mongolian delegation has serious reservations with regard to operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution and on that basis my delegation abstained in the vote.

Mr. SOLA VILA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Cuba abstained on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 primarily because of operative paragraph 5. Our country has declared itself in favour of the cessation of nuclear tests as a part of general and complete disarmament, but that should encompass all nuclear-weapon States without discrimination and without pinpointing individual States.

In connexion with operative paragraph 4, we said at the session of the Committee on Disarmament this year that we were in favour of a working group to initiate negotiations for the purpose of agreeing on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Possibly, if the draft resolution had been voted on paragraph by paragraph, our delegation would have abstained on paragraph 5, and we could then have voted in favour of the rest of it, because we fully understand the feelings of all mankind in support of the cessation of nuclear tests.

Mr. RAJAKOSKI (Finland): The Finnish delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/35/L.20. We did so because we support the ultimate objective of the draft resolution, that is, the cessation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons.

Our casting a positive vote, however, does not mean that we accept an interpretation of the text that would exclude peaceful nuclear explosions, as explained here already by many other delegations. Nor do we accept any differentiation between nuclear-weapon States as far as their responsibilities are concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now begin the voting procedure on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 and the proposed amendments to it appearing in document A/C.1/35/L.47. The draft resolution has eight sponsors and was introduced by the representative of Australia at the 33rd meeting of the First Committee on 18 November 1980.

Under rule 130 of the rules of procedure the amendments have to be voted on first, and the representative of Sweden had proposed that they should be voted on as a whole.

Accordingly we shall now vote on the amendments proposed in document A/C.1/35/L.47.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia,

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United States of America.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Viet Nam

The amendments in document A/C.1/35/L.47 were adopted by 90 votes to 3 with 35 abstentions.*

Mr. TOWO-ATANGANA (United Republic of Cameroon) (interpretation from French): Naturally my delegation voted yes, but I see that a red light appears on the display board, indicating a negative vote. We do support the amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now vote on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 as amended.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

* Subsequently the delegation of Malta informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia

Against: None

Abstaining: Argentina, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Niger, Poland, Sri Lanka, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 as amended was adopted by 115 votes to none, with 18 abstentions.*

* Subsequently the delegation of Sri Lanka advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes after the vote.

Mr. FLOWEREE (United States of America): My remarks will apply to both draft resolutions, A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 and L.20.

My delegation voted against the amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 and abstained on the draft resolution as a whole. We opposed the amendments en bloc since they have the effect of changing the character of the draft resolution. The stage has not yet been reached for initiation of multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty, which we believe would interfere with and complicate, rather than facilitate, trilateral negotiations being carried out by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. While we desire as early as possible a conclusion of those negotiations and completion of a draft comprehensive test ban treaty, we do not consider it useful to set a deadline for submission of a text to the General Assembly. What is important is that the draft treaty, when it is concluded, prove to be an effective and verifiable arms control measure, even if somewhat more time is required for its negotiation than we all would prefer.

My delegation cast a negative vote on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 for similar reasons and also because the United States cannot accept the call for a moratorium on nuclear testing which would not be verifiable. The problem of working out arrangements by which a test ban could be adequately verified is one of the major questions that has been occupying the attention of the trilateral negotiations. Without such measures a test ban would not provide the assurance that is necessary if it is to serve its intended purpose.

Finally, the Assembly's resolutions are, of course, recommendations, and it will be for the Committee on Disarmament itself to decide on its programme of work and the procedures it will follow in pursuing that programme.

Mr. SUMMERHAYES (United Kingdom): I wish to explain that it was with reluctance that my delegation abstained on draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1, which has just been approved in its amended form. In the first place, my Government is committed to the goal of a comprehensive test ban as a priority arms control objective. Secondly, my Government is one of the participants in the trilateral negotiations now in progress, along with the United States and the Soviet Union. We are doing all within our power to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion as soon as possible. We believe that those negotiations offer the best hope of progress towards a comprehensive test ban and that nothing should be done that might disturb them. At the same time we of course recognize the legitimate interest of the international community in this subject and we understand the widespread concern for faster progress. For this reason we would have supported draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 in the form in which it came before the Committee this morning, and we are grateful to the originators of it for the efforts they have made to promote a text that took account of the protestations of all concerned. Unfortunately, the amendments in document A/C.1/35/L.47 were adopted, and they have transformed the original draft resolution. In its revised form the draft resolution invites the Committee on Disarmament to play a role in this subject which we do not believe is compatible with the responsibilities of the negotiating States in the tripartite negotiations. It also purports to impose on them what amounts to a deadline.

For these reasons, despite our underlying support for a comprehensive test ban, we were unable to support draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation would like to state briefly its reasons for abstaining on draft resolutions A/C.1/35/L.20 and L.23/Rev.1.

We note, as we noted last year, that a number of nuclear tests have been carried out during the last 11 months. A great majority of those tests were recorded in the northern hemisphere. In the main they were carried out by the Powers now taking part in the negotiations on the total banning of such tests.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

We have difficulty in believing that those Powers are continuing their tests to the detriment of "the health of present and future generations", in the words of the preamble of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1.

Furthermore, we have some doubts about the idea stated in both the texts submitted to us according to which the complete banning of tests would bring about a really major contribution to ending the proliferation, both qualitative and quantitative, of nuclear weapons.

With regard particularly to the two most powerfully armed States in the nuclear field, according to data contained in the United Nations studies published in document A/35/257 we note that they carried out 1079 tests between 1945 and 1979, and they have conducted many tests since the beginning of their negotiations on the total ban.

In the circumstances we feel that a ban on using the underground environment would not prevent them from increasing their qualitative and quantitative advantage. Hence the French delegation believes that the banning of tests is not in itself a really substantial contribution to nuclear disarmament. To be a real contribution the ban should be tied to commitments relating to nuclear arsenals and thus be an integral part of the nuclear disarmament process.

As for the proposal to establish a working group we think that, as we have said on another occasion, that is a decision that stems from the Committee on Disarmament's organization of its work and choice of methods, and that it is a decision for that Committee to take.

Mr. SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): The Brazilian delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1. In doing so we wished to stress the importance we attach to the multilateral negotiation of a treaty to prohibit further testing of nuclear weapons. Although the draft resolution still does not meet fully the concerns of the Brazilian delegation, it does contribute to enhancing the view expressed by the overwhelming majority of States that this question should be urgently and substantively discussed in the Committee on Disarmament with a view to reaching agreement on a nuclear-weapon test ban treaty. Moreover, the amendments proposed by a group of delegations and adopted by the First Committee represent a considerable improvement over the original text.

(Mr. Souza e Silva, Brazil)

Brazil supported the position expressed by the Group of 21 in the Committee on Disarmament in favour of the establishment of an ad hoc working group to negotiate a nuclear weapon test ban. We see such a treaty as a first step towards the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. Among other considerations, action on banning nuclear weapon testing could be immediately implemented by the nuclear-weapon Powers and would constitute an effective means of preventing the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, a comprehensive test ban treaty would also be meaningful in the efforts to curb horizontal proliferation of such weapons. In that context, the treaty should contain an unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament so that embodied a meaningful balance of obligations between nuclear Powers and non-nuclear-weapon countries. The preservation of freedom of access by all nations to scientific and technological knowledge in the field of nuclear energy is also a very important concern of my delegation. An international instrument designed to curb the further testing of nuclear weapons must, in our view, avoid any discrimination regarding the development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in order to ensure that its provisions are meaningful and lasting.

Mr. WRIGHT (Niger)(interpretation from French): I merely wish to say that my delegation would have been pleased to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1, if the amendments contained in document A/C.1/35/L.47 had not changed the substance of that draft resolution. Those amendments, we believe, make draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 very similar to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20 on which the Committee took a decision earlier,

Draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 with the new amendments advocates the negotiation of a treaty banning all nuclear testing. As we said with reference to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.20, we think that another treaty banning nuclear testing would have no effect at all on nuclear proliferation. Since the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere in Outer Space and Under Water, as we have said, did not affect nuclear proliferation in any way, we see no reason whatsoever to support this text, which is similar to the earlier one.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet Union has been striving consistently for a general and complete ban on nuclear weapon test explosions. The USSR has been conducting negotiations in a constructive spirit with the United States and the United Kingdom with a view to the preparation of a treaty on this subject. We continue to advocate that the Committee on Disarmament take up the matter of a general and complete cessation of nuclear weapon testing and, as members well know, we support the proposal to create a working group to that end within the Committee.

The Soviet delegation notes, however, that both in draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.23/Rev.1 and in the amendments to it contained in document A/C.1/35/L.47 there are a number of provisions which cause us to have certain reservations and which forced us to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution as amended.

We consider that the General Assembly is not authorized to tell the Committee on Disarmament how to organize the work of its subsidiary bodies, to draw up their mandate or to define the practical problems which should be resolved in the course of negotiations. The settlement of these questions is, of course, the exclusive prerogative of the Committee on Disarmament itself.

Furthermore, we believe that the task facing the Committee is to prepare not a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty but rather a treaty on the general and complete cessation of nuclear weapon tests.

Finally, we consider that an evaluation of how a global seismic monitoring system works in practice can be decided on after the conclusion of a treaty on the general and complete cessation of nuclear weapon tests.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.