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Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL
(Sudan).

AGENDA ITEM 77

The urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests (A/5141 and Add.1, A/C.1/873) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. BARRINGTON (Burma) said that the item under discussion was of particular importance and urgency because every delay in ending nuclear tests made the future of the human race more uncertain. Although only the nuclear Powers could take the decision to end their own tests, every nation was directly involved, and had a responsibility to future generations to promote such a decision. The nuclear Powers themselves no longer seemed to have the situation under control, since they continued testing while admitting that to do so was madness. The issue was no longer one of cold-war politics, but of survival.

2. When the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had begun its work in March 1962, the positions of the Western Powers and the Soviet Union had been poles apart. The proposals of the United States and the United Kingdom, based on the recommendations of the 1958 Conference of Experts,^{1/} had provided for a control system consisting of internationally manned observation posts subject to the control of an international headquarters organization which would have the right to carry out annually an agreed number of on-site inspections to identify events of doubtful origin. The Soviet Union had taken the position that no international control system of any kind was necessary, since modern instruments could, for all practical purposes, detect and identify all nuclear explosions from great distances. There had thus seemed to be no point of contact between the two sides. The memorandum submitted on 16 April 1962 in the Eighteen-Nation Committee by the eight unaligned nations^{2/} had been an attempt to induce progress by providing some common ground for negotiation. Although it had not been used entirely as the sponsors had intended, it had

^{1/} Report of the Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests. See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Annexes, agenda items 64, 70 and 72, document A/3897.

^{2/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962, document DC/203, annex 1, sect. J.

certainly unfrozen the situation. The Soviet Union now accepted the idea of a control system based on national stations reporting to an international scientific commission which in certain circumstances might be invited to conduct on-site inspections on Soviet territory. The United States and the United Kingdom had swung towards the idea that a control system could be based on national stations, and that a substantially smaller number of on-site inspections was necessary than had been thought earlier. Thus the two sides had moved closer to each other, although there was still some distance between them. Further genuine negotiations between the nuclear Powers on the basis of the eight-nation memorandum provided the best possibility for an agreement on the cessation of all nuclear tests in all environments, and the best thing the Assembly could do was to press the nuclear Powers in that direction.

3. Another sign of progress was that both sides agreed that no international control system was necessary to detect nuclear tests in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space. Each side had suggested a partial ban. Each proposed that an agreement should be concluded forthwith banning tests in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space, and that further efforts should be made to reach agreement on a treaty banning underground tests. They differed in that the United States and the United Kingdom proposed that all parties should be free to conduct underground tests until such a treaty was concluded, whereas the Soviet Union considered that they should agree to refrain from doing so. Though the Western view had its attractions in that it would stop radio-active pollution of the atmosphere and at least inhibit the development of weapons systems based on high-altitude tests, those benefits would be realized only if the agreement was effective; but the Burmese delegation strongly doubted whether it would be. In the Eighteen-Nation Committee the United States representative had stated that results of important military value could be achieved in the development of weapons through underground tests which, though they might be detected by a seismic network, could not be identified except by on-site inspection. If that were so, a party to the proposed agreement which was unwilling to bear the extra cost of testing underground could hardly be expected to sit idle while the other party conducted such tests. Thus any partial ban would be unlikely to last. A partial ban that came to grief could do more harm than having no partial ban.

4. Another important fact which made the cessation of all tests desperately urgent was that several nations were now approaching the threshold of the nuclear club. One way of deterring potential members was for existing members to stop all tests themselves.

5. The Soviet Union's proposal for a partial ban had the same attractions as that of the two Western Powers, and it had the additional advantage that it

might help to restrict the number of nuclear Powers since underground tests would be suspended. But previous experience of a voluntary moratorium did not give much grounds for confidence. An unconditional moratorium would serve no purpose if it was used merely to prepare for bigger tests; it would not last for long, and when it ended it would leave the world in a worse position than before.

6. The only cure would be a comprehensive treaty banning tests in all environments. The question was whether a partial ban should be accepted as an interim measure, or whether its long-term disadvantages would outweigh its short-term advantages. Speaking on 3 September 1962 in the Eighteen-Nation Committee, his delegation had suggested a solution on the following lines: the heads of State or Government of the nuclear Powers would declare publicly that they assumed personal responsibility for ensuring that no underground tests were conducted by their Governments, or under their auspices, until a comprehensive treaty came into force; that they pledged themselves to work for the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive treaty and to assume personal responsibility for the overall direction of the work of their delegations in the Eighteen-Nation Committee; and that they agreed that the international scientific commission envisaged in the eight-nation memorandum should be established as soon as possible on an interim basis and that it should have the co-operation of their delegations. If accompanied by such a declaration, a treaty banning tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water would be acceptable, since there was a reasonable chance that it would be extended to underground tests. The idea of a public declaration should not be rejected on the ground that such an approach had been of little avail in the past: there had been cases, such as that of Laos, where it had been successful, and the exceptional dangers of the present situation called for exceptional measures.

7. In conclusion, he appealed to the nuclear Powers to reach a comprehensive agreement by 1 January 1963 or, if they were unable to do so, to stop all tests by that date under other agreed arrangements.

8. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) said that the pressure of world public opinion had forced the Western Powers to acknowledge, at the Geneva Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, that nuclear tests conducted under water, in the atmosphere and in outer space could be detected and identified by existing national detection systems. However, the results of the negotiations had been disappointing, since the Western Powers had prevented the conclusion of a nuclear test ban treaty by insisting that provision should be made for compulsory on-site inspection, which, in the absence of disarmament, would constitute espionage.

9. Mankind was faced with the alternatives of stopping the nuclear arms race, with the constantly increasing dangers it entailed, or accepting the risk of a nuclear war which would spell catastrophe for the entire human race. The only real solution was to strike at the very root of the arms race by ending nuclear tests and thus creating the conditions for nuclear disarmament.

10. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR had stated on 11 September 1956, in a message to the President of the United States, that the nuclear test ban issue could be separated from the general disarmament problem and settled at once, since it was possible to detect any nuclear explosion, wherever

it took place. That position had been supported at the eleventh session of the General Assembly by the representative of India,^{3/} who had cited data provided by United States scientists to show that a nuclear test ban would not need verification by international inspection because tests could not be concealed. The Soviet Union still favoured the banning of all nuclear tests, including those conducted underground. Apart from the fact that national instruments of detection were an adequate safeguard against violations of a test ban treaty, it was most unlikely that any State would violate a solemn and explicit international engagement.

11. The position of the Western nuclear Powers contrasted sharply with that of the Soviet Union. Mr. Lloyd, then Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, had asserted in the General Assembly on 24th September 1957^{4/} that the suspension of tests by itself would do nothing to stop the arms race. He had also said that the Western Powers were not prepared to weaken the nuclear deterrent unless there were corresponding advances made towards disarmament in the conventional field, they did not accept the implication that war fought with conventional weapons was more tolerable than war fought with nuclear weapons. That viewpoint, which implied the transformation of any war into a nuclear war, explained the continued nuclear testing by the Western Powers. Mr. Dulles, then Secretary of State of the United States, had made that clear in the General Assembly by stating that the United States was trying to eliminate the radio-activity produced by explosions of thermo-nuclear weapons and "to make nuclear weapons into discriminating weapons".^{5/} In other words, the United States had been trying to develop nuclear weapons which could safely be used for aggressive purposes.

12. It was thus understandable that the United States and its NATO allies had, at the eleventh session of the General Assembly and subsequently, opposed all proposals for the discontinuance of nuclear tests. Somewhat later, faced with rising public pressure for a ban on testing and armed with the experience gained from the tests already carried out, the Western Powers had attempted to present their policy in a more favourable light. At the Conference of Experts held in 1958, the Soviet Union, although fully convinced that a test ban could be controlled by national means, had agreed to a certain measure of international control. It had done so solely in order to promote agreement on a test ban, which the Western Powers had then appeared willing to accept. Immediately after the Conference had adopted its conclusions, however, the President of the United States declared that his country would refrain from further testing for a period of only one year after the projected opening of test ban negotiations on 31 October 1958. The United States had thereupon initiated an intensive campaign to discredit the conclusions of the Conference of Experts, and on 5 January 1959 had come forward, in the Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests at Geneva, with a memorandum containing new data and a set of conclusions completely different from those of the Conference of Experts. On the basis of that memorandum the Western Powers had called for a far more extensive system of inspection, which would have con-

^{3/} *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, First Committee, 829th meeting.*

^{4/} *Ibid., Twelfth Session, Plenary Meetings, 685th meeting.*

^{5/} *Ibid., 680th meeting, para. 29.*

stituted espionage and which they had known would be unacceptable to the Soviet Union.

13. In the meantime, the United States had launched "Project Vela", a programme of research in underground nuclear explosions designed to support the attempt of the United States to challenge the conclusions of the Conference of Experts. As a result of that programme the United States had gained invaluable experience in underground nuclear testing and had come to the conclusion that the most powerful and advanced nuclear weapons could be developed by that means alone, without the necessity of conducting tests in the atmosphere or in outer space. Indeed, the United States representative at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had on 17 August 1962 enumerated the great benefits—including the development of new weapons, such as a pure fusion weapon—which could be derived from underground tests involving very small explosions. The United States had therefore at last acknowledged that compulsory international inspection was not necessary in order to detect violations of a ban on testing in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space. It had continued to insist, however, despite the rapid development of seismographic technology, that inspection was necessary in the case of underground testing.

14. Several Western delegations had proposed that experts from the Western and the socialist countries should meet to determine whether or not inspection was necessary. It had also been proposed that the Soviet Union should permit Western experts to examine its devices for detecting and identifying underground nuclear tests. However, quite apart from the fact that States were unwilling for obvious reasons to disclose secret information about the construction of certain types of instruments, it was clear that the Western Powers were not prepared to accept a ban on nuclear testing and that the findings of their experts would reflect that fact. Discussions by experts were of value only when political decisions had previously been taken by their respective Governments. Moreover, it had been acknowledged in the United States Press that the new United States proposals had been made precisely because they were known to be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. In proposing that the nuclear Powers should be left free to continue underground testing, the United States and the United Kingdom were attempting to legalize the continuance of the arms race while at the same time creating the illusion that a solution had been found to the problem of testing. Thus, their policy remained essentially what it had been in 1957, when its champions had been Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Dulles.

15. However, the basis for a test ban agreement existed. The Soviet Union was prepared to sign a treaty banning tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, pledging itself at the same time to continue negotiations on an agreement banning underground tests, provided that all the nuclear Powers entered into an undertaking to refrain from underground testing until the conclusion of such an agreement. He recalled in that connexion President Kennedy's statement on 2 March 1962 that if all the nuclear Powers refrained from testing, the nuclear arms race would be slowed down. Some Western delegations had contended that the proposal to refrain from underground testing was unacceptable because there would be no guarantee against secret testing by one of the nuclear Powers. However, with the science of detection and identification advancing at a rapid pace, no country

would dare to take the risks implicit in such a policy of deception.

16. The Soviet Union had in addition accepted as a basis for negotiation the memorandum presented by the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee; but the Western Powers had adamantly refused to do so. As the Indian representative had pointed out at the 1246th meeting of the First Committee, the eight-nation memorandum met the main condition laid down by the Western Powers in that it provided for all decisions on inspection to be taken by an international commission, thus introducing an element of surprise which would deter potential violators of a test ban agreement.

17. The proposal by the Mexican representative on the Eighteen-Nation Committee that 1 January 1963 should be set as a time limit for the cessation of all nuclear tests had been supported by numerous delegations to the General Assembly, including that of the Soviet Union. It also had the endorsement of the Bulgarian delegation. He hoped that the failure of any of the Western nuclear Powers to state their views on that proposal up to the present time did not indicate their intention to reject it.

18. The Soviet Union was prepared to conclude an immediate agreement halting all nuclear tests on the basis of either its own proposals or those embodied in the eight-nation memorandum. The key to a solution of that vital problem was now in the hands of the Western Powers.

19. Mr. MALALASEKERA (Ceylon) said that the eight-nation memorandum contained an ingenious compromise formula for the establishment of an international authority to ensure the cessation of nuclear tests, and that the world owed its sponsors a debt of gratitude. As the Canadian representative had said (1247th meeting), no inspection system would fully meet the preoccupations of all parties to a test ban agreement: what was needed was a reasonable assurance that their interests would be protected. Any risks which the nuclear Powers might run by agreeing to a compromise were infinitesimal in comparison with the dangers of the continuance of the arms race, which would keep the world on the brink of self-destruction. The issue was thus primarily a moral one. The moral terms in which the Indian and Brazilian representatives had stated their position must be the mandatory basis for the Assembly's decision with regard to the Mexican proposal that 1 January 1963 should be set as the cut-off date for all nuclear testing.

20. Ceylon, like many other countries, did not possess enough knowledge to pass judgement on the scientific aspects of the nuclear problem, and the Powers which did possess such knowledge did not make all the necessary data available. For instance, the Western Powers now said they had instruments with which to detect explosions in the air, under water and on the ground, whereas two years ago they had said there were no such machines. Similarly, they said that it was impossible to differentiate between underground tremors produced by man and by nature, whereas the Soviet Union insisted that it was possible.

21. The truth was that both sides were engaged in a search for the master weapon, perhaps the cobalt bomb, which would assure supreme power for the nation which got it first. Such a drive for supreme power was evil, and hence the issue was not scientific,

but moral. No nation had the right to test weapons which threatened the sovereignty of States and the well-being of other nations. While Ceylon had the greatest confidence in Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Kennedy, who had agreed at Vienna in June 1961 not to unleash a nuclear war, they would not always head the Governments of their countries. It was not merely two rival Powers that were concerned, but the fate of all mankind.

22. His delegation began from the premise that the tests must stop, with or without watertight controls. It was understandable that some delegations, eager to make a beginning, were ready to settle for a limited ban in the three areas where detection and inspection were no longer a problem. But it should be remembered that the prime aim, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 1 (I) and 41 (I), was the abolition of nuclear weapons as a step towards disarmament. The question of fall-out was a secondary one, a by-product of the tests. While the dangers of fall-out were naturally an argument for the cessation of tests, the elimination of fall-out could never be the main objective. Under a partial treaty, the dissemination of radio-active matter above ground might be halted, but the search for the supreme weapon could continue. Furthermore, underground tests might eventually poison whole strata of the earth's crust, creating a terrible threat to future generations. If tests were allowed to continue beneath the earth's surface, the arms race would continue unchecked, so that a partial ban would not in practice constitute a first step towards a complete ban, as its supporters claimed. Furthermore, as long as the tests continued it would become more and more difficult to win the consent of France and the People's Republic of China to a test ban treaty, and even if they could be persuaded to accept a comprehensive agreement, they could not be expected to accept a partial ban, which would only benefit those countries which had the resources to conduct underground tests.

23. The position of his delegation was, therefore, that it would support a resolution based on the Mexican proposal and designating 1 January 1963, or even an earlier date, as the day after which there were to be no further tests by any country in any environment. A draft treaty already existed embodying such a ban, except for underground tests, and it could easily be amended to include them. Provisions could also be inserted concerning the need to continue the search for agreed methods of verification.

24. Nothing was to be gained by mutual recrimination. The United States based its opposition to a moratorium on what it called a breach of such a moratorium by the Soviet Union in 1961. The Soviet Union denied that there had been any agreed moratorium to violate. Ceylon deplored the Soviet resumption of tests, just as it regretted the explosion of bombs in outer space by the United States. But no nation was infallible, and the United States and the Soviet Union should not indulge in an exchange of moral censure. Rather, the two sides should bear in mind their common moral ground; for both had repeatedly condemned nuclear tests and expressed the desire to end them. By accepting the Mexican formula, they would be making very little sacrifice, if any, since the weapons they already possessed were sufficient for their national security. But by doing so they could put an end to the threat of universal destruction.

25. Mr. BERNSTEIN (Chile) said that he wished to speak in the general debate, firstly, because nuclear testing was driving mankind to the brink of destruction and his delegation felt morally bound to help in the search for a solution of the problem, rather than sit back passively and watch the power struggle between the two blocs; and secondly, because the march of events had caused his country to lose its faith that the great Powers alone could settle current problems.

26. The grave dangers to the human race created by nuclear testing were recognized by everyone, in particular by the nuclear Powers themselves. In the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation,^{6/} eminent scientists had expressed their concern for the fate of present and future generations, and had recommended the final cessation of nuclear tests. Yet more than one hundred nuclear bombs had been exploded during the past year.

27. The great Powers had pledged themselves under the Charter of the United Nations "to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace" (Article 1, paragraph 1), to "settle their international disputes by peaceful means" (Article 2, paragraph 3), and to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force" (Article 2, paragraph 4); in addition, they had pledged themselves, in the Preamble to the Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", "to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours" and "to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest". That pledge had been the basis for granting the great Powers permanent seats in the Security Council and the so-called "right of veto". It was evident, however, that the great nuclear Powers had not fulfilled their solemn pledges. They were threatening each other with the most deadly and destructive weapons, they were endangering the physical health of those same succeeding generations whom they had promised to save from the scourge of war, and they had stressed the paramountcy of national interests, of so-called "national security", in defiance of the interests of the international community. For that reason, his delegation was now obliged to speak quite plainly.

28. He attached little importance to the accusations exchanged and the self-justificatory statements made by the nuclear Powers. The question who was actually responsible for the failure to reach agreement on the suspension of nuclear tests was of no real interest; the point was to find a solution, or at least the beginning of a solution, to the problem; for the common man was blaming the nuclear Powers, without exception, for the existing state of affairs, and was judging them all by the same standards. While that might be unjust, it was a fact, and resulted inevitably from the fear and terror existing in the world. The common man asked how far the power for destruction would increase; why there were so many tests if no one intended to use the bombs manufactured on the basis of them; and how long the great nuclear Powers would keep mankind in its present state of insecurity.

29. The great nuclear Powers bore a tremendous responsibility. On behalf of a small nation, he appealed to all of them to find some solution; to find

^{6/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Supplement No. 16.

some way of living together and letting others live; to fulfil the pledges they had made in signing the Charter of the United Nations. He was certain that the great Powers could not remain deaf to the anguished appeals addressed to them from all corners of the earth and from within their own countries. The undoubted desire for peace among the people of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union had surely been a cause of the changes recently made in their Governments' positions, which, while still opposed, were no longer irreconcilable.

30. A road along which some light could be seen had been found, thanks to the efforts of eight countries represented at Geneva, which had by persistence and understanding established some points of contact among the great Powers. The eight-nation memorandum of 16 April 1962 offered a basis for agreement; while neither side would be fully satisfied with its text, they could not reject it outright, and therein lay its strength. The memorandum had been carefully drafted and was sufficiently flexible to serve as a basis for negotiations. He would therefore refrain from interpreting or commenting on its text.

31. The great Powers had avoided giving an affirmative or negative answer on the memorandum. His delegation believed that an agreement must be reached promptly, within weeks or preferably days, and it therefore supported the Mexican suggestion that all nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests by all countries should be halted by 1 January 1963.

32. He was astounded at the argument of one great Power that it was entitled to be the last to carry out nuclear tests because the other side had begun them. When the destiny of humanity was involved, such considerations could carry little weight.

33. The greatest obstacle to agreement was clearly the distrust between the two great blocs: one side did not trust the other to live up to its pledges, while the second did not trust the first to make proper use of the proposed controls. His delegation believed that the non-nuclear countries should make a united effort to dispel that climate of distrust. If such an effort bore no fruit, his Government believed that, as a partial interim measure, denuclearized zones should be established in various parts of the world, and it believed that Latin America should be such a zone. The Latin American countries would be called upon to pledge themselves not only not to acquire nuclear weapons, but also to refuse them if they were offered.

34. He wished, as a Roman Catholic, to conclude his statement by recalling the appeal made by the Pope on 12 October 1962 to the leaders of nations to continue their discussions with a view to reaching just agreements and to make the sacrifices necessary to save world peace. That appeal echoed the views of the Chilean Government and nation.

35. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that in spite of the General Assembly's repeated appeals, the nuclear Powers had failed to discontinue nuclear testing pending the conclusion of internationally binding agreements. The report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had made it clear that somatic and genetic damage might be assumed to result from any dose of radiation, however small, and that a final cessation of nuclear tests would benefit present and future generations. Continued testing was therefore morally indefensible and represented an unwarranted disregard of the desires and aspirations of mankind.

36. While regretting the failure of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva to bring the nuclear Powers to an agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests, his delegation believed that there was ground for cautious optimism, particularly after what had been said in the Assembly and in the First Committee by the representatives of the two principal nuclear Powers. In spite of the essentially political nature of the differences separating those Powers, the gap had been narrowed so much that the small Powers could reasonably feel that at least in the matter of nuclear testing the hard dictates of the cold war would be laid aside. Any necessary concessions or compromises would surely be fully justified by the beneficial results to mankind of ending the radiation menace and securing the foundations of world peace. Mutual recriminations were useless; what was important was to concentrate on the future and make efforts to bring the two sides closer together until final agreement was reached.

37. The statements of the Soviet and United States representatives on the positions of their two Governments had shown that the differences still separating the two sides, purely on the technical level, were not insurmountable. Both sides now agreed that a treaty could be concluded covering tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. The difference related solely to the treatment of underground tests after the conclusion of such a treaty, and the gap separating the two viewpoints was becoming narrower. However, the delegation of Iraq was unalterably committed to the immediate suspension of all tests, without exception, and felt that the treaty must be a comprehensive one covering all types of tests. Agreement on underground tests should not be difficult to achieve in view of the rapid progress made in methods of identification and detection. Accordingly, it was his delegation's view that negotiations should be renewed without delay for the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty providing for the prohibition and control of all tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, under water and underground, in accordance with the principles and suggestions presented by the eight non-aligned countries in their joint memorandum of 16 April 1962.

38. At the 1246th meeting, the Indian representative had explained that memorandum and its aims in detail. Observation and control were to be on a purely scientific and non-political basis; use was to be made of existing national networks of observation posts; and an international commission of qualified scientists would process the information received from those posts and report to the parties concerned. An important feature of the proposals was that the commission would have authority to request an invitation to conduct an on-site inspection, a request which, because of the moral weight behind it, would be very difficult for any State to refuse. Refusal would leave the other parties free to abrogate the treaty and would put the refusing country in a most compromising position; while such moral pressure was not sufficient, it was the most potent weapon available to the international community, short of outright military intervention.

39. To sum up, his delegation's recommendations were: first, that agreement should be reached on a date for the cessation of all tests; his delegation would prefer immediate suspension but would accept the date of 1 January 1963 proposed by Mexico. Secondly, negotiations should be renewed without delay for a treaty banning and controlling all tests, in accordance

with the proposals outlined in the eight-nation memorandum of 16 April 1962. Thirdly, special efforts should be made to agree on the problem of the control of underground tests, it being understood that no such tests should be conducted until agreement was reached.

His delegation hoped that a draft resolution containing all those elements would soon be unanimously approved by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.