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Chairman: Mr. C. W. A. SCHURMANN
(Netherlands).

AGENDA ITEM 73

Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests (A/5428 and Add.1) (continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said that he had been unable to attend the 1311th meeting, at which the Committee had adopted draft resolution A/C.1/L.324—since adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 1884 (XVIII)—and he wished to offer congratulations to the nuclear Powers concerned, and to Mexico, which had taken the initiative in the matter. The fact that the new agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the banning of weapons of mass destruction in outer space had taken the form of a United Nations resolution was evidence of the growing respect for the legal validity of such resolutions.

2. He was gratified at the conclusion of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow on 5 August 1963, which removed the most serious dangers of radio-activity. The agreement reached was the result of a campaign which had been initiated in 1954 by Mr. Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, had been pressed forward at the international level for the first time at Bandung in April 1955 at the Asian-African Conference, had been supported since 1956 by Mr. Stevenson of the United States, and had gained momentum since 1957 under the pressure of world public opinion and of the General Assembly. He noted in that connexion the contributions made by Albert Schweitzer and Linus Pauling as well as by the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, especially the non-aligned members of that Committee. All those efforts had contributed to the final result. The treaty, which had just entered into force, already had more than 100 signatories, including several States which were not Members of the United Nations; it was to be hoped that those Member and non-member States which had not acceded to the treaty would soon do so.

3. The Committee must now endeavour to complete the work by obtaining an agreement banning underground nuclear tests; it must take care that the success

achieved at Moscow did not lead to a slackening of effort to that end. It might be argued that the current political situation made it unlikely the nuclear Powers would reach agreement now on underground testing, and that in any case, since the main objective had been achieved at Moscow, there was no need at present for further efforts in the same direction. However, that would mean overlooking the fact that, so long as there was no agreement on underground testing, the arms race might continue and radio-active tests might claim new victims. Moreover, the treaty itself stated in its preamble that the signatories were determined to press forward with their negotiations. Some might say that that was a matter for the Eighteen-Nation Committee. However, the latter would do its work more effectively if the First Committee provided it with an example of urgent endeavour.

4. It was not enough to delegate the work of one body to another; the First Committee had to discuss practical means of facilitating the efforts of the Geneva Conference. Several proposals had been made in that connexion. The eleventh in the series of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, held at Dubrovnik in September 1963, had warned public opinion of the danger of radio-active fall-out resulting from new tests carried out by non-signatories of the treaty, which might lead to the break-down of the treaty. It had called for a co-ordinated seismological programme, with the interchange of records of explosions and earthquakes, in which the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union would be the first to participate, other countries joining in later. Improved methods of detection would reduce the element of uncertainty which still existed in the interpretation of seismic readings. An international seismic station could be set up in an area which was suitable from both the political and the seismological point of view. Sweden had suggested at Geneva that seismic detection should be carried out as part of a world-wide seismic data system. In 1962, moreover, the Economic and Social Council had unanimously adopted resolution 912 (XXXIV), calling for international co-operation in the field of seismological research. An inter-governmental conference was to be held in 1964 in order to work towards that end.

5. He would suggest the formation of a small *ad hoc* committee to make recommendations for establishing an improved world-wide seismic network which would be capable of distinguishing nuclear explosions from natural events. Such a committee could make recommendations on the recruitment of personnel, the siting of stations, the analysis and transmission of data, and the establishment of the international seismic station proposed by the Pugwash Conference. It was essential to act promptly, so that the scientific means would be available when the right moment arrived politically. As the Committee was aware, underground tests of certain yields could be detected by national means; it should be possible to reach agreement on tests above

* Resumed from the 1310th meeting.

that threshold. With regard to tests which were below the detection level, an international commission of experts should be set up to continue the study of scientific methods of detecting them. If certain tests still could not be detected, a temporary agreement—a kind of moratorium—covering those tests could be concluded. Whenever a suspicious seismic event occurred, the international commission would investigate and, if necessary, ask the country concerned to permit an on-site inspection; if that country refused twice to permit such inspection, the moratorium would become null and void.

6. There was everything to gain from such an arrangement, which might prove either that all explosions could be detected by national means or that some of them required on-site inspection, in which case the countries concerned would be called upon to demonstrate their goodwill. If, contrary to what was hoped, it became necessary to ask for an on-site inspection and the country concerned refused to permit it, matters would be no worse than they were today. Accordingly, there was no reason why that approach should not be tried, particularly since the present deadlock between the two parties was the result of disagreement over the number of inspections they were prepared to permit. The First Committee should put forward some solution and use its influence to speed the conclusion of an agreement banning underground nuclear tests.

7. He wished to conclude by once again urging the United Nations to address an appeal to those countries which had not yet signed the partial test ban treaty. It was in their own interest to do so, just as it was in the interest of all mankind, since the indefinite continuance of nuclear testing would inevitably blight the environment which had sustained human life on earth. Surely no country could resist the pressure of world public opinion as expressed through the General Assembly. He had indicated the two main tasks which faced the First Committee. The degree of effort shown in carrying them out would determine the degree of effort in the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

8. Mr. NOVIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it was a matter for satisfaction that thanks to the efforts of the peace-loving States, the international atmosphere was much better than it had been during the seventeenth session of the General Assembly. The conclusion at Moscow of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water had been welcomed throughout the world, for even though it was only a small initial step, it represented the first real progress made in many years towards eliminating the nuclear threat, and its immediate effect was to halt the contamination of the atmosphere by radio-active materials. Moreover, the treaty would serve to check the arms race, if it was observed by all countries, for if it had not been concluded nuclear testing would obviously have continued in the atmosphere and have spread to other parts of the world. The treaty represented an immediate gain for the cause of peace and was in the interest of the peoples of the world.

9. The fact that the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom had reached an agreement to ban nuclear testing in three environments had created an atmosphere in which international confidence could grow and further measures could be taken to relax tension. All the events leading up to the signing of the treaty had shown that in order to conclude an agree-

ment it was necessary only to want one. When the desire to reach agreement did not exist, negotiations came up against all manner of reservations. For five years, one plain after another calling for the establishment of controls in the atmosphere, in outer space and in the oceans had been put forward at Geneva, whereas at Moscow it had been recognized in a space of ten days that no international control whatever was needed to ban testing in those three environments. Thus, all the discussions of control during the past five years had been designed simply to conceal the fact that the desire to reach agreement was lacking. The Soviet Union for its part, knowing that a ban on nuclear tests, including underground tests, could be supervised by means of the national detection systems already available to States, had done everything in its power to promote the conclusion of an agreement on testing. The Soviet Union remained ready to continue efforts to supplement the Moscow treaty with provisions such as would eliminate any possibility of dangerous nuclear testing. If those efforts were to prove successful, however, the Western Powers must give up their demands regarding controls, for inspection was unnecessary and the Soviet Union would not submit to it.

10. The most important conclusion to be drawn from the events leading up to the signing of the treaty was that peace could be ensured only by means of unremitting struggle against the forces of war. While the treaty was, of course, a step in the right direction, it would be unpardonably remiss not to press on further. The first signs of a relaxation of tension had been badly received by those who wanted to start the cold war going again. It was understandable, in that connexion, that the French Government's decision to continue its nuclear testing in the atmosphere was causing concern among the peoples of the world. No problem, whether of nuclear testing or of disarmament in general, could be solved overnight. There must be constant effort to consolidate the gains already made and to take various types of measures, one after the other, whose total effect would be to prevent mankind from being plunged into the abyss of thermo-nuclear war.

11. His Government, which was aware of that need and wished to take advantage of the treaty's favourable impact on the international atmosphere, had worked out a set of measures whose implementation would contribute to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, thus clearing the way for a solution of the fundamental problem of general and complete disarmament.

12. Mr. BAGHDELLEH (Tanganyika) was glad to note that the session had opened in an atmosphere of mutual understanding which augured well for the success of the Committee's efforts to solve the problems still barring the way to an agreement banning all nuclear weapon tests. Although he still held, as he had at the seventeenth session, that the harmful effects of nuclear fall-out made it essential to ban every form of nuclear testing, he wished to express his satisfaction at the conclusion of the partial test ban treaty, of which his Government was a signatory. The circumstances under which the treaty had been signed clearly demonstrated the Soviet Government's goodwill and its intention to co-operate in solving world problems. That attitude should impel the Western Powers to prevail upon their allies to join without delay in the common effort to remove the difficulties which still prevented the Eighteen-Nation Committee

from reaching agreement on the banning of underground tests. If the Western Powers were truly willing to co-operate, it should be possible to sign at Washington, during the current session of the Assembly or early in 1964, a supplementary agreement which would free mankind from the nuclear nightmare. It was to be hoped that in view of the relaxation of international tension, the nuclear Powers would re-examine their position on the question of nuclear armaments and reach agreement not only on the banning of underground tests but also on measures to prevent the production and use of nuclear weapons and the dissemination of information to non-nuclear Powers.

13. He wished to express appreciation to the Eighteen-Nation Committee, whose work had led to the conclusion of the partial test ban treaty, and especially to the non-aligned countries for their efforts to bridge the gap between the Eastern and Western Powers. He recalled, in conclusion, that at the Summit Conference of Independent African States, held at Addis Ababa in May 1963, the President of the Republic of Tanganyika had called upon the United Nations to approach world problems in the same spirit of goodwill and co-operation that the nations of Africa had shown in dealing with the problems of their continent. He urged the nuclear Powers to trust one another and to strive, in a spirit of compromise, to reach an early comprehensive agreement which would guarantee world peace and security.

14. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor KHAN (Pakistan) expressed his country's satisfaction at the conclusion of the partial test ban treaty, which not only removed the immediate threat of radio-active fall-out to human health and survival but also opened the way to other measures aimed at bringing about a world that was disarmed and at peace. He shared the view of previous speakers that the treaty was only a first step and that the momentum it had generated must be exploited with a view to taking further constructive measures. He welcomed, in that connexion, the recent adoption of General Assembly resolution 1884 (XVIII) in which the Assembly took note of the declared intention of the United States and the Soviet Union to refrain from placing nuclear weapons in outer space.

15. The first objective must be to broaden the scope of the treaty so as to ban underground testing as well. It was to be hoped that increasing mutual understanding and trust among the nuclear Powers, together with technical progress in the detection and identification of seismic events, would soon make that possible. For continued underground testing might vitiate the relaxed atmosphere which had developed and strengthen the feeling in some quarters that the treaty had been signed as a matter of practical convenience rather than out of a genuine desire to achieve disarmament.

16. Moreover, the treaty did not prevent States—signatories and non-signatories alike—from adding to their stockpiles of nuclear weapons, manufacturing such weapons if they did not already possess them, or acquiring them from other Powers. Priority must be given to a vigorous effort to bring about the phased destruction of existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons and to remove any danger of widening the nuclear arms race.

17. He wished to conclude by expressing the hope that the nations of the world would abandon the futile recriminations of past debates and, in a spirit of goodwill and realism, continue along the road to disarmament and peace.

18. Mr. BOLLINI SHAW (Argentina) noted with satisfaction that the improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union since the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, when the world had been shaken by the Caribbean crisis, had made possible the conclusion of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, to which Argentina had acceded with enthusiasm. Since the seventeenth session, the cold-war climate had given way to a real desire for progress towards limiting the use of nuclear weapons, as could be seen both from the statements made at the beginning of the current session of the General Assembly by the President of the United States of America (1209th plenary meeting) and the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs (1208th plenary meeting) and from the resolution just adopted by the Assembly (resolution 1884 (XVIII)) requesting countries not to place in orbit devices carrying nuclear weapons. Mankind had thus entered a stage of positive achievement in the fight for peace, and care had to be taken not to slacken the pace set by the great advances recently made.

19. More than ever before, the nuclear Powers had to be prepared to accept suggestions to strengthen peace made by the peoples of the world, in the United Nations, at Geneva, or anywhere else. In particular, they must succeed in extending the partial test ban treaty to cover underground nuclear testing. The main difficulty lay, of course, in the question of verification. The Soviet Union feared that inspection would be used for espionage purposes although the United States had declared itself willing to give the Soviet Union all possible assurances on that score. The United States, however, felt that long-range detection of all types of underground tests was still not possible, whereas the Soviet Union said that it knew methods of ensuring such detection. To that scientific disagreement had to be added political and other factors, affecting the security of the States concerned. It was therefore necessary to appeal to the Powers in question to be guided more than ever by Article 2, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter, which bound Member States to fulfil in good faith the obligations they had assumed in accordance with the Charter. If the parties were convinced of each other's good faith, the climate of mistrust and suspicion would disappear; the Soviet Union would no longer be fearful of espionage, in view of United States assurances, and the United States would be able to consider carrying out the necessary studies in co-operation with the Soviet Union to determine the real possibilities of long-range identification of underground explosions.

20. In any event, the rapprochement which had taken place between the United States and the Soviet Union justified hope for a total prohibition of nuclear tests and for the subsequent achievement, step by step, of general and complete disarmament.

21. Mr. Víctor Andrés BELAUNDE (Peru) welcomed the peaceful atmosphere and noble intentions manifested during the discussions. The great Powers had embarked on a fruitful task, but there was a gap that had to be filled quickly if the progress made towards the strengthening of peace was to be permanent.

22. Delay in concluding an agreement on the prohibition of underground tests would be dangerous. For that reason, consideration should be given to the solution suggested by the representative of Cyprus, namely, the use of scientific commissions composed of representatives of all countries, whose interests were purely

scientific, to deal with the question. He felt that the use of scientists would be a guarantee of impartiality and good faith.

23. Since the Western Powers considered the detection of all underground explosions impossible and since the Soviet Union was afraid that inspection measures might become espionage activities, he suggested the following procedure. First, it would be a neutral element, i.e., a scientific organization, which would determine whether an underground event was suspicious and would decide whether inspection was necessary. The country concerned would then be invited to agree to inspection in its territory. The inspection itself would be carried out either by a commission consisting of scientists who were not nationals of the countries signatories to the agreement and who would therefore be incapable of partiality or espionage, or by an inspection commission consisting of neutral countries and headed by a neutral Power, accompanied by observers from the countries signatories to the agreement, and by scientists who were not nationals of those countries and those duties would be advisory. The presence of such a commission in a country's territory could certainly not be regarded as constituting an infringement of its sovereignty or a danger of espionage. Moreover, it should be remem-

bered that inspection would be asked for only in most serious cases.

24. He did not wish to put those suggestions forward formally, but would only appeal to the great Powers to complete their task of peace. He was sure that the Committee would find other useful ideas that could be brought to the notice of the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

25. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said that the international scientific commission he had been thinking of would be composed mainly of scientists from the non-aligned countries but would also have as members scientists from the nuclear Powers. It would be entitled to get all necessary data from all its members. In that way the scientific information which the Soviet Union declared to be in possession, permitting the identification of suspicious seismic events without inspection, would be made available to the commission through the participation of Soviet scientists. In the case of a suspicious seismic event the commission would sift all the data available to it and ascertain whether it was a nuclear explosion or not. If an event could not be identified in that way, the scientific commission could always, as a last resort, invite the country concerned to agree to on-site inspection.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.