

United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWENTIETH SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE, 1387th
MEETING

Friday, 26 November 1965,
at 3.10 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 30:</i>	
<i>Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (concluded)</i>	
<i>Consideration of draft resolutions (concluded)</i>	191
<i>Agenda item 105:</i>	
<i>Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa</i>	
<i>General debate.</i>	194

Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

AGENDA ITEM 30

Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: reports of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (concluded) (A/5731-DC/209, A/5986-DC/227, A/C.1/L.345/Rev.1)

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (concluded) (A/C.1/L.345/REV.1)

1. Mr. JAKOBSEN (Denmark) said that while the treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water had put an end to nuclear weapon tests of the types which endangered the health of mankind, the fact that it was only partial in scope, and permitted the continuation of underground tests, inevitably raised doubts as to its viability. Since the suspension of tests involving dangerous radio-active fall-out, moreover, attention had been focused on the problem of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. A treaty banning nuclear weapon tests of all types would undoubtedly present an obstacle to the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons; in his delegation's view, that was the most important reason for endorsing the thirty-five-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.345/Rev.1).

2. He well understood the misgivings expressed by certain Member States, and agreed that a comprehensive test ban should be subject to control. Otherwise, it would be observed by law-abiding States and violated, perhaps, by States which were not. But much progress had been made in recent years in devising methods for recording and identifying underground explosions. At their meeting in Oslo in August 1965, the Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden had agreed to consider how they could contribute to solving the problem of verification by establishing seismic detection stations in their countries. If the Soviet Union had really made more

progress than other countries in its detection techniques, he hoped that it would offer to share its advanced knowledge.

3. It was true that identification methods did not yet offer 100 per cent reliability; and there might indeed be a risk that one country would break an agreement and conduct clandestine tests. But was that risk greater than the risk of a general proliferation of nuclear weapons? His delegation thought not; and he believed that while a treaty providing for all possible safeguards should be the ultimate aim, the adoption of the draft resolution would help considerably in preventing a resumption of dangerous tests in the atmosphere and outer space and in averting the irrevocable proliferation of nuclear weapons.

4. Mr. LEFEVRE (Belgium) said that his delegation, representing a country which had for centuries been a theatre of war, would support all efforts to achieve progress in any field of disarmament. The provisions of the draft resolution were modest in scope, but they could be put into effect without difficulty; and a draft resolution of that kind was much more useful than a more ambitious text which countries might later decline to implement. If countries already in possession of nuclear weapons continued underground testing other countries would inevitably wish to acquire nuclear weapons of their own; and no one would be able to prevent them, or indeed have the right to do so.

5. On the question of control, the Soviet Union had stated that detection methods had now been developed to such a point that on-site inspection was unnecessary. The United States and the United Kingdom, for their part, had said that they were prepared to study the latest methods of detection. The Belgian delegation earnestly hoped that all the nuclear Powers would collaborate in a detailed study of the new possibilities of detecting and identifying underground events. If they found that the latest detection systems were effective, the problem would be solved once and for all; if it appeared that the new means of detection were not adequate, the countries concerned would at least have given proof of their good faith and their good will, and that in itself would be an important step towards solving the problem.

6. His delegation would vote for the draft resolution.

7. Mr. FOSTER (United States of America) said that his Government continued actively to seek agreement on a comprehensive test ban, and was therefore in complete accord with the over-all aim of the draft resolution, though it would have preferred some changes in the wording of certain sections. If more time had been available, his delegation would have been tempted to suggest various amendments; but in order not to prolong the discussion it had decided

not to do so. He wished merely to make a few comments in explanation of his delegation's intention to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

8. With regard to the third preambular paragraph, the United States shared the regret that it had not yet been possible to reach agreement on a verified comprehensive test ban; but in the absence of such an agreement, his country found it necessary in the interests of its security to continue underground testing as permitted by the limited test ban treaty. The Soviet Union was also conducting such tests.

9. He was glad to note that the final preambular paragraph, as well as operative paragraph 3, contained a reference to the importance of progress in seismic detection and identification techniques in facilitating agreement on a comprehensive test ban. That was the key to agreement on a comprehensive treaty.

10. His country shared the almost universal desire, expressed in operative paragraph 1, to bring about the permanent cessation of all testing as soon as possible; and it believed that that could, and should, be achieved by an adequately verified agreement. But for the reasons he had given at the Committee's 1385th meeting, it regarded an unverified moratorium as totally unacceptable.

11. His delegation strongly endorsed the appeal contained in operative paragraph 2 that all countries should respect the spirit and provisions of the limited test ban treaty. Universal compliance with that treaty would in itself be a major contribution towards disarmament and international stability.

12. Finally, his delegation welcomed the request made in operative paragraph 3 for the prompt renewal of negotiations on a comprehensive test ban. When negotiations in Geneva were resumed it would make every effort to seek agreement on an adequately verified treaty.

13. Mr. CAVALLETTI (Italy) said that Italy earnestly hoped for a permanent prohibition of nuclear weapon tests of all kinds, and his delegation therefore wholeheartedly supported operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution.

14. At the present time three nuclear Powers had said that they were ready and anxious to conclude the agreement banning all nuclear tests. However, while the United States and the United Kingdom wished the agreement to be accompanied by suitable guarantees, the Soviet delegation argued that guarantees were unnecessary, as the latest means of detection and identification were adequate to ensure that the agreement was being observed; but up to now it had not been willing to reveal the technical information on which that argument was based. He hoped that the Soviet delegation would be willing to co-operate in the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee when it considered the latest information on the scientific progress that had been made.

15. His delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution, which it hoped would be adopted unanimously, and in the Eighteen-Nation Committee it would do everything in its power to promote agreement on a comprehensive test ban.

16. Mr. GOWLAND (Argentina) said that his delegation had decided to join the sponsors of the draft resolution because it believed that a comprehensive test ban treaty would be one of the most effective ways of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

17. The technical problems referred to in the draft resolution should be dealt with in the Eighteen-Nation Committee through negotiations conducted with the good faith which the United Nations Charter required. Once confidence had been established, the Powers directly concerned could work together for a solution which would be consistent with the needs of their own security.

18. His delegation wished particularly to endorse the appeal in the draft resolution for the suspension of all nuclear weapon tests and for respect on the part of all countries for the spirit and the letter of the partial test ban treaty. If that appeal was heeded, it would be possible to extend the treaty to cover underground testing as well, thus facilitating the accession of States—particularly nuclear States—which had not yet signed it.

19. Mr. ESCHAUZIER (Netherlands) said that in the two years since the signing of the partial test ban treaty his Government had consistently supported the idea that it should be extended to include the prohibition of all underground tests and that it should be accepted by all Powers which had hitherto declined to accede to it. The first of those two points was the more important, for a comprehensive test ban agreement would be more likely to command universal support than a partial one. Further, as the eight non-aligned countries represented in the Eighteen-Nation Committee had pointed out in their memorandum of 15 September 1965,^{1/} and as many representatives had explained in the First Committee itself, a treaty prohibiting all nuclear weapon tests, including underground explosions, would be one of the most effective ways of halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

20. At the present stage of the debate there was only one major question on which opinions were still divided—whether or not a ban on underground testing should be accompanied by adequate measures of reciprocal or international verification. Some countries believed that seismic science had now advanced to a point where national means of detection were adequate in themselves; and those countries argued that agreement could be reached on a political basis only and that the technical problems were of minor importance. He realized that the issue was to a large extent a political one; but that did not mean that the scientific and technical problems could be regarded as negligible. The political acceptability of a comprehensive treaty would depend on the extent to which the parties were assured of their own—and the world's—security; and that in turn depended on the scientific and technical knowledge available to them.

21. His delegation had in the past expressed its satisfaction with the results of the United States Government's comprehensive research on detection techniques; and it had hoped that the Soviet Govern-

^{1/} See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/227, annex 1, sect. F.

ment too would be willing to disclose the information at its disposal and would agree to an exchange of scientific and technical information between the major nuclear Powers, as suggested in the memorandum of eight non-aligned countries and in the United Kingdom memorandum of 9 September 1965.^{2/} The Netherlands delegation also appreciated the efforts made by several smaller Powers to improve facilities for monitoring seismic events—in particular, the proposal contained in the Swedish memorandum of 2 September 1965^{3/} for international co-operation in seismology for detection purposes. But it was the responsibility of the major nuclear Powers above all to reach agreement on the minimum requirements for the verification of suspicious events which could not be readily identified as having a natural cause. In operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the Eighteen-Nation Committee was urged to promote such an agreement; and it might also be useful to convene a second conference of experts, similar to the 1958 Geneva conference.^{4/}

22. His delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution. It joined all the other non-nuclear States in calling for the earliest possible cessation of nuclear weapon tests on mutually acceptable conditions, and endorsed the appeal to all countries, including those which had not yet acceded to the partial test ban treaty and which bore a grave responsibility before mankind, to suspend nuclear weapon tests.

23. Mr. ILLANES (Chile) said he wished to reiterate the hope which his delegation had expressed on earlier occasions that countries which had not yet acceded to the partial test ban treaty would agree to do so. The continuation of nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere by countries which were not parties to the treaty was a matter of grave concern.

24. His delegation was also anxious that the treaty should be extended to cover underground tests as well. The conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty would not only protect mankind from the dangers of atomic radiation but also do much to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He well understood the difficulties involved in controlling a ban on underground tests without on-site inspection; but he thought that, with the recent advances in seismology and a more flexible attitude on the part of the great Powers, agreement on the matter should be possible. As earlier speakers had suggested, a ban should be imposed forthwith on underground tests of a magnitude exceeding a specific threshold for which existing means of detection were generally recognized as adequate.

25. The adoption and implementation of the draft resolution would help considerably towards achieving those objectives.

26. Mr. WALDHEIM (Austria) said that his Government had always urged the need for a ban on all nuclear weapons tests, which it regarded as one of the most important problems of the times. Austria had therefore welcomed the conclusion of the partial

test ban treaty as a first step in that direction. Contrary to its hopes, however, no further progress had been made over the last two years. To his country's great regret, two major Powers had continued to conduct nuclear tests. The lack of progress was even more regrettable in view of the fact that technological advances had made it possible to detect and verify explosions of all kinds.

27. The problem could only be solved by concluding a treaty prohibiting tests in all environments under conditions ensuring that no tests could be carried out in secret. In that connexion he was happy to note the improvements that had been made in detection and identification techniques, and felt that sincere co-operation in that field might eliminate the need for on-site inspection. He had therefore studied with interest the joint memorandum in which eight non-aligned countries had proposed international scientific co-operation between the nuclear Powers^{5/} and the Swedish memorandum suggesting the creation of a "detection club".^{6/} He shared the opinion of the Canadian representative that the smaller countries should play a part in that process, and regarded his proposal for the establishment of a seismic data centre as a valuable contribution to the solution of the problem. He hoped that all those suggestions would be seriously considered by the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

28. He supported the draft resolution, which was basically in line with his Government's policy. He pointed out that in the fourth preambular paragraph the correct title of the treaty referred to should be used.

29. Mr. SHALLOUT (Libya) said he had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution because it provided a sound basis not only for further negotiations on the suspension of all nuclear tests, but for an agreement on general and complete disarmament. In the debate on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the representative of the Soviet Union had urged all countries not to complicate the issue but to help in easing the situation. He hoped that the same considerations would be applied in the present case, and that all delegations would contribute to finding a solution to their common problems. If the draft resolution was unanimously adopted it would be a step on the way towards peace and stability—the ultimate aim of all countries. He therefore appealed to every representative to vote in favour of it.

30. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) said that as a sponsor of the draft resolution he felt obliged to reply to certain completely groundless criticisms that had been made of it. It had been said that operative paragraph 1 should have urged that all nuclear weapon tests be suspended "immediately". That point might have been valid if the suspension of such tests was contingent on a General Assembly resolution; but everyone knew that it must be based on a treaty supplementing the partial test ban treaty.

31. Criticisms had also been levelled at operative paragraph 3, in which the Eighteen-Nation Committee was asked to continue with a sense of urgency its work

^{2/} *Ibid.*, sect. C.

^{3/} *Ibid.*, sect. B.

^{4/} Conference of Experts to Study Methods for Detecting Possible Violations of an Agreement on the Cessation of Nuclear Tests, held at Geneva from 1 July to 21 August 1958.

^{5/} See footnote 1.

^{6/} See footnote 3.

on a comprehensive treaty and on arrangements to ban effectively all tests in all environments, taking into account the improved possibilities for international co-operation in seismic detection. But surely a treaty of the kind in question required effective scientific collaboration. In fact, paragraph 3 was a model of objectivity, sincerity and effectiveness. It respected both the Soviet Union's point of view, which was that detection could be based on recent scientific advances, and the United States view that such advances were insufficient and other methods of verification were needed. A way out of the impasse would be possible only through the international co-operation for which the draft resolution appealed. What better field for co-operation could be found than the "detection club" suggested by Sweden? He did not offend the Soviet Union by suggesting that it might refuse to collaborate with such a club, or the United States by assuming that it would refuse to accept any new scientific evidence produced by scientists. The solution proposed in the draft resolution was both acceptable and objective; the only alternative was a moratorium—and the word "moratorium" had acquired an unfavourable connotation as a result of past experience.

32. For those reasons he appealed to the USSR delegation, and to the representative of Bulgaria, who had also raised objections of a subjective nature to the draft resolution, not to abstain in the vote on so vital a problem. In conclusion, he requested that the vote should be taken by roll-call.

33. Mr. du PLOOY (South Africa) said that he would vote for the draft resolution because his country was deeply concerned over the continuation of nuclear testing. That anxiety had already been expressed by the delegation of South Africa at the Assembly's previous session, and it had also been voiced by women's organizations and other bodies within South Africa itself. As the representative of New Zealand and others had said, certain paragraphs of the draft resolution could have been differently worded, particularly the reference to detection and identification techniques, but it was essential to arrive at a consensus in so important an issue.

34. Mr. PARIS MONTESINOS (Venezuela) said that his country had always supported all efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and opposed the continuation of nuclear weapon tests. He deplored the fact that France refused to comply with the general will and that the Soviet Union was unwilling to join the vast majority of countries in supporting the draft resolution. By voting for the draft resolution he was reflecting the wishes of the Government and people of Venezuela.

35. The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.345/Rev.1).

At the request of the representative of Peru, the vote was taken by roll-call.

Mongolia, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Ro-

mania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Burma, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dahomey, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Mongolia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Algeria, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Guinea, Hungary, Mauritania.

The draft resolution was adopted by 86 votes to none, with 13 abstentions.

36. Mr. DIACONESCU (Romania) said in explanation of his vote that during the debate many delegations had insisted on the need to extend the test ban to underground testing, on which no agreement had yet been reached. His Government considered that disarmament could best be achieved by destroying all nuclear weapons, dismantling military bases and withdrawing foreign troops. His Government favoured any measure that might help to accomplish those aims, and he had therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that the debate had reflected the deep concern of all peoples over the danger to human life resulting from nuclear weapon tests. The draft resolution that had just been adopted, and the debate itself, showed that there was a general feeling that a constructive way must be found to achieve the prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests. He hoped that the views of the Committee would be given due consideration in the course of negotiations and that a solution to the problem could be found.

AGENDA ITEM 105

Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa (A/5975, A/C.1/L.346)

GENERAL DEBATE

38. Mr. OBI (Nigeria) said that his delegation had always supported the creation of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, since it believed that that would be a first step towards limiting and eventually halting the spread of nuclear weapons. Although the creation of such zones might give rise to military and political difficulties, Nigeria believed that the problems involved could be solved through the sustained efforts of the parties concerned.

39. Fortunately, Africa was relatively free from the complex military and political problems which obstructed progress in other regions of the world. The General Assembly had already adopted a resolution

calling upon all States to respect the continent of Africa as a denuclearized zone (resolution 1652 (XVI)). Since its adoption, the African States had given serious consideration to the problem at various levels. The African Members of the United Nations had decided to ask for the inclusion of the item in the agenda because they felt that the Organization should be kept informed of the position, and especially of the solemn declaration on the subject adopted at the first session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Cairo in July 1964.

40. In addition to reaffirming resolution 1652 (XVI) and noting the action taken so far by the African States, the United Nations still had a part to play in the realization of the ultimate objective. Although the creation of a denuclearized Africa was primarily a matter for the African States themselves—and they were working towards that end through the Organization of African Unity—there was also a need for assistance from other quarters, in particular the United Nations.

41. Furthermore, the African States had always recognized that countries outside Africa, especially

those with nuclear capability, had an important role to play. Africa expected the nuclear Powers to respect it as a nuclear-free zone. The African States now intended to ask those Powers to give a firm undertaking not to use nuclear weapons against Africa or threaten to use them under any circumstances whatever. Nigeria had called for such an undertaking during the debate on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. If the nuclear Powers had felt unable to accept that suggestion in a wider context, he hoped they would feel able to do so within the limited context of the denuclearization of Africa.

42. The considerations which might make the nuclear Powers unable or unwilling to give such a wide undertaking did not apply to Africa. By deciding to denuclearize their continent and thus make it impossible for them ever to acquire nuclear capability, the African States were taking a most responsible step which would contribute immensely towards world peace and stability. It was therefore to be hoped that their efforts would receive the full support of all States, and in the first place that of the nuclear Powers.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.