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**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1459th
MEETING**

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at 11 a.m.



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Chairman: Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

AGENDA ITEM 28

Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (continued)
(A/6390-DC/228, A/C.1/L.380)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. BIELKA-KARLTREU (Austria) said that the conclusion of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, in August 1963, had been a significant step towards the suspension of all nuclear weapon tests. Unfortunately, owing to the international tensions of the past three years, the treaty had lost some of its effectiveness. Two of the nuclear Powers were not yet parties to it, and the negotiations on an underground test ban had not so far yielded tangible results. The situation was all the more regrettable in that the suspension of all nuclear weapons tests was an important, if not decisive, factor in the endeavour to halt the nuclear arms race.

2. The Austrian delegation shared the view expressed by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual report for 1965-1966 (A/6301/Add.1) that the continued underground testing of nuclear devices could before long lead to a new armaments race and to the development of still unknown offensive and defensive weapons. Such a development would increase the present feeling of insecurity, and could well lead to a complete disruption of the already precarious balance of nuclear deterrence. It was therefore of the utmost importance for countries to concentrate their efforts not only on the speedy conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation, but also on an agreement banning nuclear weapon tests in all environments.

3. His delegation wished to pay tribute to the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee for the relentless efforts they had made to solve the problem of how to verify strict compliance with the provisions of an underground test ban agreement. Their joint memorandum of 17 August 1966^{1/} offered a wide range of practical possibilities based on recent advances in seismological research. The improved techniques of detection and identification of seismic events could indeed be used as an effective instrument of international control and could gradually replace the controversial concept of on-site inspections. His delegation particularly welcomed the Swedish proposal for the establishment of a "detection club".^{2/} The conference on seismological data exchange that had been held at Stockholm in May 1966 had been a first step in that direction. He hoped that it would meet with the support of all countries, nuclear and non-nuclear alike. His delegation had also noted with interest the proposals put forward in the Eighteen-Nation Committee for an immediate suspension of all underground tests which could easily be identified by existing seismic detection techniques.

^{1/} See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1966, document DC/228, annex 1, sect. O.

^{2/} Ibid., Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/227, annex 1, sect. B.

4. Austria had already formally renounced by international treaty the intention of acquiring or manufacturing nuclear weapons and was in favour of any proposal aimed at an effective banning of underground nuclear tests. The technical aspects of a comprehensive test ban treaty had already been clarified to the point where the conclusion of an agreement on the matter was mainly a question of political will. Accordingly, his delegation hoped that draft resolution A/C.1/L.380 would receive the overwhelming support of the Committee and would be given effect as soon as possible through the conclusion of an effective international treaty.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.