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Chairman: Mr. Yordan TCHOBANOV (Bulgaria).

AGENDA ITEM 24

Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/4881 and Corr.1, A/SPC/L.68, L.69 and Add.1) (continued)

1. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union attached much importance to the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation whose task was to arrive at objective and scientifically-based conclusions on the results of research carried out by scientists of various countries. Soviet scientists had played an active part in that work: from the outset they had submitted many scientific studies to the Scientific Committee and had taken a considerable part in the discussion and drafting of agreed conclusions. The Soviet Union delegation hoped that the Scientific Committee would be able in the following year to submit to the General Assembly a detailed report making a further contribution to science. At the present stage it felt obliged to mention certain facts which were injurious to the Scientific Committee's work and considerably reduced the value of its conclusions. During the past year the Soviet Union representative had twice pointed out to the Scientific Committee that the Secretariat was not taking sufficient account of the scientific studies submitted by Soviet scientists when preparing the data which would appear in the comprehensive report. That was an intolerable state of affairs; unless the results of all the research done in various regions of the world were tabulated, the Scientific Committee's conclusions could not be universal or of the high standard properly expected of them. There was a further fact which could not be passed over in silence, and which indicated how the United Nations Secretariat discriminated against Soviet science and scientists. The Secretariat of the Committee had refused, without valid reason, to allow an eminent Soviet specialist to become its scientific secretary, and was obviously trying to prevent Soviet science and its representatives, despite their world-wide reputation, from contributing to the drafting of the Committee's scientific conclusions. The Soviet Union delegation trusted that such disgraceful practices would cease.

2. Several Western Powers had tried to use the debate on the annual report of the Scientific Committee (A/4881 and Corr.1) for definite political ends. In

fact, the Special Political Committee's business was the routine consideration of an interim report which contained neither data, appraisals, conclusions, proposals or recommendations. The Scientific Committee would consider the 238 reports which it had received from various sources at its eleventh session in March 1962; thus there was nothing to be considered at present. Debate could not be based on national data of atomic radiation, often contradictory and sometimes obtained with instruments of doubtful precision. The General Assembly could not discuss the question until it received the comprehensive report. The general debate should therefore be adjourned until that time and, in accordance with established practice, the Committee should merely take note of the interim report, as proposed in the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68).

3. A number of representatives had declared that they had no political designs and that their motives were solely moral and humane. However, their wish to broaden the functions and powers of the Scientific Committee, expressed in the joint Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1) proved the contrary. The report of the Scientific Committee, which at previous sessions of the General Assembly had come nearly last on the agenda—even the 1958 comprehensive report^{1/} of some 250 pages—was now thrust into the foreground. The swollen debate on the report was blatantly out of proportion to its importance; like the debate on nuclear tests, its motives were obviously political and nothing else.

4. The representatives of the Western bloc stressed the need to intensify research on the measurement of the hazards of nuclear experiments; but that was precisely the principal task of the Scientific Committee under General Assembly resolution 913 (X). It was interesting to note that, throughout the Scientific Committee's existence, the Soviet Union had always endeavoured to make such questions the Committee's main concern, and that those who were at present demanding that research should be intensified, had continually sought to divert the Committee's attention from its main task towards secondary problems. The attempts they were now making to inflate the question were merely a political move and had nothing to do with a serious study of the problem. The Soviet Union's position was quite clear. It held that the Committee's duty, according to its terms of reference, was to study what might be the dangerous effects of radiation due to testing on the health of human beings and their environment. The Soviet Union was quite aware of those effects; but it must be admitted in all honesty that, faced by the acceleration of the arms race by the United States and its allies in aggressive blocs, the intensification of war preparations and the threats of war uttered against the Soviet

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Supplement No. 17.

Union after its peaceful proposal for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, the Soviet Government neither could nor should remain passive. It had therefore been obliged to take steps to strengthen its security and to increase its means of defence, including the resumption of nuclear tests. The Soviet Union had realized that any weakening of its means of defence might encourage aggressive circles in the West to embark on military adventures which might lead to a general conflagration disastrous to mankind, killing hundreds of millions of persons and destroying whole States. That was what the Soviet Union had intended to avert when it had strengthened its defence potential, and it would feel bound to persist until the Western Powers agreed to general and complete disarmament as the only way of ending the testing of nuclear weapons, liberating mankind permanently from the catastrophe of war, and eliminating the problem of atomic radiation resulting from nuclear explosions. To poison discussion of atomic radiations was to play into the hands of those who were blocking a settlement of the disarmament question and trying to divert the attention of the United Nations from that greatest problem of the present day. To sever the question of tests and radiation from that of general and complete disarmament was to attack the consequences of the evil without eliminating its causes. That approach rendered any discussion completely sterile.

5. The draft resolution sponsored by Canada mentioned the responsibility of those States whose actions increased the levels of radio-active fall-out; but to invoke that responsibility in a narrow technical context was misleading to nations and would divert the United Nations from its essential task. Responsibility for an immediate solution to the disarmament problem rested primarily with the Governments of those States which had nuclear weapons and powerful armed forces. That was the responsibility to be considered by those concerned for the fate of mankind. The measures which the Soviet Union had reluctantly been obliged to take were a grave warning to potential aggressors. They illustrated sharply the danger which arose when the Western Powers slipped towards the gulf of a war which would have consequences infinitely more hazardous than all the effects of atomic radiation that could possibly result from testing. For those reasons the Soviet Union could not support the joint draft resolution but would vote for the Czechoslovak draft resolution, which it considered apposite and in conformity with established practice.

6. Mr. BUNCHE (Under-Secretary for Special Political affairs) denied the two serious charges of discrimination just levelled against the Secretariat. The Scientific Committee, composed of eminent scientists, had exclusive control of its procedure and report. Concerning the charge of discrimination against Soviet scientists on the staff of the Scientific Committee, he could assure the representative of the Soviet Union that there had been none. The records, which were readily available to anyone who wished to consult them, clearly showed that the Soviet Union had received better over-all treatment in representation on the staff of the Scientific Committee than any other Member State with the sole exception of the United Kingdom, a national of which had long been the Committee's Secretary.

7. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) refused to accept the explanation of the Secretariat representative, which he found quite un-

satisfactory. The facts he had mentioned could not be refuted.

8. Mr. ELDEM (Turkey) thanked the Canadian delegation for the active part it had taken in the debate. In view of the resumption of nuclear weapons tests, the question of studying the effects of ionizing radiation was exceptionally serious. It now concerned all mankind, whose well-being, health and future were at stake. It was from the humanitarian standpoint that the Turkish delegation had studied the report of the Scientific Committee and would draw its conclusions. The Committee had undertaken to study the effects of radiation on living cells, the human body, and heredity. Present knowledge in that field was, however, incomplete and at times contradictory, and scientists were not agreed on the level at which radiation and fall-out were really dangerous to the human body. In its report the Scientific Committee had included much information from many different sources. The Committee itself thought it highly desirable that such exchanges of information should be accelerated and intensified in the future. A large-scale study of harmful radiation should therefore be carried out jointly by all States without exception.

9. The Turkish delegation was glad to see that the members of the Committee were agreed that the work of the Scientific Committee ought to be continued. The only difference of opinion seemed to relate to the direction that work should take. For the United Nations there could be no greater concern than the health and well-being of present and future generations, and, in the circumstances, the Committee could not simply confine itself to endorsing the report of the Scientific Committee as in the past years. The United Nations had to act both on its anxiety at the resurgence of the danger, and on its determination to take whatever steps were needed. The joint draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1) was fully in line with that preoccupation and his delegation would be happy to support it. His delegation approved both the preamble, which was drafted in moderate terms that avoided any idea of cold war, and the two operative parts. That the results of the Scientific Committee's work should be made known in all countries was in the opinion of his delegation of the utmost importance. Men in all parts of the world had to be enlightened on the new and terrible danger which threatened them.

10. Mr. DOBROWOLSKI (Poland) said that the Polish Government had always been seriously concerned at the threat which the effects of radiation presented. It understood the anxiety of the Japanese nation, which at Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been the victim of the first explosions. It also understood the concern of Canada as the next door neighbour of the United States, which held the unhappy record for the number of atomic explosions carried out. It was more difficult, however, to understand the sudden interest which the representatives of certain other countries not directly exposed to an increase in radio-active fall-out were beginning to take in the problem. The latest report of the Scientific Committee merely detailed the progress achieved, indicated the number of reports communicated by the different States, and expressed the hope that the largest possible number of States would continue to submit data. No more could be done at present than to reaffirm the usefulness and value of the work of the Scientific Committee and encourage it to prepare as satisfactory and comprehensive a general report as possible, for use as a

basis for recommendations to Member States. The Scientific Committee had noted in its 1958 report that it lacked sufficient information in certain fields. Similar views had been expressed during the debate, particularly by the representatives of the United States and India. At the present time the Committee should confine itself to taking note of the annual report, as the Czechoslovak draft resolution proposed. It should also give the Scientific Committee all possible help in its work, not only of increasing the volume of observations made in the various countries, but also of creating the atmosphere of trust and respect which it needed for the performance of its duties. Any attempt to extend the discussion beyond a basis of sound scientific opinion would be fruitless. Protraction of the discussion could only lead to a political debate, despite all assurances, which the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1 had already provided in abundance.

11. It was surprising that certain delegations had not voiced similar warnings at earlier sessions, particularly in 1958 and 1959, when the United States had been carrying out intensive nuclear weapons tests. They had then, on the contrary, opposed adoption by the United Nations of a firmer attitude toward the Powers engaged in nuclear weapons tests. The change in attitude, and some of the provisions of the joint draft resolution, such as the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 1 of part I gave the impression of concealing political motives.

12. He could not agree with the representative of Guatemala, who had stated at the 261st meeting that if the report did not provide a sufficient basis, she would press for a new study of the matter. Perhaps she had not intended to cast doubt on the impartiality of the members of the Scientific Committee; but in that case it was difficult to see how anything more could be asked of the scientists, who needed time to collect and study data and draw the appropriate scientific and, subsequently, practical conclusions.

13. His Government was aware of the dangers inherent in nuclear tests, and considered that general and complete disarmament was the sole solution of that problem. Only the elimination of all types of weapons could put an end to the danger of a large-scale pollution of air, soil and water. The danger, which lay not only in nuclear explosions but also in the presence of nuclear-fuelled submarines and aircraft, would increase as the arms race continued.

14. He hoped that during the examination of the two draft resolutions it would be possible to eliminate the controversial passages and to reach unanimous agreement, with the single common purpose of giving mankind the most objective and comprehensive scientific opinion on the effects of radiation, including the most effective methods of protection. The other aspects of the problem fell exclusively within the competence of the First Committee.

15. Mr. MILLET (France) considered that, as the danger from atomic radiation and radio-active fall-out was universal and the desire of peoples to protect themselves against it unanimous, the debate should be conducted in a purely scientific and humanitarian spirit and all political considerations, which concerned the First Committee, set aside. In that spirit he suggested that the figures mentioned by the representative of Ghana (263rd meeting) might give a false impression of the dangers to which the French nuclear tests in the Sahara had exposed the

peoples of Africa. As his delegation had stated in other bodies, the French Government had taken all the security measures necessary to ensure that the peoples of the Sahara, and *a fortiori* those of the neighbouring countries, should not suffer in the slightest degree from the effects of fall-out. The representative of Ghana had also failed to mention that a French expert had been in Ghana from 24 February to 2 March 1960 to measure air samples and had reached the same conclusions as the experts of the Government of Ghana, namely that the increase in radio-activity in the atmosphere had been very small and the maximum concentration well below the permissible level. Similarly, the director of meteorological services of Nigeria had stated that the French atomic explosions did not expose Nigeria to any public health risk. The representative of Ghana had also neglected to state that on 25 April 1961 the French Government had announced that with the fourth experimental nuclear explosion it was putting an end to the programme of French atomic explosions in the atmosphere in Africa. He was surprised that delegations which specifically took France to task refrained from naming the Soviet Union at the very time when it was carrying out thermo-nuclear explosions.

16. His Government, which had reluctantly been obliged to conduct nuclear tests, favoured all scientific study of the dangers of radio-active fall-out, and wished to encourage the work of the Scientific Committee. He had noted with interest and endorsed its progress report for 1961 (A/4881 and Corr.1). He would leave it to the Scientific Committee to judge for itself whether publication of its 1962 report should be advanced.

17. In the spirit of objectivity which befitted the current debate, and notwithstanding certain reservations which he might well express, he would vote in favour of the joint draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1).

18. Mr. CALDERON (Dominican Republic) was convinced that the sponsors of the joint draft resolution A/SPC/L.69 had not sought to provoke a political debate. That draft resolution bore witness to the same concern which had led the Special Political Committee to accord priority to the item currently before it and was a response to the disquieting warning sounded by the Committee in paragraph 12 of its progress report. That the United Nations should approach as a routine matter and treat lightly the most serious and urgent problem ever to confront mankind, was inconceivable. Its efforts would come to naught if future generations were annihilated by the effects of atomic radiation.

19. He would vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1).

20. Mr. PERERA (Ceylon) hoped that the debate would not depart from the question before the Committee, namely the report of the Scientific Committee, and that members would not engage in polemics. He regretted that, in supporting the joint draft resolution, certain representatives had strayed into political fields.

21. The Government of Ceylon was—and always had been—against all nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons and tests conducted with them. Hence it shared the views of the Canadian Government on that point. It might, however, be wondered whether the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68) did not answer

the Committee's purpose. It was precise, it dealt with, and approved, the Scientific Committee's report, and it was in line with earlier resolutions.

22. By contrast, it was somewhat surprising to see certain countries which sponsored draft resolution A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1 suddenly becoming aware of a danger to which they had remained indifferent in 1958 and earlier years. At the Conference of African and Asian States held at Bandung in April 1955 the Asian and African Powers had urged the great Powers to stop testing and manufacturing nuclear weapons. At the first Conference on the Law of the Sea held at Geneva in 1958, a group of African and Asian Powers, supported by the socialist States, had insisted that the second Convention dealing with the régime of the high seas should include a provision concerning the radio-active effects of atomic waste; and that was how article 25 of the Convention had finally been adopted.^{2/} At the Conference two resolutions^{3/} had been adopted which for the first time called the attention of the whole world to the danger of nuclear tests on the high seas, and the risk of pollution of the high seas by radio-active products. It might be asked why the United Nations had not then taken note of those resolutions and sought to implement them.

23. Turning to the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1), he remarked that the Committee was only considering the report by the Scientific Committee. He would therefore consider it more appropriate to replace the first preambular paragraph of part I by the following text: "Deeply concerned with the statement that the resumption of nuclear test explosions since the publication of its last comprehensive report increases the urgency for intensification of relevant scientific studies." He supported the ideas expressed in the second preambular paragraph, which had been those of his Government since the Hiroshima explosion in 1945, and the third preambular paragraph, which fell within the limits set by the report. Operative paragraph 1 of part I was purely political and was based on principles of international law which were not yet settled, such as that of the illegality of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests, which was open to question, or that of the responsibility of States. The International Law Commission had not given priority to the study of the responsibility of States,^{4/} as the General Assembly had asked it to do in its resolution 799 (VIII), and had refused to codify the laws of war. It should be noted that the payment by the United States of some \$2 million in compensation to the Japanese fishermen who had suffered after one of the explosions in the Pacific had been made *ex gratia* and had not been based on the responsibility of States. He therefore thought it would be wise to stay on purely scientific and humanitarian ground, and suggested deletion of operative paragraph 1 of part I, since the second preambular paragraph answered the same purpose.

24. He could not see the necessity for part II of the draft resolution, which could have been made an operative paragraph of part I. The operative paragraph 1 of part II could be worded as follows: "Recommends the Scientific Committee to seek the

assistance of the World Meteorological Organization for the following purposes:", paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) remaining unchanged. Operative paragraph 2 of part II should be deleted, since it contained a contradiction: it invited the WMO to implement the "above-mentioned scheme", then to consider whether the scheme was feasible. Furthermore, it contradicted operative paragraph 4 of part I, relating to "international co-operation through the Scientific Committee". As he understood it, such co-operation implied co-operation with every international body and with scientific bodies, even independent ones. Without the comprehensive report, the Committee was in danger of infringing on the exclusive jurisdiction of the Scientific Committee. In any case it would be desirable for members of the Scientific Committee to co-sponsor the two draft resolutions so as to avoid the danger of being at cross purposes among themselves, which would not augur well for the future of the Committee. For that reason his delegation urged the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1 to reconsider it and take out everything which could lay it open to political comment, so that the Committee could confine itself to the purely scientific aspects of the problem. He would support the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1) subject to the reservations he had made; if the sponsors of the two drafts could agree on a new text, he would vote for it.

25. Mr. GALLEGOS (Ecuador) hoped that, at a time when the great Powers seemed to be racing towards a nuclear conflagration, the comprehensive report which the Scientific Committee was to submit in 1962 would have all the necessary scientific authority. He defended the joint draft resolution of which his delegation was a co-sponsor, and in particular operative paragraphs 2, 4 and 6 of part I. In view of the emotion stirred up by the resumption of nuclear tests, the Czechoslovak draft, which did not express any attitude towards the danger of radiation, would not be sufficient.

26. The imminent prospect of the explosion of a bomb equivalent to fifty million tons of TNT could only spread consternation. The great Powers should remember that the world was not their exclusive property, and they should devote their efforts in the nuclear field not to perfecting their armaments but rather to encouraging progress and the general welfare.

27. Mr. SINHA (Nepal) shared the general concern at the danger which radio-active fall-out, which recognized no frontiers, brought upon all mankind, and particularly upon small countries which had not the equipment necessary to detect or counteract it. There was reason for satisfaction at the progress shown in the report of the Scientific Committee, and all who had contributed to it deserved general commendation.

28. The resumption of nuclear tests, which might contaminate the atmosphere in violation of international law and morality, could not be passed over in silence. It was with good reason that the joint draft resolution A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1 expressed the concern caused by the resumption of those tests; it deserved a favourable reception. For political reasons it had been regrettably treated as conflicting with draft resolution A/SPC/L.68, with which it was not incompatible; he hoped that the two could be consolidated.

^{2/} United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, *Official Records*, Volume II: Plenary Meetings (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 58.V.4, Vol. II) document A/CONF.13/L.53, Article 25.

^{3/} *Ibid.*, document A/CONF.13/L.56, resolutions I and II.

^{4/} *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Supplement No. 9.*

29. Mr. DIMECHKIE (Lebanon) pointed out that his delegation had shown constant concern about the consequences of nuclear explosions. The arguments with which the representative of France defended his country's nuclear tests were not at all convincing. It was neither exceptional nor praiseworthy for a country which engaged in tests to surround itself with precautions or to announce the cessation of the tests when they were no longer of use to it. His delegation, moreover, was opposed to all tests of nuclear weapons, no matter by what country they were carried out.

30. In spite of its deficiencies, the Czechoslovak draft resolution raised no objections, and his delegation would vote for it. The joint draft resolution, which was more detailed, was better adapted to the needs of the present situation; it would, however, be advisable to reword the text of operative paragraph 1 as follows: "Considers that concern for the future of mankind imposes a responsibility on all States, etc.", and to delete the word "certain" in operative paragraph 5. However, if the authors of the draft insisted on keeping the text as it stood, his delegation would vote for it.

31. Mr. TOWNSEND (Peru) defended the joint draft resolution, which reflected the general anxiety caused by the resumption of nuclear tests. The small countries could not remain passive in face of the threat to humanity posed by the tests which the nuclear Powers were carrying out, and the United Nations could not rest content with merely approving the Scientific Committee's report. It was necessary to make a world-wide scientific analysis of the results of nuclear tests and to take the necessary steps to prevent them before they led mankind to collective suicide. His delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution.

32. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) pointed out that the essential problem was that of nuclear tests, and asked that all political considerations be excluded from the debate. The choice was not between two opposing camps, but between humanity and the danger threatening it, and the only possible decision was to protect humanity by putting an end to nuclear testing.

33. He was not concerned to ask why the joint draft resolution had not been submitted before the present year. The only important matter was the urgency of

the present situation. The first preambular paragraph of part 1 of the draft rightly noted the increases in the levels of radio-active fall-out, although they were not mentioned in the Scientific Committee's report. Authorities were not lacking to show that every nuclear test had that result. One was the petition submitted to the United Nations Secretariat in 1958 by 9,000 scientists from forty-four countries. In order to make it more consistent with the report, however, the first paragraph might be revised as follows: "Deeply concerned at the resumption of nuclear test explosions and its direct effect on the levels of radio-active fall-out, which increase the urgency for intensification of relevant scientific studies".

34. His delegation, however, would vote for the joint draft resolution even if that amendment were not adopted. It did not oppose the Czechoslovak draft but considered it insufficient because it failed to take into account the urgent situation created by the resumption of nuclear tests.

35. Because of that urgency, he hoped that the Scientific Committee could submit an interim report.

36. Mr. ADUSEI-POKU (Ghana), exercising his right of reply, said that he was surprised that France had not submitted other figures if it considered those mentioned by his Government inaccurate. As to the announcement of the conclusion of the tests, the countries concerned could not agree that they should owe that conclusion to the good pleasure of France, which in defiance of world opinion had carried out nuclear explosions for reasons of national vanity. It mattered little which countries carried out explosions. They were harmful, and his country was opposed to them on principle, no matter who produced them.

37. Mr. MILLET (France), exercising his right of reply, pointed out that he had not said "inaccurate figures" but "figures which might give a false impression". He was surprised that those who had attacked France for carrying out nuclear explosions had ignored that France had announced their conclusion.

38. Mrs. QUAN (Guatemala), replying to the representative of Poland, explained that at the 261st meeting she had advocated speeding up the study of the matter, not a renewed study.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.