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CONSULTANT GROUP ON EFFECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
OPENS FIRST SESSION IN GENEVA TODAY

(The following was received from the United Nations Information Service, Geneva.)

Twelve consultant experts, appointed by the Secretary-General, U Thant, to assist him in the preparation of a report on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons, began their first series of meetings in Geneva this morning.

The appointment of the expert group stems from a General Assembly resolution requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a concise report on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and on the security and economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of these weapons. The resolution also recommends that the report be prepared with the assistance of qualified consultant experts appointed by the Secretary-General, and that it be transmitted to Member Governments in time to permit its consideration at the twenty-second session of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of the same resolution, the Governments of all Member States are asked to give the report the widest possible distribution, so as to acquaint public opinion with its contents. (For further details, see press releases SG/A/43-44.)

Message from Secretary-General

At the outset of this morning's opening meeting, M.A. Vellodi, representative of the Secretary-General, read a message from U Thant, in which he stressed the importance of the task assigned to the expert group by the General Assembly, and added: "Upon a clear understanding by the peoples of the world of the problem covered by our mandate may depend the very survival of mankind."

(more)

The Secretary-General went on to say that he had been preoccupied with this problem for some time, and recalled the conviction, expressed in his last Introduction to the Annual Report to the General Assembly, that to know the true nature of the danger might be a most important first step towards averting it. The unanimous support of the membership of the United Nations, he went on, was clear evidence that his concern was shared by everyone.

In conclusion, U Thant expressed the hope that the expert group would produce a constructive and useful report which would make a positive contribution to an understanding of the dangers inherent in the present arms race.

Work at First Session

During its present series of meetings, the work of the expert group is expected to be devoted to a discussion of its work programme.

The following are members of the expert group:

Wilhelm Billig (Poland)	Takashi Mukaibo (Japan)
Alfonso Leon de Garay (Mexico)	H.M.A. Onitiri (Nigeria)
Vasily S. Emelyanov (Soviet Union)	John G. Palfrey (United States)
Martin Fehrm (Sweden)	Gunnar Randers (Norway)
Bertrand Goldschmidt (France)	Vikram A. Sarabhai (India)
Wilfrid B. Lewis (Canada)	Sir Solly Zuckerman (United Kingdom)

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