

United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1259th
MEETING**

Tuesday, 30 October 1962,
at 3.20 p.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL
(Sudan).

AGENDA ITEM 77

The urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests (A/5141 and Add.1, A/C.1/873, A/C.1/874, A/C.1/L.310 and Add.1-2, A/C.1/L.311) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. AUGUSTE (Haiti) welcomed the recent relaxation of international tension, which gave reason to hope that human wisdom would finally triumph. Bearing in mind the intransigence with which the nuclear Powers had defended their viewpoints in previous years, it could not be said that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had produced disappointing results. There had been a certain rapprochement between the great Powers, thanks largely to the effort made by the neutral countries which had not only submitted a memorandum that constituted a sort of bridge between the two positions and facilitated the discussions but had also helped to create a climate conducive to fruitful negotiation.

2. The world could not permit nuclear tests to continue to threaten humanity with total destruction and to endanger seriously the health and the very life of future generations. More was needed than a mere cessation of tests: action must be taken to ensure that it was followed as quickly as possible by the elimination of all nuclear weapons. His delegation would support any draft resolution which sought to remove the nuclear danger forever.

3. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) referred to the restraint and moderation which the leaders of the great Powers had displayed during the Cuban crisis. The constructive part played by the Acting Secretary-General on that occasion brought out clearly the importance of the United Nations and the need to strengthen the Organisation and its executive authority. Unfortunately, however, the spirit of co-operation demonstrated by all in the face of a threat of nuclear war was not apparent in the case of the threat from nuclear testing, although the latter was no less grave. Thirteen tests had already taken place since the seventeenth session of the General Assembly had convened, and others were in preparation. The situation was thus very grave and it was the duty of the

Committee to examine the problem in its due proportions.

4. Preparations for war, including the manufacture of nuclear weapons, did not in themselves do any actual harm, except economically, so long as war was avoided. The real danger, however, was posed by nuclear tests, since, endangering as they did the health and life of individuals, they constituted an actual war against humanity. They exposed to radio-active fall-out nations which were in no way involved in the testing. They were thus a violation of national sovereignty. The reason why more protests had not been raised was that men had not yet realized that they were living in a nuclear age and that nuclear tests were fully as dangerous as a war.

5. An abundance of data was available on the harmful effects of radio-active fall-out. It was known that all foods and the bodies of human beings themselves now contained radio-active poisons. What would happen if testing continued at an increased rate? It was important to act immediately and to halt all tests which produced radio-active fall-out. The small countries, which considered the question not from the political but solely from the humanitarian viewpoint, hoped that nuclear tests would be ended without further delay. It was the duty of the United Nations to outlaw all nuclear tests, whatever the reactions of the nuclear Powers might be. There could be no doubt that tests in all environments should be stopped; however, underground tests, which could be classified as preparations for war, did not constitute an actual violation of national sovereignty, and that fact must be taken into account.

6. It was regrettable that the Geneva negotiations had not resulted in an agreement, but the memorandum presented by the non-aligned countries on 16 April 1962^{1/} was a constructive document. Moreover, it appeared from the latest proposals of the United States and the United Kingdom on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other hand that the two parties were agreed on the conclusion of a separate treaty on tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water; however, there was disagreement with regard to underground tests.

7. His delegation was in favour of concluding without delay a treaty banning tests in the atmosphere and tests in outer space and under water, in order to save humanity from the dangers of radio-active fall-out. At the same time, efforts should be made to reach an agreement on underground tests. For that purpose, an interim arrangement could be made to establish a commission of scientists entrusted with the task of verifying doubtful seismic events by all possible means, including on-site inspections, subject to the permission of the State concerned.

^{1/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962, document DC/203, annex 1, sect. J.

If a country withheld permission for on-site inspection on two occasions, that refusal to co-operate would be an indication that the presumption that a nuclear explosion had occurred was justified. The commission would then inform the other parties to the agreement, who would be in a position to revoke the agreement or to call for its review. An interim agreement on those lines might prove workable and make it possible to decide whether or not on-site inspections were indispensable. Moreover, it would be a means of testing the good faith of the nuclear Powers. The experience gained would prove helpful for the final agreement and open the way for negotiation on disarmament. The time seemed propitious for reaching such an agreement.

8. His delegation was considering presenting its proposals either in the form of a draft resolution, if necessary, or—if the other sponsors agreed—in a revised text of draft resolution A/C.1/L.310 and Add.1-2. His delegation subscribed fully to that draft resolution, of which it was a sponsor, but felt that it should be supplemented. It was not enough for the Committee merely to ask the nuclear Powers to go back and negotiate, without giving them some concrete proposals which might help them to reach an agreement.

9. Mr. PADILLA NERVO (Mexico) said that periods of respite between international crises must be utilized to reduce tensions and strengthen peace. An agreement on the cessation of all nuclear weapon tests would make a decisive contribution towards achieving that result. Putting an end to nuclear tests, halting the arms race, facilitating the signing of a treaty on general and complete disarmament and establishing machinery for maintaining peace were successive and interdependent stages in solving the same problem—that of ensuring the survival of mankind. After that it would be possible to build a peaceful world in which liberty and social justice would prevail, in which the peoples of all regions, races, religions and political convictions could follow their own destinies and enjoy the spiritual and material blessings of life.

10. It was a fact that no Power could win a nuclear war and survive; such a conflict would destroy civilization, the human race and, perhaps, all other forms of life on earth. Moreover, the armaments race was leading inevitably to nuclear war. Lastly, nuclear competition was the most dangerous factor in the armaments race. Those were truths which had been recognized by statesmen of the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, by scientists, philosophers and spokesmen for great human communities.

11. The nuclear weapons stockpiled in the arsenals of the great Powers had a total destructive power of 250,000 megatons—sufficient to annihilate a population several times greater than the present population of the earth. It was estimated that some 60,000 nuclear and thermo-nuclear bombs, with unprecedented destructive power, already existed, as well as the vehicles required to carry them to their targets. Nevertheless, the production of those weapons was continuing and the work of improving them was being carried on underground and in other environments. Nuclear weapons were meant to be used not only against the towns and villages of the enemy but against all humanity. In the face of that frightful prospect, the questions which separated the nuclear Powers seemed insignificant and trivial.

12. Each participant in the nuclear competition declared that the tests it was carrying out were the consequence of those which had been carried out by its rival and invoked the necessity of ensuring its security and maintaining the military balance. It had become apparent during the earlier negotiations and the recent discussion that the main obstacle to an agreement was the existence of mutual distrust between the parties, expressed in their conflicting views on the nature and extent of the international control which would guarantee compliance with the treaty. The differences between them were now centred on the problem of international on-site inspection as a method of identifying suspicious seismic phenomena.

13. Mexico's position was well known; it condemned nuclear weapon tests wherever they were held and whatever country carried them out. Since the nuclear Powers had closed their ears to the urgent appeal of all peoples and continued to cherish the vain hope of securing a lasting military advantage for themselves, the Committee should try to help them reach an agreement, before the present series of tests were concluded, by setting an exact date—in the current year or at the beginning of the next—when the nuclear competition would be brought to an end once and for all.

14. Any treaty freely concluded between sovereign States was based on the assumption that it would be sincerely respected. No State voluntarily signed and ratified a treaty with the deliberate intention of violating it; it was natural, however, for the parties to take all possible political and legal precautions against a possible violation. It was for the Powers concerned, and not the Committee, to determine what the necessary safeguards were. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that there was no clause which could provide an absolute guarantee that the obligations undertaken would be fulfilled. The conditions of international coexistence being what they were, the application of a treaty could not be assured by enforcement measures; the only sanctions for violation would be the moral condemnation of public opinion and the fact that the other parties would be freed from their treaty obligations.

15. He did not think that the reasons given by the great Powers to justify their nuclear tests were valid; nor did he think that the obstacles to an agreement were insurmountable. The cessation of all tests would facilitate negotiations aimed at settling other questions of vital importance: the establishment of denuclearized zones, prevention of the dissemination of nuclear weapons, the utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes, measures to prevent the outbreak of war through error, accident or the interruption of communications, and the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between groups of States belonging to opposing military alliances.

16. Sooner or later, the great Powers would either have to call a halt to the nuclear armaments race or be destroyed, and with them their scientific, technical and cultural contributions to civilization and human progress. Moreover, if the great Powers should unleash a nuclear war, they would not be the only ones to be destroyed but would involve all the other countries of the world in the catastrophe. Consequently, in the matter of stopping nuclear tests, there could be no question of siding with one camp or the other but only of defending the interests

and very existence of the human race. The United Nations should echo the outcry of its peoples and insist on the cessation of the nuclear competition: to ask less would be to help bring about the disaster.

17. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the conclusion to be drawn from the general debate was that all tests in all environments and by all States must be banned. That had been recognized by the delegations of the countries which were in favour of international peace. The Western Powers, however, were continuing to advocate a partial agreement, which in practice would only be an acknowledgement of the possibility of continuing the tests. The representative of Burma and many other delegations had given in detail the reasons for banning all tests without exception, and even those who had attempted to justify the conclusion of a partial agreement had had to resort to arguments which in fact confirmed the need for a general prohibition.

18. The chief purpose of a test ban was to eliminate two important manifestations of the armaments race: the perfecting of weapons of mass destruction and a wider dissemination of nuclear weapons. It would also make it possible to stop the pollution of man's environment and to improve the international situation, thereby furthering the settlement of the question of general and complete disarmament. However, those objectives could not be attained unless underground tests were banned as well as the others, for they provided a means of perfecting existing weapons and developing new nuclear weapons. If such tests were permitted, the nuclear armaments race would continue unabated. Moreover, any country which was willing to devote the necessary resources for the purpose would be able to carry out underground tests with a view to building itself a nuclear arsenal, and there would be an increasingly wide dissemination of weapons of mass destruction. Lastly, mutual confidence between States, the importance of which had been repeatedly emphasized, would certainly not be strengthened if each country knew that others were secretly forging terrible weapons which could be used against it.

19. A partial agreement would only serve to legalize underground tests. In fact, the United States did not want to stop those tests. For that reason, it claimed that underground tests could not be correctly identified, or even detected, by national seismic stations. That assertion was refuted by the scientific data at present available, and it had also been refuted by a United States scientific publication, all of which proved that in reality the United States argument concealed unavowed political motives. Consequently, the scientific conference which had been proposed by several delegations could only add to the obstacles in the path of an agreement to ban nuclear weapon tests.

20. The question of the date on which testing should stop was assuming increased importance. For that reason, the Soviet Union supported the Mexican proposal to set that date at 1 January 1963. The arguments advanced against that proposal by the Western Powers were not convincing and had been rightly refuted by many delegations. Setting that date would clear the international atmosphere and facilitate a solution of the problem.

21. His delegation would deal in detail later on with the various draft resolutions which had been submitted. For the present, however, it wished to state that the draft resolution of the United States and the United Kingdom (A/C.1/L.311) was not satisfactory. It contained only a brief reference to the memorandum of the eight non-aligned countries—although many delegations had agreed that that document should serve as a basis for discussion—and it referred to other documents which would be of no help in solving the problem, especially those which contained the former Western proposals. Lastly, the draft resolution recommended a partial agreement and was therefore unacceptable to all who were in favour of banning all tests in all environments.

22. In a letter addressed to the President of the United States on 27 October 1962, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR had put forward constructive proposals for settling the Cuban crisis and in that connexion had pointed out the need to eliminate nuclear weapons and discontinue the testing of such weapons. Today the United Nations had an opportunity to bring a positive solution to the problem.

23. Sir Michael WRIGHT (United Kingdom) said that if the Soviet Union was willing to communicate the information which it claimed to possess concerning means of identifying all underground tests, a treaty could be signed before the end of the current session. However, as the Soviet Union felt that the present relations among States did not permit it to give that information to other countries, he would like to know if it would be willing to communicate it to the Secretary-General.

24. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) repeated his statement that on the basis of the conclusions reached by United States and United Kingdom scientists, the Soviet Union and the Western Powers were in an absolutely identical position with respect to the manifest possibility of distinguishing phenomena caused by earthquakes from those due to nuclear tests. He could therefore add nothing which had not already been confirmed by exchanges of information between scientists of different countries who were concerned with the question.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.