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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) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. HASSAN (United Arab Republic) expressed his delegation's concern at the continuance of nuclear testing. Such testing, particularly in outer space, could have grave consequences and could carry the arms race to the point of no return.

2. His country's delegation at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva had been aware of the great responsibility imposed upon it by the fact that, like the other non-aligned members of that Committee, it had been speaking for all the small non-nuclear and peace-loving nations of the world. The neutral members had seen it as their mission to offer practical suggestions which might help to narrow differences of viewpoint, without necessarily supporting the existing position of either party.

3. The problem of halting nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water had presented no insurmountable difficulties, since the two sides had agreed that there was no need for international inspection or verification in those environments. There had been disagreement, however, on the issue of underground testing. The Western Powers had maintained that an international verification system, including provision for on-site inspection, was essential in order to distinguish between underground tests and earthquakes. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, had contended that there was no need for international verification, since States could determine the nature of suspicious events by their own scientific means.

4. Faced with those fixed positions, the eight non-aligned States had presented a joint memorandum on 16 April 1962^{1/} setting forth their views on the matter. While the two parties had had little difficulty in accepting the first two ideas in the memorandum—the

establishment of a system of national observation posts and of an international commission of scientists—that had not been so in the case of the third—and basic—idea of the document: that the parties could invite the international commission to visit their territory. Two sharply conflicting interpretations had been put forward, although the authors of the memorandum had regarded their proposals as a compromise between two extreme points of view and as meeting the basic security requirements of both parties. The latter had, in point of fact, somewhat modified their original positions so as to bring them closer to the suggestions contained in the memorandum. The Soviet Union had agreed to the establishment of an international commission and to the possibility of on-site inspections in its territory, provided that they were carried out at the invitation of the Soviet Government. The Western Powers, for their part, no longer insisted on the establishment of international observation posts in Soviet territory and were willing to reduce the number of annual on-site inspections, provided that they were made compulsory.

5. Leaving aside considerations of a political nature, the disagreement appeared to relate less to the principle of inspections than to the procedures involved and the annual number of on-site inspections. His country's delegation at Geneva had therefore suggested that the two parties should direct their efforts towards reaching agreement on the actual mechanics of on-site inspection in specific cases and on the functions and powers of the international commission envisaged in the memorandum.

6. Thus, a satisfactory solution appeared possible if some concessions were made on questions of abstract principle and prestige. The suggestions put forward by the non-aligned countries at Geneva had taken account of questions of legitimate security as well as the prestige of both parties. Unless the nuclear Powers could offer some semblance of justification for their continued disagreement on underground testing, they would face the challenge of proving that they sincerely intended to halt nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. Neither party had all the right on its side, and there could be no excuse for carrying out nuclear tests which poisoned the atmosphere. The current recrimination between the Soviet Union and the United States did not alter the fact that it had been possible to suspend testing for three years at a time when the means of detection and verification had been far less advanced than they were today.

7. Both at Geneva and in the First Committee, however, the Western Powers and the Soviet Union, while agreeing in principle to sign an agreement banning tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, had stubbornly insisted on imposing certain conditions. The delegations of the non-aligned countries at Geneva had contended that a formula could

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

be found which would involve neither an unlimited moratorium while negotiations were under way, as advocated by the Soviet Union, nor the complete elimination of the issue of underground testing, as urged by the United States. The solution proposed by the non-aligned countries, while it would not be wholly satisfactory to either side, would not harm the interests of either and would provide a useful breathing-spell while negotiations were under way on a treaty banning all nuclear tests. It called for the Governments or Heads of State concerned to make a solemn declaration of their intention to refrain from conducting underground tests for a brief period of time, thus indicating their goodwill, reducing tension and creating conditions favourable to the success of the negotiations. His delegation and those of many other non-aligned countries regarded that as the only way in which the present deadlock could be broken. It might represent the last chance to end testing before other countries became nuclear Powers and thus made it more difficult to conclude a test ban agreement.

8. It was the duty of the General Assembly to remind the nuclear Powers of their responsibilities and urge them to end nuclear testing in all environments and for all time. It should make very clear to them, at the present session, the views of the peoples which it represented. His delegation felt that the Assembly would in that way be taking constructive action and helping to remove some of the difficulties which were still preventing agreement.

9. Mr. GODBER (United Kingdom) expressed his pleasure at taking the rostrum immediately after the representative of the United Arab Republic, whose delegation had taken an active and useful part in the Geneva discussions. The First Committee's discussion of the problem of suspending nuclear tests could contribute to a solution by bringing forth new ideas. In that connexion, he had followed with great interest the observations made by the representatives of India, Brazil, Ireland and Austria.

10. The main obstacle to the conclusion of a nuclear test ban agreement seemed to be the lack of assurance that any undertakings entered into would in fact be observed. The implementation of an agreement on disarmament and the cessation of nuclear testing called for effective verification, since violations could take place in secret and might have fatal consequences. Mr. Gromyko, the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, had himself acknowledged at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament that such verification was necessary in connexion with disarmament. Nuclear weapon testing was, of course, the most dangerous manifestation of rearmament, and its cessation would be a major step towards disarmament. If the Soviet Government had accepted the Baruch plan^{2/} in 1946, no country would possess nuclear weapons today, and the question of nuclear disarmament would not arise. If testing had been halted in 1958, there would be no 50-megaton or 100-megaton bombs today. Thus, the need for guarantees of compliance with the provisions of a disarmament treaty also applied in the case of a treaty banning nuclear tests. However, different types of verification were needed for general and complete disarmament, on the one hand, and a nuclear test ban, on the other. That was one of the reasons why an agreement on one did not have to await the conclusion of an agreement on

the other. While general and complete disarmament required a complex verification system, a ban on nuclear weapon testing could be controlled with the most limited means. That question had been studied in detail in 1958 by Soviet, United States, United Kingdom and other scientists, who, in a unanimous report^{3/} which had been accepted by their Governments, including that of the Soviet Union, had defined the conditions under which a ban on nuclear testing could be verified. They had agreed that there should be an international commission assigned the task of detecting and identifying seismic events, so that all countries would be assured that the parties to the agreement were honouring their obligations. In his statement at the 1246th meeting, the Soviet representative, while complaining of the insistence of the Western Powers on inspection and control, appeared to have ignored the existence of that report, perhaps in order to conceal the fact that the Soviet Union had unilaterally repudiated the report without offering any scientific justification for doing so.

11. Since October 1958, the Western Powers had made the greatest possible effort to meet the Soviet desire for secrecy consistent with the basic objective of assurance that every State was observing its obligations. During four years of negotiations, they had made a succession of forward-moving offers, of which the latest were their two draft treaties of 27 August 1962^{4/}. But for two years the Soviet Government's response to every effort to meet its wishes had been to take a step backwards towards a more extreme position.

12. The Western Powers did not want verification or inspection for its own sake or for purposes of espionage. They wanted the minimum guarantee that treaty obligations would be respected, and that minimum meant that if an underground event was recorded, the question whether it was natural or man-made should be scientifically established. Most events could already be identified by means of national detection systems. As soon as all events were so identifiable, there would no longer be any need for control.

13. United States and British scientists had been collaborating to devise more accurate methods of identification; for four years, on some twenty occasions, they had invited the Soviet Union to join them. The United Kingdom admired the achievements of Soviet scientists and felt that they would have an important contribution to make in the field of identification research. Unfortunately, the Soviet Government had consistently declined those invitations.

14. If, as Mr. Zorin had asserted at the 1246th meeting, the Soviet Government possessed sufficiently precise and trustworthy means of verification, why did it not disclose the information it had? The only risk to the Soviet Union in giving such information was that of being compelled to sign a treaty to ban all tests. If the Soviet Union had such information and was withholding it, it was committing a crime against humanity. The United States and the United Kingdom had freely made available to the Eighteen-Nation Committee at Geneva all their information on

^{3/} Report of the Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests. See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda items 64, 70 and 72, document A/3897.

^{4/} *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962*, document DC/205, annex I, sect. O and P.

^{2/} See *Official Records of the Atomic Energy Commission, First Year, No. 1*, 1st meeting, pp. 4-14.

detection and verification machinery. But if the Soviet Government did not possess precise and trustworthy means of verification, it should abandon its hollow claim and send its scientists to work with those of the United States and the United Kingdom.

15. When the Western Powers had reduced their demands concerning on-site inspections, the Soviet Union had first proposed the figure of three inspections per year in its territory, and had then, on 28 November 1961, withdrawn that offer and refused to accept any. On that day, at the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests, the USSR had repudiated all the treaty articles on which agreement had been reached during three years of negotiation. At the same time the USSR had proposed a treaty^{5/} providing for a ban on all tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, with no international verification of any kind. As to underground tests, the Soviet Union, rejecting all reasonable proposals in that respect, had proposed an uncontrolled, uninspected moratorium until the problem of all underground tests could be solved.

16. He wished to repeat that the West asked for the inspection of only about one in five unidentified events. In the light of the new data, that would mean a fairly small number of inspections.

17. The Soviet Union's objections to verification extended to the question of the manning of detection posts. It had originally agreed that there should be fifteen fixed and permanent detection posts in the Soviet Union, each consisting of about thirty technical experts, of whom ten should be Soviet nationals and twenty nationals of other countries. In November 1961 it had repudiated that agreement, claiming that a foreigner, even a neutral or an international civil servant, could not be trusted not to indulge in espionage.

18. The United Kingdom repudiated that insinuation, and trusted in the loyalty and integrity of international civil servants and of nationals of uncommitted countries. Moreover, the Soviet Union admitted tens of thousands of foreign tourists to its territory every year, and the Soviet representative at Geneva had admitted that those tourists could constitute some risk of espionage. The only possible inference was that the Soviet Government wanted tourism but did not want a test ban.

19. In the view of his Government, the presence of representatives of eight uncommitted countries in the Eighteen-Nation Committee had been of great advantage. It was regrettable that the Soviet Union had declined to agree that representatives or scientific experts from those States should participate in the work of the Sub-Committee on a Treaty for the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests.

20. The memorandum submitted by the eight uncommitted countries on 16 April 1962 had made a very useful contribution to the negotiations. The Soviet Union had said that it accepted the memorandum as the basis for discussion and negotiation; but when the United States and the United Kingdom had tried to enter into substantive negotiation on that basis, the Soviet representative had insisted that they must first accept the Soviet interpretation of the memorandum. That interpretation appeared to be identical with the extreme Soviet position of 28 November 1961 on the subject of international inspection.

21. He denied that the memorandum gave a State the right to refuse to admit an international inspection team. The interpretation given by the Indian representative at the 1246th meeting appeared to agree with his view. A treaty which did not contain a clause obliging a Government to invite an inspection when the commission asked for one would create uncertainty and suspicion, and might well be repudiated very quickly.

22. However, the United States and the United Kingdom had recently offered to go still further to meet the Soviet point of view. They had proposed that a limit should be set to the number of inspections which an international commission could ask for in any one year. All that the United States and the United Kingdom asked was that a clear obligation should be accepted by all parties to the treaty to allow that small quota of inspections.

23. Moreover, the United States and the United Kingdom were abandoning their demand for control posts manned by international staff, provided the national posts were supervised by an international scientific commission. There would no longer be 300 foreigners operating detection posts in Soviet territory. That was a concession of major principle. The new draft comprehensive treaty proposed by the United Kingdom and the United States on 27 August 1962^{6/} was radically different from the Western proposals of 18 April 1961.^{7/} However, if the Soviet Union still considered it unacceptable, the United States and the United Kingdom had proposed a treaty banning tests in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space, without any international inspection at all.^{8/} Such a treaty would put an end to the risk of fall-out from explosions in the atmosphere and of disturbances from tests beyond the earth's atmosphere. That offer totally met the Soviet proposals of 28 November 1961 with respect to those three environments. The Western Powers were prepared to agree, with the risk that such agreement involved, that nuclear tests in those environments could be detected and identified with sufficient accuracy. However, they could not afford to risk their security with regard to underground tests, either permanently or for a limited period; that was why they could not accept an uncontrolled moratorium, long or short.

24. The Soviet Union had replied to the Western proposals of 27 August 1962 in a most discouraging way; it had refused even to discuss them. It had given two reasons to justify its refusal of the second proposal: first, that to ban tests in three environments would be to legalize testing in the fourth; and secondly, that a treaty banning tests in three environments would intensify the arms race. The first argument was absurd, for underground testing would be even more strongly condemned if tests were banned in other environments; and in addition, the danger of fall-out would be eliminated. The second objection was no more valid, because the prohibition of tests in the most dangerous environments would add to the security of mankind and narrow down the whole problem. Underground testing could undoubtedly be militarily important, but a cessation of tests in the other environments would nevertheless be a step forward towards the final solution.

^{6/} *Ibid.*, document DC/205, annex 1, sect. O.

^{7/} *Ibid.*, document DC/203, annex 1, sect. H.

^{8/} *Ibid.*, document DC/205, annex 1, sect. P.

^{5/} See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962*, document DC/203, annex 1, sect. I.

25. He recalled that, after three years of negotiation during which both sides had refrained from testing, the Soviet Government had been the first to resume tests. The Soviet Union had then repudiated a treaty text—most of whose clauses it had accepted—as well as the report of the 1958 Conference of Experts. In the matter of inspection, the Soviet Union had offered no compromise but had adhered rigidly to an extreme position, rejecting over twenty moves by the United States and the United Kingdom.

26. The United Kingdom could not support any proposal for an uncontrolled moratorium. If the Committee adopted a resolution calling for a moratorium of that kind, the conclusion of a test ban agreement might be postponed indefinitely. What had to be done was to bring the Soviet Union face to face with its responsibilities concerning an international treaty with effective arrangements for a permanent test ban.

27. After the experience of 1961, the Western Powers could not accept a moratorium in which they would have to rely solely on the word of the Soviet Union. It was true that there had never been a formal agreement for a moratorium, but the Soviet Government had given a solemn unilateral undertaking not to engage in nuclear testing—an undertaking which it had repudiated. It was the Soviet Union which had debased the coinage of the moratorium.

28. However, he acknowledged that the gap between the attitudes of the two sides had been narrowed and that the eight-nation memorandum could still help towards agreement, if the Soviet Union recognized that it was an attempt at compromise which was not to be identified with the extreme Soviet view or with any other extreme view.

29. It was not too late to take advantage of the suggested deadline of 1 January 1963 for the coming into force of a verified treaty to end all tests. In that connexion, he supported the statement made in the General Assembly (1153rd plenary meeting) by the representative of Mexico, who had said that all tests should be suspended, based upon a juridical obligation enshrined in a treaty; he had also suggested that if a treaty was signed—say on 1 November—it could provide for testing to end on 1 January or on some other agreed date. The United States and the United Kingdom were prepared to sign a treaty immediately after the end of the current series of Soviet tests. That was a generous offer. However, if the Soviet Union felt unable to accept it, the United States and the United Kingdom renewed their appeal for acceptance of their alternative treaty offer. If the Soviet Union did not heed that appeal, he asked it to respond to the silent plea of those who, while wishing to remain uncommitted to any bloc, desperately longed for the Soviet Union to give some real response at last.

30. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) considered that the extremely long statement by the United Kingdom representative required detailed analysis and could not be answered in a few words. However, he wished to single out certain points at once. In particular, the United Kingdom representative had quoted a passage from the Soviet representative's statement at the 1246th meeting in which he had complained of the Western Powers' insistence on the need for inspection. The United Kingdom representative had added that that need had been recognized by the Conference of Experts which had met in 1958 and that the Soviet Union had rejected the experts' conclusions after having first accepted them. It should therefore be

pointed out that, following the passage quoted by the United Kingdom representative, the USSR representative had gone on to say that States had detected and identified all the test explosions by their own national systems without needing a system of international control, which was an undeniable fact. Moreover, the United Kingdom itself recognized that such control was no longer necessary for tests in outer space, in the atmosphere and under water; consequently, it, too, had rejected the conclusions of the experts. In fact, control had ceased to be indispensable as early as 1958, but the Soviet Union had accepted the proposed system in a spirit of compromise. Similarly, the Western Powers were continuing to insist on inspection for underground tests, although such tests could be detected and identified by national systems. That was what was preventing the parties from reaching agreement.

31. Clarification was necessary in regard to the United Kingdom representative's interpretation of the proposal made by the Mexican representative at the 1153rd plenary meeting. Contrary to what the United Kingdom representative had said, Mr. Padillo Nervo had not in fact proposed the conclusion of a test ban agreement in which a deadline for the cessation of all nuclear tests would be specified—deadlines would in fact have to be specified in any agreement—but he had proposed that the nuclear Powers should agree to end all tests by 1 January 1963 pending the conclusion of an agreement. That proposal the Soviet Union would support.

32. The United Kingdom representative's statement indicated that the Western Powers were maintaining their position with regard to underground testing in order to be able to continue tests with a view to perfecting their nuclear weapons. In that connexion, he wished to recall the statement made at the preceding meeting by the representative of Burma, who had explained in detail the reasons why underground tests could not be isolated from other tests. It was precisely for those reasons that the Soviet Union favoured the banning of all nuclear tests, of any kind.

33. Mr. GODBER (United Kingdom) observed that, contrary to the impression given by the reply of the Soviet Union representative, the passage from the Soviet statement which he had quoted related directly to the report of the 1958 Conference of Experts. The Soviet Union representative had wrongly established a link between the report in its entirety and the current position of the Western Powers; that position had altered substantially with regard to the three environments in question, as a result of the scientific progress which had been made. The further remarks quoted by the Soviet Union representative from his statement at the 1246th meeting dealt with later developments; the Soviet representative was therefore obviously trying to create confusion.

34. The USSR representative had recognized that the Western Powers had abandoned the idea of international control for tests in outer space, in the atmosphere and under water. By so doing, therefore, he confirmed the fact that the position of the Western Powers had moved towards that of the Soviet Union, although previously he had maintained that there was nothing new in the Western proposals.

35. Mr. MALITZA (Romania) recalled that Romania had always advocated the permanent cessation of all nuclear tests in all environments. The object of the test ban was to put an end to the arms race and the

improvement of nuclear weapons, to reduce international tension and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons—which would be possible only if underground tests were banned as well as other tests. In fact, underground tests could be made by more States than those making tests in the atmosphere or in outer space, which required the employment of much greater resources. There was therefore a risk of a spread of nuclear weapons, which would increase the danger of nuclear war and make it more difficult to achieve general and complete disarmament.

36. Whatever the Western Powers might say, their proposals tended to sanction underground tests, without any guarantee that a treaty could ever be concluded on the subject. As the representative of Burma had pointed out, any partial treaty would be precarious and would, in fact, be worse than no treaty at all. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that underground tests could represent a large proportion of the total number of tests. Contrary to what had been said by the United States representative, who had claimed that the banning of tests in outer space, in the atmosphere and under water would eliminate nine-tenths of the tests, American newspapers said that, in the United States, underground tests represented two-thirds of the tests made and that in many respects they were more profitable than the other tests. Therefore, as it had already done on several occasions—in particular, on 13 April 1959 and 11 February 1960 at the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests—the United States had made proposals which would enable it to obtain military advantages.

37. If all the parties concerned displayed the same desire to discontinue tests, an agreement could be concluded immediately. Unfortunately, the Western Powers insisted on maintaining a position which, so far, had brought the negotiations to naught. Their attitude towards the memorandum submitted in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on 16 April 1962 by the eight uncommitted countries was significant. While the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries had immediately stated their support of the memorandum, the Western Powers had tried to discredit it by raising minor technical questions and had then said that they could not accept it because it contained no provision for on-site inspection; they had later accepted it as one of the bases for discussion, but without altering

their position, and had tried to replace it by their proposals of 27 August 1962, as though the memorandum had never existed.

38. Since tests could now be detected and identified by States' national systems, it was obvious that the Western Powers' insistence on the need for on-site inspection was not based on scientific considerations. Although the United States maintained that such inspection would not constitute espionage, it was known that one of the principal aims of American strategy was to discover the strategic points in the defence system of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. The United States Secretary of Defense had admitted that fact in his statement of 29 January 1962. It was also proved by the U-2 flights over the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and by the United States' declared intention of making use of satellites in order to photograph the territory of the Soviet Union. There were therefore grounds for seeing a connexion between that aim of United States strategy and the importance which that country attached to on-site inspection. The question of the discontinuance of tests was thus not technical, but essentially political.

39. All delegations recognized the urgency of putting an end to nuclear tests. There were, moreover, objective conditions permitting a settlement of that important question. The Romanian delegation therefore supported the Soviet proposal that the parties should conclude forthwith an agreement banning tests in outer space, in the atmosphere and under water and should undertake not to carry out underground tests pending the signature of an agreement on that subject. It would be the first time that countries joined together in a solemn undertaking of that kind, which would undoubtedly be of great practical importance. To doubt the value of such an undertaking would be to question the value of international obligations in general—which would be unthinkable. Final agreement could then be reached simply by continuing negotiations on the basis of the proposals made in the eight-nation memorandum. In its decision, therefore, the General Assembly should express, on behalf of world public opinion, the desire for the immediate discontinuance of all tests, which was feasible if the Western Powers displayed as much goodwill as that displayed by the Soviet Union.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.