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*Chairman:* Mr. C. W. A. SCHURMANN  
(Netherlands).

## AGENDA ITEM 73

Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests (A/5428 and Add.1)

### GENERAL DEBATE

1. Mrs. PANDIT (India) said that her country had always attached the greatest importance to the banning of nuclear tests in all environments. In the absence of such a measure there could be no real progress in the field of disarmament; that was why each year since the fourteenth session of the General Assembly India had taken the initiative of requesting the insertion of the item under discussion in the Assembly's agenda.

2. Now, the purpose that India sought to achieve had been three-quarters accomplished, through the signing at Moscow, on 5 August 1963, of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, and in that connexion the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union were to be congratulated on their statesmanship and spirit of mutual accommodation. Although the treaty had been negotiated by the major nuclear Powers, the contribution made by the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to the preparatory work should not be underestimated. It was in fact the Eighteen-Nation Committee which had first suggested the conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear tests in those three environments, and it was in that Committee that India had suggested the appointment of a sub-committee consisting of the nuclear Powers to discuss the treaty itself.

3. The treaty was important for several reasons: by prohibiting tests which caused radio-active fall-out, it would help to prevent the further contamination of the atmosphere and would thus reduce the hazards to the health and well-being of present and future generations; it would substantially limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons, since the development of such weapons through underground testing was a costly and complicated procedure beyond the reach of most countries; it would slow down the arms race by precluding experiments with certain types of weapons, for example weapons of high yield; it had already resulted in a substantial reduction in world tension; and it paved the

way for further progress leading, it would be hoped, to an agreement on general and complete disarmament.

4. A very large portion of the world was already breathing more easily since the treaty had been signed. Over a hundred Governments had acceded to it, including India, which had been among the first to sign. Unfortunately, some dissident views had been expressed in the international community: France had felt unable to sign the treaty, and the People's Republic of China had gone so far as to criticize it bitterly; that attitude could be explained only by complete indifference at the prospect of a nuclear holocaust in which hundreds of millions of human beings would be destroyed. As a counter-proposal to the treaty, the Government of the People's Republic of China had suggested the convening of a meeting of Heads of State to consider the immediate destruction of all nuclear weapons and of their means of delivery. However, if nuclear weapons were to be destroyed without a simultaneous reduction in conventional forces, the People's Republic of China would be the mightiest military power on earth.

5. It was noteworthy that, in his recent statement in the General Assembly (1208th plenary meeting), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Mr. Gromyko, wishing to bring the Soviet and Western positions closer together, had said that he was ready to agree that limited contingents of intercontinental, anti-missile and anti-aircraft missiles should remain at the disposal of the Soviet Union and the United States in their respective territories not only until the end of the second stage, but also until the end of the third stage, in other words, until the whole process of general and complete disarmament was completed.

6. The First Committee should exercise moral pressure on the dissident countries to sign the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. In view of the provisions of article IV, concerning the withdrawal of the parties from the treaty, there was a real danger that the treaty might be abrogated if the dissident Powers—and that included France as well as the People's Republic of China—were not persuaded to sign it.

7. Although the purpose had been three-quarters fulfilled, it would only be completely fulfilled when underground tests also had been banned. The object was not to drive the nuclear arms race underground, but to end it. If renewed efforts were not made to that effect, there would be a risk of retrogression. As long as underground tests were being conducted, any aggravation of the international situation could lead to a resumption of tests in the other environments, thus nullifying everything that had been done. Moreover, although the prohibition of testing in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space would reduce radio-active fall-out, it would not completely eliminate it. There was good reason to believe that radio-active debris could escape into the atmosphere as a result

of underground explosions. The transport of such debris to the territory of other countries by air currents could lead to serious complications and even to the abrogation of the treaty. Her delegation therefore appealed to the nuclear Powers to enter into negotiations with a view to reaching a speedy agreement on the banning of underground testing. It was to be hoped that such a step would be facilitated by the valuable suggestions put forward by the non-aligned countries—particularly Brazil—in the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

8. In conclusion, she announced that her delegation and those of the other non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee would very shortly submit a draft resolution which she hoped would receive the widest sponsorship and be adopted unanimously.

9. Mr. ADEEL (Sudan) paid a tribute to the outstanding qualities of the Chairman and expressed his satisfaction that the Committee would be guided in its work by so enlightened a man.

10. He was gratified that after many years of vain endeavour, the appeals of the United Nations and the anguished prayers of humanity had at last been heard and that the major nuclear Powers had decided to take a first step towards peace. Although the Moscow treaty only banned nuclear tests in three environments and covered only one aspect of the central problem of general and complete disarmament, it would at least limit the contamination of the air and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Although the production and refinement of nuclear weapons still remained possible, although no provision was made for the destruction or reduction of existing stockpiles, and although the use of nuclear weapons in time of war was not prohibited, the treaty none the less afforded an opportunity of reducing international tensions and slowing down the perilous arms race. If the former mistrust and suspicion had now been replaced by an atmosphere of goodwill, that was thanks to the courage and wisdom displayed by the leaders of the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, the name of the fourth nuclear Power, France, could not be added to that list, although it was difficult to believe that France, which had contributed in such generous measure to the enrichment of human ideals, would choose to remain aloof from an undertaking designed to protect humanity against the most deadly threat that the world had ever known.

11. Like many other representatives, he would have wished that the Moscow talks had been held within the framework of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, since after all the subject came within the wider context of disarmament. As the Emperor of Ethiopia and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil had recently stressed, world peace and security were matters of life or death the settlement of which could not be left wholly in the hands of a small group of great Powers. He therefore hoped that any future negotiations to broaden the scope of the partial test ban treaty would be conducted within the framework and with the full participation of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. In that regard, serious consideration should be given to the proposal made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR in the General Assembly (1208th plenary meeting) that a conference of the States members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee at the highest level should be convened during the first part of 1964.

12. In conclusion, he wished to stress the dangers inherent in the fact that the nuclear Powers remained

free to conduct nuclear tests underground. He believed that such tests could not be isolated from tests in other environments. In certain circumstances, a party fearing that advantages gained by another jeopardized its national security might invoke article IV of the partial test ban treaty in order to withdraw from the treaty. The resulting situation would be worse than that which had obtained before the conclusion of the treaty. That was why the nuclear Powers should be urged to do their utmost to finish what they had begun. It was the sacred duty of mankind to conquer all difficulties, however overwhelming, in order to hand down to posterity a world from which the terrors of nuclear war had for ever been banished.

13. Mr. HASSAN (United Arab Republic) felt it would be useful to review the efforts made by the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and to define what his country and the other non-aligned members of that Committee believed to be their responsibilities. Their chief role had been to find compromise solutions between the conflicting positions of the two parties. Their task today was to work along the same lines to bring about a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear tests in all environments. The signing of the partial test ban treaty was a significant breakthrough because it implied a determination on the part of the signatories to put an end to the most dangerous aspect of the nuclear arms race and testified to their desire to co-operate in preventing the dissemination of nuclear weapons. It also demonstrated the beneficial influence of the United Nations, world public opinion and the non-aligned nations. The first contribution of the latter at Geneva had been to convince the nuclear Powers that without an agreement on the cessation of nuclear weapon tests it would be useless to continue negotiations on general and complete disarmament. Mindful of the resolution adopted at Addis Ababa in May 1963 by the Summit Conference of Independent African States, they had devoted all their energies to the achievement of a nuclear test ban, partial or comprehensive.

14. The partial test ban that had been achieved, welcome as it was, had to be considered in its true perspective. It could not in itself reduce the armaments race or put an end to international tension. Yet, in spite of its imperfections, it constituted the first legal obligation in that regard assumed by the three major nuclear Powers. It created a healthier atmosphere conducive to more promising negotiations. Lastly, it had an undeniable symbolic value. On the other hand, because it did not ban underground test, there remained the risk of an arms race in that environment, with the destruction of the precarious balance that the treaty had brought about; moreover, the partial test ban was not complete without other specific arrangements to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons. To give the treaty every possible chance to lead to further agreements, it was important to shun whatever source of friction might undermine it. Pending a final agreement on underground tests, the nuclear Powers should not indulge in a spiral of underground tests which might run counter to the spirit and the aim of the partial test ban treaty.

15. Moreover, the differences of opinion that had prevented the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty had been substantially reduced at Geneva, and it was to be hoped that the political will to arrive at a solution had not disappeared. His delegation took an optimistic view regarding the prohibition of underground tests, for two reasons: first, the favourable

atmosphere created by the conclusion of the partial test ban treaty opened up prospects for the normalization of political relationships, and secondly, both sides had sincerely tried to pave the way for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear tests in all environments. The Soviet Union had agreed in principle to two or three on-site inspections yearly, while the United States had consented to reduce the number of yearly on-site inspections to seven, provided that the USSR agreed in principle to the modalities of inspection proposed by the Western Powers. The discussion at Geneva had thus reduced itself to the question whether priority was to be given to the number of inspections or to the modalities of inspection. The non-aligned countries had suggested a number of compromise solutions, which were annexed to the Eighteen-Nation Committee's report.<sup>1/</sup> The Socialist delegations had then stated that the time for compromise on the number of inspections was past and that scientifically there might be no need at all for on-site inspection; nevertheless, the Soviet Union had not withdrawn its offer to permit three on-site inspections yearly. At that juncture Ethiopia, Nigeria and the United Arab Republic had submitted their joint memorandum<sup>2/</sup> appealing to the interested parties not to retreat from their latest positions, since such a move would have been a set-back to all negotiations. That constructive contribution had happily been followed by the Moscow negotiations, which had led to the partial test ban treaty. To be sure, the memorandum did not offer the only possibility for a compromise solution, but it did offer a logical possibility. At the request of the Swedish delegation, the secretariat of the Eighteen-Nation Committee had prepared a synopsis of suggestions made by the eight non-aligned countries concerning a treaty on the discontinuance of underground tests.<sup>3/</sup> He invited the nuclear Powers to study those suggestions, which might offer them a possible basis for an equitable solution.

16. His delegation was convinced that an improvement of detection techniques would facilitate an agreement and permit a reduction in the number of on-site inspections; future progress could even make such inspections unnecessary. It therefore suggested that the Committee should invite the major nuclear Powers and all the States concerned to improve those techniques, unilaterally, bilaterally and multilaterally, by exchanging scientific information and stepping up scientific research, perhaps in conjunction with an advisory scientific organ created by the General Assembly or one of the specialized agencies.

17. Such a procedure would bring speedier concrete results; moreover, agreement by the nuclear Powers to co-operate in the scientific aspects of detection and identification would also signify their determination to prohibit nuclear tests in all environments and to respect such an agreement.

18. Finally, his delegation would welcome a General Assembly resolution noting with satisfaction the signing of the partial test ban, the spirit of mutual accommodation shown by the three original signatories, the contribution made by the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and the efforts of the non-aligned delegations. Such a resolution would call upon all countries to become parties to the partial

test ban treaty and to abide by it; it would urge the nuclear Powers to negotiate on a basis of mutual understanding and realism to reach a comprehensive test ban treaty, and would draw attention to the non-aligned States' various constructive suggestions. The eight non-aligned States participating in the Geneva negotiations intended to submit such a draft resolution at the appropriate time.

19. Mr. STEVENSON (United States of America) said that the partial test ban treaty represented the most important single step taken in the field of disarmament since the war. He was pleased to note that the treaty had been received favourably both in the United States and the rest of the world, and he hoped that it would receive universal acceptance. It was recognized throughout the world that the treaty was useful in helping, in the first place, to halt the nuclear arms race, secondly, to discourage the search for ever more destructive weapons, thirdly, to make more difficult the development of nuclear weapons in any country which had not begun to test, fourthly, to end the danger of radio-active fall-out and, lastly, to facilitate agreement on other disarmament measures.

20. The partial test ban did not, however, stop underground testing or put an end to all weapons development; it did not reduce the nuclear arsenals of States; it did not eliminate the threat of war. It was essential therefore to continue to work toward agreement on an adequately verified comprehensive treaty ending all nuclear weapons tests. Despite the difficulties, it should be possible to achieve that objective through the co-operation of the General Assembly and the Eighteen-Nation Committee, which had played an important role in bringing about the partial test ban treaty. The efforts of the eight non-aligned participants had reinforced the usefulness of the Geneva Conference. The United States remained steadfastly opposed, however, to a voluntary, unverified moratorium on underground testing. Such a moratorium would not facilitate agreement but would only engender suspicion and increase tension. The scientific facts pointed to the amount and type of verification necessary to reach agreement. The United States had already spent over \$150 million on trying to improve its knowledge of the detection and identification of nuclear events, and that effort would continue. The Western Powers asked only for as much verification as was necessary to give adequate assurance of compliance with the provisions of a comprehensive treaty. In the case of underground test, adequate assurance required on-site inspection to dispel doubts as to the nature of certain seismic events.

21. The Western Powers had done all they could to provide the Soviet Union with safeguards against the abuse of inspection for purposes of espionage. For example, the area to be inspected would be limited. Certain sensitive installations could be excluded from inspection. All the safeguards considered necessary to ensure the security of military and other defence installations could be taken, provided that inspection teams could still arrive promptly. The receiving State could use its own aircraft and its own pilots and could choose its own flight routes; its personnel could accompany the teams, which would include members of an international staff. The United Kingdom and the United States, in their memorandum of 1 April 1963,<sup>4/</sup> had indicated what elements they regarded as neces-

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1963, document DC/208.

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*, annex 1, sect. A (ENDC/94).

<sup>3/</sup> *Ibid.*, sect. B (ENDC/96).

<sup>4/</sup> *Ibid.*, document DC/207, annex 1, sect. C (ENDC/78).

sary for effective verification of a test ban treaty. It would be helpful to the negotiations if the Soviet Union similarly indicated the necessary elements of a properly safeguarded agreement, in accordance with the existing state of the science of nuclear test detection and identification. The goal remained the ending of all nuclear weapons tests and the achievement of general and complete disarmament. The members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee should therefore renew their efforts to reach agreement on an adequately safeguarded comprehensive test ban treaty.

22. Mr. MATSCH (Austria) expressed pleasure at the conclusion of the partial test ban treaty, of which Austria was a signatory. What must now be done was to examine the possibilities for arriving at a complete ban on nuclear testing in all environments. The major obstacle appeared to be a technical one, since no on-site inspection would be required if a method of identifying all test explosions could be developed. There remained one category of underground nuclear tests—low-yield tests conducted in certain types of soil—which, according to the Western Powers, could not yet be identified, although the Soviet Union claimed to have means of identifying events of that type as well. However, the United States Atomic Energy Commission had been informed by experts that, although a country could carry out a single nuclear test without being detected, a series of tests would quickly be identified; a single test was, of course, usually insufficient for purposes of developing a new nuclear weapon. Moreover, the United States was planning to establish an extensive network of recording stations throughout the world, while earthquake specialists attending the General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, held at Berkeley, California, in August 1963, had discussed two major discoveries, one Soviet and the other British, which might make it possible to improve existing methods of identification and thus ultimately extend the present partial test ban treaty to cover all nuclear tests. Finally, proposals had been made at the non-governmental level that United States, British and Soviet scientists should join in studying seismic phenomena in order to speed the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement.

23. His delegation was convinced that the scientific approach was the one that would lead to a solution. However, the problem also had military and political aspects, and it was difficult to envisage the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty so long as one of the major nuclear Powers regarded continued underground testing as necessary to its security.

24. The Committee should therefore recommend continued scientific efforts to find means of identifying even the smallest explosions and, at the same time, appeal to the nuclear Powers to work towards a swifter rapprochement between East and West in order to promote the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement, as provided in the preamble of the Moscow treaty.

25. Mr. CAVALLETTI (Italy) said that the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, speaking in the Assembly's general debate (1218th plenary meeting), had expressed the satisfaction of the Italian Government at the conclusion of the partial test ban treaty; the United States representative in the Committee had very rightly stressed the advantages which the treaty conferred and the promise it held out for further progress towards disarmament.

26. Recalling certain aspects of the negotiations which had preceded the signing of the treaty, he ob-

served that the principal difficulty had been the disagreement between the parties with regard to controls. In the hope of overcoming that difficulty, the United States and the United Kingdom had on 27 August 1962 submitted two draft treaties, one calling for an uninspected ban on nuclear testing in three environments<sup>5/</sup> and the other providing for a general ban accompanied by controls.<sup>6/</sup> Since that move had not met with the response for which the two countries had hoped, they had decided in April 1963 to address themselves directly to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, and the spirit of understanding shown on both sides had finally made possible the signing of the partial test ban treaty.

27. Useful conclusions for the future could be drawn from the manner in which the negotiations had proceeded. First of all, the approach adopted in arriving at the conclusion of the treaty could serve as a precedent for the work still to be done at Geneva in the field of disarmament. It was a realistic and effective approach which consisted in concentrating effort on areas where there was already a measure of agreement and deferring the more controversial issues. In that way, it would be possible to make gradual progress towards disarmament. Secondly, he wished to draw attention to the extremely active part which the Western Powers had played in the conclusion of the treaty; while it was true that by signing the treaty the Soviet Union had provided concrete and encouraging evidence of goodwill, it was the initiative taken by the Western Powers that had made it possible to conclude the agreement. Finally, he wished to point out the importance—which had been officially recognized by the three nuclear Powers—of the work done by the Eighteen-Nation Committee.

28. His delegation was certain that the Eighteen-Nation Committee would continue to be a positive factor in efforts to arrive at an effective solution to the problem of testing. Only a partial solution had so far been found, for the treaty that had been signed, while it achieved the aim of eliminating radio-active fall-out, did nothing to prevent the qualitative nuclear arms race. Accordingly, negotiations for a complete ban on testing in all environments, accompanied by appropriate safeguards, must be resumed as soon as possible. Even if the proposals put forward in the Eighteen-Nation Committee by the two sides did not win immediate acceptance, they would be of value, for experience had shown that such proposals could later prove a decisive factor in arriving at an agreement.

29. It would, of course, be difficult to work out a control system that was acceptable to all concerned, since such a system would have to provide adequate safeguards against secret underground testing and offer reassurance to those who feared that inspection might be used as a cover for espionage. While the number of suspicious seismic events was, of course, very great, the Western Powers were prepared to take certain risks in order to reach agreement. The first step, therefore, must be a practical scientific study of specific inspection methods, with a view both to determining how a suspicious event should be investigated in order definitely to establish its nature, and to ensuring that inspection did not entail any undue interference in the life of the country concerned or any activities prejudicial to the security of States.

<sup>5/</sup> *Ibid.*, Supplement for January 1961 to December 1962, document DC/205, annex 1, sect. P (ENDC/59).

<sup>6/</sup> *Ibid.*, sect. O (ENDC/58).

30. Although there were difficult problems yet to be solved, the improved atmosphere which had followed the signing of the Moscow treaty should simplify the task of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. Once the necessary safeguards against espionage were available, it should be possible to reach agreement on the number of international on-site inspections to be carried out within a given period of time. By agreeing to a limited number of inspections, the Soviet Union could enjoy the moral, political and economic benefits to be gained from the elimination of all nuclear testing for all time to come. The positive effect which the signing of the partial agreement had had on the political atmosphere in the world showed clearly that the favourable impact of a comprehensive agreement would be even greater.

31. The preamble to the treaty bound the three nuclear Powers to press forward with negotiations for a total ban on testing. The United Nations must therefore make every effort to adopt resolutions that would promote the conclusion of such an agreement. In spite of the difficulties yet to be overcome, his delegation had faith in the nuclear Powers' sense of responsibility, in the moral authority of the United Nations and in the willingness of the Eighteen-Nation Committee to provide unstinting technical and political assistance.

32. Mr. THOMAS (United Kingdom) said that, as a representative of one of the original signatories of the partial nuclear test ban treaty, he was profoundly happy that the nuclear Powers had been able to achieve that concrete result. Although the treaty unquestionably represented only a first step, its long-term psychological effect must not be underestimated, for it showed that patience, persistence and good sense always yielded results in the end. There was, of course, no occasion for complacency and his Government, for its part, did not intend to slacken its efforts to achieve the goal sought by all: a disarmed, secure and peaceful world. The United Kingdom would therefore continue to work for a comprehensive agreement. At the present stage, however, it might be more feasible to exploit the success achieved at Moscow and try first of all to arrive at further agreements dealing with collateral measures. In any case, he hoped that countries which had not yet signed the treaty would reconsider their position. He wished to conclude by paying a tribute to those who had taken part in the work of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and, in particular, to the delegations representing non-aligned States, which had played an important part in clarifying the issues.

33. Mr. Víctor Andrés BELAUNDE (Peru) wished to stress that the recent treaty, despite its importance and great psychological repercussions, was merely an auspicious beginning, and not a final settlement. Underground tests remained to be dealt with and, though they did not present the same dangers as tests in the air and on land, they left the way open to nuclear competition and thus failed to remove the possibility of a disturbance of the nuclear balance or the still graver possibility of a surprise attack which would represent universal suicide.

34. The solution advocated by the representative of Austria, to wait patiently until scientific progress made it unnecessary to institute control over underground tests, was perhaps a realistic one, but it was not compatible with the seriousness of the problem and with the views of the small Powers, which, since the beginning of the nuclear tests, had been exposed to constant danger from atmospheric pollution, the spread of cancer and the contamination of milk. The great Powers must realize their duty to mankind and speed up their negotiations despite the difficulties still remaining, in order to arrive at a treaty which would serve as the basis for the elimination once and for all of nuclear tests in all environments.

35. It was the First Committee's moral duty to complete the juridical structure of the Moscow treaty. If science could give an assurance that in the near future no nuclear test would escape detection, the great Powers could certainly be given a period of time; but if, after an interval, insufficient progress had been made—as seemed likely—the United Nations must urge the great Powers to accept the other solution, namely, the institution of control. In short, while it was natural for the General Assembly to welcome the conclusion of the treaty, it must nevertheless stress the need to conclude a supplementary treaty on underground tests in the near future.

#### Organization of the Committee's work

36. Mr. PADILLA NERVO (Mexico), speaking on a point of order, said that one of the General Assembly's main concerns was to take advantage of the present relaxed international atmosphere in order to obtain the conclusion of further agreements between the great Powers on other specific points. In plenary meetings of the Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the President of the United States of America had in turn expressed their countries' intention not to place nuclear weapons in orbit. The Mexican delegation especially welcomed those statements as it had pressed that point at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva.

37. He read out a draft resolution submitted by the seventeen States taking part in the work of the Geneva Conference, which would appeal to all States to refrain from placing in orbit any objects carrying weapons of mass destruction (A/C.1/L.324). He considered that the possibility of obtaining an agreement in those terms was so important that the Committee might alter its programme of work slightly in order to examine that draft resolution as soon as possible and, he hoped, to adopt it unanimously.

38. The CHAIRMAN suggested that if no delegation invoked rule 121 of the rules of procedure, the Committee might interrupt the debate on the first agenda item and devote its next meeting to the matter raised by the Mexican representative.

*It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.