

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTEENTH SESSION
Official Records



**FIRST COMMITTEE 945th
MEETING**

Friday, 10 October 1958,
at 11.10 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Order of discussion of agenda items (continued)	13
Agenda items 64, 70 and 72:	
Question of disarmament	
The discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests	
The reduction of the military budgets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France by 10 to 15 per cent and the use of part of the savings so effected for assistance to the under-developed countries	
General debate.	13

Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

**Order of discussion of agenda items (A/C.1/806)
(continued)**

1. Mr. FEKINI (Libya), referring to the procedural decision adopted by the Committee at its 944th meeting, explained that he had voted in favour of the United States procedural proposal to discuss the three disarmament items together and to decide the priority to be given to all draft resolutions and proposals on their merits, on the understanding that that procedure would allow priority to be given to the proposals relating to the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests

2. The CHAIRMAN announced that the representative of Nicaragua had requested that his affirmative vote on the United States proposal should be recorded. He had not been present when the vote was taken.

AGENDA ITEMS 64, 70 AND 72

Question of disarmament (A/3929, A/3936)

The discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests (A/3915, A/C.1/L.202, A/C.1/L.203)

The reduction of the military budgets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France by 10 to 15 per cent and the use of part of the savings so effected for assistance to the under-developed countries (A/3925)

GENERAL DEBATE

3. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) said that, despite the difficulties encountered in attempting to resolve the highly important question of disarmament, there had been significant progress. Successful technical talks had been held on the means of detecting nuclear explosions and there was hope that further technical talks would advance the efforts to reduce the

possibility of surprise attack. That approach had wider implications for the whole field of disarmament.

4. Commending the Secretary-General for the initiative he had taken in proposing the disarmament item for the agenda of the thirteenth session, he emphasized that the United States fully agreed with the statement in his very useful memorandum that the attainment of balanced, world-wide disarmament must remain a primary objective of the United Nations (A/3936, para.8). The United States, recognizing the Organization's fundamental responsibility in the field of disarmament, had co-operated to the fullest in every United Nations effort to achieve disarmament. The General Assembly, confronted at its twelfth session with the disappointing results of the talks held by the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in London in 1957, had, as one remedial measure, enlarged the Disarmament Commission to twenty-five members to meet the USSR view (resolution 1150 (XII)). However, the USSR had prevented the Commission and its Sub-Committee from making any further useful efforts. It was then that the United States had decided to press its own efforts towards solution of the disarmament dilemma, even if it had to do so outside the formal structure of the United Nations.

5. He reviewed the steps taken to set in motion the Geneva talks on the practical means of detecting nuclear explosions, which had resulted in an agreed report (A/3897), and the negotiations scheduled for 31 October 1958 for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests and the actual establishment of an international control system on the basis of that report. He emphasized that one big difficulty had been to provide against possible violations in secret. As the President of the United States, Mr. Eisenhower, had announced, unless testing was resumed by the USSR, the United States was willing to withhold further testing on its part of atomic and hydrogen weapons for a period of one year from the beginning of negotiations. It was regrettable that Mr. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, at his recent press conference, had thrown doubt upon the Soviet Government's willingness to stop tests, and it was to be hoped that the Soviet Union was not trying to evade acceptance of the United States offer and thus obstruct the forthcoming negotiations. Despite the resumption of testing by the Soviet Union in recent weeks, the United States offer still stood, unless the Soviet Union conducted further tests after the opening of the negotiations.

6. The United States was glad that progress had been made on the question of nuclear testing, that both sides recognized the need for control, and that the scientists had shown that a technique for detection was feasible. The elements of inspection and control, without which

any disarmament agreement was illusory, had been accepted in respect of nuclear weapons testing. The United States would take part in the Geneva negotiations determined to achieve an agreement and thus translate the technical agreement reached by the experts into political reality.

7. United States policy on the question of nuclear tests had evolved considerably in the past year, and one of the important factors in that evolution had been the United States Government's respect for the opinions expressed in the United Nations, in particular, the minority views.

8. The method of technical talks among experts gave promise of progress in working out a system for preventing surprise attack. The United States, which had sought since 1955 to curb the danger of such attack by air and ground inspection, would do its utmost to ensure that the talks on surprise attack to begin on 10 November 1958 were as successful as the experts' talks on nuclear weapons testing had been. It hoped that those talks would also be followed by negotiations for a political agreement.

9. The momentum created by the favourable developments of recent months must not be lost. The United States agreed with the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his memorandum that all possibilities for technical study of disarmament questions should be fully explored, and supported the application of the principle of openness of information in disarmament and related matters. It should be recognized that those favourable developments were isolated steps; they did not deal with the heart of the problem of disarmament. They none the less illustrated the fruitfulness of the new approach, which meant that all concerned should stop arguing about generalities and begin practical talks on specific disarmament measures capable of being applied and enforced. That procedure should be fully exploited, without prejudice to the basic positions of the various Governments concerned, and might ultimately be applied to a number of significant questions.

10. It would be useful, for example, to explore the technical aspects of controlling conventional armaments and the reduction of armed forces. Such exploration might facilitate agreement on what could be done, in practice, to reduce the threat of large armies and great stocks of modern weapons. Similarly, through technical discussions, it might be possible to devise some system of control over the implementation of measures to ensure the cessation of the manufacture of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and the conversion of existing stockpiles to peaceful purposes. It should be noted that the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and France had proposed the early adoption of such measures, while the USSR had made cessation of manufacture of nuclear weapons contingent upon the complete prohibition and liquidation of weapons stockpiles. In the United States view, that last measure, however desirable, was uncontrollable. Lastly, the United States was willing to take part in technical discussions on an inspection system which would ensure that outer space was not used for military purposes.

11. Technical studies on specific disarmament measures would be a first, essential step. They should be followed by negotiations on those measures which offered reasonable prospects for agreement, negotia-

tions based on technical conclusions regarding what was feasible and controllable. The United States believed that, through the scientific and technical approach, a sound basis could be laid for disarmament and that the General Assembly could make a constructive contribution by encouraging the forthcoming technical talks and by avoiding raising issues from past debates which had provoked recriminations. The important thing was that the technical talks should succeed.

12. From the twelve years' experience in the United Nations of disarmament negotiations, several valuable principles had emerged. Any measures undertaken must be capable of verification and control; agreements based on good faith and promises alone increased, rather than reduced, tensions. Drastic reduction of armaments and armed forces could be realistically expected when the existing political situation had improved. The United States continued to favour the partial approach adopted by the General Assembly in 1955 and believed that limited reduction of conventional arms together with other partial measures could be taken without awaiting political settlements. Arms limitations in both the conventional and nuclear fields must proceed concurrently. Disarmament must be balanced to safeguard the security interests of all States. The United States could not accept unbalanced disarmament calling for abandonment of a nuclear deterrent while allowing conventional arms and manpower in unlimited quantities. Measures for control should be carried out in such a manner as not to give one side a military advantage over the other.

13. Lastly, a complete and permanent cessation of nuclear weapons testing could be achieved as progress was made towards reducing the nuclear threat, lowering the high level of conventional arms and minimizing the danger of surprise attack. If the United States was to give up its ability to improve its defensive weapons, there must be corresponding limitations on the ability of other States to increase their weapons stocks and to maintain large armed forces. As President Eisenhower had pointed out, the suspension of nuclear weapons tests was not per se a measure of disarmament or a limitation of armament. Agreement on testing was significant if it led to more substantial agreements relating to limitation and reduction of fissionable material for weapons and to other essential phases of disarmament.

14. The United States hoped that an agreement would be reached at the forthcoming negotiations on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests and that it would eventually lead to a permanent discontinuance of testing. It had stated its willingness to negotiate a cessation of tests in the interests of encouraging the Soviet Union to make a comparable move forward.

15. Unilateral or unbalanced disarmament, or disarmament based on promises alone, would add to the danger of war. It was therefore imperative not to miss the opportunity of making a practical, positive beginning towards a relaxation of tension. The United States appealed to the General Assembly to help maintain the momentum towards progress in disarmament created by the favourable developments of recent months.

16. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, in the statement he had just made, the United

States representative had dashed the hopes raised by his statement at the previous meeting that the United States hoped to introduce very soon specific proposals concerning the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests. The United States insisted on linking the discontinuance of tests with the whole complex range of disarmament questions, and implied that the cessation of tests could not be discussed until agreement had been reached on lessening the nuclear threat, reducing the high level of non-nuclear arms and minimizing the danger of surprise attack: in other words, it wished to treat as a final step what the rest of the world saw as the first step.

17. Universal attention was centred upon disarmament, for on its solution depended the fate of the world: the continuation of the armaments race leading to war, or peaceful coexistence and an end to the armaments race. The United Nations could not ignore those alternatives. The recommendations made by the General Assembly in its resolution 41 (I) for the general reduction of armaments, the prohibition of atomic weapons, the elimination of such weapons from national armaments and the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only had never resulted in any agreement on disarmament, and the arms race was an ever-increasing menace to peace and security. Concern at the lack of progress had been voiced at plenary meetings during the present session by an overwhelming majority of speakers, who had urged that practical measures should be taken without delay.

18. The United States and certain other Western countries, however, still clung to their "brink-of-war" policy. That was evident from the United States representative's statement at the present meeting and from the statement by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, in the General Assembly that "most important is arms control" (749th plenary meeting, para. 51)—as distinct from actual disarmament. What the United States regarded as most important was control over armaments. The Secretary of State had made no practical proposals for even partial disarmament measures, had reported no action by the United States to reduce conventional arms and armed forces, to halt the arms race or to end tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons, but had merely suggested the adoption of a resolution to give encouragement to the negotiations to take place at Geneva from 31 October 1958. Yet the whole world looked to the United States to abandon the arms race and the production of atomic weapons and to pursue to policy of peace, disarmament and reduction of international tension. Mr. Dulles' statement that the United States stood ready to dedicate its power to world order (*ibid.*, para. 84) revealed his country's ambition to dominate the world and the aggressive nature of its whole foreign policy as a would-be world policeman. The United States, the United Kingdom and France had made it clear to the Assembly that they adhered to their arms race policy and would continue to oppose adoption by the United Nations of any decision which would promote the practical application of specific disarmament measures.

19. The Soviet Union had repeatedly proposed to the Western Powers a wide range of disarmament measures: a substantial reduction in armed forces, armaments and military budgets, complete prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, cessation of the production of such weapons and destruction of the existing

stocks, the elimination of foreign military bases, and others. The Western Powers had replied that they could not conclude any broad disarmament agreement at present and that they needed atomic weapons as a deterrent.

20. From the course of long negotiations and the unwillingness of the Western Powers to embark on a broad programme of disarmament, the Soviet Government had inferred that the only practical way to reach agreement on disarmament was to proceed step by step, starting with measures which could be applied under present conditions. Such measures were set forth in the Soviet memorandum (A/3929) and other documents presented at the current session, and the most important of them had been discussed by the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs at the 750th meeting of the General Assembly. Those measures would serve the interests of all countries which really wished to reduce armaments, end the atomic arms race and reduce international tension. They contained nothing which would give any State an unfair advantage or threaten any State's security; they formed a balanced programme.

21. It was high time that the question of ending atomic weapons tests was settled; the relevant Soviet proposal was over three years old (A/2979). The matter was simple in comparison with certain other disarmament questions, and its solution had become urgent, as had been recognized in the General Assembly, in the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee, and in the Press. There were several reasons for that urgency.

22. First, the continuance of tests merely intensified the arms race by contributing to the development of more powerful and varied nuclear weapons. Furthermore, as those supremely destructive weapons developed, their manufacture became less complicated, less expensive, and accessible to more countries; consequently, unless the process was halted, the rate of accumulation of nuclear bombs would increase and more States would become involved. France was preparing to test nuclear weapons in the Sahara, in the face of vehement protests from African States. Preparations for the production of nuclear weapons were being stepped up in West Germany and, with the rising militaristic mood of that country expressed in the growth of its armed forces and the intensification of propaganda for frontier revision, the danger of atomic war was increasing. With only three States producing nuclear weapons, three years had not been long enough to reach agreement on the Soviet proposal for cessation of tests; the difficulty of such a step could only increase as the number of producing States grew. That consideration alone should be sufficient to rouse the United Nations to prompt action.

23. The second reason for urgency was the increase in radiation caused by the intensive testing of nuclear weapons in various parts of the world. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation stated in its report to the General Assembly that radio-active contamination of the environment resulting from explosions of nuclear weapons involved new and largely unknown hazards to present and future populations (A/3838, chap. VII, para. 54).

24. The pressing nature of the problem was now so evident that few ventured to advocate openly that tests

should continue. Even the champions of the "positions-of-strength" policy sought to evade the wrath of the peoples by seeking pretexts to conceal their refusal to end tests; hence the repeated suggestion that the General Assembly should merely wish success to the three Powers which were shortly to negotiate at Geneva, without expressing its own views on the cessation of tests. That was an inadmissible thesis: the question was of concern to all States, all peoples, and every individual throughout the world, and it was the duty of all delegations to strive actively for the cessation of tests. A sincere desire to end tests implied an equal desire for further discussion of the topic in the General Assembly, and it would be a grave error for the latter to shirk its responsibility in the matter. Such a discussion, and the adoption of recommendations to discontinue tests, far from prejudicing the Geneva negotiations, would only bring their successful outcome nearer.

25. It was a melancholy fact, and one known to all present, that of the three Powers producing atomic weapons only the Soviet Union was prepared to agree to an immediate, complete and unconditional cessation of tests. His country realized that that measure would not solve the whole atomic problem; the threat of atomic war would remain until the decision was taken to prohibit nuclear weapons, eliminate them from the armaments of States, and cease the production and liquidate existing stocks of these weapons. In calling for the cessation of tests, the Soviet Union openly avowed that its principal aim was the complete and unconditional prohibition of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union was ready to take that step at any time.

26. Since, to judge from the statements their representatives had made, the United States and the United Kingdom were not yet ready to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons, the Soviet Government proposed that a start should be made with a complete and unconditional cessation of nuclear weapons tests, and that that step should be discussed and settled separately from the other disarmament issues on which the attitude of the Western Powers at present prevented agreement. The United States representative, on the contrary, wished to tie the cessation of tests to a multitude of such issues.

27. It was often asserted that the cessation of tests would do nothing to further disarmament or to end the arms race. That was an untenable theory: the purpose of nuclear tests was clearly the development of new types of nuclear weapons. That was acknowledged by the United States and United Kingdom leaders. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, justifying the policy of his Government with regard to test explosions, had told the House of Commons on 1 April 1957 that to give up tests meant giving up the bomb, and the Minister of Defence had explained to the House on 10 June 1958 that the purpose of the tests was to increase the explosive force of a given quantity of fissionable materials. The former Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission had repeatedly stated that to discontinue tests would retard the development of nuclear weapons, with consequent risk to the United States, and that view had been upheld by Mr. Willard Libby, a member of the Commission. Such assertions were hard to reconcile with the statements by the United States and United Kingdom Governments on 22 August 1958 (A/3895, A/3896/Rev.1) that the sus-

pension of testing of atomic and hydrogen weapons was not, in itself, a measure of disarmament or a limitation of armament.

28. Such assertions were made because in reality the two countries concerned were planning, not to end tests, but to cover them by a special international agreement. The United States periodical Foreign Affairs had recently featured a proposal that nuclear weapons tests should be registered at the United Nations for two years^{1/}. It was proposed that nuclear weapons producers should be assigned quotas within which they would be free to contaminate the earth, air and seas and all living things with the radio-active products of legalized nuclear explosions. The opponents of cessation even made the paradoxical assertion that tests were needed in the struggle against the arms race.

29. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of France had argued in the General Assembly (758th plenary meeting) that continued testing was beneficial to mankind because it drew people's attention to the problem of disarmament. Such reasoning might well lead to the conclusion that wars were desirable because their horrors aroused mankind to the need for peace. In reality, the discontinuance of testing would be a step in the direction of disarmament. An immediate agreement on the matter was possible if the United States and United Kingdom Governments demonstrated their goodwill, for the Soviet Union was prepared to sign such an agreement at once.

30. As early as 1955, the Soviet Union had proposed the discontinuance of tests and the establishment of an international commission to supervise the observance of an agreement on the subject. In June 1957, during the negotiations of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission at London, it had proposed the establishment of control posts on the territory of the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom and in the Pacific Ocean area (DC/112, annex 12). The Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests, held at Geneva in July and August 1958, had removed any remaining doubt that effective control of an agreement on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests was possible. It fully confirmed the Soviet Union's view that control over the testing of nuclear weapons was quite feasible and was not so very complicated. The Soviet Government agreed with all the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference of Experts on control over a complete cessation of nuclear tests. Neither the United States nor the United Kingdom had as yet declared that they fully endorsed those conclusions.

31. On 31 March 1958, the Soviet Union had unilaterally halted the testing of all types of atomic and hydrogen weapons and had called upon the United States and the United Kingdom to follow suit. However, the United States had proceeded to carry out some forty new test explosions of nuclear weapons and the United Kingdom had launched a similar series. Obviously, those Powers had selected 31 October 1958 as the starting date for a one-year discontinuance of tests so that they would be able to complete the new test series; they were seeking to turn the Soviet Union's unilateral discontinuance of testing to their own military ad-

^{1/} Henry A. Kissinger, "Nuclear Tests and the Problem of Peace", Foreign Affairs, vol. 37, No. 1 (October 1958).

vantage. In its note of 22 August 1958 (A/3896/Rev.1), the United Kingdom Government stated openly that it was beginning a series of tests. The United States and the United Kingdom thus demonstrated their preference for the continuation of the nuclear arms race.

32. Under the circumstances, the Soviet Union had been obliged to consult its own security interests. In its Decree of 31 March 1958 (A/3820) the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had stated that, if other Powers continued to test atomic and hydrogen weapons, the Soviet Union would be free to act in the matter of nuclear tests, having regard to the interests of its security. That was why the Soviet Union had recently been compelled to resume its tests. Indeed, it would be fully justified in continuing such tests until their total matched the number carried out since 31 March 1958 by the United States and the United Kingdom combined. It should be also noted that the United States had carried out a substantially larger number of tests than the Soviet Union prior to 31 March.

33. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was prepared to halt its tests if the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to the immediate discontinuance of testing for all time. The present position of the United States and the United Kingdom Governments, as set out in their statements of 22 August 1958, was a negative one; the two Powers were attaching conditions to the discontinuance of testing which negated their announced readiness to halt tests. Previously, those two Governments had made the discontinuance of testing conditional upon the establishment of an effective control system. Now, following the successful outcome of the Geneva Conference of Experts, they were seeking to make the achievement of agreement on other disarmament problems a prerequisite to a ban on tests even though it was the Western Powers themselves which had prevented such agreement. The negative attitude of the United States and United Kingdom representatives in the Committee with regard to the priority to be given the question of the discontinuance of tests and to the Soviet Union's proposal to conduct the forthcoming Geneva conference at the foreign ministers' level was also significant in that respect. Since the United States and the United Kingdom were continuing to evade agreement on the immediate and unconditional discontinuance of nuclear tests, it was essential that the General Assembly should consider the matter and bring

its influence to bear on the Governments of those two Powers.

34. As Mr. Khrushchev, the Prime Minister of the USSR, had stated, the Soviet Union was entering the forthcoming Geneva conference in the conviction that the latter's purpose should be to conclude an agreement on the permanent discontinuance of tests of all types of atomic and hydrogen weapons by all States; otherwise, the negotiations could be used as a screen for concealing an unwillingness to seek an agreement (A/3904).

35. The Soviet delegation had also submitted to the Committee a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.203) calling for the immediate cessation of all tests and recommending that States possessing nuclear weapons should enter into negotiations with a view to the conclusion of an appropriate agreement. Adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly would have a salutary effect on the entire international atmosphere and would clear the way for the solution of other important international problems.

36. Mr. LODGE (United States of America), exercising his right of reply, stressed that the United States position on the discontinuance of tests was not conditional on the existence of a comprehensive disarmament programme. The United States was prepared to suspend nuclear tests for one year without controls unless the USSR continued testing during that period. Moreover, it was prepared to extend the suspension indefinitely as long as, each year, it knew that the inspection system was functioning effectively and that reasonable progress was being made on other aspects of disarmament. Lastly, the United States was in favour of and would continue to work for comprehensive disarmament. Its policy had evolved considerably in the past year and it was incorrect to imply, as the Soviet representative had done, that it had not evolved. The members of the Committee would not be deluded by Soviet attempts to distort the United States position.

37. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the verbatim record of the meeting would clearly show that the United States was willing to suspend nuclear tests for one year only in order to prepare the next series of tests. It was unwilling to agree to a permanent and unconditional discontinuance.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.