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**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE**  
3rd meeting  
held on  
Wednesday, 8 October 1986  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING**

Chairman: Mr. KOUASSI (Togo)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

1. Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Colombia) nominated Mr. Ahmed Khan (Bangladesh) for the office of Rapporteur.
2. Mr. Ahmed Khan (Bangladesh) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.
3. Mr. ITEMCELIK (Turkey), in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, and Mrs. LUOSTARINEN (Finland), on behalf of the previous Chairman of the Committee, congratulated the Chairman on his election.

AGENDA ITEM 70: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/41/16, A/41/546 and A/41/634; A/SPC/41/L.3 and L.4)

4. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of members of the Committee to two letters relating to the item received from the Permanent Representatives of China and the United Kingdom and issued in documents A/41/546 and A/41/634 respectively. He announced that Uruguay, Oman, Antigua and Barbuda and Bangladesh had become sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.3, while Brazil had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.4.
5. Mr. ORN (Sweden), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.3, said that Sweden, which had been a member of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation since its establishment, attached great importance to the work of that Committee which was characterized by a strict scientific approach and fruitful co-operation with other international bodies such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization.
6. The sponsors of the draft resolution welcomed the ninth substantive report which the Scientific Committee had submitted to the General Assembly at its current session. The draft resolution was virtually identical to the draft adopted the previous year and his delegation, on behalf of the sponsors, hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.
7. Introducing on behalf of the 20 members of the Scientific Committee draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.4 inviting the People's Republic of China to become a member of that Committee, he expressed his conviction that the participation of the People's Republic of China, a permanent member of the Security Council, would make a valuable contribution to the Committee's work and enhance its effectiveness. He hoped that draft resolution too would be adopted by consensus.
8. He reiterated his Government's full support for the Scientific Committee's important work and recalled that that Committee had evaluated the doses to members of the general public resulting from nuclear power production and had concluded

(Mr. Orn, Sweden)

that the collective dose arising from environmental contamination as a result of nuclear reactor operations accounted for a relatively minor part of the total radiological impact of the nuclear fuel cycle. However, since the Committee had last met in April 1986, a tragic accident had occurred in a nuclear power plant, resulting in serious radioactive fallout not only in the Soviet Union but also in other countries, including Sweden. Some estimates had already been made of the health effects of that accident but much work remained to be done. His delegation noted with satisfaction that some foundations had already been laid for the Scientific Committee's work in that field. It was confident that that Committee, in close co-operation with other international organizations, in particular IAEA and WHO, and with input data from the countries concerned, would be able to make a more accurate estimate of the global impact of the Chernobyl accident and gain a better understanding of the dangers involved.

9. Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had studied carefully the comprehensive report of the Scientific Committee which, in its 30 years of existence, had proved itself an international scientific authority for its work on the effects of atomic radiation on the human body and the environment. Indeed, the work of the Committee clearly showed the extreme danger of atomic radiation for human health and life and provided a coherent scientific basis for the world public movement in favour of ending nuclear tests and preventing nuclear war. In that connection, the Committee's conclusions had been instrumental in the negotiation of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water.

10. His delegation welcomed the broad co-operation established between the Scientific Committee and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization and other international agencies, and hoped that such interaction would be developed and strengthened further in the future. It also supported the request by the People's Republic of China to become a member of the Committee. The Soviet Union had become a sponsor of the relevant draft resolution, for it was confident that, as a nuclear Power and a permanent member of the Security Council, the People's Republic of China would make a valuable contribution to the Scientific Committee's work.

11. The two recent tragedies involving space and nuclear technology, namely the destruction of the Challenger and its crew and the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, had reminded everyone of the risks associated with the nuclear and space age. The Chernobyl accident had shown that nuclear power, to which there was currently no equivalent alternative, must be developed in conditions which provided to the greatest possible extent for the safety of the people and the environment, and that broad international co-operation and joint efforts were essential in order to ensure genuine nuclear safety.

12. While the Chernobyl accident has been a tragic mistake in the peaceful use of the atom, how much more dangerous a mistake involving nuclear weapons would be. Experts estimated that the detonation of the smallest nuclear warhead would result in radiation equivalent to three Chernobyls. The escalation of nuclear weapons

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(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

must therefore be brought to an end and a process of actual disarmament begun. In his historic statement on 15 January 1986, Mr. Gorbachev had proposed a concrete programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons throughout the world before the end of the century. The Soviet Union was convinced that the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests and the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty could and must become a turning point in efforts to that end. That was why it had declared over a year previously, and extended four times since, a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions. Adherence by the United States to that moratorium and its subsequent development into a multilateral moratorium would be a major step towards the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. For nearly 30 years, the General Assembly had been urging the cessation and prohibition of nuclear tests, but the United Nations had yet to exhaust its possibilities in that field. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Mr. Shevardnadze, had said in his address to the General Assembly, the Soviet Union, for its part, was prepared, at any time and in any place, to sign a treaty on the total prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and was prepared to do so at the United Nations itself.

13. Accidents at nuclear facilities, the recorded number of which was over 150 world wide, proved that peaceful uses of the atom were also not without danger. The Soviet Union had advanced the idea of extensive international co-operation in preventing such accidents and eliminating their consequences. Mr. Gorbachev himself had called for the establishment of an international régime of nuclear safety and, at the most recent session of the General Conference of IAEA, the Soviet Union had submitted for consideration by the international community a programme for the establishment of an international régime for the safe development of nuclear power, recently circulated as a United Nations document (A/41/652). That programme proposed, in particular, the establishment of an early notification system for nuclear accidents, the establishment of well organized machinery for the provision of assistance, adherence to the IAEA recommendations regarding measures for ensuring the safety of nuclear power plants, exchanges of information regarding accidents, the development of a reliable system to prevent attacks on nuclear installations, the early entry into force of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the elaboration of a multilateral legal instrument on liability for nuclear damage, and the strengthening of the role of IAEA.

14. A special session of the General Conference of IAEA, held recently at Vienna, had considered measures to strengthen international co-operation in the field of nuclear and radioactive safety. That session had unanimously adopted two important documents: the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. The Soviet Union, which believed that those agreements constituted a good basis for a comprehensive programme for the safe development of nuclear power, had taken an active part in the drafting of those documents and, as the first party to sign the Conventions, had declared that it would implement them as of the date of signature. It had therefore promptly notified the entire world of an accident that had occurred recently on one of its nuclear submarines.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

15. The two Conventions signed at Vienna, as well as the success of the Stockholm Conference, had demonstrated that attitudes were changing and that there was a new political approach to achieving mutual understanding, confidence and openness. Such a trend was evident at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as in the crucially important documents adopted at the Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries held at Harare. The Soviet Union was firmly convinced that responsibility and realism could and must prevail and lead to practical agreements on the halting of nuclear tests, leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. That was why it had proposed that a Soviet-United States summit meeting be held at Reykjavik on 11 and 12 October, a proposal which had been accepted by the United States. The meeting would enable the two Heads of State to make a direct assessment of the situation and to reach agreement on a number of clear-cut measures designed to ensure progress on two or three disarmament questions, including the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests.

16. In conclusion, he was confident that the Scientific Committee would continue to do all it could to ensure that the power of the atom was used exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind.

17. Mr. LAGORIO (Argentina) congratulated the Scientific Committee on the quality of its report (A/41/16), which covered the genetic effects of atomic radiation, dose-response relationships for radiation-induced cancer and the biological effects of pre-natal irradiation. His country would continue to actively support the Committee's work because of the particular importance which it attached to the peaceful uses of nuclear power. Nuclear power was one of the mainstays of Argentina's socio-economic development at a critical moment when the country's basic structures were being transformed and it was in that context that President Alfonsín had declared that Argentina would be "a civilian nuclear State".

18. The Government of Argentina, which had recently signed with the People's Republic of China a bilateral agreement on co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear power, welcomed the opportunity to co-operate with that country in the multilateral context of the work of the Scientific Committee. That was why his delegation had co-sponsored draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.4 inviting China to become a member of the Scientific Committee.

19. His delegation hoped that draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.3, also co-sponsored by his country, would be adopted by consensus.

20. Mr. STRULAK (Poland) congratulated the Scientific Committee on the valuable contribution it had made to broadening knowledge of the effects and risks of atomic radiation. The quality of its work could only further enhance its established position as the highest scientific authority on radiation.

21. In 1986, the tragic accident at Chernobyl had created universal awareness of the real dangers of radioactivity. Those who had most suffered from its consequences, namely the people and the Government of the Soviet Union, had come up

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(Mr. Strulak, Poland)

with a far-reaching initiative to establish an international system for the safe development of nuclear energy. His country supported that initiative and was prepared to contribute to its implementation. The International Conventions on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, drafted in record time under the aegis of IAEA, had been signed only recently, at the first special session of the IAEA General Conference, by 51 States. The new comprehensive IAEA programme for nuclear safety and radiological protection called, inter alia, for a closer co-operation among international organizations. With its vast experience, intellectual potential and authority, the Scientific Committee was certainly among those most qualified to play an essential role in the promotion of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear power.

22. The Scientific Committee could be particularly helpful in determining critical levels of radiation with regard to populations, foodstuffs and the environment, for the Chernobyl accident had shown that there was an urgent need for internationally accepted criteria. IAEA and WHO had already requested the Scientific Committee to collect data on the radioactive fall-out from that accident and on the doses of radiation to which various countries had been exposed.

23. It was also necessary for the results of the Scientific Committee's work to be made more widely accessible. His delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts undertaken in that connection by the United Nations Environment Programme, particularly its publication in December 1985 of an excellent book on doses, effects and risks of radiation. The Scientific Committee itself should also devote more attention to that important aspect of its activities.

24. Poland attached great importance to the work of the Scientific Committee, of which it had been an active member for several years. It was convinced that the admission of the People's Republic of China, as a nuclear Power, to membership of the Committee would enhance the Committee's effectiveness.

25. Mr. KOVACIC (Czechoslovakia) said that his Government attached particular importance to the work of the Scientific Committee, the activities of which were an example to be followed in enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations.

26. The consequences of the Chernobyl accident, which had occurred a week after the adoption of the Scientific Committee's report (A/41/16), would be considered in later reports, but more thought would have to be given as of now to nuclear risks. While technological rationalization and nuclear safety measures might make the risks inherent in those activities which contributed to mankind's well-being, acceptable, it was impossible to find any usefulness in nuclear weapons which might justify the real threat that they posed to mankind's very existence. That was why Czechoslovakia unreservedly approved and supported the Soviet Union's plan for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. It was also gratified that the Soviet Union had extended to 1 January 1987 its moratorium on all nuclear explosions, and called on the other nuclear Powers to join in that moratorium, since the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests would remove the principal source of radioactive contamination of the environment.

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(Mr. Kovacic, Czechoslovakia)

27. His country also welcomed the proposal put forward by Mr. Gorbachev on 14 May for the establishment of an international system for the safe development of nuclear energy. The Scientific Committee, in co-operation with other international organizations such as WHO and IAEA, could work out rational scientific standards for radiation levels and propose measures to be taken should those levels increase. It would thus be possible to avoid the adoption of unjustified measures which did little to promote the development of international relations. In that regard, Czechoslovakia welcomed the recent adoption of a Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident, drawn up under the aegis of IAEA.

28. The Committee might consider the possibility of presenting the international community with a scientific and factual picture, however limited, of the biological and other consequences of nuclear conflict. Such an analysis would have a significant impact on the formulation of political positions.

29. His country would continue to support and take part in the Committee's work. That was why it had co-sponsored draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.3. It had also co-sponsored draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.4 because it was convinced that, by becoming a member of the Scientific Committee, the People's Republic of China, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear Power, would enhance that Committee's effectiveness.

30. Mr. MAHMUD (Pakistan) said that his country welcomed the request of the People's Republic of China to become a member of the Scientific Committee. Now, more than ever, the Chernobyl accident had underscored the need for the Committee's work to continue. International agreements on nuclear safety, and a rational and equitable system for co-operation in that field, were urgently needed. The industrialized countries must assist the developing countries in the maintenance of the reactors they exported and refrain from prohibiting the supply of vital spare parts. His country was also opposed to restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful applications, which were indispensable for developing countries which faced a shortage of conventional fuels and energy resources.

31. Pakistan supported a moratorium on all kinds of nuclear explosions as the only means of preserving the fragile global environment from the risks of further contamination.

32. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that his country had been pleased to host the session of the Scientific Committee held in April 1986 at Vienna, one of the three major headquarters locations of the United Nations. The Committee's work on the effects of atomic radiation had always provided useful scientific information and the tragic events of the current year had revived interest in and concern over that issue.

33. His delegation had co-sponsored the draft resolution on the mandate of the Scientific Committee. It was also convinced that the People's Republic of China, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear Power, could, by joining that Committee, make a valuable contribution to its work.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.