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Held at Headquarters, New York,
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Chairman:

Sir Leslie MUNRO

(New Zealand)

Effects of atomic radiation [59] (continued)

- (a) Co-ordination of information relating to the effects of atomic radiation upon human health and safety
- (b) Dissemination of information on the effects of atomic radiation and on the effects of experimental explosions of thermo-nuclear bombs.

A statement was made by:

Mr. Krishna Menon

(India)

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EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION [Agenda item 59] (continued)

- (a) CO-ORDINATION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION UPON HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY
- (b) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION AND ON THE EFFECTS OF EXPERIMENTAL EXPLOSIONS OF THERMO-NUCLEAR BOMBS

Mr. Krishna MENON (India): I had the honour to intervene in the discussion on this subject when it was first introduced on the basis of the memorandum presented by my delegation last August, and since then I have had the opportunity of addressing the Committee in submitting amendments to the joint draft resolution which is now before us. Since that time, much has been said in this Committee in connexion with many aspects of this problem.

I should like at this stage, if I may, to return to the main purpose which is before us. As some members have referred to many topics and others have referred to only some topics, I feel that it is essential that we return to the main purpose.

The main purpose of the joint draft resolution should be, as set out in the agenda item, to deal with the "Effects of atomic radiation, (a) co-ordination of information relating to the effects of atomic radiation upon human health and safety and, (b) dissemination of information on the effects of atomic radiation and on the effects of experimental explosions of thermo-nuclear bombs".

The debate has now progressed to the stage where we are actually formulating our more concrete attitudes. As the Chairman said the other day, the general debate stage and the resolution stage have more or less merged into each other. I want here to point out that to my delegation there are broadly two trends of thought which have been brought into play in this discussion. One trend is expressed mainly by many of the observations which were made by the representative of the United Kingdom and, perhaps to a lesser extent, by the representative of the United States.

The United States, in requesting the item to be placed on the agenda, informed the General Assembly, in its memorandum dated 4 August 1955 (A/2931), that:

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"Although scientific data available to the United States Government indicate that properly safeguarded nuclear testing does not constitute a threat to human health, all possible information should be made available to all nations as a basis for their own evaluation of the problems of atomic radiation."

That is to say, it is an approach to the problem which states that existing information does not warrant the belief that present tests have resulted in danger to human health. It does not state here, however, that in the future this would not be so. There is very little doubt, however, that from the statements which have been made here on this subject by the main sponsors of the joint draft resolution, their approach is that the radiation which already exists is not of a character about which we should be alarmed. We have not said anything about being alarmed. We are dealing with the effects of atomic radiation in the world. As I stated in my first intervention, it is necessary to relate this item to the two other items which have been before the Assembly, namely the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the whole problem of atomic weapons in connexion with their effects on humanity. I wish to state that I am not trying to include in the present item the question of disarmament.

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We are told that, since there is so much radiation already and since this is not a new problem, we can take it in our stride. I should not have taken the Committee's time to go into this question had it not been for the fact that so much seems to have been made of it, that we have been told, "We are living in a sea of radiation, so what are you bothering about?". I think that it is necessary to place this problem in its proper setting.

The fact that there are "X" units of radiation does not mean that anything added to those units would not be harmful. Our blood is normally at a level of below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Are we to say, then, that another 100 degrees would make no difference? This planet on which we are living revolves at the rate of eighteen and a half miles per second. Would the people who put forward this view about normality contend that it would not be disastrous if we were pushed another half mile a second? Light strikes us at the rate of 186,300 miles per second. That does not mean that we should like our eyes to be exposed to ultraviolet rays.

Hence, with great respect, I must say that this argument about normality is entirely misleading. We are born into this normality; that is a fact that we must take into account. We are nurtured in this normality; that is to say, our whole system -- physiological, psychological, and so forth -- is adjusted to a set of conditions into which we are born. The changes that take place in nature are gradual. They are probably balanced by other factors. Even so, these so-called natural changes are often the cause of disease. That is why when the temperature goes down -- a normal condition -- there is a general outbreak of colds. Of course, compared to radiation effects, that is not a very serious situation.

My delegation, therefore, wishes at the outset to dissipate any affect which this argument about normality may have had.

Another notion to which we should not pay much attention is that of averages. To use the argument of averages amounts to saying that if a normally intelligent person and a person who is not so intelligent are put together, the former at once becomes a half-wit, merely by dividing the two. Mr. Libby of the United States Atomic Energy Commission has told us that, if world conditions are taken into account, the introduction of even a very large amount of radiation

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into the sea would amount to an increase of only ten per cent. I think that the contention that this matter therefore has no great importance should be dissipated.

I think that what we must establish in this Committee is that, prima facie, the use of this new energy -- whether for war purposes, for war preparation or for peaceful ends -- is likely to have injurious effects upon mankind. I entirely subscribe to the view put forward by the representative of Canada, to the effect that merely because there is the risk of evil does not mean that we should not pursue good. But what we are saying is that if there is the risk of evil, we ought to avoid being subjected to the evil.

The draft resolution before the Committee does cover all these points -- some of them in a way with which all of us could agree, some of them in a way with which all of us could not agree. Mr. Wadsworth, the United States representative, said yesterday that there had been many conversations on these matters among the interested delegations -- that is, the delegations interested in the procedural aspects and in the concrete suggestions to be made -- and that, as a result, many alterations had been made in the original draft resolution. I wish to echo the following remark made by Mr. Wadsworth in this connexion:

"I am happy to say that some of these changes, in fact most of them, improve our draft considerably." (A/C.1/PV.778, page 21)

This does proclaim the principle that amendments which are submitted to original suggestions are constructive. What is more, the result has also been of a constructive character.

There has been some suggestion that in our amendments we have introduced new material. That is not the case. I shall first deal with the draft resolution and then shall revert to any general aspects on which I may wish to touch.

There is no disagreement as regards the preamble to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.138. Our troubles arise in connexion with the operative part, and particularly in connexion with the constitution and character of the committee, the sources from which the information in question is to be sought, the place of the Secretary-General, the convening of the committee, and so forth.

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Some of these amendments are, as the United States representative has pointed out, of a verbal character; they may perhaps be caused by typographical errors. Perhaps, therefore, we should discuss some of these minor changes which are suggested before going on to the more important amendments.

We have suggested that the words "scientific committee" in paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft resolution should be replaced by the words "special technical committee". I would say quite frankly that, if anyone feels very strongly about this, I should have no objection to calling the committee a scientific committee. I do not, however, think that I am entitled to take the view now, on the basis of the discussion so far, that this scientific committee is to be an academic body concerned with the promotion of pure knowledge for its own sake. The functions of that committee are related to this item on our agenda and must be conceived in the context of this debate. But, as I have said, if this amendment is considered to be unsuitable, we are prepared to accept the present wording of the draft resolution in this respect.

In the last part of paragraph 1, however, it is proposed that the governments named in the paragraph should "each ... designate one scientist to represent them on this committee". I cannot help thinking that this is an error of some kind. For, as was pointed out by the representative of Canada, it would be quite impossible for one scientist from any country to deal with these matters; that scientist would have to bring a team with him. Furthermore, the possibility should be left open to the committee, in our opinion, to call in for the purpose of giving evidence or sitting with the committee specialists of countries not represented in the committee. Assuming, therefore, that the delegation to this committee from any given country must be composed of more than one scientist, I ask the following question: If the phrase from paragraph 1 of the draft resolution which I have just quoted is not amended, if the word "scientist" is not changed to the plural, as we suggest, will that not conflict with our normal internal procedures? That is to say, as the paragraph is now worded, we should be asking governments to nominate one scientist, who would then nominate his colleagues. That is not a suitable procedure, in our view. A government must be represented by its own nominees.

I am therefore afraid that we must ask the sponsors of the draft resolution to take what I have just said, as well as their own statements, into consideration, and to bring this part of paragraph 1 into conformity with the actual aim.

It has become the practice -- it may be a good practice, or it may be a bad one -- to have a large number of words in resolutions, a large number of sponsors, and a large number of interpretations. That practice has its value. We may take what we choose. But we shall not be sitting on this proposed committee, and the people who will be are not here. Hence, to the extent that it is possible to do so, it is necessary to bring the language of the draft resolution into conformity with what is actually meant. I am prepared -- in fact, I am glad -- to agree that the interpretations made of various clauses of this draft resolution by the different sponsors have assisted us in making the clauses broader and in bridging the differences that may exist either among the sponsors themselves or between the sponsors and those delegations which desire the draft resolution to be amended. I do hope, therefore, that it will be possible for the sponsors to change these words in paragraph 1 to which I am now referring and to make them say exactly what is meant -- that is, that the governments named should send scientists. A government may then send one scientist; it may send more. In any case, we think that the word should be in the plural: "scientists", so that there will be no difficulty in this respect.

I am not quarreling here about mere verbal aspects of the matter. It would, however, create difficulties for governments if they were called upon -- as they would be if the wording of paragraph 1 were left as it now stands -- to delegate to someone else the function of appointing their representatives. This is not the case as regards the United Nations. I have a delegation with me, but I do not appoint my alternates or my advisers; they are appointed by my Government, and any alteration would have to be made by my Government. That is part of our constitutional procedure.

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Then we come to the next amendment, which is probably the most important. The draft resolution, as it is set out, prescribes the functions of the committee, and on that we have made two suggestions. One is that, in addition to what is included in (1) and (2) of operative paragraph 2(a) of the draft resolution, it should say "other relevant matters". So far as I am concerned I should have thought that it was a quite harmless and useful addition because, after all, when a committee of this character is appointed -- a committee which, by its very nature, would have to be largely autonomous, would have to feel its way and would have to be governed by the knowledge that came to it and by the conditions that developed in the world in this field -- some latitude is allowed, just as on the agenda we include "any other business". On the other hand, however, if the sponsors of this draft resolution feel that the explanations that have emerged in the course of this debate are adequate and that the level of this committee is sufficient for the momentum of the scientific knowledge to enable its activities to be spread in the relevant spheres, then I am prepared, for the sake of concord, not to press that particular aspect. But I would like to say that the addition of these words would improve the draft resolution and give the scientific body the latitude that is required.

I am entirely unable to accept paragraph 2(a) of the draft resolution as it stands. I shall explain my position, and I hope that the Committee will follow this argument on its merits and also consider it from the point of view of what the United Nations will look like if it passes this draft resolution as it stands and, at the same time, calls upon the committee to perform the task assigned to it. The representative of the United States told us that this subject had a certain political aspect. He said, "That it is why it is being considered in this Committee", and did not attach much importance to it. Then he went on to say that these political considerations should not come into the decision on this draft resolution. It is, according to him, political only "because the question of the effects of atomic radiation on man and his environment is of concern to all our governments and all our peoples". (A/C.1/PV.778, page 13) Presumably, "our peoples" means the peoples of the earth, and not merely the peoples of the Member States of the United Nations. Mr. Wadsworth continued:

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"We are dealing with the subject in response to that just concern, but we do not believe that other political issues which are extraneous to the subject should be allowed to intrude." (Ibid.)

I could not say more. I entirely agree with this statement, and that is why my delegation has requested the deletion of the words "furnished by States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies". Let me make our position very clear. We are not asking, in this particular paragraph, for the constitution of a committee on any basis that contravenes the decisions we may have taken this year. The function of this committee, as defined in the first two lines of operative paragraph 2(a) of the draft resolution, is "To receive and assemble in an appropriate and useful form radiological information ...". Now is it suggested that the framework of admission to the United Nations or the relations that this body will have should isolate radiological data that exists in the world? Is it possible for us to obtain this information on a world-wide basis unless the words in question are dropped? And I am not saying that any other words should be substituted which have another definite, positive meaning. What have we said? We have said, "To receive and assemble in an appropriate and useful form the following radiological information furnished to it", thereby leaving it to the committee to obtain the information.

The draft resolution as it stands would prevent the committee from looking at any relevant information unless it came from Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies. This is an unnecessary political argument introduced into this draft resolution, and if my delegation has been put in the position of having to raise it I would say, with great respect, that the onus lies on those who drafted this cause. We are asking for the removal of a political disability -- not for the introduction of one. We are asking this Committee to realize that when a body of scientists is asked to pronounce on the effects of radiation that body of scientists must take into account the data available all over the world. That would be so whether they were dealing with epidemics, diseases or meteorological conditions. Otherwise, it is tantamount to saying that we should issue weather forecasts to the world or study meteorological science while excluding considerable parts of the globe.

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I hope that, in the light of this explanation that no political implications are involved in this matter, it will be conceded that this amendment does make the draft resolution what it should be. What is more, it does not force a political exclusion upon those who could not agree to it. It is for that reason that we ask that the changes in question should be made in this paragraph, together with the consequential changes in the others, which simply leave the matter in general terms without specification.

I am very glad to say that I am not alone in this. I have very distinguished authority on my side -- the distinguished authority of one of the sponsors of the draft resolution who supports me here. I refer to my colleague, Mr. Wadsworth, of the United States. What does Mr. Wadsworth say? He said, on 31 October, "We believe a radiation fact-collecting system should be established on a world-wide basis". It is possible for us to pass resolutions excluding or including countries, but we cannot, by resolution, dissipate part of the world. And that is what Mr. Wadsworth says -- "We believe a radiation fact-collecting system should be established on a world-wide basis". (A/C.1/PV.773, page 4-5) In other words, we have said "all countries". I am prepared to say "on a world-wide basis", for it is not my purpose to achieve some other objective through this draft resolution. All we are trying to do is to make this correspond to the facts that are warranted by our intentions and by the purpose of this draft resolution.

Mr. Wadsworth goes on to say:

"We must interpret these data in relation to the possible longer-range biological effects of radiation."

And then:

"Since this information has never been collected and disseminated on a world-wide and systematic basis, we believe that a procedure should be established whereby the United Nations will be furnished with information ...". (Ibid., page 6)

Thus what we are asking for is not the positive statement of any political dictum of any kind. We are asking that this draft resolution should not be cast in such a form as to make others have to subscribe to exclusions, or, in our view, to make the purposes of this draft resolution as well as those of the committee that is to be set up limited and inconsistent one with the other.

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It is for these reasons that we ask this wording be adopted and that the draft resolution should simply say, "radiological information submitted to the Committee".

We are happy to learn that some of the other suggestions have been accepted by the sponsors of the draft resolution -- particularly the suggestions relating to operative paragraph 2(e) which deals with the making of yearly reports. We think that it is important that these report should be made because they are progress reports. In the case of progress reports "appropriate" is not appropriate, and therefore we propose that it should be deleted, and I thank the sponsors of the draft resolution for the suggestion made yesterday that this alteration should be made.

I come now to the problem with regard to the Secretary-General, and here again the Committee will be aware that in approaching this problem our minds were inspired by the desire to find something that would make the committee a businesslike organization which would function year after year and be closely related to the United Nations. This desire seems to have been shared by so many. The representative of Norway said:

"We feel that the role should be an important one. This is a complex matter with very many ramifications".

And he continued:

"Sir Pierson Dixon said yesterday that he felt sure that the scientific committee would benefit greatly from the unique experience of the Secretary-General. We think that the draft resolution in its present form will permit the Secretary-General to play an active role". (A/C.1/FV.776, page 11)

That interpretation of the draft resolution was followed by its other sponsors, and it is that very largely we must be guided by what the Secretary-General himself has to say. In view of this I refer the Committee to document A/INF/67, from which I propose to read the relevant paragraphs that affect our mind in this matter. In that document the Secretary-General says, in paragraph 10:

"If the Secretary-General is requested, by a decision of the General Assembly, to assist the committee in its operations, his statutory right under this rule is developed into an obligation, making the Secretary-General serve as a link in both directions."

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Now that is what we wanted. The paragraph continues:

"Such an arrangement -- in combination with the one already decided upon by the ACC -- would seem to give the co-operation of the committee with the United Nations organizations a sufficiently firm legal and constitutional framework".

And when I say that we think that the interpretations make the present draft resolution satisfactory in this respect, I understand it to mean that the sponsors of the draft resolution accept this view that it provides a sufficiently firm legal and constitutional framework.

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Then he goes on to say:

"It follows from what has been said that a request to the Secretary-General to assist the committee as interpreted here, and an invitation to the specialized agencies to co-operate with the committee, would provide a sufficient basis for the organizational arrangements necessary in order to give the new committee the strength that a full utilization of the United Nations machinery can provide."

I do not for a moment say that the Secretary-General either presumes, nor would we accept the position that one of the organs of the United Nations, namely, the Secretary-General, could make a decisive statement on this matter, but my delegation asks for his views. And, in the light of the discussions that have taken place and the interpretation in this document A/INF/67, we are satisfied that the wording contained in the draft resolution is adequate for the purpose.

Once again, I hope that this will enable the Committee to feel that my delegation is not interested in pressing amendments if the substance and the purposes can be achieved in other ways. Therefore, we would not, when the time comes, press for a vote on the amendment which says: "in co-operation with the Secretary-General" because we are now assured that that is what is intended, and whether that was not the original intention, or is not now, these words and these sentences have acquired that connotation.

Now I refer to paragraph 5 which speaks about the Secretary-General inviting the Japanese Government to nominate a scientific representative. We have requested that this should be altered to "ask the Secretary-General to convene this committee". That has already been said by Mr. Wadsworth himself -- that the Secretary-General would convene the committee, or the Secretariat would convene the committee, or something to that effect, so it is the idea that someone has to convene the committee. It could not be convened by any one of its members; it has to be convened by someone with a general authority or a general relationship with everybody concerned.

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The specific reference to Japan can only mean one of two things: Japan is either on a higher level or a lower one. To either of these we are able to agree and, therefore, I hope that it will be possible either to drop the whole of that clause referring to the Secretary-General inviting the Japanese Government, or to say: "Request the Secretary-General to convene this committee", because, if he is to convene the committee, he will be sending an invitation to the Japanese Government in the same way as he will be sending one to others, and we should not like that invidious distinction to be made in that way.

I am happy to say that Mr. Wadsworth has found it possible to agree that the normal procedure which he took for granted -- it is my fault that I did not take it for granted -- for transmitting the proceedings of the General Assembly could be incorporated in the draft resolution. Here, again, there is no new matter; it simply has made explicit what is implicit or is in the minds of the other sponsors of the draft resolution.

Having dealt with these paragraphs as such, I come to more substantial items in them. I refer, first of all, to the amendment with regard to the constitution of the committee. And here there are two or three observations which I wish to make, both for conveying our views to the sponsors and also for placing them on record.

We have suggested certain additions -- Egypt, Mexico and "--" -- meaning thereby that we do not say that even the addition of Egypt and Mexico makes the committee sufficiently large or that anybody should be excluded. I think that there are scientists in Belgium, Denmark, in other countries, in Asia and other places, who may be valuable for this purpose, so we are not prepared to exclude anybody, but have made the specific suggestion of adding Egypt and Mexico because it was said yesterday that it was to be on a geographical basis. If my geography is not wrong, the constitution seems rather lopsided, from a geographical point of view. But I do not for a moment say that that is the only criterion to be taken into account. We must warn ourselves against creating a kind of scientific or atomic oligarchy.

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It was also the view taken by my Government, when it proceeded to make some enquiries and suggestions on this matter, that this committee should be of a scientific, objective character. I am not at all sure that if we were writing on a blank sheet and approaching the problem with complete objectivity, scientists of countries which were not atomically committed, which were not manufacturers of hydrogen bombs, would not be the best people to make these enquiries because they have no opinions on the matter which would preclude enquiry with less limitations than otherwise would be the case. But we have now gone too far in this direction, and we think that this committee should be capable of making enquiries. It is not the atomic prowess, it is the capacity for receiving information to assist them which is all that matters, and we do not believe that that is confined exclusively to the countries which either have the material at present or are engaged in atomic industry or war purpose work as such. Therefore, if we had been left to ourselves, we would have sought to suggest that the committee should be one which would produce, like a tribunal or an objective committee, all data that is available. This is not to suggest -- and I want to be perfectly clear about this -- that the scientists of the United States or of the Soviet Union, which are the two great atomic Powers, would not be objective in the material which they give. All I am saying is that the atomic prowess, so called, does not by itself entitle a country to be on the committee. Most specifically we have moved the inclusion of Egypt and Mexico, and my delegation would support any other addition within reason that might be made to the committee.

The United Kingdom representative yesterday made a number of observations relating to the long-term effects of radiation, and we mean by the item that we have put down all effects that are produced by the development of atomic energy, including those from the explosions of atomic or hydrogen bombs. I have already referred to the fact that it is not, to our mind, a relevant argument to refer what is called the normal level of radiation, and to suggest that a little more would not do any harm. It is probably that little more that may do harm. At any rate, it is about that little more -- if it is a little more -- that we have to think.

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Secondly, I think that there is a suggestion in all these observations that the harmful effects of radiation remain to be proved. On the one hand, there are fifty years of experience in the world of radiation of this kind and of its harmful effects. Secondly, there is no one who can say, after the experience of the Japanese fisherman and the explosions in Bikini -- and when we come to know the results of the explosions conducted by the Soviet Union -- all the radiation effects in this matter. We can only deal with published information; and here it is. We have the experience of Hiroshima, also the experience of the atomic explosions in the Pacific. And in order that there may be a predilection to regard these authorities with sympathy, may I say that what I am reading comes from a former Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office of the United Kingdom. When we speak about the effects we are not only dealing with the effects that are caused by one kind of rays, by the gamma rays alone, but by all the effects that are caused by atomic explosions or by other atomic development.

This gentleman, in his book Atomic Energy for the Layman, said the following on pages 115 and 116:

"The other special effects of atomic bombing are attributable to the radiations of higher frequency than the light and the heat, especially the gamma rays which are discharged, and the induced radioactivity.

"The gamma ray effects are similar to those produced by over-exposure to hard X-rays, but more severe. Those who have received heavy 'doses' of gamma rays soon show symptoms of severe shock. This, for instance, is Mr. Hersey's description of the scene after the streams of people fleeing from Hiroshima had lessened, most of them wounded and many with hideous burns: 'Now not many people walked the streets, but a great number sat and lay on the pavement, vomited, waited for death, and died.'"

I say that that statement probably rules out the idea that we have to establish something about these results. The author then goes on to say:

"The effects, however, do not necessarily show themselves at once, but sooner or later" -- now that statement goes to point out that we are not dealing merely with the effects of burns -- "those who have had any considerable exposure to the rays begin to suffer from vomiting and weakness, often followed by internal haemorrhage, and at Hiroshima and Nagasaki many died a week or ten days afterwards."

I think that it is an appropriate moment to say that at the Conference at Bandung the Japanese representative publicly and categorically stated that his Government had evidence, and was convinced, that atomic radiation had conclusive genetic effects. The quotation goes on to say:

"In many cases the principal symptoms are those associated with loss of blood, and seem to be caused by the destruction of the cells whose function is to produce the ~~blood~~ corpuscles, so **that** the supply of corpuscles is not kept renewed as it is in a healthy body."

No layman can say that this is nothing but a kind of wasting disease. The quotation then continues:

"The victims become anaemic and, where the white corpuscles are affected, suffer loss of resistance to infections, which then can spread unchecked through the victims' systems, often starting from the mouth and accompanied by gangrene of the lips. At Hiroshima and Nagasaki many victims

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died in periods of six or eight weeks from the combined effects of gross infections, anaemia and internal haemorrhage. Another effect of the gamma rays was upon pregnant women, for all those within in a mile or so of the explosion who were exposed to the rays, and many beyond that distance, suffered miscarriages or gave birth to children who soon died.

"The gamma rays penetrate walls and roofs."

This means that even people who are far away from them would be affected by them.

We also have the description of the sinking of big ships -- I think they were cruisers in this case -- which were nearly half a mile away from the place of an explosion. We also have the description of seacraft of that size simply being vapourized. So that to speak about these things now as though they were merely problematical, an academic investigation, is just not realistic.

I now come to the question of the level of radiation. The whole of the argument that has been put forward against playing down, if I may say so from our point of view, the whole of this enquiry, to say that the existing level of radiation, which has been increased by whatever has been done in the last few years, is small.

I am prepared to accept that, certainly for the purpose of argument. But if that is so, there is all the more reason to say that at present it is small, but even that word "small" represents an increase, and therefore a progressive rate of increase is likely to cause other results. We have no guarantee, in the context of the draft resolution, that there will be no further increase in the present levels. That is why my delegation has included in this item the question of the effects of the experimental tests with these bombs.

We have not specifically introduced into the draft resolution a request for suspension of the experiments with regard to the hydrogen bombs, or of atomic bombs. That is not in any way a change in the attitude of my Government. We have for a long time asked and suggested and pleaded for some suspension of this preparation for warfare, in view of the long-term consequences.

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We have not introduced this into the resolution because it would have to come in anyway at a further stage. But if the matter is brought up before the Committee, it entirely conforms to the views of our Government. Therefore, if there is a draft resolution before the Committee which asks for the suspension of these explosions, then our duty and our position in regard to that would be to support any movement in that direction.

There is some suggestion also, in the statements that have been made, that the references we have made to genetic effects are of an alarmist character. There is certainly no specific statement of that character, but it is said: how can the public be expected to discriminate between the pronouncements of one geneticist and another, and indeed between a geneticist and a mathematician? This is what Sir Pierson Dixon asked us. May I say, with great respect, that in this particular matter where investigation, in so far as a realistic and practical investigation by samples is concerned, the place of the mathematician is far higher than it has been in any other of the sciences. Now does anyone here say that either the splitting of the atom or the harnessing of it for other purposes would have been possible but for the contribution made by mathematicians?

The other day we heard about the discovery of the anti-proton. The mathematicians have said that this must be somewhere. I know that the work which Professor Bhabha has done in this field of science has largely been based upon mathematical enquiry and that pure science has made a greater contribution to what afterwards has been utilized by others in this way.

Now in the field of genetics it is even more so because, as it was rightly said, if we are to get data from human beings or even from mammals, it will take a very considerable time, especially in view of the permutations and combinations that are involved. Therefore, we should not dismiss lightly the data and the observations offered by men of pure science, and some of them men who have great experience in this field, such as Professor Haldane.

At any rate, in so far as our purposes are concerned, there is sufficient evidence; there is a sufficient and concrete statement made by a responsible authority about these genetic effects. We have from an American source, Mr. Russell of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the following statement:

"The first generation effects, even from irradiated spermatogonia, appear to be important enough to warrant further investigation."

And that is what the resolution proposes to do. The statement continues:

"Adequate protection against the general hazards of peaceful uses of atomic energy may require a limitation not of the average dose of radiation received by the population as a whole, but also of the dose accumulated by individuals. The magnitude of the first generation effects already observed, with the doses used in these preliminary experiments with mice, indicates that it is quite possible that, if the present permissible weekly dose is to be kept, a total accumulated dose limit may have to be established to protect the individual from incurring too great a risk of damage to his own offspring."

That statement is quite adequate for laymen to know that the field we are approaching is one full of hazards. That does not mean that we should not take the risks, provided they are calculated risks. But here is a high scientific authority, from sources that are related to the powerful Governments of the world, which must be accepted as a responsible authority and which says that "a total accumulated dose limit may have to be established to protect the individual from incurring too great a risk".

Sir Pierson Dixon has today referred to the Medical Research Council, and he told us, quite rightly, -- and we were glad to hear that what a high place it has in the country and the scientists who are associated with it. Mr. Carter, of the Medical Research Council, who is at Harwell, has this to say:

"The awakening of the public conscience in this matter is due mainly to the writings of geneticists, notably H.J. Muller and A.H. Sturtevant. They pointed out that there is no threshold for the induction of genetic effects by ionizing radiations and that any exposure, however slight, implies the induction of some mutations; that when a population is in genetic equilibrium every new mutation must be balanced, on the average, by the loss of mutant gene through selection; and that this loss ('genetic death' to use Muller's term) often means suffering for the individual or his family."

"It was a natural consequence that there should be a demand for some quantitative assessment of the probable magnitude of the genetic dangers of ionizing radiations. But the geneticist found himself faced with such enormous gaps in our knowledge of the genetics of human populations, and of the results of exposing them to radiations that even a rough quantitative assessment was impossible."

Then he goes on to say:

"No scientist interested in exact quantitative results would touch the subject, were it not that its social significance leaves us no alternative."

That is to say that even a scientist who is pursuing exactitude of knowledge feels that the social consequences of this matter are such that a new approach has to be made. In summing up this article, this professor says:

"In my opinion, we cannot today make any useful quantitative assessment of the genetic consequences of exposure of human populations to ionizing radiations at low dosage rates; we know far too little about human population structure and the induction of mutations in man. But we know enough to be apprehensive about the genetic dangers."

That is exactly what we think is the context in which our decision and our debates take place. The article goes on to say that therefore we need a research programme with international co-operation.

It is not necessary at this stage of the debate to add to the general observations on this subject. I want to say, therefore, that in requesting this Committee to accept the resolution that is before it, as we will have to do now or later, with the alterations we have made, we are only trying to make it correspond more with the purposes that I hope the whole of the Committee, and certainly our delegation, has in mind. I should only to repeat that we do not seek to set limits in the way provided in the draft resolution. We moved the inclusion of Egypt and Mexico and we have left the composition of it sufficiently open for any other countries to be joined in if they are proposed. My own delegation will support any such additions.

(Mr. Krishna Menon, India)

We also made the observation that we are against the creation of some kind of atomic oligarchy where it is presumed that X, Y and Z countries are by definition suitable for this purpose. Here we want a very objective, very impartial and, if I may say so, fearless inquiry. That inquiry, whatever its results, would not be accepted by anybody as the last word because there will be criticisms on either side since this will be published in the scientific world.

I have already stated our position in regard to the non-exclusion of any areas of the world from this inquiry. I want to repeat once again that we are only seeking to remove from the draft resolution an exclusion for the collection of data and for the dissemination of data to a certain part of humanity. That is a very different position from any other political objectives which may be pursued.

I hope that this Committee realizes that we are employed in a task of a character entirely different from the admission of new members or various other political controversies which we have had. We are engaged in a task of warning humanity, of preparing it against the evil effects of atomic energy and of saving future generations from the harmful effects of radiation and the consequences of atomic work in war or peace. Therefore, it is not right, reasonable, and logical and it is not fitting and inconsistent with our purposes to exclude anyone by definition. In order to meet the various political contexts that exist in the world, my delegation has not gone to the extent of positively stating any inclusions but has merely omitted the exclusions.

With these words, I should like to express the hope which has been expressed not only by my delegation but by various other delegations that these few alterations we have suggested, some of which we have withdrawn or agreed to withdraw, will be accepted by those who have presented the draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now proceed to discuss the draft resolution and amendments. I would respectfully suggest that in fact we have already discussed them in some detail and that members of the Committee, when they are debating that draft resolution, should be good enough to remember that they

(The Chairman)

have already traversed some of the ground. We have before us the main draft resolution, if I may refer to it as such, moved by Australia and others, which is contained in document A/C.1/L.138; the amendments moved by India, which are contained in document A/C.1/L.139/Rev.1; the amendments moved by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which are contained in document A/C.1/L.140 and Corr.1; and the amendment moved by Indonesia and Syria, which is contained in document A/C.1/L.141/Rev.1.

Finally, I have a document to which the representative of India has actually adverted and which is moved by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. This document is being reproduced and will be distributed shortly. I think it would assist the Committee if I read it out. It is as follows:

"Substitute operative paragraph 1 by the following:

"Establishes a scientific committee consisting of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and requests these Governments each to designate one scientist to represent them on this committee."

Sir Pierson DIXON (United Kingdom): I shall address myself, as I understand I shall be in order in doing, to the draft resolution, A/C.1/L.138. I also propose in the course of my remarks to speak about the amendments moved by India and the USSR and the amendment moved by Indonesia and Syria. I have also taken mental note of the amendment moved by Argentina and others, which the Chairman has just read out. My remarks will be primarily directed to these written amendments, though of course I have just listened, as we all have, to the remarks made by the representative of India, my colleague and friend, Mr. Menon.

I should like to say that this has been for me a most enlightening, and indeed an encouraging, debate. At the close of the debate on our first item, I remarked that we were in an atomic mood and should therefore continue with our next atomic subject. We have, I think, now demonstrated that the mood has continued, with results which are proving beneficial to our deliberations. We have approached our second atomic item with that sense of realism and responsibility which befits so complex and challenging a problem as this problem of the effects of radiation on man and his environment. This is an entirely new venture in international co-operation, and it is right that we should look to the United Nations to launch the enterprise.

I listened with pleasure to the remarks this morning of the representative of Sweden. The Swedish Government have been a prime mover in the promotion of the idea that this problem of the effects of ionizing radiation should be tackled on an international basis. They have made an invaluable contribution to the results we are attaining here. I am glad that the discussions and explanations to which my delegation has been happy to contribute have helped to clarify the position and to lead us along the road towards the unanimity of view which we hope to achieve on this subject.

We were bound to hesitate a little before attempting to define in words the scope of the vast enquiry which we are about to set on foot. We all, I think, wished its scope to embrace as wide a field as possible consistent with the realistic prospects of achieving practical results in a reasonable time. A great deal of work has gone into this question of defining our subject -- and here I would like to pay tribute to the valuable contributions from the delegation of India. As a result of numerous discussions, with them in particular, we have now arrived, I believe, at a better definition of the scope of our enquiry than we had when we set out.

(Sir Pierson Dixon, United
Kingdom)

The phrase "man and his environment", which now figures both in the title and in the preamble of the draft resolution, is, I submit, a description which is both accurate and elegant of the field of the inquiry, embracing, as it does, not only the direct effects of radiation on man himself but also the effects on agriculture and ecology which also affect man indirectly. I would hope that this description of the Committee's task is broad enough and serious enough to reassure all that our intention is that the Committee will treat this inquiry with all the gravity that it deserves.

We have also, at the suggestion of our Indian colleagues, expanded the phraseology in our second preambular paragraph so that it is now not confined to the effects of radiation levels and radioactive "fall-out" but also takes in any other aspects of the effect of ionizing radiation in its widest sense.

Clearly, however, some limit must be set to the scope of this inquiry if we hope to see results emerge within a reasonable time and if we are to avoid draining the scientific talent of the world. We should not for instance, confuse the issue by introducing here other problems, important enough in their own context, but not relevant to the scientific inquiry with which we are concerned. Questions relating to the military aspects of atomic energy and to the use of nuclear weapons, for example, are here out of place, since they must be dealt with in the disarmament context, and my delegation will vote against those amendments which treat of such matters. I refer, of course, to the Soviet and to the Indonesian-Syrian amendments.

Nor do I think it would be wise to ask the proposed scientific committee to deal with "other relevant matters" as suggested in one of the amendments of the delegation of India. We have already given the Committee a very wide mandate; sufficient to enable them to deal with all relevant aspects of the problem. Indeed the mind boggles at the task which they are being asked to undertake. It will be hard enough for them, as it is to definite the limits of their subject matter.

At the same time we must be careful not to **particularize** or highlight any one aspect of the problem in giving the committee their terms of reference. Nor should we set them tasks which are already being dealt with internationally. For instance, the fourth Soviet amendment seeks to include among the committee's functions a specific reference to "the problems of protection from the effects of atomic radiation and of remedies and methods in the treatment of illnesses". But the World Health Organization and the International Labour Office are rightly concerning themselves with these very matters.

By way of illustration I might mention that the WHO, at the request of the Swedish Government, is about to initiate a five-week course on radiological protection and has invited United States and United Kingdom specialists to contribute to this enterprise. My Government is actively supporting the important work of the ILO in disseminating information relating to the protection of workers against the effects of ionizing radiation in atomic plants and in factories using radioactive isotopes.

It would indeed only cause confusion if we were to duplicate the work of these specialized agencies by giving the scientific committee the further specific function suggested in the Soviet fourth amendment. My delegation will therefore vote against it.

I confess I was surprised to note that the representative of the Soviet Union, in his speech on 1 November, attempted to distinguish two sources of atomic radiation in their effects on human beings. This distinction seems to us to be unjustified. It is just as important that we should be concerned about the extent of genetic mutations arising from peaceful developments as those arising from the effects of radioactive "fall-out". We must give just as much weight to the extent of genetic mutations arising from peaceful development, such as the expansion of atomic power, the increased use of radio-isotopes in industry and the use of x-rays for therapeutic and diagnostic purposes. The subject is a single one -- the effect of ionizing radiation on man and his environment. For this reason my delegation will vote against the first of the Soviet amendments.

(Sir Pierson Dixon, United Kingdom)

I now turn to the suggestion in the draft resolution before us regarding the establishment of a scientific committee. I think there is virtue in giving this committee the appellation "scientific". We all wish to see a committee composed of eminent scientists. We had originally thought of the phrase "Ad Hoc Technical Committee" but, at the suggestion of the Indian and other delegations, we dropped the words "Ad Hoc" which, as we recognized, might have carried the implication that the Committee would not be a continuing body. It also seemed to us, on reflection, that the word "Technical" was an inappropriate adjective to use. If we are to get the best scientists to serve on the committee they will want to be assured that the work of the committee will be essentially scientific. For these reasons, I do not think that the amendment suggested by the delegation of India would be appropriate.

We are, I believe, now generally agreed that to be effective, the committee must consist of representatives of the highest scientific calibre from the various countries concerned. At the same time it would be wrong to oblige such eminent scientific representatives to attend systematically each and every meeting of the Committee. They will all have important work to do at home; some may even be engaged in the research work necessary to provide the very material which the committee will require.

I was therefore much attracted by a suggestion made the other day by the representative of Canada Mr. Martin that the eleven scientific representatives might call on alternates and consultants where necessary. The representative of the United States, I noted, agreed with this idea. Provided that the alternates and consultants are themselves scientific experts, I believe that this suggestion would enable the committee to function most effectively.

It is, however, important to keep the committee itself as compact as possible. The effect of the amendment of the delegation of India to substitute "scientists" (in the plural) for "one scientist" in the first operative paragraph of draft resolution might well be to make the committee unwieldy.

I understand that there is some difficulty which Mr. Menon had explained to us for him in this matter, arising out of the constitutional arrangements in India, but it does seem to me that the consideration I have just mentioned should in the general interests be overriding, and I would hope that Mr. Martin's suggestion would point a way out for any countries for whom there may be a difficulty in this respect.

(Sir Pierson Dixon, United Kingdom)

I now turn to the composition of the committee. Naturally, it would be desirable for the committee to be based on as wide a geographical representation as possible, but the first consideration must be to create a compact body of eminent men who can tackle the formidable programme of scientific work which we are setting them. The essential thing is to create a team of leading scientists who will command the respect of scientists throughout the world. We are suggesting a team of eleven which, together with their alternates and advisers, would, I believe, be the optimum for efficient operations.

The representative of Argentina drew our attention to the fact that the committee as proposed would not contain a representative familiar with the Spanish language. I can well understand his concern, but I do not think that the solution to the linguistic problem should be met by way of additions to the membership of the committee itself. I was much struck by the remark made in a speech by the representative of Denmark. She, having in mind no doubt the intimate relations existing between the Scandinavian countries, hinted at the possibility of the Swedish member of the committee calling upon scientists of other Scandinavian countries to assist him in the capacity of consultants. I would commend this idea as a possible solution to the problem raised by the representative of Argentina.

There are specific suggestions in the form of amendments by the Indian and Soviet representatives, and now by the representative of Argentina joined by others, for expanding the membership of the committee. I have already explained why I think it would be a mistake to do this. The first consideration, as I have said, must surely be that the committee should be composed of scientists who are the most experienced in knowledge in this field. Geographical considerations, which in any case are adequately reflected in the proposed composition, should not, I feel, be dominating in this very exceptional case. This is, of course, no reflection on any Member State whose addition to the committee has been suggested.

The Soviet amendment to paragraph 1 of the draft resolution would also undoubtedly raise highly controversial questions which are, to my mind, out of place here and out of keeping with decisions already taken at this session by the General Assembly.

(Sir Pierson Dixon, United Kingdom)

As to functions, the draft resolution before us describes in outline the functions which the scientific committee would perform. I found myself in full agreement with the representative of Denmark when she said yesterday that we cannot define today precisely the work which this committee may be called upon to perform. It must therefore be kept sufficiently flexible to enable it to tackle any new tasks which may well be thrown up as a result of its own work and, in particular, of any new research projects which may be found to require further study.

It has been suggested in one of the amendments by the Indian delegation that the committee should make a collective evaluation of the reports it will receive. Experience, however, has already shown the extraordinary difficulty of getting a consensus of opinion even among the geneticists of a single country, let alone the brotherhood of geneticists the world over. Mr. Menon himself this afternoon drew attention to this point. It will, I fear, be many years before any comprehensive evaluation can be made. That is why we felt that it would be wrong to ask the committee to do more than evaluate, simply for its own purposes, the usefulness of each report received. And it is for this reason that we shall be obliged to vote against the Indian amendment on this point. We must first elicit the facts and the facts will speak for themselves. This will be a committee of scientists who can surely be relied upon to carry their evaluations as far as is scientifically justifiable.

There are also before us a number of amendments designed to enable the committee to receive data from and disseminate documents to the world at large, whether an individual or a State, whether or not a member of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies.

While, of course, we would all wish to see this great inquiry range over as wide an area as possible it is, in the first place, a United Nations enquiry. The scientific committee will be a United Nations body, and we are making provision for it to operate in close concert with the whole family of the United Nations, including the specialized agencies.

(Sir Pierson Dixon,
United Kingdom)

Indeed, one of the Soviet amendments seeks to stress this fact by inserting in operative paragraph 1 of the joint draft resolution, the words "of the United Nations" to describe how the committee will be established.

I do not think that this amendment adds in any way to the draft, but I do think that if, as is clearly the case, the committee is to operate within the United Nations orbit, then we must respect the United Nations decisions regarding the representation of its Member States and the States members of the specialized agencies. For these reasons, the United Kingdom delegation cannot accept the amendments relating to this point.

Finally, there is the question of the role of the Secretariat. In response to a helpful suggestion from the representative of India, the Secretary-General has circulated a useful paper giving his views about the work of the committee and the organization of its operations. I feel sure that members of this Committee, and indeed the future members of the scientific committee itself, will benefit greatly from these clarifications which have been given by the Secretary-General.

I was interested to hear Mr. Hammarskjöld say in his statement yesterday that the views expressed in his working paper were not proposals in any way out of keeping with the provision of our joint draft resolution, paragraph 3 of which requests the Secretary-General to provide appropriate assistance to the scientific committee in organizing and carrying on its work.

Undoubtedly, the Secretary-General will play an important role in the ways suggested in his paper, in particular, as the co-ordinating link between the scientific committee and the specialized agencies concerned.

The recent establishment of an Atomic Sub-Committee of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, of which, of course, the Secretary-General is Chairman, will undoubtedly help to ensure smooth co-operation in this field.

As I said in my previous intervention, we can assume that one of the Secretary-General's many tasks will be, under paragraph 3 of our draft resolution, to convene meetings of the scientific committee. It does not therefore seem necessary to spell this out in our draft, as proposed in an Indian amendment.

(Sir Pierson Dixon,
United Kingdom)

I should perhaps add that it seemed to us proper that there should be a paragraph in our draft resolution requesting the Secretary-General to invite the Japanese Government to nominate a scientific representative to the committee, seeing that Japan, unlike the other members of the proposed committee, is not a member of the United Nations.

In view of these explanations, I hope that my friend and colleague, the representative of India, will not insist on pressing his amendments to the vote.

The representative of the United States has already indicated his willingness to accept the Indian amendments to delete the words "if appropriate" from subparagraph (e) of operative paragraph 2 of the joint draft resolution, and to add as a concluding paragraph wording similar to that suggested in the final amendment of the delegation of India. My delegation would support both these amendments. However, for the reasons which I have given, we do not consider that the other suggested amendments would contribute to the efficient functioning of the committee.

This is, as I have said, a new venture for the United Nations. Here is a field for international co-operation where the United Nations can demonstrate the unique character of the services that it can render to mankind.

Mr. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the group of Latin American countries composed of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, we have submitted for the consideration of the Committee an amendment (A/C.1/L.142) to the joint draft resolution, document A/C.1/L.138.

Our amendment suggests the addition of four names to operative paragraph 1: Argentina, Belgium, Egypt and Mexico. We feel that this addition will take care of the question of geographical representation, which is so important in a committee of this type. The committee will be called upon to disseminate information on the effects of atomic radiation and on the effects of experimental explosions of thermo-nuclear bombs, as well as to co-ordinate information relating to the effects of atomic radiation upon human health and safety. A committee of that type cannot have a purely scientific character;

(Mr. Trujillo, Ecuador)

it must also have a geographic, linguistic and truly democratic character. If all the countries represented in the United Nations are really equal, then we must be so not only in the Declaration of Human Rights but we should also be permitted to add our contribution to the deeds of the United Nations.

This is a question which is of interest to all the world. With all due respect to the opinion expressed by the representative of the United Kingdom, we feel that the countries which we have suggested for inclusion in the scientific committee -- Argentina, Belgium, Egypt and Mexico -- also have men of high scientific calibre who can share their knowledge with scientists of the other countries that are mentioned in the joint draft resolution.

The fundamental objection raised by the representative of the United Kingdom was that the committee should be a purely scientific committee in order to carry out the required type of investigation. I am certain that among the four countries which I have mentioned there are highly competent scientists who could contribute greatly to the work of the committee.

The group of twenty Latin American nations, which almost constitutes an entire continent, respectfully requests the United Nations to heed its voice. This amendment in no way undermines the excellent ideas and purposes which underlie the joint draft resolution.

Furthermore, in the establishment of committees, political associations have been taken into account; for example, the British Commonwealth of Nations has always been taken into account. Among the proposed eleven members of the committee, there are four members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. On the other hand, Latin America, which is made up of twenty countries, is represented by only one country, a very respected and well-loved nation, Brazil. But the delegation of Brazil itself agrees that other Latin American nations, such as Argentina and Mexico, should be represented, along with Belgium, which has assisted so much in atomic research, and Egypt, another country which is also a member of a highly respected group of countries Members of the United Nations.

(Mr. Trujillo, Ecuador)

I therefore respectfully ask the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the other sponsors of the draft resolution, to take into account the request made in this amendment by a group of countries composing almost an entire continent. Our desire is to expand the proposed committee, not only scientifically, but also geographically and linguistically.

Mr. KUZNETSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet Union delegation deems it necessary to offer some clarification in connexion with the amendments and modifications which it has moved to the draft resolution sponsored by the United States, the United Kingdom, and some other countries, on the question of the effects of atomic radiation.

In the first place, one's attention is drawn to the fact that the draft resolution fails to reflect the yearning of the peoples of the world to be freed from the danger of atomic radiation arising from the test explosions of atomic bombs. It is, after all, the atomic test explosions which are the major source of radiation. In this connexion, I should like to emphasize that we cannot accede to the view just expressed by the United Kingdom representative, to the effect that one cannot distinguish between, on the one hand, radiation arising from test explosions of atomic weapons -- radiation which, after all, cannot be effectively controlled -- and, on the other hand, radiation arising in connexion with the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The following comparison might be made in this respect. In the first instance, one is dealing with a hurricane which is destroying everything in its path and which cannot be effectively fought, whereas in the second instance, one is dealing with something like a fan in an apartment, which, of course, does cause some air movement but can be controlled. One cannot approach these two phenomena -- the blowing of a fan and the blowing of a hurricane -- in the same way; after all, their consequences are greatly different.

Representatives who have spoken in this debate have quoted statements by political leaders, scientists and statesmen, papers read at scientific meetings, and so forth, which have made it perfectly clear that test explosions of atomic weapons are a major source of radiation. As a first step, therefore, we feel

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

that these explosions should be discontinued. Of course, the cessation of the production and stockpiling of atomic weapons should be the paramount objective. Only in this way would the danger of atomic radiation from the explosions of nuclear weapons be fully removed and all atomic energy used for peaceful, constructive purposes.

The USSR delegation believes that, in considering the question of atomic radiation, the General Assembly should not limit itself to the recognition of the importance of this problem and to the adoption of a decision concerning only the compilation and dissemination of information relating to the problem. The General Assembly should express its attitude towards a very significant and insistent demand that atomic explosions should be stopped, since they are the main source of dangerous atomic radiation. It therefore seems necessary for the General Assembly to express itself as being in favour of the earliest possible conclusion of an agreement among the States on discontinuing tests of all types of nuclear weapons. Such an agreement would, at the same time, be an important step forward in the solution of the problem of prohibiting nuclear weapons.

Basing itself on the above-mentioned considerations, the Soviet Union delegation suggests that the following text should be included in the draft resolution, as the first two paragraphs of the preamble:

"Noting that atomic radiation constitutes a danger to human health, and especially bearing in mind the fact that there is no protection from the harmful effects of the atomic radiation formed in atomic explosions,

"Considering that mankind can be freed from the danger of atomic radiation arising from experiments with, or the use of, nuclear weapons only if an international agreement is reached on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the establishment of strict international control over the application of that decision".

The Soviet Union delegation further suggests that the following text should become paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft resolution:

"Calls upon States, and in the first place States possessing nuclear materials and the means of producing nuclear weapons, to continue their efforts towards the earliest possible solution of the question of the prohibition of nuclear weapons and, as a first step, towards the reaching of an agreement on the cessation of experiments with all types of nuclear weapons".

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

The adoption of this amendment by the First Committee would in the best way serve the task before us; namely, the task of promoting the elimination of the danger of atomic radiation produced by the explosions of atomic bombs.

In this connexion, we cannot pass over the statement of the representative of the Philippines. In effect, that representative spoke against the continuation of the efforts of States to solve, as quickly as possible, the problem of prohibiting nuclear weapons and, as a first step, to conclude an agreement on the termination of tests of all types of nuclear weapons. He favoured the continuation of atomic explosions, alleging that they were necessary for the accumulation of experience in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Here, he made a reference to a statement made in 1949 by the Soviet Union representative.

It is well known that the Soviet Union has never proposed to conduct explosions of atomic weapons for the purpose of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. As is known, the Soviet Union has repeatedly proposed, and is now proposing, that the States should conclude an agreement on the prohibition of the use and production of atomic weapons and on the elimination of those weapons from national armaments, and, as a first measure, should conclude an agreement on the termination of tests of all types of nuclear weapons.

The representative of the Philippines spoke of the usefulness of tests of atomic weapons, saying that, as a result of these tests, it had become possible to determine the deadly effects of atomic "fallout". There is no doubt, however, that it is possible without any explosions of atomic bombs to determine the effects of radioactive radiation and to develop safe methods of using atomic energy in the solution of the gigantic tasks which must be faced in furthering mankind's progress.

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

Tests of atomic bombs are conducted, as is known, not for the purpose of finding means of protection of people from the effects of atomic radiation. To insist on the continuation of tests of atomic weapons and to oppose the conclusion of an agreement on the termination of such tests under the guise of allegedly peaceful purposes of the use of atomic energy is tantamount to hindering the deliverance of mankind from the threat of atomic war and the consolidation of general peace.

The United States representative opposed the inclusion in the draft resolution of a provision concerning tests of nuclear weapons, arguing that this question fell within the province of the United Nations Disarmament Commission whose report will be considered separately. He was supported in this view by the representative of the United Kingdom, who spoke today. We cannot agree with such an opinion since atomic explosions are the main source of radioactive radiation dangerous for man. Thus, the question of testing atomic weapons is most closely connected with the question of atomic radiation now under discussion.

In the course of the debate on the question of the effects of atomic radiation many delegations spoke in favour of the establishment of a scientific committee with a view to entrusting it with the compilation and dissemination of information on observed levels of ionizing radiation and radioactivity in the environment and on scientific observations relevant to the dangerous effects of ionizing radiation upon man and his environment. It is also proposed to request the Committee to recommend uniform norms and methods of sample collection and means of radiation counting to be used in analyses of samples.

The compilation, integration and dissemination of information on these problems will undoubtedly be a useful work since it will widen our knowledge in a certain field. It would, however, be inadvisable to limit the functions of this committee to the compilation and dissemination of information on levels of radiation and its effects on man and his environment. It is important to know not only the data on existing levels of radioactivity in the environment and on the effects of ionizing radiation. Everyone is especially interested in information on how to solve the problem of protection from atomic radiation, on prophylactic measures and on means and methods of treatment applied in cases of atomic contamination or irradiation exposure.

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

The need to possess this information is dictated also by the ever-increasing scale of peaceful application of atomic energy. The number of persons handling atomic materials is increasing. In the process of the production and peaceful uses of atomic energy, as in any industry, accidents may happen because of failure to observe necessary precautions and, as a result, there may be cases of radiation sickness due to irradiation.

The problems of protection from, and treatment of, atomic radiation effects are, therefore, of basic importance for the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Information published in connexion with the Geneva scientific-technical conference revealed that significant progress had been achieved by many countries in this field. It is necessary that the experience and achievements of various countries in this field should be integrated and widely disseminated.

Proceeding from the above points, the Soviet delegation deems it necessary to entrust to the committee, in addition to the tasks determined by the draft resolution, the task of compiling, integrating and disseminating information relating to atomic radiation and to the development of means and methods of therapy in connexion with diseases caused by such radiation.

The Soviet delegation proposed the insertion in the operative part of the draft resolution of a paragraph under which this committee would be requested "to collect, circulate and distribute information relating to the problem of protection from the effects of atomic radiation and to the problem of remedies and methods in the treatment of illnesses resulting from the effects of such radiation".

The view was expressed here that the committee, were it to deal with this problem, would duplicate similar work carried on by other agencies, and in particular by the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organisation. As is known, we are faced with a completely new problem which has many obscure aspects, and which at the same time is of vast significance for mankind. Therefore, we should encourage in every way the study by various organizations of problems relating to atomic radiation and methods of protection. The fact that the problem of protection from atomic radiation is being dealt with by certain agencies such as the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organisation, cannot prevent the scientific committee which is being set up by the General Assembly from considering this problem.

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

The task of the proposed committee, as provided in the draft resolution, would be to help co-ordinate the activities of various organizations and to develop co-operation with the aim of achieving best results both in this matter and in other matters relating to the effects of atomic radiation.

There is no reason for depriving the committee of the possibility to compile, integrate and disseminate information of the problems of protection from atomic radiation and therapy against radiation sickness. The tasks to be entrusted to the scientific committee under the draft resolution of the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries are also within the competence of other organizations. In particular, the question of atomic radiation is being considered by the International Commission on Radiological Protection and by the International Radiological Congress, which were specially created for the study of problems relating to atomic radiation. Nevertheless, it is considered useful by the sponsors of the draft resolution to request the new committee to collect and disseminate information on the levels of ionizing radiation and radioactivity and their effect on man and his environment. It goes without saying that the work of the scientific committee should be carried on in close co-operation and contact with the appropriate international organizations, and in particular with the World Health Organization.

The study of the problem of the dissemination of atomic radiation and its effects on living organisms and their environment shows that in order to obtain more complete results it is necessary that scientists of a larger number of countries should participate in this study. Atomic radiation can disseminate anywhere; no boundaries can be set to its effects. Radioactive radiation constitutes a menace for the population of countries, irrespective of whether they are members of one international organization or another. In this connexion it seems absolutely necessary and useful that scientists and specialists of all States, irrespective of whether they are members of the United Nations and specialized agencies, should participate in the study and integration of the experience obtained in the sphere of the effects of atomic radiation. Many delegations in the First Committee have supported this point of view. However, the draft resolution of the United States, the United Kingdom and other States provides that only members of the United Nations and

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

the specialized agencies may participate in the work of the committee and co-operate with it. If the committee is to have made available to it the broadest possible sources of information, these limitations should be removed.

With this in mind the Soviet delegation is submitting a proposal to delete the words "member of the United Nations or specialized agencies" from sub-paragraphs 2 (a) and 2 (b) and paragraph 4 of the operative part of the draft resolution.

In order to make the nascent scientific committee more representative the Soviet delegation proposes an increase in the number of States nominating their scientists to represent them in the scientific committee and the inclusion of the People's Republic of China and Romania among them.

(Mr. Kuznetsov, USSR)

There is no need to prove the legitimate right of the People's Republic of China to participate both in the bodies of the United Nations and in the agencies and organizations set up under the auspices of the United Nations. And this applies a fortiori to the proposed body to study radiation and its effects. We cannot ignore the fact that if the People's Republic of China is deprived of the possibility to participate in the work of the committee, the United Nations in turn will not be able to avail itself of the knowledge and experience of the scientists of the People's Republic of China, nor will it get information on the effects of atomic radiation in this vast area of the world.

The Soviet Union delegation proposes to include Romania in the committee as well. That country's scientists are carrying on considerable experimentation in the sphere of radioactive radiation and their co-operation in the committee would be very desirable.

Consideration of the problem of the effects of atomic radiation shows that the States Members of the United Nations have displayed great interest in this problem. The nature of the tasks to be vested in the committee requires that its work should be carried out in closest liaison with the Secretariat of the United Nations and that the necessary assistance should be extended to it by the Secretary-General. Consequently, the USSR delegation proposes that the draft resolution should mention that the proposed scientific committee should be a committee of the United Nations. To that end it would be desirable to add, after the words "establishes a scientific committee", the words "of the United Nations".

The aim of the amendments of the USSR delegation is that the General Assembly should take into account numerous declarations and suggestions on this question before the First Committee made by representatives of various countries, both at this session of the General Assembly and outside the United Nations. The adoption of these amendments would undoubtedly contribute to the utmost degree to the development of broad co-operation among these States in problems connected with the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Mr. de SOUZA GOMES (Brazil): Acute awareness of my ignorance on the technical and scientific aspects of this question made me refrain from taking part in the debate in its first stage. Without the benefit of expert advice on which I could draw, I thought it wise to wait until the representatives of the countries which are in the forefront of scientific knowledge in this matter had spoken. After having heard and carefully studied the speeches made by the representatives of the leading nations in the field of atomic energy, I have come to the conclusion that the world knows very little indeed about the effects of atomic radiation and the problems which it creates. It is a highly technical problem with humanitarian connotations and should be considered as such.

The political implications constitute only a side issue. It would be a mistake to allow that aspect of the question to influence unduly our decisions and to become out of proportion. The efforts made by certain delegation to drag the question of disarmament into the present debate are, therefore, regrettable. The problem of disarmament will be discussed at the proper time and in the proper place. I am sure that the question relating to the prohibition of atomic weapons, raised by the Soviet Union amendments, will be dealt with on its own merits, and I am also sure that all of us here are anxious to see the day when the world political situation will allow every country to do away with certain types of armaments which today, nevertheless, are indispensable to their security.

For the moment we should keep in mind the warning given by the representative of the United Kingdom when he said that before we proceeded to draw deductions on the effects of atomic radiations on human beings and on nature in general, we needed to know more facts and more scientific work must be carried out; to jump to conclusions on the basis of such scant knowledge as we now have would lead inexorably to misconceptions and dangerous speculations.

I am gratified to see that there seems to be unanimous agreement on the creation of a scientific committee as proposed in draft resolution A/C.1/L.138. Some differences of opinion, however, have been expressed as to the number of its components and as to whether they should be appointed on a governmental basis or chosen on the basis of personal qualifications. The representative of the United States said in his first intervention in this debate:

(Mr. de Souza Gomes, Brazil)

"The composition of this committee ... includes all those States represented on the Secretary-General's Advisory Committee for the Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, in addition to several other States whose interest and scientific capability in the problem of atomic radiation are widely recognized." (A/C.1/PV.773, page 6)

Being a member of the Advisory Committee, Brazil was, therefore, automatically included. I would dare to believe, however, in all modesty, that the scientific capabilities which we may already have shown in this particular field would also warrant our being selected to serve on that body.

The representative of Ecuador has announced the decision of all the Latin American States to introduce an amendment to the joint draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.138, in order that the composition of the scientific committee should be enlarged. My delegation, it goes without saying, wholeheartedly supports this amendment. It gives the scientific committee a more equitable geographical representation and it will also, I am sure, bring to it a most valuable scientific contribution.

Concerning the other aspects of this question, we favour the method proposed in the draft resolution on the question of nominating countries instead of personalities. It seems to us that the committee would thereby have at its disposal the entire scientific resources of every country instead of having only the benefit of the abilities of one man, exceptional though he might be. It is also true that the most highly qualified scientists in this field are, generally speaking, to be found in the more technically advanced countries, the majority of which are mentioned in the Latin American amendment.

I wish to conclude my remarks by expressing the hope that in these matters of undisputed importance and far-reaching implications, we shall be able to adopt a draft resolution with unanimity. We shall then be showing the world that, on questions so vital to the whole destiny of mankind, differences of opinion, important as they may be, will never be permitted to stand in our way.

Mr. WADSWORTH (United States of America): I feel that I should state the position of the United States with regard to the proposals which have been made, particularly the most recent one to expand the composition of this scientific committee.

Yesterday I said:

"We have proposed that the committee be made up of eleven scientists. We strongly believe that a committee of any greater number would be unwieldy." (A/C.1/PV.778, page 17)

My Government still holds to that view and I am constrained to make it perfectly clear that my delegation will not be able to support any proposal for expanding the committee.

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(Mr. Wadsworth, United States)

This position, which of course was taken before the new Latin American amendment was tabled, must not be taken as reflecting in any manner on the particular States which have been suggested or upon the scientists whom they might nominate to represent them in the event they do become members of the committee. Our position is based solely on the fact that we are **trying** to create a scientific body of manageable size. We are not establishing a committee to deal with economic, social or political matters where geographic representation must be given paramount weight.

In the case of this committee **which** we are now considering, scientific considerations must remain paramount or we may end by defeating the very objective we are seeking. We believe that to expand this committee might seriously hamper its scientific effectiveness. The committee as originally proposed seems to us fully competent to deal with the task we have given it. To add four or perhaps even more new members seems to us to depart from the concept that I had assumed we all had in mind.

That is why the United States, although extremely sorry to find itself in an opposite position from our friends of Latin America, cannot support these proposals.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.