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AGENDA ITEM 68

**Question of French nuclear tests in the Sahara (A/4183,
A/C.1/L.238 and Add.1) (continued)**

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ADEEL (Sudan) pointed out that the issue before the First Committee could not be debated merely from the technical point of view; its implications were much broader than would appear from the unconvincing array of figures based on atomic physics which the French representative had marshalled; it had political, juridical, moral and human significance. The Sudan's opposition to nuclear weapons tests wherever they might be held was a basic principle of its foreign policy. Moreover, as an African State, it was deeply concerned for its own safety and for that of other African countries, many of which were not yet in a position to speak in international forums. Nigeria, the largest of the latter group, had clearly demonstrated that its Government and people were not satisfied with United Kingdom assurances that the projected test would not be dangerous to its safety. Indeed, for those countries which bordered on the Sahara, the French plan involved a question of life or death. Mr. Moch had admitted (1043rd meeting), for example, that if there was a light wind at the moment the bomb was exploded, radio-active particles would be carried eastward for a distance depending on the size of the particles. Libya, the Egyptian part of the United Arab Republic, the Sudan and Ethiopia would be in the direct line of that wind. Mr. Moch had deliberately omitted to say how far the radio-active particles could travel eastward if the wind velocity was several times what the French contemplated and if the particles were very small. That omission reflected on the objectivity of the technical data presented by the French representative. In the circumstances, the Sudan was very apprehensive; its representative on the Economic and Social Council had expressed its alarm during the Geneva session of the Council; like other African Governments, it had made representations to the French through diplomatic channels. However, those various appeals had evoked no satisfactory response, and the Sudan could only hope that France would see its way clear to reconsider in the light of world public opinion its decision to detonate a bomb in the Sahara.

2. Analysing the French arguments in support of the proposed test, he pointed out that the analogy drawn with previous tests carried out by the three nuclear Powers was not valid. Those three Powers had exploded nuclear devices either on their own territory or on the territory of another country with the consent of its Government. Furthermore, they had since agreed to suspend all testing pending the outcome of the current negotiations on the cessation of all nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests. The contention that the distance between the testing ground and the nearest populated centre would be 1,000 kilometres (621 miles) presupposed the existence in the French-dominated Sahara of a circle with a diameter of 2,000 kilometres (1242 miles) which was totally uninhabited. Unhappily such a contention did not correspond to reality. Furthermore, that argument failed to take into account the unpredictable movements of nomads through the designated area, its intersection by caravan routes and the streams of water running into it from great distances. With regard to French assurances that the precautions taken would reduce risks to an absolute minimum, it should be pointed out that if, as the French representative claimed, the effects of the test were known in advance, there seemed little point in testing the bomb at all. Obviously, the bomb was being tested because the French had no certainty regarding its effects; its power might well exceed expectations. The last point made by the French representative was that the States opposing the bomb test were not showing the necessary responsibility in the face of the fears and emotions of their peoples and that their action was motivated by propaganda considerations. The Sudanese delegation took strong exception to any such imputation. Fears and emotions still conditioned the action of peoples and Governments; indeed, the French desire to develop a nuclear weapon for its self-defence was founded on fear.

3. On juridical and political grounds, the French decision to explode an atomic bomb in the Sahara was open to serious question. French title to the area of the Sahara including the test site was being contested with physical force. Even if it were not, the risks arbitrarily imposed by the French test on the dependent people of the area were in clear violation of Article 73 of the United Nations Charter and France's obligation to recognize that the interests of the inhabitants were paramount. The further threat to the countries bordering on the Sahara was in violation of the established principle of international jurisprudence that no party was justified in committing any act on its own territory which might be detrimental to its neighbours. Politically, the French decision was most inopportune; it ran counter to the thinking of the time; it had been made at a time when all States, including France, had repudiated the arms race and were striving towards a cessation of nuclear tests and peaceful coexistence. It was paradoxical to note that, despite the warning given by the French Minister of

Foreign Affairs that unbelievable dangers stemmed from the accumulation of nuclear weapons (814th plenary meeting), despite Mr. Moch's own insistence that high priority should be given to the prohibition of the development of such weapons and vehicles to deliver them (1030th meeting), France was determined to accelerate the arms race.

4. The Sudan had co-sponsored the twenty-two-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.238 and Add.1) in the hope that France would respond to the appeal to abandon its plan to test a bomb. That response would not be construed as a sign of weakness or of yielding to pressure; it would be a demonstration of good common sense.

5. Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon) said that France's defence of the bomb it wished to test could not withstand the clamour of world public opinion for a cessation of tests of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons and their elimination from the armaments of nations. However persuasive the technical arguments advanced by the French representative in support of the proposed test might be, they were of little avail in a field in which science had not said the last word. In view of the differences of opinion among scientists regarding safe levels of radio-activity, its unmeasured hazards and its possible genetic effects, it was no consolation to the peoples of Africa to know that the French test would produce less fall-out than the Soviet and United States tests. They would never understand why France, in order to develop an atomic bomb, should expose them to the possible effects of radiation, however slight or negligible.

6. One of the major implications of the French decision was France's determination to disregard the overwhelming clamour of public opinion for a permanent, controlled cessation of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests. Yet the three nuclear Powers had been moved by it and by the recognition of the dangers inherent in the nuclear arms race to seek to negotiate an agreement on cessation. France, for its part, was not even willing to await the results of those negotiations. It would not stop testing and producing nuclear weapons until the three Powers had renounced nuclear armaments completely, had ceased production of fissionable materials, and had eliminated stockpiles and vehicles for carrying nuclear weapons. France wanted to have its atomic bombs, and if necessary its hydrogen bombs, as long as any other Power possessed them. Its determination would not be affected by the improved prospects for disarmament reflected in the draft resolution unanimously adopted (1042nd meeting) by the Committee on general and complete disarmament and resulting from recent high-level meetings of political leaders. Although France had shared in the common expression of fear of nuclear annihilation, it still wanted to enter the arms race and would not be dissuaded by the new, favourable climate in international relations.

7. France justified its insistence on carrying out an atomic bomb test on the grounds that the test would remove the unfair discrimination against it in the atomic field, ensure its national security and enhance its prestige. Only nuclear disarmament for all, according to Mr. Moch, would ensure full equality of peoples. It was difficult, however, to follow Mr. Moch's reasoning when he maintained that France was being discriminated against in being excluded from the three-Power nuclear group and it failed totally to

appreciate the fact that that exclusion placed it on a footing of equality with the seventy-eight other Member States which had co-sponsored the disarmament resolution. Surely, the best means of ensuring total equality would be to persuade the three nuclear Powers to renounce their nuclear weapons. It was by exerting its economic, political and moral influence that France could retain its position as a great Power, not by acquiring the atomic bomb. In fact, possession of the bomb would bring it very little additional political power; it had far more to gain by remaining "uncontaminated" by the nuclear arms race. Moreover, it could hardly hope to gain security by possessing an atomic bomb when the accumulated stocks of the more powerful hydrogen bombs were already sufficient to destroy the whole world, and, even if it planned to go further and produce hydrogen weapons, it could never hope to catch up with the other nuclear Powers in the arms race. Its security appeared to be adequately guaranteed by the NATO security system and the nuclear balance already achieved. Lastly, the bomb was not necessary to French prestige and France's contribution to atomic research, so painstakingly stressed by Mr. Moch, was a well-known fact. It was by continuing to bring to bear France's great humanitarian tradition and culture, and not by military prowess, that France would enhance its prestige both in Africa and throughout the world. It should direct its scientific research towards the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and do nothing to undermine the new spirit of great-Power understanding which characterized the present favourable juncture in world affairs. For all those reasons, Lebanon had co-sponsored the twenty-two-Power draft resolution before the Committee.

8. Mr. RIFA'I (Jordan) said that his delegation would have hoped that the comprehensive analysis presented by the French representative should be devoted to ways and means of achieving peace and not to a justification of the development of another weapon of global self-destruction. In protesting the projected nuclear test, Jordan was defending what it believed was right; it was not guided merely by emotion. France's record in Africa and in the Arab homeland failed to assure the peoples of those areas that the French decision was in the interests of their safety and security. Moreover, irrespective of that decision, the General Assembly, as the mirror of the conscience of the world, should express its views on the matter.

9. The question of the proposed nuclear test in the Sahara was not essentially a scientific issue to be debated by experts; it was of immediate concern to the countries of Africa and it had international complications. The parallel drawn between the projected French test and the tests carried out in the Soviet Union and in the United States was not valid; the latter tests had been carried out at sites much farther removed from any other country than the Sahara site was from Morocco. Indeed, the authority of the Kingdom of Morocco extended to a point as near as 300 kilometres (186 miles) from the testing ground and Moroccan soldiers were posted on that line. The people of the area could therefore take little comfort from France's assurances that the test would not be dangerous to them. He did not think that the Government of any country exposed to the risks of such a test would act as the agent of any foreign Power for the purpose of allaying the legitimate fears of its people threatened with the effects of nuclear tests.

Those effects were generally known to be harmful to human health. In previous tests, they had been felt thousands of miles from the point of explosion. They were known to be both somatic and genetic. They had been shown to be cumulative in contaminating animal and vegetable life. There appeared to be a direct correlation between the increased incidence of leukaemia and bone cancer and the areas where tests had been held. In the absence of definitive scientific conclusions regarding the hazards, present and future, of radio-active fall-out, it was logical to believe, as the African peoples did, that the risk would be greater with an added uncontrollable amount of radiation from atomic fall-out.

10. The French argument that France should be free to carry out its test so long as there was no general agreement on nuclear disarmament failed to take into account the existing suspension of nuclear tests agreed upon by the three nuclear Powers and the prospects of an agreement on a permanent cessation. France apparently considered that, unless it tested its atomic bomb, it would have wasted long years of nuclear research and failed to assert itself as a great Power. Possession of the bomb was no criterion of greatness; France could retain its position as a great Power through its culture and its contribution to disarmament, and not by exploding a bomb in a contested area. Far from being desolate, that area was dotted with a number of oases, penetrated by caravan routes and irrigated by streams. There was great danger of contamination of its animal and vegetable life. The direction of its winds could not be controlled. In the circumstances, many African States might suffer from fall-out from radio-active dust.

11. Jordan had great sympathy for the independent States of Africa and for the territories struggling to settle their problems peacefully with foreign Powers. As France had disregarded their protests and their appeals that the test should be abandoned, they had brought the issue to the United Nations. His delegation urged France to reconsider its decision in the interests of international co-operation and human welfare.

12. Mr. YAKOVLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union's attitude towards the projected French nuclear tests was determined by its policy of favouring, not only the discontinuance of all nuclear tests universally and for all time, but also the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons with the cessation of their production, their elimination from the armaments of States and the liquidation of all existing stocks. In order to expedite agreement on the discontinuance of tests, the Soviet Union had unilaterally halted its own tests in 1958 and had pledged itself, on 29 August 1959, not to resume testing unless the Western Powers did so. That pledge was not hedged with any time limits. Only in the event of the resumption of nuclear weapons tests by the Western Powers, would the USSR be released from the obligation which it had taken upon itself.

13. The Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests had made progress and offered hope of early agreement; it was the duty of every State to refrain from taking steps which would impede such agreement. Unfortunately, the French nuclear test would not contribute to the success of the Geneva talks.

14. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking in the General Assembly (814th plenary meeting), and

the French representative in the First Committee (1043rd meeting) had said that the precautions to be taken in connexion with the proposed French test would eliminate all risk. However, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, on which France had been represented, had recognized that nuclear testing posed a serious danger to mankind, and scientists in France, the Soviet Union, the United States, India, the United Kingdom and other countries were warning statesmen of the biological and genetic damage that would be caused to both present and future generations by such tests. The USSR therefore shared the alarm felt by many nations over the projected French nuclear test.

15. The United Kingdom representative's statement (1044th meeting) justifying the French test would not contribute to the success of the Geneva negotiations; it was not the General Assembly's task to exchange information on the carrying out of nuclear explosions but, rather, to promote the immediate discontinuance of testing for all time. It was also surprising that the United States representative, in his statement at the 1046th meeting, should minimize the danger of nuclear explosions for mankind and thus, in effect, defend the proposed French test.

16. Recently published data indicated that the French nuclear test threatened above all to contaminate large areas of Africa and that the prevailing air currents would cause radio-active fall-out in Italy, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and a number of other European countries, including the south of France itself. The French Government's decision to carry out a nuclear test had occasioned protests by a number of States, particularly the African countries which were situated nearest to the proposed test site. The Moroccan Government had rightly raised the problem at the current session of the General Assembly (A/4183) in the hope that the latter would contribute to a solution that accorded with African and world public opinion. It would be unthinkable for the United Nations to ignore the voice of the peoples of Africa. The Soviet people's sympathetic understanding of the fears of the African countries was shown by the protests adopted in recent months by several Soviet organizations dedicated to friendship with the countries of Asia and Africa.

17. The demand for abandonment of the French nuclear test reflected the desire of all peoples for a relaxation of international tension. Major progress had been made towards ending the cold war, eliminating war from international life and strengthening friendly relations between States. The unanimous adoption by the First Committee of a resolution on general and complete disarmament had been an important recent contribution towards the reduction of tension. The Soviet Government was anxious to improve relations with all countries, including France, and was opposed to actions that complicated the task of strengthening peace. His delegation would therefore vote for draft resolution A/C.1/L.238 and Add.1.

18. U THANT (Burma) said that his delegation was not convinced by the French representative's assurance that the projected French nuclear test would pose no danger to the peoples of Africa. Expert opinion increasingly held that continued nuclear tests might do irreparable harm to mankind. The radio-active matter produced by tests was dispersed through the atmosphere and could descend as fall-out anywhere in the world; hence, a nuclear explosion in the Sahara would result in radio-active fall-out even in

metropolitan France. The amount of fall-out depended not only on the size of the bomb, but also on the height at which the explosion occurred and on other conditions; it was generally agreed that most of the radio-activity which ascended into the stratosphere in the form of strontium-90 returned to earth over a period of decades and, as a result of its absorption into vegetable and animal matter, increased the incidence of cancer and might also produce genetic mutations. Moreover, all the physiological effects of radio-active fall-out were not yet known. His delegation therefore urged the cessation of all nuclear tests, regardless of where they were conducted.

19. People all over the world were distressed at France's decision to explode a nuclear bomb at a time when the Geneva negotiations on the discontinuance of nuclear tests were making significant progress and when the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union had each taken the wise and humane decision not to resume testing so long as the others did not. If the number of nuclear Powers was increased, the task of achieving effective nuclear disarmament would become an impossible one. Twenty-three nations already had the scientific and technological capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons, and it was said that the People's Republic of China might develop an atomic bomb in the next two years. If the process of nuclear arming continued until virtually every sovereign State possessed such weapons, the world would surely be doomed to destruction.

20. Even more important than the scientific and military aspect of the question under discussion was its political and ideological aspect, with which the French representative had failed to deal. To the peoples of Asia and Africa the atomic bomb was the white man's instrument of terror, a weapon which, on the only occasion when it had been used in war, had been employed by whites against non-whites; the projected nuclear test on African soil would therefore intensify existing racial feelings.

21. Those who wished to see the principles of political democracy triumph over those of totalitarianism were greatly concerned at the increasing anti-Western sentiment in many parts of the world. The decline in Western prestige in Asia and Africa was largely due to the fact that the leading nations of the free world were, at the same time, colonial Powers which had identified themselves with the *status quo* rather than with the revolutionary forces of Asia and Africa; the free nations were endangering the cause of democracy by their own actions.

22. France's persistent refusal to understand the African mind was distressing to those who hoped that France would recapture the noble traditions of liberty, equality and fraternity which had inspired so many countries of Asia and Africa in their struggle for independence. His delegation appealed to France to reconsider its decision to conduct a nuclear test, which would strike a blow at the cause of democracy and would affect relations between the West and the countries of Asia and Africa. The fact that twenty-two Asian and African countries had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.238 and Add.1 attested to the anxiety caused by the projected French test. The test might also embarrass France's Western allies and hinder the course of the present Geneva negotiations on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests.

23. Mr. SOSA RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela) said that in considering the question of French nuclear tests in the Sahara, which was a complex one, three viewpoints had to be taken into account. There was the French viewpoint, that of the independent African States, and lastly, that of the international community as a whole.

24. The French viewpoint, as stated by Mr. Moch, was that in the absence of any agreement on the testing and production of nuclear weapons, France was entitled to take such measures for its own defence as it thought fit, including the testing of an atomic bomb. It considered the Sahara the most suitable area in which to conduct the explosion without endangering the neighbouring populations.

25. The independent African States, on the other hand, strongly objected to the proposed test in the Sahara as they would be the chief victims of any harmful effects of radio-active fall-out.

26. The Venezuelan delegation had assessed both arguments objectively and, while it fully appreciated the views put forward by France, to which Venezuela was traditionally bound by strong ties of friendship, it nevertheless took into account the equally valid views of the independent African States, for which it had the feelings of solidarity of a young country pursuing the same course of development.

27. The Venezuelan delegation had no intention of questioning the right of France or any other sovereign country to take whatever measures it considered necessary for its defence. It only differed on the question whether there was, at the present time, a necessary relationship between effective defence and the possession of an atomic bomb. The present age was one of interdependence between nations in which frontiers were meaningless beside ideological trends and economic interests. No country could escape the consequences of the division of the world into two blocs, both of which possessed weapons capable of annihilating the human race. Thus, in the event of a nuclear war, the defence of a particular country could not be considered in isolation as it was necessarily related to the bloc to which it belonged and neither France nor any other country similarly placed would find itself at a disadvantage merely because it did not possess atomic weapons. Pending a final agreement on disarmament, the countries of either bloc were sufficiently protected by the stock-piles accumulated by the Western nuclear Powers on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, without involving mankind in the appalling risk that would be occasioned by each country independently seeking to develop its own atomic weapons.

28. Possession of the atomic bomb by France would thus seem more a question of prestige than of defence. But France's prestige surely lay in its cultural achievements and in its high ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity and not in the possession of an atomic bomb which, in any case, would not place it on a footing of equality with the other nuclear Powers, which had weapons of infinitely greater destructive power.

29. On the other hand, the atomic bomb was undoubtedly the first step towards a hydrogen bomb and other advanced nuclear weapons. France would therefore have to choose between limiting its test to the atomic bomb and lagging behind the other nuclear Powers or continuing its experiments until it reached

their level—a course that might cause other Powers to resume or initiate tests and destroy all hope of achieving the permanent discontinuance of tests which all peoples desired.

30. As for the fears expressed by the African States regarding the dangers of radio-active fall-out, the representatives of France and the United Kingdom had assured the members of the committee that the proposed explosion would entail no danger to the populations living near the site or, *a fortiori*, to those living further away. However, that opinion, which was based on scientific data obtained from past nuclear tests, was not unanimously shared, as was natural in such a new field of study. Thus, in paragraph 56 of chapter VII of its report (A/3838), the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had stated that mankind should proceed with great caution in view of the possibility of underestimating the genetic and somatic injuries caused by radiation. The report had gone on to emphasize that any present attempt to evaluate the effects of sources of radiation could produce only tentative estimates with wide margins of uncertainty. In paragraph 54 of that chapter, the report had concluded that all steps designed to minimize irradiation of human populations would act to the benefit of human health.

31. The very least that could be done, in view of those conclusions, was to entertain doubts, but when such doubts centred on the vital question of the health of present and future populations, abstention from tests was surely the wisest precaution. While the tests might have no adverse effects whatsoever, it was only natural for the African States to be apprehensive because they would pay dearly for any miscalculations and, even if they suffered no physical effects from radio-activity, as was probable, they would still suffer psychological harm on account of the fear of the delayed effects of radiation, which were still unknown.

32. The delegation of Venezuela therefore considered that the African States had acted reasonably in bringing the question before the United Nations after having approached France directly to no avail.

33. The next viewpoint to be considered was that of the international community as a whole. The increasing division of the world into opposing blocs had led to the folly of the arms race, which had brought mankind to the brink of destruction. A realization of that danger had led to a new spirit of comprehension between the great Powers and the hope of reaching an agreement on disarmament. One of the most important aspects of disarmament was precisely the question of nuclear tests. In the past year, as a result of the Scientific Committee's report, world opinion had spoken out unequivocally in favour of the suspension of nuclear tests not merely as a means of halting the arms race, but primarily for fear of the harmful effects of radiation.

34. That appeal had led to the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests and to the *de facto* suspension of tests by the nuclear Powers, with the consequent relaxation of international tension. Undoubtedly the explosion of an atomic bomb at the present time would damage the precarious understanding that had been reached and reverse the hard-won progress towards a peace based, not on mutual fear, but on mutual understanding and respect.

35. It thus occasioned alarm, not only to the African States, but to all States which sincerely desired an

end to the appalling threat hanging over the world. Bearing in mind the General Assembly's earlier appeal, in its resolution 1252 A (XIII), to the parties concerned to make every effort to reach early agreement on the suspension of tests, it would be difficult even implicitly to allow a further test to be carried out without contradicting or reversing past positions. Venezuela, for one, abided by the views it had held in the past and could not consider making any exceptions. It therefore considered that the United Nations should recommend that France should reconsider its decision, which might have fatal consequences to the cause of peace and which occasioned the African States such alarm.

36. Mr. MEZINCESCU (Romania) said that the re-opening of discussions on the harmful effects of radiation seemed to imply a reversion to a stage that had already been passed. If the nuclear explosions that had taken place so far had been harmless, the efforts that had been made to bring about negotiations on the discontinuance of nuclear tests would have had no results. However, scientific data accumulated in recent years contradicted the contention that nuclear explosions were harmless and, even if those data had not been widely publicized, they had undoubtedly influenced certain Governments. It was significant that data published early in June 1959 on the fall-out from the Nevada tests held in 1957 showed that the heaviest fall-out had been recorded in an area more than 1,600 kilometres (994 miles) distant from "ground zero". Professor Pfeiffer of the University of North Dakota had estimated that the strontium-90 fall-out at Fargo, one year after the explosion, was greater for one single day than the fall-out for the entire year in other parts of the country and equal to the amount accumulated in New York City over two years. Furthermore, eight months after the explosion, the concentration of strontium-90 at Fargo was four times higher than the world average.

37. According to Professor Norman Bauer of the State University of Utah, more than 10,000 persons in the southern part of the State of Utah had received a radiation dose at least thirty times higher than the amount normally absorbed by other persons in the United States. Professor Bauer had estimated that those persons had been exposed, during the fall-out period after the 1957 tests, to the maximum permissible radiation dose for the entire reproductive period. According to the estimates of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, if the maximum permissible dose were absorbed by the whole population of the United States, it might result in 200,000 cases of genetic disorders in the first generation and more than 2 million cases in subsequent generations.

38. No doubt complex factors accounted for the high radio-active fall-out at a distance which, according to the representative of France, should constitute the zone of greatest safety. But that was merely further proof that knowledge about fall-out was still limited.

39. On the other hand, the problem of French nuclear tests in the Sahara was not an exclusively African problem, but was of concern to other countries, including Romania. Romania was one of the countries over which winds from the Sahara regularly carried particles of desert sand. Information on the subject has been published by the French Meteorological Institute, whose findings had been confirmed by Romanian experts. Pollution of the atmosphere by

radio-active fall-out might have repercussions on the flora and fauna of Romania as well as on the health of its inhabitants.

40. The announcement that the French Government would follow up its atmospheric explosions with underground explosions was scarcely reassuring. Scientific research on the spread of ionizing radiations and the consequences of nuclear explosions on ground water and petroleum deposits had not yet provided any conclusive data which ruled out the possibility of danger.

41. In any case, there seemed to be no further controversy regarding the possibility that nuclear tests were dangerous since the three nuclear Powers had decided to negotiate an agreement on their suspension. Moreover, whatever differences of opinion existed among scientists, there were two aspects of the problem which should be given serious consideration. First, the fact that scientific opinion had steadily progressed towards a recognition of the dangers inherent in nuclear fall-out and, secondly, the fact that the controversy centred on a subject fraught with serious consequences for mankind.

42. Even if the tests were well within the safety margin, the risk entailed by errors in calculation and premature conclusions was too great to be assumed. If there were still any doubts concerning the dangers of nuclear tests—and the Romanian delegation could not share them—the present and future generations should surely be given the benefit of the doubt, since any mistake would be irreparable.

43. After the unanimous adoption of a draft resolution calling upon all Governments to make every effort to achieve a solution of the question of general and complete disarmament, every State should be expected to refrain from action likely to increase tension or to promote the arms race.

44. The progress made at the Geneva Conference had only served to strengthen the Romanian Government in its view that all nuclear tests should be discontinued and stockpiles of atomic weapons destroyed. Accordingly the Romanian delegation would vote for the twenty-two-Power draft resolution urging France to refrain from conducting the proposed tests.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.