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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Agenda items 73 and 72:</i>	
<i>Continuation of suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests and obligations of States to refrain from their renewal (continued)</i>	141
<i>The urgent need for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons tests under effective international control (continued)</i>	141

Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

AGENDA ITEMS 73 AND 72

Continuation of suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests and obligations of States to refrain from their renewal (A/4801 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1) (continued)

The urgent need for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons tests under effective international control (A/4799, A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1) (continued)

1. Mr. QUAISON-SACKEY (Ghana), introducing draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1 on behalf of the sponsors, said that it was a revision of the draft resolution originally submitted by a number of African States in December 1960 (A/C.1/L.264) under the general item of disarmament. The revised text dealt specifically with nuclear tests.

2. The purpose of the draft resolution was to ensure that Africa should be kept free of nuclear tests and nuclear weapons, and should be treated as a de-nuclearized neutral zone. There could be no difficulty in that since Africa was a continent constituting an integral territorial unit—a continent in which, with the exception of France, which had tested four nuclear devices in the Sahara, no Power had attempted to conduct nuclear tests. He expressed confidence, moreover, that France had now reconsidered its position and would not conduct further tests in the Sahara; there was thus no reason why the aims of the draft resolution should not be endorsed by the General Assembly.

3. He urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution as soon as possible. Since the proposal had actually been before the Committee for a whole year, there would appear to be no need for further detailed debate on it.

4. Mr. GEBRE-EGZY (Ethiopia) said that the draft resolution that now appeared in document A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1 had originally been submitted to the Assembly at its fifteenth session.^{1/} The purpose of the decla-

^{1/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda items 67, 86, 69 and 73, document A/C.1/L.254 and Add.1-3.

ration it embodied was to prohibit the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for any reason whatsoever. It did not insist upon the conclusion of a treaty at the present juncture, but its adoption would be an effective first step towards the ultimate prohibition by treaty of the use of nuclear weapons to settle disputes between nations. He urged the Committee to put the draft resolution to the vote as soon as possible.

5. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that his delegation, together with a number of other African delegations, had submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.293 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) to draft resolution A/C.1/L.291 and Add.1. Now that the sponsors had submitted a revised version (A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1) of that text, he asked for the vote on it to be postponed pending consultation between the sponsors of the amendment. That, however, should not stand in the way of a vote on draft resolution A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1.

6. Mr. BA (Mali) said that draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1 had been fully explained by the sponsors of the original version (A/C.1/L.264) at the fifteenth session. At that time there had already been nuclear tests in Africa and, in spite of the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 1379 (XIV) requesting France to refrain from such tests, the African States had had little hope of obtaining from the French authorities any assurance that they would desist from conducting further tests. Since then, radio-active fallout from the French nuclear explosions had produced certain unusual symptoms among the people of the areas of Mali bordering on the Sahara, a subject on which his Government would submit a report to the General Assembly.

7. Mali categorically condemned all nuclear tests by any State in any environment; but it was particularly strongly opposed to nuclear testing in Africa and to the explosion of nuclear bombs by France outside its own national territory. When Corsica, which was an integral part of France, had refused to allow nuclear tests on its territory, France had chosen the Sahara as the site of its test explosions, totally disregarding the fact that the Sahara, however sparse its population, was a populated area. Moreover, the French nuclear tests directly threatened the African States bordering on the Sahara, namely Mali, the Niger, Chad and Algeria; in that connexion, it should be noted that the French Government no longer denied the fact that the Sahara was part of Algeria's national territory.

8. His delegation did not recognize the right of any nuclear Power to conduct tests of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons. The armaments race and the proliferation of nuclear tests were an insult to the poor countries of the world. Africa, which had been pauperized by the colonial system and earnestly hoped to pursue its economic and social development in peace, certainly did not need nuclear tests; the cost of two days of the arms race would be enough to finance Mali's five-year plan.

9. He therefore urged the Committee to adopt draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1. If all States considered and respected the continent of Africa as a de-nuclearized neutral zone, Africa would never be forced to become a party to a cold or hot war.

10. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation's attitude to the two draft resolutions before the Committee derived directly from the principles underlying Soviet foreign policy, the main purposes of which were to defend peace, to remove the threat of war and to promote the peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems. The Soviet Union had always supported and would always support any constructive measures having those aims. It believed that a treaty on general and complete disarmament should be concluded without delay, and had frequently made specific proposals to that end—proposals which took into account all the positive elements in the position of the Western Powers. The programme for general and complete disarmament submitted by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Khrushchev, at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly^{2/} would provide a sound basis for agreement; the Soviet Union was ready to sign a treaty of general and complete disarmament providing for the strictest international control immediately. Although that would be the best method of ensuring peace, agreement could also be reached on certain partial measures which would help meanwhile to reduce international tension and increase confidence among States. Accordingly, there could be no doubt that the two draft resolutions now before the Committee would help to strengthen peace on the African continent and to improve the international situation.

11. As regards draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1, the Soviet Government had made quite clear, in its memorandum of 26 September 1961 (A/4892), that it was in favour of the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world, including Africa. There could be no doubt that the establishment of such zones would reduce the danger of armed conflict, prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to new countries and continents and help to create confidence among States. At the same time, it would provide useful experience at a regional level in the organization of control and inspection, which would be very useful when the time came for general and complete disarmament. The proposal would not be difficult to put into effect, since many African States already pursued a neutral policy and were firmly opposed to nuclear weapons. Indeed, the idea of nuclear-free zones was finding more and more support not only in Africa but throughout the world. Poland, for instance, supported by Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, had put forward a detailed proposal for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. Similar proposals had been made for de-nuclearized zones in northern Europe, in the Balkans and—by the People's Republic of China—in the Far East and the Pacific. All those proposals were fully supported by the Soviet Union. They had the particular advantage that they would not affect the existing balance of military forces.

12. The adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1 would benefit the whole world, since it would thwart the plans of those who wished to use African territory as a base for nuclear war; but it would do most good to the African countries themselves, since

it would lessen the danger of their being drawn into such a war. His delegation had supported a similar proposal at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly and would vote in favour of the present draft resolution, although it considered that the second preambular paragraph was not strictly relevant.

13. As far as draft resolution A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1 was concerned, the declaration it embodied would act as a suitable basis for solving the problem of prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union believed, as it always had, that the peoples of the world must be saved from the threat of nuclear war. It had often proposed to the Western Powers that there should be an agreement to ban nuclear weapons, and but for their resistance that problem would have been settled long ago. The Soviet Government's memorandum (A/4892) made the point that a declaration by the nuclear States that they would not use nuclear weapons would help to prepare the ground for a treaty on general and complete disarmament. It should be recalled in that connexion that the Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of poison gas and bacteriological weapons^{3/} had proved effective in practice; in the Second World War, in contrast to the First, such weapons had not been used, although they had existed. Thus there was no reason why it should not be possible to prohibit the use of nuclear and rocket weapons, which were even more monstrous, in the same way. His delegation would therefore support draft resolution A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1. Both draft resolutions before the Committee reflected the concern of the peoples of the world at the threat of a nuclear war, and their adoption would be a step towards general and complete disarmament.

14. Mr. MAKA (Guinea) said that the feelings of his delegation about nuclear tests were well known; it would be recalled that Guinea had protested strongly against the French tests in the Sahara. Africa had in the past suffered from the effects of scientific progress, the benefits of which were often alleged to justify colonization; for instance, advances in navigation had made the slave trade possible. As a result of the development of atomic physics, the continent was now threatened with the danger of radio-active fall-out. It was for those reasons that his delegation had associated itself with the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1. The vote on that proposal would show which countries really desired a better future for Africa.

15. Mr. WINIEWICZ (Poland) said that nearly four weeks of debate on the items now before the Committee had merely demonstrated that in the present critical situation the problem of halting nuclear tests could be solved only within the framework of general and complete disarmament. The resolutions thus far adopted could have no practical meaning, since they represented an attempt to impose a decision in a matter which must be resolved by agreement between all the parties concerned.

16. However, draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1 provided an opportunity to accomplish something constructive; it was further evidence of the effort being made by the African States to help save mankind from the horrors of nuclear war. The de-nuclearization of Africa would give that continent some

^{2/} *Ibid.*, document A/4505.

^{3/} Protocol prohibiting the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, opened for signature at Geneva on 17 June 1925 (League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV, 1929, No. 2138).

measure of security pending the achievement of general and complete disarmament, and would in fact represent a major step towards disarmament in a large geographical area. He recalled that in 1957, faced with the threat of militarism and revanchism in West Germany, his Government had proposed the establishment of a denuclearized zone in Central Europe as the best means of bringing about the peaceful stabilization of Europe. Although that proposal had met with wide public support, the Western Powers, pursuing their policy of strength, had rejected it. In the view of his delegation, the Rapacki plan still represented a valid approach.

17. It was unfortunate that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1 had omitted from the revised text the appeal for the elimination of foreign bases from Africa. The Bizerta affair had shown that so long as the colonial Powers maintained military bases in the territory of their former colonies, the latter would be subject to the threat of armed conflict and would be unable to consolidate their national independence.

18. Draft resolution A/C.1/L.292 and Add.1 constituted a vigorous appeal against the use of nuclear weapons, and had the support of his delegation. It should be pointed out, however, that only general and complete disarmament could finally eliminate the danger of nuclear war.

19. Mr. AHMED (United Arab Republic) said that draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1, of which his delegation was a sponsor, expressed the desire of the people of Africa to shun the cold war and avert the

threat of nuclear war. It was to be noted that while the two major nuclear Powers conducted tests either in their own territory or in the Pacific Ocean, the tests carried out by France constituted the one instance in which an outside Power had forced the people of an area to submit to testing in their midst. The First Committee, which had already called for the suspension of nuclear testing and drawn attention to the harmful effects of atomic radiation, would surely give draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1 the support which it deserved.

20. Mr. KALONJI (Congo, Leopoldville) said that the statements made in the Committee indicated that the nuclear Powers would agree to an arrangement along the lines proposed in draft resolution A/C.1/L.291/Rev.1. His delegation had joined with the other sponsors of that proposal in appealing for the denuclearization of Africa because it feared that otherwise the African States too would eventually acquire nuclear weapons.

21. Sir Michael WRIGHT (United Kingdom), supported by Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan), suggested that the draft resolutions before the Committee should not be put to the vote until the next meeting, so as to give delegations additional time to consider their votes.

22. Mr. DELGADO (Philippines) moved the adjournment of the meeting.

The motion was adopted by 40 votes to 15, with 29 abstentions.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.