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URGENT NEED FOR CESSATION OF NUCLEAR AND THERMONUCLEAR
TESTS AND CONCLUSION OF A TREATY DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE A
COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

CONCLUSION OF A TREATY ON THE COMPLETE AND GENERAL
PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Francisco CORREA (Mexico)

1. The items entitled "Urgent need for cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests and conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive test ban: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament" and "Conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests" were included in the provisional agenda as items 40 and 49 in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 31/66 of 10 December and 31/89 of 14 December 1976.
2. At its 5th plenary meeting, on 23 September 1977, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include both items in its agenda and to allocate them to the First Committee.
3. At its 7th meeting, on 18 October, the First Committee decided to hold a combined general debate on the items allocated to it relating to disarmament, namely, items 33, 34, 38 to 49 and 51 to 53. The general debate on these items took place at the 7th to 27th meetings, from 18 October to 7 November. 1/
4. In connexion with agenda item 40, the First Committee had before it the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. 2/

1/ For an index to statements by delegations on disarmament items, see document A/32/383.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/32/27).

5. In connexion with item 49, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Note verbale dated 17 February 1977 from the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/32/59);

(b) Letter dated 3 June 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/32/113);

(c) Letter dated 6 July 1977 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/32/133);

(d) Letter dated 23 September 1977 from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/32/235);

(e) Note by the Secretary-General dated 4 November 1977 (A/32/324).

6. On 11 November, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia and Poland submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/32/L.20) under item 49, which was subsequently co-sponsored by the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. It read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Convinced that the early cessation of nuclear-weapon tests, including underground tests, everywhere and by everyone, would contribute to the reduction of the nuclear arms race and to the further relaxation of international tensions,

"Noting the need to complement the international agreements concluded so far in the area of reducing the nuclear arms race for a radical solution of the problem of banning nuclear-weapon tests,

"Recalling the aim proclaimed in the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time,

"Reaffirming its conviction of the need to exert new efforts to achieve an international agreement on the cessation of all types of nuclear-weapon tests,

"Believing that a moratorium on peaceful nuclear explosions along with a ban of all nuclear-weapon tests for a definite period will facilitate the achievement of such an agreement,

/...

"1. Reaffirms the need for an early conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests;

"2. Notes with satisfaction that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have begun negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and expresses the hope that these negotiations will lead in the near future to the conclusion of a relevant international agreement;

"3. Calls upon other nuclear-weapon States to join in the efforts aimed at achieving the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests;

"4. Notes that non-nuclear States, within the framework of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and elsewhere, may make a substantial contribution towards solving the problem of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests,

"5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session the item entitled 'Conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests'."

7. On 11 November, Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden and Venezuela submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/32/L.23) under item 40. It read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Reaffirming its conviction that the cessation of nuclear-weapon testing would be in the supreme interest of mankind, both as a major step towards controlling the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons and to relieve the deep apprehension concerning the harmful consequences of radioactive contamination for the health of present and future generations,

"Recalling the determination of the parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, and the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons expressed in those Treaties to continue negotiations to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time,

"Recalling its previous resolutions on the subject,

"Taking note of that part of the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament relating to the question of a comprehensive test-ban treaty,

"1. Reiterates its grave concern that in spite of the Assembly's repeated resolutions related to nuclear-weapons testing in all environments, adopted by very large majorities, such testing has continued unabated during the past year;

/...

"2. Notes with satisfaction that negotiations have begun among three nuclear-weapon States with a view to the drafting of a comprehensive test-ban agreement;

"3. Declares that the conclusion of such an agreement and its opening for signature would be the best possible augury for the success of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament;

"4. Urges the three nuclear-weapon States to expedite their negotiations with a view to bringing them to a positive conclusion as soon as possible, and to use their best endeavours to transmit the results for full consideration by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament no later than the beginning of its spring session;

"5. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to take up the question with the utmost urgency, with a view to the completion of a draft treaty for consideration and action by the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978;

"6. Once again proclaims as its objective the complete cessation of all nuclear and thermonuclear tests in all environments;

"7. Decides to include on the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session an item relating to the implementation of this resolution."

8. On 18 November, after consultations among the sponsors of the two draft resolutions, both texts were withdrawn and replaced by a single draft resolution (A/C.1/32/L.37) submitted under items 40 and 49 and sponsored by Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Sweden and Venezuela. The resolution was introduced by New Zealand at the Committee's 38th meeting on the same date.

9. At the 38th meeting, on 18 November, Nigeria orally proposed the following amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.37:

(a) In operative paragraph 3, the words "such an agreement" should be replaced by the words "a comprehensive test-ban Treaty";

(b) In operative paragraph 4, the words "to use their best endeavours to" should be deleted.

10. At its 40th meeting, on 21 November, the Committee proceeded to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.37. The amendments by Nigeria were not pressed to a vote. Draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.37 was adopted by a recorded vote of 89 to 1, with 1 abstention (see para. 11 below). The voting was as follows: 3/

3/ After the vote, Ireland stated that it wished to record its vote as being in favour. Afghanistan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Cyprus, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay stated that they would have voted in favour, had they been present. Albania stated that it wished to record its vote as being against.

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia

Against: China

Abstaining: France

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

11. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Urgent need for cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests and conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive test ban

Conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its conviction that the cessation of nuclear-weapon testing by all States would be in the supreme interest of mankind, both as a major step towards controlling the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons and to relieve the deep apprehension concerning the harmful consequences of radio-active contamination for the health of present and future generations,

Recalling the determination of the parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water 4/ and the Treaty

4/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 480, No. 6964, p. 43.

on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 5/ expressed in those Treaties to continue negotiations to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the subject,

Taking note of that part of the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament 6/ relating to the question of a comprehensive test-ban treaty,

1. Reiterates its grave concern that in spite of the repeated resolutions of the General Assembly related to nuclear-weapons testing in all environments, adopted by very large majorities, such testing has continued unabated during the past year;
2. Notes with satisfaction that negotiations have begun among three nuclear-weapon States with a view to the drafting of an agreement on the subject of this resolution;
3. Declares that the conclusion of such an agreement and its opening for signature would be the best possible augury for the success of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in May/June 1978;
4. Urges the three nuclear-weapon States to expedite their negotiations with a view to bringing them to a positive conclusion as soon as possible and to use their best endeavours to transmit the results for full consideration by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by the beginning of its spring session;
5. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to take up the agreed text resulting from the negotiations referred to in paragraph 4 above with the utmost urgency, with a view to the submission of a draft treaty to the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament;
6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session an item relating to the implementation of the present resolution.

5/ Resolution 2373 (XXII), annex.

6/ Official Records of the United Nations, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/32/27).