

Canadian Delegation that this new presentation of United States proposals is a valuable step forward in the process of negotiation. As we understand it this is not a rigid, detailed programme of disarmament; it is, rather, a broad outline of the present United States position, realistically stated in the light of all the present conditions, and intended as a basis for further negotiation. . . .

As my Delegation indicated in the general debate at the opening of this Session of the General Assembly, we are prepared to give careful and objective consideration to the latest Soviet proposals. I have already indicated that, so far as it goes, we welcome the new Soviet position on aerial inspection, even though the particular limited application of aerial photography proposed by the U.S.S.R. may involve some serious difficulties, including the implication of the continued division of Germany. The Soviet Government also continues to propose the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons in spite of the fact that according to an explicit statement of the Soviet Delegation itself, it is not, at the present time, technically possible to devise any adequate system for inspecting such a prohibition. Incidentally in view of Soviet attacks on the pacific intentions and the good faith of Western powers, their confidence in the willingness of those powers to make effective such an unconditional, uncontrollable prohibition is as surprising as it is unconvincing. . . .

Nuclear Explosions

I now wish to turn to one particular aspect of the armament question which has become a cause of considerable concern and anxiety to many people. I refer to the effects of atomic radiation and particularly to the possible consequences of nuclear test explosions. In his statement in the general debate at the beginning of this session of the Assembly, the Foreign Minister of Norway proposed that there should be established some system of United Nations registration of nuclear test explosions. In the present debate in the Political Committee we have heard with serious concern and with sympathy the moving remarks of the distinguished representative of Japan. The representative of the United Kingdom also touched on this matter. He suggested that the disarmament sub-committee investigate the possibility of agreeing on the limitation of nuclear test explosions either as part of a disarmament plan or separately. We also have before us the proposal tabled by the representative of the U.S.S.R. calling for a cessation of tests of these weapons.

The Canadian Delegation included some comments on this question in our statement in Plenary in the general debate on December 5, and our position remains as set forth in that statement. While it may not be realistic to propose an immediate ban on all such tests, nevertheless we are of the opinion, after weighing the best scientific evidence available to us—which is by no means complete or conclusive—that the United Nations must

give close and serious consideration to the whole question of nuclear tests. Last year the General Assembly established a scientific committee on the effects of atomic radiation, the duty of which is to keep under close observation the whole problem of the levels of radiation and possible effects on man and his environment. We look to this Committee, as it accumulates the data supplied to it and makes its analyses and assessments, to serve an important role. It could be the source of objective and valid scientific conclusions which could aid all concerned in avoiding decisions or action which might prove harmful.

In any agreement on nuclear tests we must be guided by two considerations: first, the necessity of securing authoritative, accurate information on the effects of such tests, scientifically and objectively determined; and second, the requirement to give reasonable satisfaction to the needs of defence in a dangerously divided world!

In our earlier statement to the Assembly, which I have mentioned, we expressed the hope that the countries concerned might be able to agree on some annual or periodic limit on the volume of radio activity to be generated by test explosions. One of the recommendations of the proposed draft resolution of which I have just spoken is that the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee give prompt attention to the whole problem of measures for cessation or limitation of nuclear test explosions.

There is, however, a further draft resolution before the Committee which deals only with the question of advance registration of nuclear test explosions, that is to say, with the proposal made in Plenary by the Foreign Minister of Norway. This resolution stands in the name of Norway as well as of Japan and Canada.

The proposal incorporated in this resolution is inspired by a belief that it may be better to do now what is possible and feasible with respect to nuclear test explosions, rather than to do nothing at all because it is not possible to take more far-reaching action. If a proposal of this kind can be worked out, we would, for the first time, have moved, if only one step, away from dead centre of this whole problem.

Our resolution recommends that urgent attention be given to establishing, as a preliminary step, a system for registration with the United Nations of nuclear test explosions. The resolution also requests the Secretary-General and the Radiation Committee to cooperate with the states concerned in this registration system with a view to keeping under constant observation the world situation regarding present and expected radiation. This would, I repeat, be only a preliminary step, but I am certain it would be an important preliminary step and I hope that it too will be given most serious consideration.

In conclusion, I hope that all the proposals that have been submitted to this Committee