

continued testing improve the security of any nation? In the short term, it may be claimed that nuclear testing is required in order to effect or restore a balance in weapon power. But is there any reason to think that national security can be maintained over the years in this way? In my view, there is not. A protracted competition in this sphere -- between super-powers already armed to a degree hardly imaginable -- can only increase international tensions, and the ultimate danger of nuclear war. The major nuclear powers are themselves in agreement that continued testing increases the pace of the armaments race. In a joint statement released last August 27 by the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the President of the U.S.A., we read the following sentences: "The U.S.A. and the U.K. cannot emphasize too strongly the urgency we attach to the problem of ending all nuclear testing once and for all. For the safety and security of all of us this deadly competition must be halted and we again urge the Soviet Government to join with us in meaningful action to make this necessity a reality".

The Soviet Position

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. has been equally firm in spelling out the grave consequences of continued testing. In a letter addressed by him to Prime Minister Macmillan in April of this year, he wrote as follows: "Throughout the world the peoples are justly expressing their indignation not only because nuclear tests lead to the fouling of the atmosphere and may in some degree have a harmful effect on peoples' health and their moral and physical condition, but also -- and this is the most important point -- because the race to build up nuclear weapons will be accelerated even more by the new series of experimental nuclear explosions".

Clearly, then, dangers of further experimentation in this field are admitted. It may have grave effects both on our own health and on future generations; it is ultimately a threat to the security of mankind; it increases international tensions and reduces the possibility of agreements in other fields. If this is the belief of the leading statesmen of the nuclear powers, why can they not stop the tests? But it is not only the responsibility of the nuclear powers; nuclear testing affects all nations; to deal with it is the responsibility of all of us represented here. Can we not, as rational beings, act in our own interest?

Advantages of a Ban

The advantages of a test-cessation agreement are many. Such an agreement would not give a special advantage to this or that country or alliance, but would be in the interest of all humanity. Let me summarize the truly impressive gains which a nuclear-test ban agreement would achieve.

First, as the major powers themselves recognize, it would significantly reduce radiation hazards and improve international security.