Twenty-ninth session
FIRST COMMITTEE
Agenda item 35

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Mexico: working paper containing the text of the statements made by the representatives of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the 1577th meeting of the First Committee, held on 31 May 1968, concerning the provisions of article V of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which relate to the conclusion of a special international agreement on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

At the opening of the 1577th meeting of the First Committee, held on 31 May 1968, the Chairman of the Committee said:

"Before calling on the first speaker, I am indeed pleased to announce to the Committee that the Co-Chairmen of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament have informed me that they have agreed to certain amendments to the draft treaty which is at present before the Committee. 1/ I am sure that we all agree that this is a very positive and encouraging step in response to certain desires mentioned during the general debate. The Co-Chairmen, I am sure, have taken it in the spirit of the United Nations, in recognition of the validity of those desires, and to allay the anxiety of some members of the Committee."

When the representatives of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics spoke at the same meeting, each of them referred to his interpretation of the provisions of the revised text of article V of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular to the question of concluding the "special international agreement" mentioned in that article. The full text of the relevant parts of the two statements is reproduced below in this working paper:


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(1) Relevant paragraphs of the statement made by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

"Thirdly, article V of the treaty, dealing with peaceful nuclear explosions, now contains a number of amendments, defining more clearly the rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to use nuclear explosions for the development of their national economy, both through an appropriate international body and pursuant to bilateral agreements. The article now specifies that negotiations on the subject of the potential benefits to States from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions pursuant to a special international agreement or agreements, through an appropriate international body, shall commence as soon as possible after the present treaty enters into force.

"Naturally, the necessary preparatory work can begin before the treaty has entered into force. We take it that the corresponding international agreement or agreements will be based on certain general principles which are in accord with the treaty and which will govern the procedures whereby any benefits from the applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear-weapon States. Such procedures must, of course, be worked out with the very broad participation of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the treaty interested in the use of nuclear explosions for their national economic development.

"In addition, this article now includes a provision stressing that the peaceful application of nuclear explosions in accordance with this treaty must be made 'under appropriate international observation', with a view to excluding any possibility of peaceful nuclear explosions being used by non-nuclear-weapon States to obtain the special information needed for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

"During the debate, certain States sought to cast aspersions on the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by alleging that it would deprive non-nuclear-weapon States of an opportunity to use nuclear explosions for peaceful development. I should like to emphasize once again that this interpretation bears no relation to the aims and purposes of the article on peaceful nuclear explosions. However, in order to remove any doubt in that regard, article V now contains a revised formulation which, in clear and precise treaty language, not only reaffirms the right of non-nuclear-weapon States to enjoy the benefits of any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions, but sets forth the practical ways in which this can be done.

"The full text of article V of the draft treaty, in its new version, was read out by the Secretary of the First Committee at the beginning of this meeting, and there is therefore no need for me to do so once again.

"Taken together, the amendments made to those parts of the treaty and of the General Assembly resolution on non-proliferation dealing with the peaceful applications of nuclear energy lend added strength to the international basis..."
for broad and varied co-operation between nuclear and non-nuclear countries, between States greatly advanced in nuclear research and States which are only beginning such research.

"The non-proliferation treaty will promote the economic, scientific and technological progress of non-nuclear countries. It will be of particular importance in this regard for those developing countries which are not yet in a position to carry out independently large-scale projects in applying nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and which therefore need assistance from States that are more advanced in these matters. If the non-proliferation treaty is concluded, the non-nuclear countries parties to it will be given broad access to the benefits of scientific and technological progress in the peaceful uses of the atom. The treaty imposes precise obligations on the developed countries with regard to lending assistance to developing countries in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy."

(2) Relevant paragraphs of the statement made by the representative of the United States of America:

"I come next to article V, which relates to peaceful nuclear explosions. This article has been strengthened in several ways in our desire to respond to concerns voiced by various delegations, especially those in Latin America. Among other things, the new language binds the parties explicitly and emphatically:

'... to take appropriate measures to ensure that, in accordance with this Treaty, under appropriate international observation and through appropriate international procedures, potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty ...'.

"It will be noted that the revised text makes it clear that States may obtain the benefits from peaceful application of nuclear explosions:

'... pursuant to a special international agreement or agreements, through an appropriate international body with adequate representation of non-nuclear-weapon States.'

"This language contemplates a basic agreement defining the functions of the appropriate international body and holds open the possibilities of a series of separate international agreements dealing with particular projects.

"It is important that the primary agreement - defining the function of the international body - be negotiated promptly. For this reason we have added the sentence that:

'Negotiations on this subject shall commence as soon as possible after the Treaty enters into force.'

/...
"We trust that this language will remove any doubts about the intention of the nuclear-weapon States which are in a position to do so to provide such services under appropriate international observation and at the earliest practical moment.

"Let me add, lest there be any doubt on this score, that the provision concerning negotiations is not intended in any way to preclude preparatory consideration of this matter before the treaty enters into force. We assume that all interested States will wish to begin studies and consultations promptly. Many States, including the United States, will promptly begin or continue studies and consultations already under way. I should also note that this subject is on the agenda of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States.

"We are grateful to the head of the delegation of Mexico, Mr. García Robles, and his colleagues of the Latin American working group, Ambassador Turbay Ayala of Colombia and Ambassador Piñera of Chile in particular, for suggestions which formed the basis for these changes, and also to other delegations that expressed their great interest in them."