Sixteenth session
FIRST COMMITTEE
Agenda items 75 and 72

CONTINUATION OF SUSPENSION OF NUCLEAR AND THERMO-NUCLEAR TESTS
AND OBLIGATION OF STATES TO REFRAIN FROM THEIR RENEWAL

THE URGENT NEED FOR A TREATY TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS UNDER
EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

Letter dated 24 October 1961 from the Permanent Representative
of Sweden addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I am transmitting herewith a statement made by the Prime Minister of Sweden,
Mr. Tage Erlander, in the Swedish Parliament on 24 October 1961, regarding the
present nuclear weapons test series in the Soviet Union.

I have the honour to request that this statement be circulated as soon as
possible to all Members of the United Nations as an official General Assembly
document.

Please accept, etc.

(Signed) Aagda RGSELL
Permanent Representative of Sweden
to the United Nations
STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SWEDEN,
MR. TAGE ERLANDER, ON 24 OCTOBER 1961

On the basis of a strong public opinion the Swedish Government has always expressed regrets over the nuclear weapons tests which the great Powers have conducted. In doing so, we have referred to the fall-out risks inherent in these tests, to the risks for a further spread of nuclear weapons, and to the very alarming perspectives for humanity which the arms race, concentrated on the most horrible devices of destruction, create. We greeted with great satisfaction the decision of the Soviet Union in 1958 to discontinue nuclear weapons tests, a decision in which later on the United States and the United Kingdom joined. We looked forward with great hopes to the Genève negotiations. These negotiations opened a possibility to put a definite stop to nuclear weapons tests. A positive result would have been an important step on the road to general disarmament. Therefore we expressed our deep regrets when the Soviet Union resumed nuclear weapons tests. Also the United States have unfortunately decided to start such tests.

The decision of the Soviet Union to explode a 50-megaton bomb during the present test series has for obvious reasons caused great alarm in Sweden and in all the Nordic countries. An explosion close to the frontiers of our country of a bomb of this unprecedented size could under unfavourable conditions create considerable risks for a radio-active fall-out with direct harmful effects. In this emergency situation the Swedish Government, considering the risks for its people, has of course tried all means available to make an appeal of greatest possible effect to the Soviet Union not to perform the foreseen tests.

The Swedish Government felt that the opportunity given by the present session of the General Assembly of the United Nations should be used. At the end of last week Denmark submitted a draft resolution, supported by Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Japan and Canada, containing an appeal to the Soviet Union to reconsider its decision to test a 50-megaton bomb. The draft resolution did not imply a judgement on our part on the various proposals for a solution of the nuclear weapons test problem which are being discussed. It was - as the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Undén declared during the debate in the Political Committee of the United Nations "a spontaneous expression of the alarm and anxiety that public
opinion in our countries feel in view of the risks emerging from the very considerable radio-active fall-out which we fear will result from the foreseen, gigantic test". The unanimous opinion of the Swedish public in this question has thus been clearly expressed to the Soviet Union as well as to world opinion. We wanted the full authority of the world Organization behind this appeal. We also wanted to stress that the big nuclear weapons tests are something of concern to everybody. Radio-active fall-out does not respect national frontiers. People in all countries are alarmed by the fall-out risks which may result from such tests. They expect that the nuclear Powers pay due regard to them. We hope therefore that the draft resolution will be widely supported by the Members of the United Nations.

While this proposal is still being dealt with in the Political Committee, we have received the news that the Soviet Union has exploded a bomb of extremely powerful effect. For this reason, I have sent today the following telegram to Premier Khrushchev: "The Swedish people feel alarm and anxiety in view of the present nuclear weapons tests of unprecedented effect, close to the frontiers of our country. The Government of Sweden has given expression to these feelings both in the United Nations and by other means. I express an urgent appeal to you that no further such tests should be made."

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