FIRST COMMITTEE

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Chairman

Mr. MATSCH (Austria)

Question of French nuclear tests in the Sahara \[68\]

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AGENDA ITEM 68

QUESTION OF FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS IN THE SAHARA (A/4183)

The CHAIRMAN: We are beginning today consideration of the second item on our agenda, entitled "Question of French Nuclear tests in the Sahara". So far, there is only one document relevant to that item, namely document A/4183.

Before proceeding with our work, I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the fact that we still have seven items on our agenda, while the target date for closure of this session is less than five weeks away. It has taken us more than three weeks to complete a single item. It is obvious that if we do not accelerate considerably our rate of progress we shall have difficulty in finishing our agenda by 5 December.

I would therefore urge the members of the Committee to put their names on the speakers' list as early as possible in consideration of any new item so that we may fully utilize the time at our disposal. If we had at this stage to cancel meetings for lack of speakers, we would soon be obliged to hold either evening meetings or meetings on Saturdays. I am sure that members of the Committee share my desire to avoid that possibility.
Mr. BENHIDMA (Morroco) (interpretation from French): This being the first opportunity I have had of addressing this Committee, I apologize for being rather late in expressing my warm congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. I should like to congratulate also the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Velazquez, and the Rapporteur, Mr. Fekini, whose experience and outstanding abilities, along with your own, will surely make our deliberations successful.

The agenda of our Committee calls for the examination of important and sometimes complex questions, but it is a pleasure to note that our proceedings have begun rather happily. My delegation rejoices at the historic unanimity achieved at the conclusion of the debate on general and complete disarmament. My delegation hopes that the same spirit that brought about that unanimity in regard to the preservation of humanity from the scourge of war will bring about a similar attitude in regard to the danger of nuclear explosions which the African continent is menaced within the very near future.

In the various civilizations, and despite diversities of moral conscience, there is a category of individuals who do not like to contest an issue in court. The very fact of appearing before a magistrate, even when they are the aggrieved parties, is embarrassing for them. The same applies to some States which in their relations with their neighbours are reluctant to plead their cases, even in order to defend themselves. Morocco deplores having to do so today. It is not in the tradition of my country to have recourse to international bodies to resolve conflicts between ourselves and other Powers. In all circumstances Morocco has consistently proclaimed its belief in the solution of problems by negotiation. Very important problems, some of them imposed on us by the process of our national liberation, have gone unsolved because Morocco still hopes to be able to solve them through friendly dialogue with its partners.

The request by my Government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to include on the agenda of this session the question of French nuclear tests in the Sahara was an act of last resort after the Moroccan Government had made a number of representations to France which had been met by a pure and simple rejection. Between 24 February and 17 July 1959 five notes were handed to the French Government in which Morocco protested the proposed nuclear tests.
in the vicinity of its Territory and drew the attention of France to the grave dangers which such tests held for the neighbouring populations. Other countries of Africa, the Orient and Asia likewise protested and expressed their concern. In the month of August the independent States of Africa met in Monrovia and unanimously reiterated their condemnation of these tests in a motion which they adopted. But France held to its decision, and merely declared that Monrovia was 2700 kilometres from Reggane and that precautions would be taken to protect the populations and territories in the vicinity.

I would refer to serious studies and irrefutable evidence establishing the certainty, and the reality of the danger and the nature of the harmful effects to which the African populations would be exposed.

My delegation reserves the right to intervene in this debate whenever it deems it necessary to do so in order to develop this aspect of the problem. But I should like to dwell for a moment on other considerations, human, social and political in nature, which must place the question in its proper perspective, because we are not here dealing with a laboratory experiment, and this discussion cannot be considered as merely a scientific controversy.

My country did not wait until it was directly involved to denounce the danger of these atomic tests and to condemn them. Ever since our admission to membership in this Organization, our attitude to this problem has been clear. We have participated in all the appeals and all the decisions and we share the regrets at seeing the former go unanswered and the second unacted upon. The attitude of the Governments of the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom and of their peoples, in proceeding with nuclear tests or accepting them, derives from a certain conception of responsibility on the part of their leaders and a certain notion of discipline and spirit of devotion on the part of their peoples. But these three Powers engaged in tests on their own territories, in the midst of their own peoples.
This does not apply to the tests envisaged in the Sahara. The Reggane region is situated in a contested area in an Africa which is in the midst of a process of development, where the situation of France permits it in many cases to make and unmake frontiers. The conflicting claims, unfortunately, have not begun to be settled, and, even if we do not wish to prejudge the results, the differences are still valid.
At the present stage of development, it may not be claimed that it is a territory of the Community that is involved and that consent has been acquired, notwithstanding certain protests or public warnings which may have been made. This argument, I say, cannot be opposed to our view, firstly, because it is formally invalid, and, secondly, because, even if it were not formally invalid, the consent of some to incur risks cannot commit those who refuse to incur those risks, especially those who are more directly endangered.

A section of the Press, about two years ago, described the Sahara as a gloomy and uninhabited desert. The aim of this conditioning campaign, to some extent, was to prepare minds in Africa and elsewhere to accept without difficulty and in due course the announcement, first, of the existence of guided missile bases, and then of the testing in the Tanzezrouft of the first French nuclear bomb.

Unfortunately, these journalists, who suddenly set themselves up as geographers or sociologists or even as economists, were far from being excellent journalists. Reganne is not in the Tanzezrouft desert but in the southern extremity of Touat. It is situated in the centre of a great arc of valleys between Southeast Morocco and Mzab, one of the most fertile oasis regions in the Sahara. It is easier to falsify history, but to falsify geographic data in a region seems to be somewhat less easy. From two sides of these valleys, those of Gourara, of Touat and of Tidikelt, there are rich palm groves, substantial towns called Ksours and even old monasteries. In this region there live 200,000 persons -- Negroes, Arabs and Israelites -- whose means of subsistence are agriculture, weaving and commerce, for the region was an historic stopping point of the Sudanese caravans which constituted the only means of commerce and cultural communication between North Africa and the northern areas.

To the east, this geographic entity is washed by the water courses coming from Tademait; to the south, by the water courses of the Hoggar mountains and of the Moroccan Atlas. Subterranean rivers bring the waters of the Ksour mountain range into the area. This irrigation feeds 150 kilometres of palm groves in Touat and constitutes the livelihood of 17,000 inhabitants. This is called the road of dates, whose production is over 200,000 quintals. There are other crops, such as barley, tobacco, henna, pimentos, as well as pasturage for camels, sheep and goats. The prosperity of this oasis is due not only to the privileged position at the bottom of an irrigated basin. For centuries, the inhabitants have planted, cultivated and irrigated at the cost of immense efforts.
It will be easily understood that we are deeply pained by the intention to carry out atomic explosions in this green area which, according to Mr. Augustin Bernard of the Academy of Sciences, is unique in all the Sahara.

How can it be alleged that a region populated to such a degree and so vital for the Sahara is a desert region in which the explosion of an atom bomb would have no consequences?

How can it be alleged that precautionary measures will be taken to avoid harmful effects from the test? Certainly, the notion of precautionary measures implies the notion of danger or at least of risk. It does not seem that in the present state of advancement of atomic science, and even among the most advanced Powers in this field, the certain dangers have been eliminated, dangers which are either immediate or at least long-range.

I shall cite in a moment concrete examples of what Einstein called "the slow torture of radioactive dust and rain".

We may be told about precautionary measures which would consist of totally displacing the population of the area and settling it definitively elsewhere. The Americans have transferred several hundred inhabitants from Bikini and Eniwetok and settled them at the southern end of the Marshall Islands group. I shall not dwell on the inhuman aspects of this forced exile of a population of a trust territory. Will France repeat this phenomenon in the Sahara on a much larger scale? By what right will it do so? Even conceding that such an action were legitimate and practicable, would the region be preserved from the destruction of all animal and vegetable life?

We may receive the answer that if some islands were made to disappear and if some peoples were moved in the Pacific, a series of cases may be made to disappear and several hundred thousand farmers and nomads made to move without bothering about the fact that this island of life and activity constitutes perhaps one of the most beautiful promises of the intensive population of the Sahara and its development.

Moreover, at the beginning of the nuclear tests, numerous scientists and specialists concentrated their observations on external radiation. Since that time, studies and observations have established that certain radioactive substances introduce themselves into human, animal and plant organisms and emit internal radiation. One of these substances is strontium 90.
I do not claim the capacity to develop before this Committee a scientific subject which is so astruse. However, there are certain aspects of this question which are accessible even to laymen. All scientists are in agreement that this substance did not exist on the earth and that its presence is the direct result of nuclear explosions. Today, we are in a position to evaluate the rate of accumulation of strontium 90 in the human skeleton following nuclear explosions. For that purpose, it would be appropriate to study the concentration of this substance in the atmosphere, in water and in the soil.

Data based on calculations made in Great Britain and Japan fortunately permit us to conclude that the contamination of the atmosphere is not likely to become a worrisome problem in all fallout zones. On the other hand, in desert regions, owing to the absence of rain, radioactive dust is not washed away. Professor Libby has estimated that, if explosions continue at the same pace as during the pre-1955 period, the maximum tolerance will be reached in 1965.

Other computations show that strontium 90 is deposited by rain on the leaves of plants, whence it is brought to the soil by falling leaves as well as through the roots of certain plants, and such plants can subsequently serve as nourishment for domestic animals or directly for human consumption.

In addition to water, we receive a lot of calcium, and at the same time of strontium, through milk or milk products. Infants and young children get them essentially through these products. The content of strontium 90 in powdered milk from the Yeovil installation was analysed for a number of years, and a graph shows to what extent it increased between 1954 and 1956.

The dose of strontium 90 thus absorbed is fixed in the osseous tissues of man, and especially of infants and young children. Studies made in England from 1955 to 1957 show that among young children the level of concentration was ten times higher than among adults.

It is therefore clear that a minimum quantity of this radioactive substance accumulated in plants or animals, being part of our regular food, is sufficient to create a certain danger.
The climatic and geographic conditions prevailing in the Sahara unfortunately have the characteristics of a most dangerous situation. The infrequency of rain has the result that the slow fallout arrives on the ground charged to the maximum with radioactivity. The density of vegetation around the cases and in the palm groves constitutes an element which retains this radioactivity and transmits to the soil radioactive substances such as strontium 90 or radioactive iodine 131, excessive irradiation of which into the thyroid or other parts of the body may bring about cancer.
On the other hand, the natural food of the population of the Sahara, which is milk, cereals, dates and meats of animals, is among the products which are most susceptible to contamination by fall-out, since through numerous watering places it would be carried from well to well and transmitted through the subterranean waterways which constitute one of the most precious reserves of life in this region.

We may add to this the action of winds, the continental trade winds, which blow through the winter and spring in the northeast at a speed of 200 kilometres an hour and would transport the contaminated sand towards Mauritania, Sakia Al Hemra and the Canary Islands; the maritime trade winds, which follow the north winds, would carry the dust across the Mediterranean; the east winds blow in the southern regions of the Sahara and Sudan.

May I finally point out -- and this is not the least important point -- the existence of insects and grasshoppers which come in from the south at the beginning of spring and which almost regularly come down in various regions of Morocco and would be capable of transporting radioactive particles. It is useful in this connexion to recall that the area of extension of this scourge covers a so-called permanent reproduction zone of this species between the 22nd and 18th parallel, which covers the area from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf.

I have some idea of the nature of the precautionary measures which may be taken and which will be mentioned here. It will be argued that the experiments will be conducted in a zone where everything living will have been removed. These precautionary measures are indeed indispensable in order to avoid the atrocious deaths which occur at the time of the explosion, but we know from the experience of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Bikini and Eniwetock that the effects of the explosions are not only those which occur simultaneously with or immediately following the explosions. The kinetic and atomic effects have a limited duration and their field of action may sometimes be clearly delineated. The dangers derived from these effects may be easily avoided, but this does not, unfortunately, apply to the radioactive phenomena which take place in two periods, the second one being marked by the atomization of the fragments of the fissionable materials which are transformed into very fine dust and gaseous radioactive bodies.
These are the elements which fall down more or less slowly through the wash action of rains or winds and which contaminate animal and vegetable matter long after the explosion itself has been forgotten about.

The victims of the bombs are not only the bodies which are collected in the ruins and among the shambles, but also the incalculable mass of the wounded, the burned and the irradiated who remain maimed for life and who live on in clinics and hospitals in an agonizing life to the satisfaction of the professors who may marvel at a beautiful specimen of cancer or leukemia.

A book published by the Atomic Energy Commission of the United States, entitled *The Biological Peril to Man of Carbon 14 from Nuclear Weapons*, estimates that the nuclear tests carried out through the month of September 1958 would give rise to 100,000 major defectives of a physical or psychological nature, 380,000 cases of still-born children and of infant mortality, and 900,000 cases of embryonic or neo-natal death. One may minimize the importance of these figures by claiming that they represent a small percentage of the world population or that they occur over a long period. Some may also claim that the quantity of radioactivity which is now scattered will not be increased very much by the explosion of one additional bomb.

This would be a simple way of begging the question and of sidestepping the moral question which arises. It is also begging the question to affirm that the real danger is reduced by the precautionary measures or that the dose will be admissible. The same group of scientists who drafted the report of the Atomic Energy Commission of the United States stated: "As surely as a bomb is exploded, thousands of persons will fall sick and will die in some part of the world as a result of this inconsiderate action."

All these data are universally known, but the French experts are silent and give no consideration to the alarm of the peoples of Africa or to their protestations. France wants to have a bomb. This is a matter of prestige. My country profoundly believes that individuals and States have only the friends that they deserve. We have never wanted to be the friends of a weak France relegated to an unworthy place in international relations. For more than a century Africa has participated in more than just a passing way in France's role
in the international arena. But all States, large and small, have a prestige to keep and to consolidate. We do not think that France wants deliberately to deny the right of African States to this dignity -- the grandeur of a State begins where its respect for others begins.

For reasons which my delegation does not have to emphasize, France has not found itself in the same position as certain other States in the field of atomic weapons. Atomic power has become in this new hierarchy of values a new criterion of authority in international affairs. Does France consider that it must catch up in order to strengthen its position? We do not see any objection to that. Publicity concerning the bomb coincides with certain events in Africa and with certain international activity of high interest to France -- this does not bother us. But that the bomb should be the instrument of this policy and should be tested on African territory -- this is certainly bound to shock profoundly the African conscience.

I have stated that Africa has participated in various ways in France's development and in her international role. This is a historical fact that one may recall without pretention. At the time of colonial conquest, France set up an empire in Africa where her bourgeoisie and her army found a field of action, the former for business enterprises and the latter in order to establish a tradition when wars took place.

The Africans have consented to sacrifices which assured military successes. Today, evolution is occurring in a new way in Africa, which has chosen to carry out its destiny in peace and prosperity. French intentions which today form the object of our concern result only from the persistence of the concept of domination, which France does not seem to have removed yet.

May I say, quoting a certain important French personality, "Africa has been a credit opened by history to France and France apparently believes that she has not yet exhausted this line of credit." A new line of credit may be opened for the benefit of France, but this time it will be by the will of the Africans themselves. Instead of adapting itself to this new situation in Africa, France is mortgaging this future which is so full of promise. The peoples of Africa unanimously ask France to forego the explosion of its bomb. The refusal to take into consideration these concerns, fears and requests would rather appear like a challenge or a defiance.
If this bomb is exploded, the very fact that the explosion will take place in Africa would be sufficient, in the eyes of the Africans, to identify France as the nation which will have introduced the destructive atom on their continent.

Mr. NOCH (France) (interpretation from French): I would like to reply now to the representative of Morocco and, at the same time, I would like to limit as much as possible the scope of our discussion. Other representatives will make known their points of view, and none will be surprised if, from this moment, in keeping with what the representative of Morocco has just done, I reserve my right to reply at the end of this debate to the views that may be expressed and which I may deem it necessary to take up.

I shall maintain the serenity which, I am sure, will also underlie the reply to the statement made by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Morocco.

I shall not only congratulate him and personally express my satisfaction at his perfect knowledge and use of French, which might serve as an example to many French people, but I should also like to thank him for having made his case so calmly and for having maintained courtesy in the defence of a subject that is very dear to the heart of his Government. But I believe that I can show that this problem is not as serious as he would try to make out.
I wonder whether it is necessary for me to say that I shall try to keep my answer in the same spirit of cordiality and friendship that exists between our two countries. There are numerous links that both of us are equally eager to maintain and to multiply. Our momentary difference, which I trust I shall be able to overcome, cannot and should not cast shadows on our friendship. It is basically a subject that has been outlined by Mr. Benhima, and which I do not want to go into here, and that is the question of the territorial claims which were contained in his statement. It is because these claims are the subject of notes from the Moroccan Government to the French Government that the latter has rejected them.

Now, my first reason for leaving this subject aside is of a procedural nature. We are discussing, in accordance with the agenda, French nuclear tests in the Sahara. Our Chairman will no doubt call me to order if I overstep the limits of procedure.

My second reason for doing that is contained in the Charter itself, and that is, that the General Assembly is not competent to deal with the matter. There is a third reason of a practical nature, which emanates from the previous one. The representative of Morocco cannot expect the Assembly to impose a procedure of conciliation or of arbitration, nor that it has a resolution on such a subject. Therefore, why submit a claim against a neighbouring State that prefers to remain a friend. If the Moroccan Government wishes to make such claims, it is hardly from this forum that that claim should come, but diplomatic uses should be applied.

I shall not discuss French sovereignty over the Sahara in general or the place for testing in particular. Nor will I take up the argument of territorial claims regarding atomic explosions.

Now I come to the substance of the debate. I know I have a heavy task ahead of me. I know too how extremely difficult it is to plead a case when objections of an emotional and impassioned nature are ranged against us; when the arguments of reason, of science or even of common sense are up against statements based on hearsay, on beliefs or rash generalizations of scientific data erroneously taken out of context. However, this is the case, and I must ask you to allow reasoning to prevail over sentiment, and knowledge over emotion.
In order to have more time left for other parts of my discussion, I shall confine myself to speaking very briefly on two aspects of the problem. This aspect, first of all: in the absence of a general decision for nuclear disarmament applying to all without distinction, France must proclaim its determination to have no discrimination. The law must be the same for all, if every one is to conform to it. I said this two years ago and I repeated it last year. I believe I am justified in reaffirming it today.

The second point: since France is not creating any risk for the rest of the world -- as I shall demonstrate -- nor is France creating a risk for Africa, is France, from the point of view of its own interests, right or wrong, in equipping itself with nuclear weapons? This, I believe, is a matter which concerns only the French, which the French may discuss among themselves, on which they alone have the right -- basic in every democracy -- to hold different opinions, but which is a matter that has no place whatever in a debate of this nature.

The demonstration, which I shall undertake, forces me to ask for your patience and your goodwill. But I am sure that you will all understand me when I do this. What I am going to try to do is to restore to its true perspective a matter emotionally exaggerated by the propaganda of people making capital out of the nervous state of public opinion. Above all, I intend to demonstrate seriously, objectively, and scientifically -- although in every day language -- to those of our colleagues who have shown particular anxiety as a result of the geographic position of their countries, that their fears are not justified. I quote one of Mr. Benhira's statements: the "certain danger" does not exist. He told us that "the French experts are silent". Well, I shall very modestly and very humbly end my statement, and may I say that one of the French experts sits with me here, but I shall speak for them and repeat what they have said.

The first point which I must emphasize is the very small amount of energy involved in French experimentation in comparison with other experimentations previously carried out. I apologize for having to resort to figures and statistics in order to prove this.
The energy released by all the American, Soviet and British explosions has increased by a very rapid progression. As you know, this energy is measured in terms of the tonnage of a conventional explosive, TNT, which would have an equivalent effect. The average annual amount of energy released during the seven years from 1945 to 1951 was around 110,000 tons of TNT. The passage from the atomic age into the thermonuclear era suddenly raised this average which, during the period from 1952 to 1957, oscillated between 10 million tons and 12 million tons. It finally rose to 30 million tons in 1958. So that the total energy released since 1945 comes to more than 91 million tons in 207 test explosions, 131 of which were carried out by the United States, 55 by the USSR, and 21 by the United Kingdom.

To these totals, which are increasing at a rate that is alarming to the world, and which have still not added appreciably to the amount of radioactivity -- which I shall prove in due course -- to these totals, what would French experimentation add? Certainly less than 100,000 tons, that is to say, less than 1,000th of the total energy already diffused in the atmosphere and stratosphere, and less than 3,000ths of that released during 1958 alone. Now, 1958 we know was the year when the records were broken for both the number of explosions and the amount of energy released by them. Thus our experimentation remains, to all intents and purposes, a negligible factor which France -- I shall return to this later -- does not want to increase. This was the first point that I felt I had to establish in order to reassure all those who, in all good faith, are worried and concerned about our decision.
If I were not afraid, both for our Committee and for my country, of appearing irreverent and being accused of levity, I would use the propaganda that has led to our present debate -- and I shall return to this later -- as an excuse for recalling that other campaign which was immortalized by our fableist, the good La Fontaine, in "The Animals Sick from the Plague". I am sure that many of you are familiar with this little masterpiece, which is 291 years old but always timely. Could it not have been the anticipation of nuclear fall-out which inspired this beginning:

"A malady that spreads terror,
Which the heavens in their wrath,
Invented to punish the crimes done on earth..."

According to the fable, the malady strikes the animals. The lion, the king, calls on them all to make what some would call today their self-criticism, their examination of conscience. We find everything in La Fontaine if we look for it. He confesses to having eaten sheep, and even having gone so far as to eat the shepherd. The tiger and the bear both have quite a lot on their consciences. And then the ass, when his turn comes, admits:

"I cropped from that meadow, a mouthful of grass.'

"At these words, they all heaped reproach on the ass..."

And La Fontaine concludes -- in 1668 and not in 1959:

"And so, as you are mighty or weak,
The judgement of the court will find you white or black."

This is perhaps even more satirical of the entourage of the Roi Soleil than I want to be here.

Having restored to our experimentation its actual and modest dimensions, I wish, in the second place, to measure its general effects in comparison with the various radiations to which man is exposed. This is the scientific realm into which I must ask you to take a brief excursion with me.

We are bathed constantly in radiations belonging to four types, two natural and two artificial.

The first, of astral origin, is essentially cosmic rays and varies according to latitude and especially according to altitude. Their intensity at sea level, along the parallel of Paris and Montreal, is about twenty-eight mrad-units a year -- that is about twenty-eight units -- and rises to forty-two units at an
altitude of 1,500 metres. We are concerned here, as in what follows, with the question of genetic damage, that is, whether there is risk of radiation causing mutations.

The second type of radiation of terrestrial origin is more intense and varies even more from one locality to another. Its average intensity of seventy units a year is, for example, tripled on the granitic soil of French Brittany and multiplied eighteen times in the monazitic areas of the Indian State of Kerala, which is the most irradiated place in the world because of the wealth of thorium there. These basic facts are modified by the type of dwelling that exists: leaving a frame house and moving into a house of brick or concrete increases the dose by about twenty units in England and in Austria -- by about forty if the new home is constructed of granite -- and even by several hundreds in some villages in Kerala where terrestrial radiations in the neighbourhood of 3,000 units a year have been noted.

The third category consists in artificial radiations produced by the X-rays of medical apparatus and by several other sources. Their average strength is about fifty-seven units a year in France and double this and more in the United States with single doses sometimes being extremely high. Just one fluoroscopic examination of the abdomen causes the absorption of considerable doses from a genetic standpoint: sixty-four units for a man, nine times as much for an embryo. Luminous watch dials result in the bodies of their wearers being subjected to twenty-five units of radiation a year, apparently without harmful effect. This year, when I landed in New York, although I was perfectly sure that I was not smuggling in any fissionable material in my luggage, I noticed that one of my suitcases caused a customs agent's Geiger counter to register the maximum. Obviously this suitcase contained a travelling clock with a luminous dial.

There still remain the radiations of the fourth type caused by the nuclear explosions from 1945 to 1958. I want you to ponder these figures. They resulted for the Northern Hemisphere as a whole where the irradiation was the greatest, in an additional dose of two units on an average, and I am not misreading my notes, which is the equivalent of the increase in intensity of cosmic rays to which one is subjected whenever in the course of a walk one ascends 215 metres above sea level. This sort of ascent has never been considered injurious to health.
French experimentation, since it is to add energy which is less than one-thousandth of what has already been released, will be equivalent to two-thousandths of an extra unit -- 0.002 of an extra unit or, if you prefer it in other terms, equivalent to the increase in cosmic rays due to a rise in altitude or ascent of all of twenty centimetres -- 7.9 inches -- that is, the height of a single step in a flight of stairs.

Please excuse this avalanche of figures, but they give the following over-all picture.

Man is exposed to a total of radiations, natural or medical, which may vary greatly; the average is about 150 units a year but, in certain points of the globe -- and I pointed out where these points were -- the figure reaches 3,000 units per year. It is 150 on the average and 3,000 in certain points.
Past explosions have added only two units to this total. French experimentation will increase this total by two-thousandths of a unit. The annual dosage which is commonly held to be completely harmless, even for children and for embryos which are even more sensitive, is about 500 units, which certainly does not prevent the young people of certain areas of the globe from being exposed to natural radiation six times as great. For adults, the dose that is considered harmless is about 5,000 units a year.

In comparing the doses of natural radiation that are received by everyone, without danger, with the doses -- 250 times smaller -- which were produced by all past explosions, and with the dose -- 250,000 times weaker still -- which is expected to result from our experimentation, I believe I have placed on the record certain factors that will provide reassurance to anyone who wishes to judge the matter impartially. I believe that these words and these figures had to be expressed and put before the Committee. This covers also the question of strontium-90 to which Mr. Benhina referred. This is a product of fission, the density of which is rigorously in proportion with the power of the explosion and therefore is negligible in the same proportions as those which I have outlined for the entirety of radiation after French experimentation takes place.

All the figures that I have given have been taken either from the report of our Scientific Committee -- which my colleagues will easily be able to locate -- or else from the Report on Fallout, which was drawn up eleven months later, in May 1959, by the Atomic Energy Commission of the United States. May I say here that this latter document is a very useful complement to the former document and it indicates a slightly higher fallout. But the acceleration seems to be due to the fact that thermonuclear explosions carried out on the Island of Nova Zembla, in the Arctic Ocean, caused a slightly more rapid fallout than that created by the explosions carried out under the sun of the Pacific Ocean or of Australia. In the case of seeming divergencies, I have systematically made it a point to use the most pessimistic data, which I believe strengthens even further the validity of my conclusions.
The Committee will perhaps bear with me for continuing this analysis by answering one objection in advance. I have just studied -- perhaps summarily but carefully nevertheless -- the average, remote and global effects of fallout. Although recognizing their weakness and their harmlessness, some of you may perhaps wonder if more or less near the explosions, there may not be created concentrations that would be dangerous either locally or regionally. I will not evade the question which as yet has not been asked of me but may well be posed, and right now I would like to furnish details on the immediate effects of our experimentation and its effects on nearby regions.

I shall not go into a disclosure of the technical conditions under which this experimentation will be carried out. But I can give the Committee absolute assurance that all necessary precautions have been worked out under the direction of eminent professors, my friends Francis Perrin and Louis Bignardi. All these precautions will be observed. But I do not want you to be led into error by a self-sophism that was stated previously when Mr. Benhima, in perfectly moderate and calm terms, said that the proof of the risks is the fact that precautions are being taken. But if none were being taken, then we could be accused of much.

But it is obvious that when an atomic explosion is to be carried out, precautions have to be taken. So that I shall give you precise and careful information on the immediate radiation that will be produced and, purposely, I shall start from an unfavourable premise and hypothesis. I shall set the stage with the wind blowing at all altitudes up to 12,000 metres, at the speed of 28 kilometres per hour, which you must realize, at all altitudes, is an unusually high wind for that area.

But setting these atmospheric conditions, people who, from the instant of the explosion, would remain an unlimited length of time at a distance of 150 kilometres from the test site in the direction of the wind, or at a distance of 15 kilometres, in a perpendicular direction -- people at these distances would absorb a total of less than 2.5 units, which in this case are called roentgens. Now the dose that is considered safe for workers under the supervision of the French Atomic Energy Commission is 5 units in thirteen weeks, or 5 in a year. I wish to specify too that an evacuation of the populations living near a nuclear establishment in France is only considered when there is a danger of their absorbing 25 units, that is, ten times as much as in the preceding pessimistic hypothesis.
Now contrary to the short geographical excerpt that was read to us earlier, the sector within this range is totally uninhabited. I must ask Mr. Benhima not to jump for his pencil. The sector to which I refer is the polygon of experimentation. I know this polygon, as does he, because I went there; I know that long range of the Touat, and it ends way beyond the experimentation polygon chosen. This polygon is part of the Tanezrouft, or the Desert of Thirst, which the nomads from time immemorial have obviously avoided. A single trail, constructed by us, skirts this sector, and outside of it only specialized vehicles are able to circulate at all. This trail, which is already under guard, will be closed to all traffic while the entire proving ground will be guarded.

The hypothesis that I have just put before you of an unlimited stay -- even the hypothesis of a prolonged stay -- within the area defined above, both of these are purely theoretical and unreal hypotheses.
I have considered the case of particles carried in the air for a short distance. For those projected directly around the explosion site and not on the winds the results are even more insignificant. At the Australian proving ground at Maralinga, no appreciable radio activity carried in this manner was found beyond a twenty-two kilometre radius from the explosion site.

I shall have to ask you to draw from this part of my demonstration the following conclusion: the air and land surveillance before and after the explosion will be extremely close in a region which is virtually uninhabited, so much so that no one will run the risk of unknowingly entering the restricted area of the Saharan proving ground. The proving ground has been so devised and the boundaries of the area have been determined in such a way that there will be no danger -- I repeat, there will be no danger -- outside it. I can assure you that France is familiar with the necessary precautionary measures and knows how to apply them. If, unfortunately, France has had its radiation victims, they were among its scientists and doctors handling X-rays at a time when the effects of these were still not well known, and not -- I repeat, not -- among the 13,200 workers of the Atomic Energy Commission. None of these has been the victim of an accident.

I make this statement soberly and seriously as the father of a young scientist who is an assistant director of an atomic physics laboratory, and as a father whose other son fell before the enemy during the Resistance. I, who am neither a member of a Government or a civil servant, would not have agreed after so many years devoted to the cause of disarmament, to alienate or to damage my independence and to sit this time, on this Committee, if I had the slightest doubt about the harmlessness of our experimentation. Those of you who know me, and I am happy to say that so many do, certainly cannot doubt this.

But I would like to reassure our African colleagues even further by comparing our experimentation with others that have taken place on a larger scale. I have here, and it is being distributed to you even while I speak, a document containing three plans of test sites. I am sorry that it is not possible to project these on a screen. That, perhaps, is one system of study that will have to be introduced here in due course. In each of these plans there
are two circles with radii of 500 and 1,000 kilometres respectively, centred on the site, with the principal cities and their populations indicated.

On the American proving ground in Nevada, which is also in a desert as is the French in the Sahara, numerous explosions were carried out between 1951 and 1955. Forty-five of these involved small and medium amounts of energy. On the plan which has been distributed it will be noted that there are certain large cities which were neither evacuated nor threatened. These include Las Vegas, which, if my memory serves me, has 45,000 inhabitants and is only 118 kilometres from the site. There is the tremendous metropolitan area of Los Angeles with its four million inhabitants, which is only 400 kilometres from the proving ground. Within the 500 kilometre circle there are other cities, and in the circle between 500 kilometres and 1,000 kilometres radii there is the metropolitan area of San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley, with almost 1,500,000 inhabitants, and many other cities, so that more than 10 million city dwellers, without counting the people in the rural areas, live less than 1,000 kilometres from an experimental site adjacent to the American state with a population second only to that of New York.

This site includes two sectors with favourable winds, that is, winds which do not blow on any large city. One is towards the east and the other towards the north, with a total angular opening of not more than sixty degrees.

What was the result of the forty-five explosions in Nevada? In the cities situated between 50 and 100 kilometres from the site, and I hope these figures will be noted too, the increase in irradiation varied in six years, depending on the place, between 0.015 and 1.3 units. The greatest increase remained notably inferior, after six years, to the exposure permissible in a single year for the civilian populations, an exposure that has a considerable margin of security over that tolerated for workers in atomic energy. It can be taken as a proportion of one to ten.

In the cities situated between 500 and 1,000 kilometres from the site of the American proving ground, the radio activity increased in six years by only 11 to 16 hundredths of a unit, that is, less than a sixth of the permanent natural radioactivity of the locality. In the cities at a distance of 1,000 kilometres or more, that is, in the same relation to Nevada as Morocco would be
to our site, the increase at the end of six years and after forty-five explosions varied between 6 thousandths and 5 hundredths of a unit, that is, less than a thousandth of the dose permissible for civilian populations. Our experimentation will have effects which will be much weaker still, and thus they will be completely negligible. Surely this should completely reassure the representative of Morocco and, still more, those of other States which are even further removed than his from our proving ground.

The Soviet region of Lake Balkhash or, to be more precise, the region north of Lake Balkhash, which has been the site of a good many explosions, includes two towns, Rubtsovsk and Semipalatinsk, each with a population of 100,000, and these are situated 100 kilometres from the site. There are nine other towns inside the inner circle and large population centres between the two rings, including Omsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Stalinsk, the capital of Kazakstan, Alma Ata, and Tadzhikistan, Stalinabad, with a population of nearly 10 million people, not including the populations of the sovkhozy and the kolkhozy.
In this area there are two sectors with favourable winds, one towards the west and the southwest, and the other towards the southeast, with a total angular opening of 125 degrees.

Representatives may perhaps be surprised at this detailed information -- and I can assure you that it was not given out by the Soviet representative nor by any member of his staff. This information comes from the readings taken by the Detection Division of our Atomic Energy Commission. It might well be that the site located in this manner is actually several dozen kilometres from the point judged the most probable. The possible error would not modify my conclusions: a slight displacement at the centre of the circle does not upset the distribution of the agglomerations nor the demographic density. It lessens the distance of certain towns, but in the same way it increases the distance of towns diametrically opposite.

The Soviet Government has not, at least to my knowledge, published any information on the tests at LeK Balkache comparable to that furnished by the United States Government on the Nevada explosions. Nevertheless, we can be quite certain that Moscow, no more than Washington, wished to subject the large populations living in the vicinity of the proving ground to the slightest risk and that the increase in radioactivity is just as negligible in Siberia or in Kazakhstan as it is in the American States adjacent to Nevada.

The Anglo-Australian site at Maralinga, where seven atomic explosions have been conducted, and which is a desert also, is not included in our diagram; nevertheless, exact measurements have been taken there and have been made public. The increase in radioactivity has been negligible in every direction outside the restricted area.

Only one exception has been noted, which was, moreover, extremely interesting, especially so after hearing the remarks of Mr. Benhima. There was an unexpected violent storm which prematurely accelerated the fallout, and the dose recorded was three times as great as the average -- twenty-four units instead of eight in the area where it rained. This dose, however, was one thousand times less than that which is permissible and without risk to the civilian population. I am obliged to make this observation in order to reply to Mr. Benhima. It has
been clearly demonstrated, contrary to a secondary affirmation in his statement according to which a scarcity of rain increases radioactivity, that it reduces it and makes it weaker; therefore, from that point of view, desert areas are favoured for explosions rather than areas where there is rainfall. Finally, in the Anglo-Australian experiments, the fallout resulting directly from the explosion was not appreciable at more than twenty-two kilometres, as I have already said.

I come now to an examination of the French site in the Sahara.

Here we must no longer speak in terms of millions of inhabitants, but rather of thousands, in the inner circle, where there are only a dozen small cases, only one of which is at a distance from the site comparable to that which separated Las Vegas and Semipalatinsk from the United States and Soviet testing sites -- I refer precisely to the valley of Touat towards the south. However, as I said, the inhabitants of Las Vegas and Semipalatinsk were never evacuated, as was the case with the inhabitants of the atoll of Bikini, and this for the very simple reason that atomic explosions must not be confused with the thermonuclear explosions which are tens of thousands times more powerful and more important than those which we are going to conduct in the Sahara. These thermonuclear explosions were conducted on Bikini or in the Nova-Zembla area.

In the ring between the two circles there is just one population centre of some size: Colomb-Béchar, with 19,000 inhabitants. Population becomes relatively dense only at a distance of one thousand kilometres to the north and northeast in the regions of Tlemcen in Algeria and of Fez and Marrakesh in Morocco, all of which are much farther away from the Sahara site than are Los Angeles and San Francisco from the United States site or than are the large Siberian cities from Lake Balkache.

May I add finally that, at the site chosen, the favourable sector covers three-quarters of the circumference -- that is, one single angle that is four times greater than the angles of Nevada and twice as large as those of Lake Balkache -- a situation which obviously facilitates meteorological forecasts and provides still greater security.
To sum up, all conditions, without exception, are more favourable than in the other two sectors. In one of these, forty-five explosions have caused no incident and many of them were much more powerful than ours. If they have caused no incident and have created no risk, doubtless the same will apply in the Soviet sector. *A fortiori*, therefore, our experimentation creates no danger for anyone.
I am sorry I have to revert constantly to technical questions, but there is another one which I should bring out, and that is the question of winds, which is causing concern to certain of your gentlemen. In this field, too, I can reassure you completely. From systematic studies conducted separately by the National Meteorological Division of our Ministry of Public Works and Transportation and by the Meteorological Office of the British Air Ministry, it has been learned that above an altitude of 10,000 metres over the site chosen the wind blows constantly towards the east. It has also been ascertained that the same is true between 6,000 and 10,000 metres, except from June to September; and finally, that nearer the ground there is a regional wind, the Harmattan, which, however, blows only three months out of the year, from the northeast to the southwest.

The experts agree in stating that, to all intents and purposes, there is no wind toward the south, the west or the north which could carry anything a thousand kilometres from the Saharan site. The sands from Africa which sometimes are found in Southern Europe do not come from the area chosen but from other deserts of Africa far away from the site. If such winds were blowing, obviously the test would not take place. If on the day of the test there is a light wind, it will carry the radioactive particles toward the east and not toward the northwest. Depending on their size, these particles will fall to earth from four to ten hours after the explosion, and at a distance of between 150 and 600 kilometres in an area which is desert and completely deserted. By that time they will have retained only a dose of radioactivity which, as I have just shown, is by no means cause for anxiety and can be ignored. Beyond 600 kilometres -- that is to say, well before reaching the little cases of Forts Polignac and Charlet which are outlined on the map -- this dust would have virtually no effect whatever because of its dilution and its low radioactivity. I think that these indications will also help to relieve many groundless fears.

I believe I have now dealt with the various technical features of the problem before us. However, the emotional, the psychological or political aspects of the problem cannot be neglected; they still have to be dealt with. The French delegation, along with all the others, knows full well that a great fear reigns, a great fear such as history knew in ages past. Even if one could assume -- and I can understand this -- that at the beginning certain campaigns of political
propaganda had been systematically launched, that the opposition to the tests had initially been an attempt to exert international pressure, the psychological way out of the collective fear of today could nevertheless not be denied. This fear is real, it is sincere, and to a certain extent it is justified by the rate at which explosions succeeded each other in 1958, when the atomic Powers hastened to carry out the maximum number of tests before the negotiations began in Geneva.

But I believe that I have shown you that effects of the French experimentation will remain negligible in comparison with those of previous explosions. Must we, therefore, now bow to collective fears, or, on the contrary, should we reason with those who are blinded by that fear? Is the role of the leader to follow his troops or to lead them? Does it consist in expressing the same opinion as the leader's troops, sometimes more strongly than they, and sometimes even provoking them? I have already proof of this which I shall make public in due course when I feel that the time is ripe. Should the leader express the same opinion as his troops in order to keep his authority intact, or, on the contrary, should he fulfil his duty and brave even unpopularity in order to speak the language of reason?

How could chiefs of state, heads of governments, political leaders or high officials remain worthy of the responsibilities which are theirs if, in order to please they were to renounce the truth or even worse, to expound the false for political purposes? Democracy, that of that West like that of the East, presupposes a constant effort to educate man. It is imperative that man be helped to develop. Democracy requires that man forge for himself a reasoned opinion, that consequently all the facts be available to him, and not that his leaders use for themselves false interpretations under the mere pretext that they are commonly accepted.

My long career has been guided by one fault, Jean Jaures, in his admirable "Address to Youth," exclaimed fifty-six years ago: "Courage is to seek out the truth and to say it."
There is a second argument which is analogous to the first. Why, we are asked, do we prepare for this explosion in the Sahara rather than on a remote island of the Pacific? I might confine myself to answering that if, several years ago, the French Government had adopted the second solution instead of the first, the argument would then have been hurled at us by other States. But there were technical reasons that governed this decision. The Sahara lends itself to this experimentation better than any other region, both because the site chosen -- and I refer to the security proving ground -- is desert and because it is much nearer than the atolls of the antipodes of France. It lends itself better than Nevada or Kazakhstan, as I have shown you. The inhabitants of Los Angeles or San Francisco, or Omsk or Novosibirsk, were much more exposed without risk than will be those of any single Moroccan town. The populations of all these States bordering on the Sahara -- Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea and the States of the community -- will be in less danger than were the inhabitants of California and of Siberia, who were in no danger at all when a greater number of experiments were being conducted.

Then we will be told, why did France not carry out this experimentation in metropolitan France? We would have done this without hesitation in one of our European Departments -- and it would already be a thing of the past and forgotten-- if, in any of these European Departments we could have marked out a sufficiently large proving ground, empty both of all human life and of all flowing water. But such a desert does not exist in a country where the average density of population is greater than eighty persons to the square kilometre, and where human habitation extends to the foothills of mountains which themselves are watersheds of the surrounding plains.
A sincere friend of my country, who holds a very high post in Government, said to me: "Doubtless France is going to increase her power by possessing the atomic bomb. But she will lose the friendship of the peoples of Africa"; and Mr. Bihima has just referred to the opportunity opened by history to France, quoting, in fact, a great French personality.

This argument affected me deeply, but I do not wish to believe that it is correct. I refuse to think so because I have trust in human reason, in all its extensions. Once the tests have been carried out the fever will subside and everyone will see that life continues exactly as before, without incident of any sort. This is why we shall regain our friends even if today they turn away from us. They will return to us when their alarm has passed and when they realize the groundlessness of their fears and, perhaps, the ill-will of those who created those fears.

"But why," I have also been asked, "conduct this experimentation at a time when perhaps an agreement is shaping up among the three present atomic Powers?" The argument of time is thus added to that of place, and is rounded out by allusions to the responsibility thus assumed by France.

Once again I do not intend to dodge any question, even now when it has not yet been asked, nor later when we shall have heard other speakers. But to this question, the full significance of which I appreciate, I make the following response: So long as there remains the agonizing insecurity of a world dedicated, as it is, and despite ourselves, to the arms race, each State has the right -- and each Government the duty -- to ensure the protection of its country, France as well as all others.

May I recall here the solemn declaration made before our Organization in 1946 -- thirteen years ago -- by the representative of my country. The mission which France at that time gave to her research workers and technicians who, on the eve of the war, were pioneering in nuclear research; the mission that France set out for its young Atomic Energy Commission which had been established a year earlier, was "an exclusively peaceful mission". During nearly ten years we have been faithful to that declaration, hoping thus to set an example which, alas, has not been followed. Ought we, in the insecure world of today, remain without modern weapons?
We have made our choice. But we have not made it without mature reflection and very painful renunciations and cruel dislocations for many of us. And it is a singular irony that we are being questioned today, through a strange consequence of that example which we wished to set in losing nine years' work on the problem of atomic explosions.

Perhaps there are some outside our borders -- we ourselves know it -- who do not know that our best scientists, escaping during the hostilities from occupied France, made a gift of their work to the common defence; that our industries rose again from the ruins of war; that our technology quickly made up for the lost tragic years; that what others before us had succeeded in doing, we -- we too -- were able to accomplish.

We have reached this goal at the time when the three atomic Powers are negotiating an agreement in Geneva. Whether they will succeed or not I do not know. I am certain, however, that their final decision will not be influenced by our experimentation, but rather by other considerations of greater importance to them.

I wish, before concluding this statement which I realize has been rather long, to stress two brief remarks which in themselves are of a nature to calm anxieties. First -- and I stress this because of the confusion that was created earlier -- what is being questioned at the present time is a test involving a small amount of energy, analogous to those carried out in great number and without incident in Nevada and Kazakhstan, and not a test of the same type as those considerably more powerful which were carried out in the Pacific and in Nova Zembla. No confusion, I beg you, must arise between one type of explosion and the other.

In the second place, France does not wish to multiply such experiments unless it is absolutely necessary. Those effected underground, which throw off practically no radioactive particles, are, after all, of very great scientific and technical interest. They will some day permit us, doubtless in the near future, to excavate, without risk and at low cost, seaports, canals and interior seas; to build dams and fertilize deserts -- and the Sahara will probably be
one of the first; to draw greater profit from petroleum deposits; to transform the low-yield product of bituminous schists by heating and making fluid the oil they contain, so as to pump it directly rather than having to extract, with great difficulty, twenty or thirty times as many tons of stone impregnated with only a small quantity of hydrocarbons. That is why we hope later to be able to carry out underground explosions.

I come finally to my conclusion. It is a repetition of my statements made in 1957 and 1958. France unanimously wishes for peace with disarmament. With enthusiasm, on the day that the first three atomic Powers renounce their nuclear armament, France will forego all military tests. Let these three Powers agree to halt, under international control, the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes, to begin the reconversion of their stockpiles, to eliminate the vehicles for these explosives -- in short, to renounce a monopoly in fact -- and that very hour France will adopt the same measures. Seriously and solemnly I reaffirm this stand.
We do not accept any indirect discrimination. We do not accept any tacit monopoly. Our precise, permanent and fundamental objective is nuclear disarmament for all, for that alone will bring about the full equality of peoples. If the fact that France is the fourth State to liberate the explosive energy of the nucleus of the atom -- if this fact should cause the other three Powers to turn towards the necessary and urgent elimination of nuclear weapons, then the present efforts of France and the research of its scientists would, without fear of the verdict of history, have served the cause of peace.

Mr. ZEINEDDINE (United Arab Republic): The United Arab Republic has constantly stood for the complete cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests of weapons of mass destruction. It has therefore been constantly opposed to moves or policies which tended towards the continuation of these tests, the hindering of international action for their termination or the delaying of the conclusion of international agreements for banning the development, use and production of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. Our attitude towards the French tests in the Sahara is an objective one which partakes of the general stand we have taken consistently in regard to such tests in the past.

The question of the French tests in Arab North Africa, though related to the general problem of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, is nevertheless a question of a specific nature. It has its distinctive characteristics which call for special and prompt international attention and action.

Indeed, the question now before us is characterized, among other things, by some facts which need to be recalled here.

First, France intends to detonate its own bomb, and to do so in the present international atmosphere, when the United Nations as such and the great Powers that are Members of the Organization are deploying serious efforts to stop such tests and the further development of the race for the production of arms for mass destruction.

The contemplated participation in the dismal business of production of these weapons of mass destruction by France may be an ominous sign for the future participation of other countries. The world would become more exposed
than ever to the eventual use of these weapons by any one of a number of States, which may start a generalized atomic chain reaction. Thus, the French move to develop the atomic bomb tends to go counter to the present current of beneficial international developments.

Another characteristic of the tests is that France intends to explode its bomb not in France, where that is not feasible, but on non-French territory in Africa which is, to say the least, contested territory. This contemplated act would necessarily expose wide areas outside France to the dangerous effects of the explosions. It intends to proceed to realize its design while ignoring the declared opposition of all the African States concerned.

Thirdly, among the areas exposed to the French tests are Territories under United Nations trusteeship and other Non-Self-Governing Territories, for the welfare of which the United Nations assumes a special responsibility.

We were, therefore, satisfied to note that the Assembly at the beginning of this session recognized the distinctive traits and characteristics of the present question and acceded to our view that the matter of the French tests is a special problem, by deciding ultimately to deal with it as a separate and distinct issue.

This is the more important in view of some efforts which tend, under the guise of non-discrimination or otherwise, to mix the present question with the other multiple and heterogeneous issues of disarmament, thus conditioning any international action concerning this particular issue by the general situation of the disarmament problem. What we heard a moment ago from the representative of France does not allay such fears. Such an attitude would tend to make the steps to be internationally taken in respect of the French tests in the Sahara go at the same slow pace as steps in other aspects of disarmament. These efforts are being undertaken while France is feverishly proceeding in its preparations to carry out these tests.

Before proceeding to deal further with the question, it is proper and necessary to look into the reasons and motives which prompt France to develop weapons of mass destruction. The French motives have been rendered clear by French conduct. They have also been rendered more clear by the French statement
today. They have also been rendered clear enough by other authoritative French statements, two of which, one by the President of the French Republic, the other by the Prime Minister of France, are of special importance.

The President of the Republic, General de Gaulle, referring to the French motives for the tests, stated in a speech on 20 August that the French tests were to be undertaken for the prestige and defence of the French community. He is reported to have said, using his French words: "pour le prestige et pour la défense de la Communauté".

Defence -- which means increased military power -- and atomic prestige form together a thesis which may cause the Assembly to stop to ponder and to search for its justification under prevailing world conditions tending towards peace, coexistence and disarmament.

Mr. Debre, the Prime Minister of France, has contributed to clarifying the motives of France and its reasons. The Prime Minister has said, among other things, as reported by the London Times on 19 August:

"to avoid being crushed by agreements between very great Powers, a nation like France must have the power to make herself heard and understood."

France thus feels that it is in need of an atomic bomb to avoid being crushed by agreements between "very great Powers". It is evident that some defence is desired against agreements between very great Powers, which agreements, in the view of the Prime Minister, may crush France.
Today, the representative of France referred to another form of defence. He said:

"So long as there remains the agonizing insecurity of the world dedicated, as it is, and despite ourselves, to the arms race, each State has the right -- and each Government the duty -- to ensure the protection of its country, France as well as all others." (Supra, page 45)

But the theme of defence which has been expressed by the Prime Minister of France is a defence to avoid France's being crushed by agreements between the "very great Powers".

What about prestige, to which the President of the French Republic referred? In that respect, the French Prime Minister went further in his statement. He seems to believe that, as he said, "a nation like France must have the power to make herself heard and understood". But the voice of France is actually being heard in international conferences and through diplomatic channels. The hearing of the voice of France cannot be an issue which looms large in the mind of the Prime Minister. The issue for the Prime Minister appears to be that the voice of France should be "understood" and, for that reason, should be conveyed with the high sound of an atomic explosion, so that it may be "understood", presumably, by those whose minds are open to convincing atomic arguments.

The two theses, that of defence against agreements or for other reasons and that of prestige and power born out of an atomic explosion in Africa, do form in fact one thesis. There is in them a unity of concept which, on any analysis, would consist of the following elements:
First, it is evident that the military atomic energy let loose by an exploding French bomb is the energy which is wanted in order to be translated and transformed into international political power. That power is to be used for two purposes. One purpose is to avoid agreements between the great Powers which may allegedly crush France, as I have said. The other is to make France particularly understood in the making of international arrangements to its liking. Such arrangements may concern disarmament or the German question. Such arrangements may also concern, though indirectly, North Africa or other matters to which France at present devotes so much attention.

The second element is this: There was a time when an international settlement of outstanding problems was held to be a prerequisite to disarmament. There was much said in opposition to this thesis or in favour of it. Those times have fortunately changed into better ones, whereby the settlement of international questions was proceeding at the same time with the efforts at disarmament. There was no time when any one Power clearly took the position that armaments should be a prelude and a prerequisite to the settlement of international questions to the extent, and in the manner, that France now seems to be taking that position. France would like to see the sequence of international developments be such as to have atomic armaments for France come first. Probably France is too late to try to reverse the current of international developments, one manifestation of which was the resolution passed by our Committee on 2 November. But the French attitude can definitely cause great concern to all of us in view of the fact that it is an attitude which helps neither disarmament nor the settlement of outstanding international issues in Europe, North Africa and France.

Today, further clarification of this attitude was heard. In his conclusion, the representative of France said:

"We do not accept any indirect discrimination. We do not accept any tacit monopoly. Our precise, permanent and fundamental objective is nuclear disarmament for all, for that alone will bring about the full equality of peoples. If the fact that France is the fourth State to liberate the explosive energy of the nucleus of the atom -- if this fact should cause the other three Powers to turn towards the necessary and urgent elimination of nuclear weapons, then the present efforts of France and the research of its scientists would, without fear of the verdict of history, have served the cause of peace."  (Supra, page 51)
"Nuclear disarmament for all" -- but at the same time we proceed to establish equality in armaments.

It is obvious that the question put to the United Nations by the French tests consists of three parts. First, it must be asked whether, at this juncture in world developments, it is opportune and admissible to have a wider dissemination of weapons of mass destruction although the General Assembly made its position known on this matter during the last session and the very question is again before us in this session. The resolution passed by the General Assembly on this question -- I am referring to resolution 1252 -- was one which we voted against because it was not satisfactory to us. It did not go far enough. Yet, even that resolution is completely disregarded by the French attitude.

The second issue put to the United Nations is this: whether an increase in French military power should precede international settlements which involve France and would involve, directly or indirectly, Members other than the great Powers. Those countries which would be directly or indirectly affected by such settlements should have a chance to say a word before these settlements take shape.

The third question is whether military power is to be translated and transformed into international political power at this time and in a manner which does not excel in lending itself to international co-operation in the solution of world problems.

That, more than anything else, would remind us of the fable of La Fontaine to which the French representative referred. In fact, this fable has its Oriental, and probably Arab, origin, and its wisdom, which developed in the past, continues to remind us in the East of present circumstances.

Who are the "very great Powers" whose eventual agreements appear to cause France so much apprehension? Naturally, these very great Powers, in atomic terms, are very few: there are only three of them. Surely, the French Premier was not thinking of China in this connexion. It appears that all the three Powers represented here are, to the French Premier, in the company of one another. I happen to be seated between two of them but I would like to reassure the French representative that I do not serve in any way as a connecting link. This attitude on the part of France toward the nuclear Powers and their agreements does in fact betray an evolution
in international thinking, an evolution which may indicate that the North Atlantic and some other systems of the cold war are undergoing a reappraisal.

It is not my intention to discuss or appraise these French apprehensions. I simply wanted to refer to them inasmuch as they occupy a central position in dealing with the problem before us in its broad international aspects. I should only like to assure the French delegation that we of the United Arab Republic look on the French apprehensions very objectively.

My delegation cherishes the hope that agreements between the very great Powers will soon come about. We do so while feeling sure that such agreements will not be "crushing" either to France or the countries in North Africa or to any other countries in the Middle East or elsewhere. These agreements would plausibly limit themselves to problems of legitimate concern to the very great Powers, such as the problem of armaments and the questions still pending as an aftermath of the last world war.
We believe that France would be ill advised if it felt the need of the test in Africa so as to translate military power into political power at the table of negotiations between the great Powers. After all, the other Powers are very great, as described by the Prime Minister, and the weight of France in international dealings is big enough without having the test added to it.

Since the voice of France is already adequately heard and understood without the test, it is to be expected that the projected meetings between heads of States and Governments of the great Powers would help to allay France's fears without causing real apprehensions to other States. The French motives to undertake the test are evident enough. Also evident is the real meaning of the French affirmation that the test is intended for the defence and prestige of the French community. This affirmation about the defence of the community and its prestige is, to say the least, a matter open to varied opinions.

Is Algeria, for example -- a question that interests France so much in the field of international settlements -- a member of the French community according to France? I do not pretend to know sufficiently the present thinking of France. Yet, if defence is there, it would in this case really be to defend Algeria against Algeria for the purpose of colonialism, and to defend Algeria against colonialism for the purpose of liberty.

Would the French test have any indirect relationship to such problems? That is to be seen. Very probably it may be intended to strengthen the hand of France in dealing with problems of Africa and beyond. It is true that colonialism is on the wane. But in its desperate retreat before the forces of freedom, colonialism is fighting its most harsh battle and seeking to gain international strength in every possible way, including an atomic test. Instead of strengthening the defences of the nature referred to, the way should become open for negotiations not only between the great Powers but also between the two parties directly concerned in respect of Algeria. Pacification is the continuation of war, while peace would be the result of due and immediate negotiations.
The question before us has a variety of aspects, some of which I have tried to describe. There are other aspects to which I would now like to turn and deal with briefly, as I can continue to avail myself of the lucid and sound statement made by the delegation of Morocco.

What does the contemplated French act consist of? It consists of setting a cloud, an atomic cloud, with the attendant rain of fall-out, across the otherwise homely skies of Africa -- an ominous cloud of fear which would contaminate, physically, regions in Africa and possibly other regions, and would shock morally the whole world with a revolting human feeling. The Sahara region is truly a thinly populated area, but it is not an empty waste. More than one million people live in the whole of the Sahara, and they lead mostly a nomadic life. Probably more than one-quarter of a million people live in the region around Ragga, in an area where they would be affected by fall-out. There are many millions beyond in the more populated areas of Africa, in independent States and Non-Self-Governing Territories, who can rightly expect to fall under the sheer physical effects of the explosion.

It is a well-known fact that certain strong winds occur, sometimes abruptly, in the area of the explosion. We understand that not all of them go east. These winds are prone to carry substantial fall-out as far north as the Mediterranean and to greater distances to the south, east and west of the said region of Nagga. Ordinary dust carried by these winds of the Sahara reaches many Mediterranean countries. The Atlantic solidarity in this case may not benefit the Italian fishermen in the Mediterranean or the Italians in their homes as a shield against fall-out. Precautions did not benefit the Japanese fishermen at one time. The fact that there is some worry in Italy about the test is not completely unfounded.

The nomads of the desert region of Africa roam about all the time and get exposed. The peoples in the oasis not far from the site of the explosion may become effected. Other peoples in Africa are prone to be effected where they live. All this is expected while France continues to affirm that there will be no nefarious effects from the explosion. It is as if France were sure of the test before the test is made, or as if its atomic bomb were already tested in respect of its supposed "cleanliness" and the efficacy of the precautions.
necessitated by it. This test would not take place in a laboratory but in a place where people are exposed to it. The French Government seems easily to ignore the fact that neither the nomads of the desert nor the settled peoples of Africa dispose of health facilities to treat the possible consequences of the explosion.

It is said that the French bomb is of the Hiroshima type. It is also said that France may conduct more than one test, which is possible. No matter what the physical nature of the French bomb is, it will certainly bear resemblance to the Hiroshima bomb in some ways.

At one time an Asian people at war received a bomb in Hiroshima. Now the people in Africa at peace are invited by France not to witness the bounties of the atomic age, to which the representative of France has referred. What is offered to these people of Africa is an explosion in their midst, on non-French territory, and in opposition to the declared will of the Africans. A region in Arab North Africa is to serve as the place: A wide region is to be contaminated and polluted. This may not appear to be of much concern to some people to the north of the Mediterranean. The Africans would be the victims. But Europe is also going to be polluted and contaminated in a way; if not physically, at least morally and politically. Europe is to suffer by the contamination of imitation to own the bomb, by the adverse effect on its moral standards, by a sense of guilt in its spirit. It is going to be affected politically by the aversion which the act necessarily entails in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.

Bombs breed bombs. The Hiroshima bomb, in its time, bred other bombs and more disastrous ones, not only in the hands which first had it but in other hands as well. The Faustian spirit of Europe, bent upon acquiring power, may set many people in Europe along the path of owning the bomb, and thus establishing the equality to which the representative of France referred. Why Europe only? Why not other parts of the world? If the possession of the bomb spreads, who would feel secure without one? If a State does not possess the bomb or is unable to do so, it may be tempted at least to enter into alignments with those who own the bomb, against other States who own a threatening one. Some States
may refrain from falling into such temptation; others may not. The initially rare and impulsive efforts to own or to use the bomb may become generalized. That may not happen quickly, but may come with time, until only a few countries remain without bombs or remain free from alignments with those who own bombs, or remain free from that equality which may produce generalized atomic weapons for all States with possibly very few of them, including the Vatican City, for example.
France itself would, so to speak, be contaminated with the guilt of the 
bomb. That bomb would, in a way, decrease the prestige of France without 
effectively serving any real purpose of defense of the type referred to by 
the French Prime Minister in the statement I have quoted or of the type of defence 
referred to by the representative of France a moment ago.

There is a greater prestige for France to remain innocent of the bomb, 
to be voluntarily pacific in that sense. This may constitute a purpose and a path 
which France would be well advised to consider. It is certainly preferable than 
the path leading to the further production of atomic weapons. If France takes 
the path which constitutes the path for peace, then the voice of France would be 
better understood, it would be understood with general international sympathy. 
There is prestige and grandeur for France to take to the humane aspects of the 
French Revolution, to that equality of the French Revolution, and no other 
equality such as that of the possession of the bomb. After all, in an atomic 
race, France cannot possibly expect much success; but in a race of civilization, 
culture and international understanding, France can well aspire to succeed.

There was a time when some Western European countries visited Africa and 
Asia with colonialism, and gave to their colonial action such qualifications as 
"the burden of the white man," mission civilisatrice, "the light of civilization 
brought to the Dark Continent". All the beautiful adjectives given to colonialism 
did not hinder the Asian and African peoples from fighting back colonialism as 
an encroachment upon them and in order to realize their liberation.

Now that the people of Asia and Africa are able to do something, in order 
to reconsider their relations with the Western European countries in a light 
other than that previously experienced, France appears to hasten to force upon 
Africa another light, a light which comes from an atomic explosion. This light 
is truly carried to Africa by what remains of France's colonial influences. 
Otherwise, France would have to think of undertaking its test in France and not 
in Africa, where in France it could not be really considered. It is as if France 
would like to throw serious doubts upon the assertion that colonialism is at an 
end.
This, in the mind of Africans and Asians, would not be a reflection on the French attitude only, but would be a reflection on the attitude of all countries, which, directly or indirectly, are connected with the prevailing French policy in respect of North Africa and the rest of the continent. Indeed, the declared intention of France to detonate a bomb at Raggen has already set in motion the feelings and efforts of the peoples concerned to try to oppose and stop this contemplated act.

Early in September of this year, the Arab States meeting at Casablanca had after considering the nature and implications of the French test, unanimously agreed to adopt as their own the Moroccan item, now under consideration. A month prior to that, early in August, the Independent African States meeting in the Monrovia Conference, had considered the French tests in the Sahara as an important issue affecting their continent, and on 8 August passed their well-known resolution concerning the nuclear tests. We read in that resolution, among other things, the following:

"The Conference of the Independent African States, denounces vigorously and with profound indignation the decision of any government to carry out nuclear tests in the Sahara or in any other part of Africa."

Before the two meetings at Monrovia and Casablanca, many Member States had used diplomatic channels to make representations and protests to France, but with no positive results. We understand, for example, that Morocco, the State most directly concerned, sent six notes to France, the last one of which was flatly rejected. Ghana also voiced its protest on 2 June 1959. Liberia on 13 July 1959, and the Sudan Government on 8 August 1959 also protested. Nigeria, as it has not yet become a sovereign State, debated the matter in the Nigerian Federal House of Representatives in Lagos on 24 February 1959, and passed a resolution which was subsequently sent to the Secretary of State by the Governor-General with the request that the apprehension felt in Nigeria should be brought to the notice of the French Government.
The question now before us was at last brought to the United Nations when all these efforts proved to be in vain. The question comes here with that history behind it.

Morocco, by submitting the present item for the consideration of this Assembly, and those Member States who feel like Morocco on the question, do request the United Nations to fulfil its mission as a centre for harmonizing international action. International harmony would, in this case, be resumed by persuading France, through the international body, to desist from the test and to go along the path of international co-operation on this matter.

While many Member States were doing what they could in order to convince France to desist from the tests, France was proceeding with its preparations to do it. France's target date is not known to us. Maybe it is not known to France itself. Also unknown is whether France will be satisfied with one test or whether it will hold more than one. To say the least, it is certain that France is in a hurry and the time may be quite short, urging us to take a prompt international action.

One aspect of the question needs still to be considered. France tends to put off for good any United Nations action, or at least, to delay it, possibly until the test is done. In this context, it appears that past French declarations, and the declaration which we heard today, especially in the concluding part, all these declarations and French conduct appear to make the French attitude look like this: France would say, "I will desist from the test if certain conditions are realized."

What are these conditions? They are: first, if other States suspend their tests definitely; secondly, if existing stocks of bombs are eliminated; thirdly, if the production of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons is banned; fourthly, if adequate international control is established, in a manner satisfactory to France; and judging by such French declarations, there is a fifth condition, if other great Powers desist from attempting to make agreements or arrangements not to the French taste; and sixthly, if all the previous conditions are realized before France detonates its bomb.
We subscribe to most of these conditions, not as conditions but as aims and purposes which all States concerned should seek to realize. But we who have constantly supported these aims would have liked better to see France more often on our side in past deliberations concerning these weapons. Yet if these aims are seen by France as conditions to desist from the test and, for that matter, as conditions to be all realized before the test, then one is entitled to think of these conditions as reminding him of a French saying which states: Avec des "si" on peut mettre Paris dans une bouteille -- give me enough conditions and "ifs" and I will put Paris into a bottle. It seems that this is the real meaning behind non-discrimination which has been so much emphasized a moment ago. At least that is the thing which we have gathered from a quick look at the text and after hearing it. We might be mistaken in this respect.

But taking these conditions themselves and using them for the mere sake of argument, one would find that it would have been more logical for France to take an attitude which would consist of saying: As atomic powers tend to suspend nuclear and thermonuclear tests and as positive steps in that direction are being taken and as serious international negotiations for disarmament are going on, France will suspend its test until the relevant negotiations produce results. This is far more logical than saying that France will have the atomic bomb and will seek to test it even when these negotiations are going on.

In the course of the general debate, Mr. Couve de Murville, the very eminent Minister for Foreign Affairs for France said to the Assembly of the United Nations on 30 September:

"The precautions that will be taken will absolutely eliminate all risks, whatever they may be. We are convinced that an objective examination of the facts will provide complete assurance, just as a similar examination has already convinced the Governments of the African States that are associated with the French Republic in the Community." (A/PV.814, page 42)

Today, in the very lucid statement made, a greater development of this scheme has been undertaken. Again going back to the general debate, the representative of France said to the Assembly on 5 October:
"The decision on the nuclear explosions in the Sahara was approved by the Executive Council of the Community by a unanimous vote after a free discussion among all its members. If there was one reservation presented by a single one of the members, it applied not to the principle of carrying out an explosion but to the precautions to be taken for the protection of neighbouring peoples." (A/PV.823, page 53-55)

These statements cannot pass without some comment. Indeed they call very briefly for some questions and observations.

One question is, How thorough was the discussion of the French test in the Executive Council of the French Community? What attributes and competence does the Executive Council possess so that its decision would serve to carry so much weight in international councils? That discussion was either really thorough so as to ascertain the real views of the members of the French Community, or it was not. If that conviction was based upon a thorough and free consideration, as said then, it would add no strength to the French position beyond having the French Community instead of France itself become the party responsible for the test. The approval of the Executive Council was possibly given in a very hurried manner. It is quite possible that the members of the Council were affected to a large degree by the influence of France and its ascendancy in the community. In this case, their decision would weaken the position of France by such a unanimous approval. I ask: Why does not France take note of the legitimate position of the independent African countries which really freely and unanimously oppose the test?

The French delegation expressed its conviction that the independent African States, upon an objective consideration of the matter, would become convinced, as the members of the Community were, that the precautions taken would eliminate all risks whatever they would be. The question arises as to the basis on which such absolute assurances are being founded. Today, we heard a long development of the French thesis as to the efficacy of these precautions. We have also heard remarks concerning the little amount of fall-out of radioactive matter that would be released. This statement might necessitate further analysis from our side. But let me say at present that it would be
exceedingly difficult and almost impossible to be able to ascertain that the precautions would be enough no matter what the consequences may be. On this matter, the Sub-Committee of the Regional Office of the World Health Organization has expressed a view which is neither that of France nor of Morocco nor of other States, but that of the Sub-Committee. Last September, the Sub-Committee adopted a resolution which reads in part:

"...the Sub-Committee ... protests against any attempt by France or any other country to explode atomic bombs in the Algerian desert or any other countries neighbouring to the region, and asks that the inhuman action be abandoned."

The Sub-Committee also states in another resolution:

"...considers with dismay and regret the atomic test resulting in the increase of atomic dust in the world's atmosphere which endangers man's health from the somatic and genetic points of view", and "recommend the prevention of this danger by appealing to all responsible countries and authorities to ban atomic tests before they become a direct danger to man's health as a result of the spread of the atomic fall-out."

What is important in the French test is not the amount of radioactivity it may release but rather that it is a beginning for the continued and the further development of tests everywhere, thus increasing this matter by far more than the amount which has been referred to by the representative of France a short while ago.

But supposing, for the sake of argument, that no great harm would be done physically, that France is really sure of the bomb before testing it and of the precautions and also sure of the help that would be given to the African people who might be exposed to the consequences, supposing we concede the opinion expressed by France, what would become in this case of the great harm which is not physical, of the harm that comes from tests and of the nefarious moral and political effects about which no precautions can be taken except that of stopping the test itself? May I modestly suggest to the French representative that it would be fit to see France and the members of the French Community become convinced in the way that the independent African States were convinced and are convinced of the inopportuninty, the illegitimacy, the political
uselessness and exceedingly adverse effects, physically, politically and morally, which this test necessarily entails. It is this which one should have the courage to say. It is this which should be emphasized. It is this thing which makes the leaders of countries concerned feel a real responsibility for the protection of their country and their peoples, as well as for the protection of the world at large, from these consequences to which I have referred.

There is no doubt that the independent African States, Morocco and others all look upon this test as an encroachment upon them, one and all.

The United Arab Republic has previously made its position known on this matter at the Monrovia Conference and at the meetings of the League of Arab States in Casablanca.

Today, my delegation has tried to put to the consideration of the Assembly the reasons which prompt the United Arab Republic to seek a recommendation by the Assembly which would effectively help France to become dissuaded of the test in question, whether they be reasons drawn from the general world international situation or from the situation in Africa.
My delegation would therefore join in sponsoring a resolution or in voting for one which would take into consideration the desiderata which my delegation tried to expose. In all earnestness and objectivity, we believe that an action by the United Nations, urging France to refrain from the test, is proper and necessary. It would come in fulfilment of the mission of international harmony and co-operation which the United Nations and all its Members have taken upon themselves under the Charter.

The CHAIRMAN: As there will probably be no afternoon meeting, I would request the Committee to continue with this meeting for a few minutes to hear a statement by the representative of France who wishes to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. Moch (France) (Interpretation from French): In no way do I wish to enter into a debate as to substance, nor do I wish to delay the time of adjournment. I shall follow the example of the moderation of the representative of the United Arab Republic who flew to the aid of the Moroccan delegation -- which needed no such aid--for reasons which are perhaps matters of inter-Arab politics, but which are not within my concern.

However, I should cordially point out to the representative of the United Arab Republic that his speech had one disadvantage, that it was written before I made my speech. Therefore, it does not take into account the arguments which I presented. It does not answer them and it brings forth no others. When he speaks of danger for Africa, when he speaks of the necessity of strong health services, etc., I can simply answer with what I said about the American experiments in Nevada and the Soviet experiments in Kazakhstan in more highly populated areas.

Another point I do not wish to mention is what was said about Algeria, an item which is not on the agenda of this Committee at the moment, and it was therefore out of place to talk about that matter.

The evolution of French thought was mentioned by the representative of the United Arab Republic. There is no evolution of French thought on this topic. For
the third year now I am saying the same things. He spoke of the apprehensions about an international agreement between the great Powers. As far as we are concerned, there is no apprehension at the thought of any agreement being reached by the great Powers. If the three great Powers agree to renounce their nuclear test explosions, having each made a large number of them, they are free to do so. But this will not alter the position of France so long as no agreement on genuine nuclear disarmament is arrived at.

The representative of the United Arab Republic then spoke of the contamination, if not physical, at least moral, of the world. As far as moral contamination is concerned, in my opinion it principally results from the campaigns of panic which are organized and from erroneous or exaggerated statements that are made. It does not result from tests which carry no danger.

But what I would like to say, to conclude, is that, in agreement with the French Government, I will continue tomorrow, as I did yesterday, the struggle for general disarmament, of which nuclear disarmament is part and parcel. In support of these aims, the representative of the United Arab Republic said, France has not often been at our sides. I wonder what allowed him to say that. May I simply recall the long series of disarmament plans proposed since 1951 by the person who is now speaking on behalf of France, the long series of Franco-British plans, tripartite or quadripartite plans, presented in all of our preceding negotiations, the suggestions which I myself made today, and the like.

I affirm once again, contrary to all insinuations, that France wants to prosecute further its policy of disarmament, that it will renounce all atomic weapons the day when agreement is reached on nuclear disarmament.

As for Committee A of the Middle-East World Health Organization which was mentioned a while ago -- there also exists a Committee B, owing to local difficulties -- this Committee A, which is composed exclusively of Arab countries, voted its motion, but it did not base this on outside considerations, but on political ones. And this is part and parcel of that campaign which I mentioned a while ago. For if courage means giving in to fear and panic, then I must say right away that this is the kind of courage that I do not possess.
The CHAIRMAN: I think that we can continue for five more minutes so as to avoid the afternoon meeting which cannot be held because there is only one speaker on the list. I therefore now recognize the representative of Morocco to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) (Interpretation from French): It had been my intention to add one thought to those expressed by the representative of France concerning a delegation which flies to the aid of Morocco. This afternoon, with your permission Mr. Chairman, I shall endeavour to develop this point at considerably greater length, because the intervention of the representative of France, in response to my statement, already contained certain ideas in this sense and he expressed them by implication. I reserve the right to make a rather lengthy reply.

I merely wish to say now that if the delegation of the United Arab Republic shares our convictions and has the same feelings as all other Arab countries which have expressed alarm, it is not that that delegation goes to the assistance of the Moroccan delegation in expressing the same point of view and the same sentiments. I do not wish to infer from the thoughts of the representative of France that delegations which express the same views as France would be flying to the aid of France.

I thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. Chairman, but I reserve the right to give a longer answer. Out of deference for the Committee, I shall postpone the statement to this afternoon.

The PRESIDENT: As the representative of Morocco has asked for a meeting this afternoon, we shall convene at three o'clock.

Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) (Interpretation from French): Perhaps I am ill-informed. The Secretariat told me that there were two speakers on the list for this afternoon. I am not asking that a special meeting be held this afternoon. All I want to say is that as soon as the Committee decides to reconvene, I shall make my statement. Urgency is not the important matter here; it is efficacy which I hope to achieve.
The CHAIRMAN: If the representative of the United Arab Republic is prepared to make a short reply now, he may do so.

Mr. ZEINEDDINE (United Arab Republic): I will make a very short reply now. I listened with great interest to the remarks of the representative of France and I would like cordially to call his attention to the following points. First, as he said, Morocco is not in need of help on this matter. We feel the more so because Morocco is taking the right stand, and it is undoubtedly supported by a large number of Members of the Assembly. I do not think that such generous sympathy and support will come to the delegation opposing the viewpoint of Morocco. It is not inter-Arab politics. It is international politics which is the main issue behind this test.
The representative of France inferred that they had nothing against agreement among the other great Powers, yet this in no way accords with the statement made by the French Prime Minister himself on 19 August. Perhaps the French position has changed since that time, although it does not seem to us really to have changed. It does seem to us that the opinion expressed today is substantially different from the opinion expressed authoritatively by the French Prime Minister.

I did refer to the question of Algeria among a number of other matters which are of special interest for France and to which France is at present devoting so much thought, when France would like, as the Prime Minister has said, to avoid international agreements which may be detrimental to it.

One has to think of all the questions that are of special interest to France at this moment. Algeria is one of them, and my reference to it was relevant since it is one of the questions which may directly be of interest with regard to the test, since that test is intended to translate the military power of France into a political, international power, and that political power would indirectly influence the Algerian situation. All that is being done while there is a way out of the Algerian problem by means of negotiation, as we see it.

It is true that my statement was prepared before the French representative gave us the opportunity of hearing his statement. It was prepared, indeed, with a knowledge approximating to that which he mentioned concerning the viewpoint of France on the scientific matters to which he referred. Yet, in all objectivity, I reserved our point of view with regard to analyzing his statement.

I should like to add that the long and lucid statement made by the French representative centred mainly on the physical effects of the explosion and on the possible precautions against its physical consequences. In our view, he could have avoided this in order to put emphasis on the far more important effects than the physical effects, on the very important political and moral effects that the test will necessarily entail. It was for that reason that we visualized the situation from the international point of view rather than merely from the point of view of the physical effects of the explosion on the people in the area neighbouring the site where the explosion is to take place.
We would like to ask the French delegation to look with us into these international consequences. After all, the United Nations is the centre where international actions should be harmonized; it is the place where the political consequences of the test should be considered, and should be considered first, since they are the most important.

The representative of Morocco has given us some scientific information about the test. We might seize the opportunity to look further into this matter at a later stage and thus avoid going into any detail at the present late hour. But I would not like the French representative to leave this Assembly without realizing the importance of the political, international influences and consequences which this test might bring, in addition to the moral consequences. The physical consequences can be debated, but, even if for the sake of argument we said they were not there, then the question would still remain a special and important question and one which would permit of international action. I think the French representative would be right to be dissuaded of the contrary.

The CHAIRMAN: Since there is only one speaker on the list for this afternoon, and I assume no other representative is ready to intervene, and since the representative of Morocco has not insisted on a meeting being held this afternoon, the Committee will reconvene tomorrow at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.