Verbatim Record of the Nine Hundred and Sixty-Seventh Meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 29 October 1958, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador)

1. Question of disarmament \[64\] (continued)
2. The discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests \[70\] (continued)
3. The reduction of the military budgets of the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom and France by 10 - 15 per cent and the use of part of the savings so effected for assistance to the under-developed countries \[72\] (continued)

Note: The Official Record of this meeting, i.e., the summary record, will appear in mimeographed form under the symbol A/C.1/SR.967. Delegations may submit corrections to the summary record for incorporation in the final version which will appear in a printed volume.
AGENDA ITEMS 64, 70 and 72

1. QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT (continued)
2. THE DISCONTINUANCE OF ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN WEAPONS TESTS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): Several representatives wish to exercise their right of reply, and I call upon the first of these, the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom): In my brief intervention yesterday, I reserved my right to reply to the statement made yesterday by the representative of the Soviet Union after I had studied the verbatim record of his speech. I am therefore very grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor now for this purpose. I shall not detain the Committee long, but, as I said yesterday, Mr. Zorin has seriously misrepresented the position of the United Kingdom.

Let me first make clear what the position of the United Kingdom is as regards our offer to refrain from carrying out test explosions of nuclear weapons for one year from the day the negotiations begin in Geneva, that is, on 31 October, provided the Soviet Government also refrains from testing during that period.

Mr. Zorin has been at pains to declare, both yesterday and the day before, that the Soviet Government "categorically declines the proposal of the United States and the United Kingdom Governments to suspend tests for one year". (A/C.1/PV.964, page 3)

If in this statement Mr. Zorin was referring to our offer to suspend tests from 31 October, then I think he has got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Her Majesty's Government had made no proposal about this. We have never asked the Soviet Government for an undertaking to refrain from testing for one year after 31 October. What we have done is to declare our own intention in the form of an entirely voluntary and unilateral undertaking. We have given the undertaking that from the day the negotiations begin in Geneva we shall stop our tests for one year, and for this we make only one condition: that the Soviet Government should likewise not conduct tests during that period.
Our object, of course, has been to create an atmosphere of goodwill and to facilitate agreement at the Geneva negotiations. It is naturally a great disappointment to us that the Soviet Government does not volunteer a year's suspension for this purpose as we have done, but our position is still the same, and our offer remains valid. It is still our hope that the Soviet Government will in fact refrain from testing after the Conference has started.

The Soviet representative alleges that our offer is meaningless because, he says, a year is about the period needed to prepare a fresh series of tests. This, he declares, is evidence that we have no intention of stopping our tests but will go right on with them after the one-year period. Mr. Zorin is entitled to his point of view, but I think it fair to draw attention to the actions of his own Government.

The Soviet Government declared the unilateral suspension of their nuclear tests on 31 March last. Before the end of September, however, the Soviet Government had resumed testing and is now conducting a series of tests of considerable magnitude. From 31 March to late September is a space of less than six months, and six months is a great deal less than the one-year period which Mr. Zorin says is necessary to prepare for a series of tests. I shall leave the Committee to judge, in the light of Mr. Zorin's own argument, what the intentions of the Soviet Government may have been when they announced the unilateral suspension of their tests six months ago.

Now let me turn to the Geneva negotiations themselves. What may be agreed at these negotiations is something entirely apart from the United Kingdom's voluntary offer of a one-year suspension, to which I have just referred. The nature of the agreement is something that can only be decided by the negotiations at Geneva themselves. The duration of the agreement is equally something to be decided at Geneva, and we have made no proposals nor taken any position as yet on that score. What we have made clear is that we envisage the suspension of our tests for longer than one year. We are prepared to refrain from testing for year after year, provided the Soviet Government will do the same and provided satisfactory progress is being made towards the installation of effective international controls over the suspension of nuclear weapons tests and towards the adoption and execution of measures of real disarmament. In fact, if these conditions are met, we are prepared to suspend our tests.
indefinitely. As was stated in the Note of 20 October from Her Majesty’s Government to the Soviet Government:

"It is the sincere and earnest hope of Her Majesty’s Government that the [Geneva] Conference will make sufficient progress to justify the expectation that the final termination of all nuclear test explosions may in due course be achieved." (A/3955, page 2)

This is the aim and the end to which we look in this process.

Mr. Zorin seems to object violently to our desire to accompany the continued suspension of tests by progress towards real disarmament. Indeed, he seems very despondent on this score. He tells us we are intransigent. He accuses us of making impossible conditions. Let me just repeat what I said in my statement to the Committee on 14 October in reply to the Foreign Minister of Sweden. I said then:

"I do not wish, of course, to anticipate the United Kingdom position at the Geneva negotiations as regards interpreting the words 'satisfactory progress' but I can assure the Committee that our interpretation will have due regard for what is reasonably and practically possible, given the time factor and the difficulties of the disarmament problem." (A/C.1/948, page 32)

I do not think that anyone could call that an intransigent approach to these negotiations at Geneva.
I will just ask the Committee to compare this attitude of ours with that of the Soviet Government, as expressed in this Committee, which seemingly is: all or nothing, either there must be total cessation or there can be no discontinuance. I think the most constructive comment on the Soviet attitude was made by my friend, the representative of Peru. In his intervention, Mr. Belaúnde said:

"But I believe that without sacrificing the ideal of the absolute cessation of tests, the Soviet Union might be willing, because of the ideals of the Soviet Union, because humanity must be saved from the possible risk of the increase of radiation, to accept the middle of the road position offered by the United States. I think frankly that it is an illogical position to want the whole and to be unwilling to accept the part, at least from the humanitarian point of view, if not from the political point of view. Therefore, if a one year suspension can be achieved, it should be accepted. Otherwise, you would be giving up the reality of the partial advantage for the shadow of the intellectual or political position. This is a serious responsibility which the Soviet Union is undertaking."

(A/C.1/PV.965, page 56)

Let me conclude by saying that the United Kingdom wants the suspension of tests as a step towards real disarmament -- and that, I believe must be the objective of us all here. I feel that I have made our position as clear as I can.

I will not deal now with what Mr. Zorin said yesterday about his proposal for the reduction of military budgets, because I think it will be more appropriate to deal with this in the debate on draft resolutions. As I said yesterday, in my brief intervention, if we go on with replies and counter-replies, we shall never end our general debate. I hope that what I have said today will make it unnecessary for me to intervene again.

**Mr. LODGE (United States of America):** From the outset of this debate the United States has tried to act constructively and open-mindedly to achieve the objectives which are so much desired by all of the United Nations.
In all our statements, therefore, we have tried to put forward ideas for carrying out these objectives, and to avoid criticisms and recriminations.

It is really too bad that it should again be necessary to take the floor because the representative of the Soviet Union has so attacked the United States and so distorted its position. But, he has done it, and so I must set the record straight.

Mr. Zorin would have you believe that the United States is opposed to the cessation of nuclear tests, to disarmament generally and to the cutting of military budgets. Now the members of this Committee are far too experienced to be taken in by allegations which in all frankness can only be described as grotesque. Let me itemize.

Mr. Zorin's statements run completely contrary to previous Soviet positions on nuclear tests. At the last General Assembly the Soviet Union called for a two or three year moratorium on tests with adequate controls -- not paper promises to control -- under the supervision of an international commission. But now they will not be satisfied with this. Mr. Zorin said in his statement on Monday that the Soviet Government proceeds from the fact that the cessation of such tests, and I am quoting, "should not be made dependent on whether an agreement is reached or not at the forthcoming conference at Geneva." Mr. Zorin's statements now seem to mean that although they give lip service to the idea of control, they really want a permanent uncontrolled cessation of nuclear tests. This is not a question of conditions. This is a question of whether you are really going to cease or whether you are not going to cease, and the only way you are going to be sure it is real is if you have got controls in effect, and not a paper promise that is adopted here in a resolution some afternoon.

And so it happens that when our position was modified, when we moved towards the Soviet position of last year, then the Soviet Union shifted its position in favour of something which they knew would be impossible to carry out. That sounds fantastic, but that is what happened.
(Mr. Lodge, United States)

Then -- and please note this -- the Soviet unilateral test cessation announcement was made well after the United States publicly announced that we would hold a series of tests in 1958. But the Soviet so-called offer was conditioned -- and I use the word "conditioned" advisedly -- on the United States and the United Kingdom ceasing their tests -- which we had already announced we would hold. In the light of our prior public announcement on our testing programme, the Soviet Union knew perfectly well that they could not possibly be called upon to carry out the intention which they had so blithely announced.

Then the Soviet representative has repeatedly stated here that a year is required to prepare for a new series of nuclear tests. Only six months after their 31 March announcement, they resumed testing. If we accept the Soviet statement that preparations for a test series requires one year, then we can only assume that in the fall of 1957 -- five months prior to their unilateral announcement in March 1958 -- they were planning their present resumption of tests. From the size and from the scale of the current Soviet series, it is obvious that their test preparations were not in the slightest bit interrupted or slowed down.

Here is another item. The Soviet representative has misrepresented the position of the United States on the matter of a continuation of test suspension beyond the first year. And this is a very fundamental point. He has implied that we have placed insurmountable obstacles in the way of an indefinite discontinuance of weapons tests. But this is not the case. We have pointed out here that we shall suspend tests for one year beginning 31 October provided the Soviet Union does likewise. The Soviet representative apparently has not understood that it is reasonable to expect that in effect this could mean and could amount to an immediate two-year halt. I say this for this reason: we expect that during the first year an agreement on a test suspension, under effective controls, can be reached. In the following year we would install the agreed control system. From this point on, that is, after an initial two-year period, the halt could be continued indefinitely provided that a simple set of specifications could be made to work. These specifications are clear and precise. They are specifications which any nation negotiating in good faith should be
willing to endorse and support. It is hard to understand why the Soviet Union insists in taking issue with the principles that it, in effect, has stated time and again in the past are necessary and desirable.
They claim they are ready to halt tests under an effective control system, but they balk at a proposal which asks that each year parties to the agreement be satisfied that the system is working satisfactorily. They claim they are always ready to achieve agreements on disarmament measures, but they balk at a proposal which asks that each year parties to the agreement be satisfied that reasonable progress is being made on these vital measures. Those are very striking contradictions, and no reason for these contradictory attitudes has been given by the Soviet representative.

Mr. Zorin attempted to suggest to this body that the United States and the United Kingdom were intriguing against the Soviet Union. He based this innuendo on what can only be regarded as a play on words, on the fact that the United States has called for progress on "arms control measures", while the United Kingdom has asked for progress on "real disarmament". Because the United States wants to control armaments, it is, according to Mr. Zorin, promoting an arms race. It is just like saying that because a doctor deals with illness he is in favour of disease. It is exactly the same logic. If quibbles like this are what really bother Mr. Zorin, the United States is ready to assure him that for us the United Kingdom’s phrase "real disarmament" has no different meaning than "arms control measures" in statements of the United States Government, since that is what Mr. Zorin is prepared to accept. So much for that.

Mr. Zorin says that the United States has remained silent on the Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.204) concerning the reduction of military budgets by 10-15 per cent. This is one charge of his which I shall not deny. I have remained silent because the Soviet draft resolution on this matter was so transparent and so specious that I did not consider that it deserved serious comment. But there are facts which I can cite now which will show exactly what I mean and exactly what is the true position of the United States.

From the largest military budget and the greatest armed forces in history at the end of World War II, the United States reduced its defence expenditures consistently and drastically until the Communist aggression in Korea. That is a great big fact. Compare this with the Soviet Union whose expenditures for military purposes have meant and mean today that the Soviet people have been denied and are being denied the decent standard of living which their great land with all its natural wealth can provide them.
We are eager to see military expenditures reduced. We will agree to reductions to the fullest extent possible as a result of disarmament. President Eisenhower made this clear soon after his inauguration in April, 1953 when he proposed that the savings from disarmament be put into a fund to help the under-developed countries. I believe that the amendment to the seventeen-Power draft resolution introduced by Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti and Uruguay offers a satisfactory and sensible approach to this question, and we support it.

Despite these recent discouraging Soviet statements, the United States delegation is now on its way to the 31 October Geneva meeting. The delegation's instructions are to make every effort to conclude an agreement for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests and the establishment of an international control system on the basis of the report of the Geneva experts. We hope sincerely that the Soviet delegation will also have similar instructions.

Before I relinquish the floor, let me just try for a minute to put the situation against a broader background. It is often said that people have short memories. But certainly we here in this room who give up all of our time to these great questions of peace and security for the world cannot forget some of the things that have happened in the past ten years. Yesterday, Senator Hickenlooper, who sat in this seat, recalled the offer which Mr. Bernard Baruch had made when he was representing the United States. At a time when the United States had the sole monopoly of the atomic bomb, we offered to give up this advantage of ours and turn everything over to an international agency. But this idea was wrecked by the Soviet Union.

When I was in the Senate just after the war and the United States created the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after the devastation of World War II, the Soviet Union was invited to help in this great international humanitarian effort. But this, too, was rejected by the Soviet Union.

In 1955, President Eisenhower suggested the "open-skies" plan whereby the danger of surprise attack would be virtually eliminated by both countries agreeing to a system of aerial and ground inspection, but this plan was rejected by the Soviet Union.
Last winter, the Soviet Union complained about flights over the Arctic. We made a proposal in the Security Council which was supported by all the members of the Council except one, the Soviet Union, which cast its veto and destroyed this most promising beginning towards lessening international tension and overcoming the fear of surprise attack.

Now we have put forward a proposal for the discontinuance of nuclear tests. There is nothing wrong with our proposal. It is honest and it is clear. It has been lying right here on the table for three weeks and every member has had a chance to scrutinize it, to take it and turn it upside down, to look at it and see what makes it tick. It is a good faith proposal. It is the indispensable first step. Yet, if we take Mr. Zorin's words as final, the Soviet Union is rejecting this too.

How can one account for this succession of Soviet actions to prevent the world from advancing towards peace? Is it because they run their affairs in accordance with some old book written more than a century ago by Karl Marx, a book which has always been inapplicable to the United States and is also obsolete as far as the rest of the world is concerned? Is it because they foolishly think of the United States as a capitalistic country which stands in the way of Soviet progress? The United States is not a capitalistic country. As the great French philosopher Jacques Maritain has said, "The United States is a country of economic humanism." The United States wants nothing but health and happiness for the people of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet representative often complains because his country is defeated in the United Nations. The reason why it is defeated is not because there is any automatic majority against his country. Except for the Soviet bloc, there are no satellites. There is no automatic voting in the United Nations. The Soviet Union could very easily be on the winning side here at the United Nations if it would simply change its policy. It is just as simple as that. We would like to see the Soviet Union on the winning side on that basis. If the Soviet Union just gives up this philosophy that "everybody is out of step but me", it would be happier, it would be more prosperous, it would be stronger and the world would advance towards peace.
There is still time to take this turn. The meeting is opening at Geneva on 31 October. We hope that you from the Soviet Union will be there, that you will give up some of these antiquated ideas and that you will move forward with the rest of us.
The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): This concludes the list of speakers and I think that I have given everyone an adequate chance to exercise his right of reply. Therefore, I now declare the general debate on the three items before the First Committee closed. In accordance with practice, and if there is no objection or any other suggestion on the part of representatives, we shall proceed immediately to a special debate on the draft resolutions and amendments which have been submitted. This, of course, includes the procedural motion presented verbally by the representative of Nepal.

Mr. ARDOH (Iran) (interpretation from French): We have come to the close of our general debate and are about to tackle the draft resolutions, amendments and proposals. However, it seems to me that, in the circumstances, we might be well advised not to undertake consideration of the draft resolutions and proposals today. To begin with, it seems to me that there are many draft resolutions, amendments and suggestions which, by reason of their large numbers, would not render a discussion very easy. Moreover, in view of the complexity of the disarmament question, it might not be the better part of wisdom to deal with this matter immediately since, as you know, Mr. Chairman -- and happily, I may add -- efforts have been made to arrive at a formula acceptable to all, especially to the delegations most directly concerned. These efforts are being continued and it is only proper to give them an opportunity to succeed. That is why I should like to propose adjournment of the meeting until tomorrow so as to enable those engaged in conciliation efforts to continue their endeavours, and also in order to leave time to all of us to ponder the various proposals which have been voiced before the Committee. Therefore, I move that this meeting be adjourned until tomorrow afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): Is there any objection on the part of the Committee to the motion just made by the representative of Iran?

The silence of the Committee indicates general agreement and, therefore, I declare the meeting adjourned until tomorrow at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.