The discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests (continued)
always involved great-Power rivalry, so that the use of nuclear weapons by a small State or a revolutionary group could easily set off a world-wide nuclear war. The danger was obvious; differences of view existed only on the means to combat it, and the Irish delegation therefore wished to reply in advance to some of the arguments likely to be invoked against its amendments (A/C.1/L.207).

6. It would doubtless be argued that the Irish amendments, by establishing, even temporarily, "have" and "have-not" States with respect to nuclear weapons, would infringe the principle of the sovereign equality of States and reduce the prestige of the "have-not" States. That argument was unfounded because the decision not to supply, manufacture or accept nuclear weapons would be a voluntary one and would in no way impair the fundamental right of the States concerned. Moreover, prestige—the world's good opinion—was not likely to be hurt by a deliberate choice on the part of a State which was capable of producing nuclear weapons not to produce them.

7. It would also be maintained that, by limiting freedom of action in the disposal of nuclear weapons, the effectiveness of various systems of defensive alliances would be impaired. That argument implied that in order to secure some military advantage Powers which possessed nuclear weapons would be prepared to hand over such weapons to allies which did not. That was the very danger that should be prevented forthwith by international agreement. Defensive alliances were at best ad hoc groupings designed to meet changing historical circumstances; and although it might at a particular time appear advantageous to give nuclear weapons to allied forces, their dissemination would undoubtedly increase the risk of war and make disarmament in nuclear weapons more difficult. Surely it would be worth forfeiting a hypothetical military advantage which might lead to a conflict as destructive as to render the whole concept of military advantage meaningless.

8. It would probably also be argued that an agreement on a suspension of tests would in itself render the measures proposed by Ireland superfluous. That argument was untenable. A suspension or eventual cessation of tests would not automatically stop the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons. If a State was capable of producing such weapons, it could build up a stockpile even without testing, with the practical certainty that the weapons would be effective; furthermore, any State could obtain weapons of proved efficacy from existing "nuclear Powers".

9. Finally, a case could be made against the Irish amendments on the grounds that, since the presence of nuclear weapons was virtually impossible to detect, it would be impossible to control compliance with the requirement that States possessing such weapons should not hand them over to States which did not yet possess them. It was unfortunately true that there was no certain means of detecting a violation of a voluntary undertaking such as that suggested by Ireland, just as the lack of a system for detecting the presence of unexploded nuclear weapons, in general, was an obstacle to a comprehensive disarmament agreement. However, the disadvantages of breaking a pledge not to disseminate nuclear weapons or not to manufacture and stockpile them were so overwhelming that they would act as a deterrent. The violator of such a pledge would be exposed as an enemy of peace. A detected breach of the agreement would be a tremendous propaganda defeat for the supplying Power. Moreover, no "nuclear Power" could give up such weapons without giving up some of its own power and influence, and a secret delivery to another State might in the end prove prejudicial to its own vital interests.

10. The aim of the United Nations should be to foster gradual evolution towards a world government under which all disputes would be settled by law based on justice, rather than by force. It was to be hoped that the new approach of clearing the way for political agreement by technical talks on the technical aspects of disarmament would break the long deadlock on disarmament. During the waiting period, before the achievement of agreement on partial aspects of disarmament, all States should be alert to dangers both old and new. Ireland's purpose in submitting its amendments and its draft resolution was to direct attention to the urgency of dealing with the new dangers.

11. Mr. WINIEWICZ (Poland) said that the United Nations had so far failed to discharge its responsibility for solving the basic question of whether atomic energy would be used for constructive or for destructive purposes. The arms race was continuing; nuclear weapons were rapidly becoming conventional armaments; and there was a growing tendency to include those weapons into the arsenals of States other than the "nuclear Powers".

12. While Poland recognized the fact, frequently stressed by representatives of the Western Powers, that the world was split ideologically and the major political problems remained unsolved, it rejected the West's conclusion, namely, that the arms race must continue. Solutions, in its view, must be sought at the political, not the military, level through negotiations and the strict observance of the principle of the peaceful coexistence of different social systems. That was the keystone of the foreign policy of all the socialist States.

13. The arms race had assumed such dimensions that it had itself become a major political problem. It aggravated other contentious questions, tied down huge expanses of money for non-productive purposes which could be used for the development of underdeveloped countries—and heightened the general feeling of insecurity. It created new problems, such as the establishment of foreign military bases in countries all over the world—in itself, a major problem which had long required solution.

14. The time had come to decide whether the world was to be permitted to live in peace, despite the different social structures of the various States, or whether military means alone were to be used to settle disputes. The common man in all countries wanted peace above all; his common sense told him, however, that if bombs and other destructive weapons continued to be manufactured they would ultimately be used, in a war which would mean annihilation. He would not forever continue to support the arms race. Force and the show of force were not the means for settling differences; political thinking and diplomatic action had to be restored to their proper place in international affairs. It was to be hoped that the United Nations would ultimately play a decisive role in the solution of the disarmament problem.
15. Three conclusions could be drawn from the failure of disarmament negotiations up to the present. First, all attempts to impose solutions from “positions of strength” were unrealistic, for temporary military advantages, such as the atomic monopoly the United States had once possessed, were soon overcome. Secondly, a situation in which only one side showed a readiness for compromise and settlement could not be continued. Thirdly, it had become clear that there were great difficulties in the way of reaching an overall agreement on all disarmament problems at one stroke. For that reason, the concept of partial solutions and of the gradual implementation of disarmament measures was gaining more and more adherents. However, if that or any other method of disarmament was to be successful, the tactic of continually putting forward new pre-conditions intended to prevent final agreement must be discontinued.

16. The last conclusion in no way meant that Poland no longer desired speedy, all-embracing and radical solutions. Thus, his Government supported a complete and immediate ban on nuclear weapons and a speedy, substantial reduction of all armaments. But time was running short, and necessity dictated an approach to the problem in terms of partial solutions.

17. Such solutions could be implemented in three ways: through unilateral action by Governments, through regional disarmament agreements, and through partial disarmament agreements on a world scale.

18. Poland believed that disarmament could be accelerated by such unilateral action as the reduction of armed forces or armaments and the withdrawal of troops from foreign territories. Such steps had already been taken by States parties to the Warsaw Treaty. However, such decisions could seriously influence the disarmament problem as a whole only if the example they set was followed by other States belonging to other military groupings. That form of partial disarmament must be based on reciprocity to be effective. Thus, for instance, an opportunity to achieve results with regard to the cessation of nuclear tests had been wasted when the Western Powers had for six months failed to follow up the very important Soviet initiative in the matter.

19. Another unilateral step which might be taken was for States which did not yet possess nuclear weapons to refrain from equipping their armies with them. His delegation whole-heartedly welcomed the statement made by the Swedish representative in that connexion (946th meeting), and appealed to other nations to follow Sweden's example. The spread of nuclear armaments could not but complicate disarmament discussions and render agreement more difficult to achieve.

20. The regional approach to partial disarmament solutions was exemplified by the Polish plan to set up a zone, consisting of the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia and the two German States, in which nuclear weapons would be prohibited. The advantages of the proposal seemed obvious: it would greatly diminish the strategic importance of the sensitive border between the two opposing groupings, while the system of control established in the zone could serve as a pattern to be applied to other disarmament measures. In that connexion, he would emphasize that Poland was in favour of control—but of control, not as an end in itself, but in relation to specific measures. The Polish plan was based on the principle of equal concessions and would not change the relationship of forces at the expenses of either side. Its implementation should lead to the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces in the zone free of nuclear weapons, and by helping to improve the political atmosphere would facilitate, not only further progress towards general disarmament, but the solution of controversial political problems as well.

21. The Polish plan was particularly significant because of the special situation obtaining in Germany. The transformation West Germany into an arsenal of weapons—including nuclear weapons—which could be used against many European countries, and the activities of circles in that country bent upon revision of the existing frontiers, were fought with danger, not merely to Poland, but to all the countries of Europe.

22. The most important and urgent of the steps which could be taken on a world scale was the cessation of nuclear tests. Experiments with nuclear weapons were a matter of world-wide concern, and two valuable documents, prepared and unanimously adopted by the most prominent experts of both East and West—the reports of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/3898) and of the Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests (A/3897)—had provided decisive proof both of the harmful effects of radiation and of the possibility of detecting and controlling nuclear explosions.

23. The first report made inevitable the conclusion that in the interests of humanity tests of new nuclear weapons should be abandoned as soon as possible. The second report provided the basis for a system of control and inspection which would make it possible to enforce the cessation of testing. Thus, any measures taken in that respect could in no way affect the right of the "nuclear Powers" to protect their own security.

24. In the history of the United Nations no other problem had been so thoroughly prepared or was so ripe for solution as that of the final and unconditional cessation of nuclear weapons testing. Poland was the more concerned therefore at such statements as those made by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom, which seemed to push the problem back to its starting point. To accept the proposal to make the cessation of testing dependent on other disarmament measures, which was a new retreat from the principle of immediate partial solutions, and the proposal to limit the proposed suspension of nuclear tests to a period of one year could only be to evade a solution of the problem. Poland's concern was further justified by the fact that the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) avoided any clear decisions on those questions and was worded in less specific terms than many similar resolutions unanimously adopted by the United Nations in the past. His delegation felt that the purpose of the Geneva conference scheduled to begin on 31 October 1958 should be to put the conclusions of the Conference of Experts into the form of a binding agreement. The United

Nations should raise a firm voice on the matter and call unequivocally for the cessation of nuclear weapons tests.

25. His delegation could not share the opinion of those who questioned the value of the cessation of testing as a disarmament measure. Final cessation could put an end to the further development of nuclear weapons with increased destructive power and of smaller, so-called tactical, weapons, both of which were equally dangerous to mankind. The cessation of tests would also prevent any further enlargement of the number of "nuclear Powers", a prospect which gave rise to serious fears and could only cause further difficulties in solving the disarmament problem.

26. His Government attached great importance to the conference of technical experts on the prevention of surprise attack to be convened in Geneva on 10 November 1958. It had been expected that their negotiations would be successful, and would result in proposals which would contribute to an increased sense of real security among nations. Nevertheless, conferences of experts could not and should not be regarded as an end in themselves; they fulfilled their fundamental function only when their results became a basis for speedy decisions by the United Nations and the Governments concerned. The world should beware of allowing the method of technical discussions in various fields of disarmament to be used as a pretext for putting off specific and practical decisions on disarmament.

27. Much had been said in the past twelve years about the absurdity of the armaments race and the possibility of finding solutions. Words should now be followed by action, if only in the form of partial but specific disarmament measures. The USSR memorandum (A/3923) listed a number of other partial measures which could prevent the further growth of armaments and lead the world towards disarmament. It should not be forgotten that every specific decision leading towards disarmament would immediately be reflected in an improvement in the international atmosphere and would pave the way for further agreements. On the other hand any wasted opportunity to reach a partial agreement on matters as ripe for positive decision as the question of test suspension would inevitably bring about an aggravation of the international situation.

28. Mr. SOSA RODRIGUEZ (Venezuela) said that there seemed to be general agreement in the Committee on the need for disarmament in order to reduce the danger of war, and to use part of the savings thus effected for the economic and social welfare of the peoples of the world, and on the need to suspend and perhaps ultimately discontinue the testing of nuclear weapons altogether. The disagreement concerned the methods of achieving those goals. The Western Powers held that a ban on the production of nuclear weapons must be accompanied by a reduction in conventional armaments and military forces and that a permanent discontinuance of testing must be preceded by the establishment of a control system; otherwise, they contended, an imbalance among the Powers would result which would increase rather than reduce the danger of war. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, felt that the question of a ban on testing should be given first priority and settled independently of the other disarmament problems since the tests constituted a continuing threat to mankind.

29. The task of the United Nations was to obtain a compromise resolution, based on mutual concessions; such a resolution might not be satisfactory to everyone, but it would be preferable to one which reflected the viewpoint of only one group of States and would therefore, once adopted, become a dead letter.

30. A possible resolution would be one which expressed the desirability of measures to reduce conventional armaments and military forces, prevent surprise attack and stop the production and testing of nuclear weapons, and which recommended, first, the early resumption of great-Power negotiations on the general question of disarmament; secondly the initiation of great-Power talks on measures to prevent surprise attack; thirdly, the early conclusion of an agreement on an effective control system permitting the cessation of nuclear weapons production and stockpiling; and fourthly, the immediate suspension of nuclear weapons tests pending the establishment of a control system that would permit a permanent ban on testing.

31. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), replying to earlier observations by the Swedish representative (951st meeting) on the dispute over the use of the words "cessation" and "suspension" in the discussion on weapons tests, recalled Mr. Undén's remark that those who employed the word "cessation" and those who employed the word "suspension" were equally desirous of bringing about a genuine cessation of testing and that the dispute could perhaps be ended by settling on the word "discontinuance". In reality, the two words did not have the same meaning: a suspension was temporary, whereas a cessation was permanent. The Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.203) had not added the words "for all time" after the word "cessation", as Mr. Undén had pointed out, inasmuch as the latter word clearly implied permanence without further elaboration. On the other hand, the word "suspension" had been deliberately employed in the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) because the United States and the United Kingdom, as was evident from the statements of their representatives in the Committee, were entering the forthcoming Geneva conference with a view to securing, not a permanent discontinuance but a temporary suspension of testing, limited to one year. They were doing so in order to obtain time to prepare for their next series of tests.

32. The Swedish representative had suggested the use of "discontinuance" rather than "cessation", even though "discontinuance" was clearly a weaker word; nevertheless, Mr. Undén had made it apparent that Sweden favoured the complete cessation of tests. The United States and the United Kingdom, on the other hand, had rejected the word "cessation" because its use would have been at variance with their entire position; if they really desired the complete, unconditional stopping of tests they should not find it difficult to substitute the word "cessation" for "suspension" in the seventeen-Power draft resolution.

33. Mr. UNDEN (Sweden), pointing out once again that the Soviet draft resolution had not specifically called for an agreement covering an indefinite period, said he hoped that the Soviet representative would consider the possibility of a compromise lying somewhere between an agreement covering one year and one covering an indefinite period.
34. Mr. BARCO (United States of America), replying to the remarks of the Soviet representative, said that the United States had made it clear that it was working for an agreement that could lead to the cessation of tests, and that it would halt testing for one year, starting on 31 October 1958, if the Soviet Union did the same. He asked whether the Soviet Union intended to take such action.

35. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) replied that the answer to the United States representative's question could be found in the statement which he (Mr. Zorin) had made before the Committee on 10 October (945th meeting).

36. Mr. MOORE (United Kingdom) pointed out that the United Kingdom Government had stated on 22 August 1958 (A/3895/Rev.1) that it was prepared to negotiate an agreement for the suspension of nuclear weapons test under effective international control and to refrain from testing thereafter for further successive one-year periods.

37. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) declared that the United States and the United Kingdom had attached a variety of conditions to the prolongation for additional one-year periods of any future suspension of tests; the Soviet Union favoured the unconditional cessation of tests.

38. Mr. BARCO (United States of America) said that the Soviet representative, in bringing up the use of the words "cessation", "suspension" and "discontinuance", was trying to deal with a serious problem in terms of mere slogans.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.