BREAKTHROUGH FOR INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS

Signing of the US-Japan Safeguards Agreement. Mr. F. Uchida (Japan), Dr. S. Eklund (Director General IAEA), Mr. H.D. Smyth (USA). On the left, Mr. D. Popovic, Director, IAEA Division of Safeguards and Mr. G. Klevanski, IAEA External Liaison

One of the major actions taken by the seventh regular session of the IAEA General Conference (24 September - 1 October 1963) was the overwhelming support given to a resolution on the extension of the Agency's safeguards system. There were 57 votes in favour, 4 against and 6 abstentions.

The Board of Governors, in June 1963, had provisionally approved the extension of the safeguards system to nuclear reactors of a capacity exceeding 100 MW(th). That decision had been taken without dissenting vote. In view of the special importance of this question, the Board had also decided to submit to the General Conference the document extending safeguards. The massive vote in favour at the General Conference reaffirmed and reinforced the action taken by the Board, which was requested to take into account the discussion in the General Conference, before giving final effect to the extension.

In the Conference discussion, general satisfaction was also expressed over the fact that the entire system would be reviewed from a scientific and technical point of view in the course of 1964.

On the very eve of the Conference, 23 September 1963, the first agreement transferring to the Agency the administration of the safeguards under a bilateral agreement was signed at IAEA headquarters by Ambassador H. Uchida, for Japan, Professor Henry D. Smyth, Governor to IAEA from the United States, on behalf of his Government, and Director General Sigvard Eklund for IAEA.

On that occasion, Dr. Eklund stated:

The past year has seen several important developments in the Agency's safeguards programme. One of these is the extension of the general system to cover reactors of a thermal capacity greater than 100 MW. This extension was provisionally approved by the Board in June without any opposition, and has now been submitted to this Conference for its consideration. At the same time the Board decided that the time had come to undertake a general review of the safeguards system which can now be performed on the basis of the past experience of the Agency. As regards experience, none is more valuable than practice, and any first step in this field assumes therefore special significance and deserves particular recognition.

Seen in this context, Japan has made a unique contribution to the work of the Agency. As you may recall, Japan was the first country to receive nuclear fuel through the Agency, and to which Agency safeguards were attached. The Governments of Japan and Canada have notified the Agency that it will be asked to administer safeguards under their bilateral agreement. It is similarly foreseen that transfers of nuclear materials between Australia and Japan and between South Africa and Japan will be subject to IAEA's safeguards. Early this month we were officially informed that Japan and the United Kingdom intend to transfer to IAEA the safeguards contained in their bilateral agreement regarding the Tokai Mura power station.

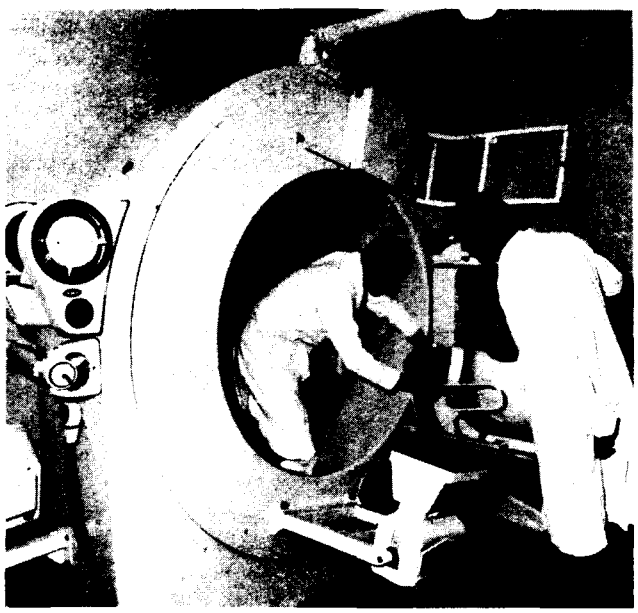
These various plans are indicative of the profound seriousness of the approach of Japan - one of the most advanced countries in atomic energy - to the question of reserving it exclusively for peaceful uses and of assuring the world community that this is so.

The plans I have referred to are for the future; today we are witnessing the formal conclusion of the first transfer to the Agency of responsibility for safeguards under a bilateral agreement. This is the culmination of negotiations started in 1961, following the announcement by Japan and the United States of their intentions in this regard. The support that the United States has given to the Agency's safeguards system has been evident from the start, and took practical form in the arrangements made to test Agency safeguards procedures on four reactors within the United States itself.

The agreement places heavy responsibility upon the Agency and its secretariat. It will be our task

to ensure that the Agency justifies the confidence being placed in it by the two partners to the bilateral agreement, and will be able to demonstrate that international safeguards can be wisely and flexibly applied without detriment to the peaceful nuclear industry of the countries concerned.

The terms of the agreement represent pioneering effort in this field, and experience will show us in what ways it may be improved in future instruments of this kind. An important step of internationalizing bilateral safeguards has thus been taken. It is perhaps relevant that this transfer takes place at a time when the first step has been made towards limiting the threat in the form of atomic weapons that has hung over us since we first succeeded in artificially releasing nuclear energy.



Checking a cobalt-60 teletherapy machine at Charing Cross Hospital, London, during an advanced training course on the physics of radiotherapy for 15 international trainees. The course opened in September 1963 at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School. It is organized by IAEA in co-operation with the UK Hospital Physicists' Association (UN photo)

One of the students who took part in the International Training Course on Nuclear Science for High School Teachers at the Nahal Soreq Radioisotope Centre, 28 July - 5 September 1963, thanks the Israeli authorities and IAEA for the arrangements and facilities. Sitting, from left to right: Professor E.D. Bergmann, Chairman, Israel Atomic Energy Commission; Dr. C. Braudo, Director of the Nahal Soreq Radioisotope Centre, and Mr. A. Kozlov of IAEA's Division of Exchange and Training

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