

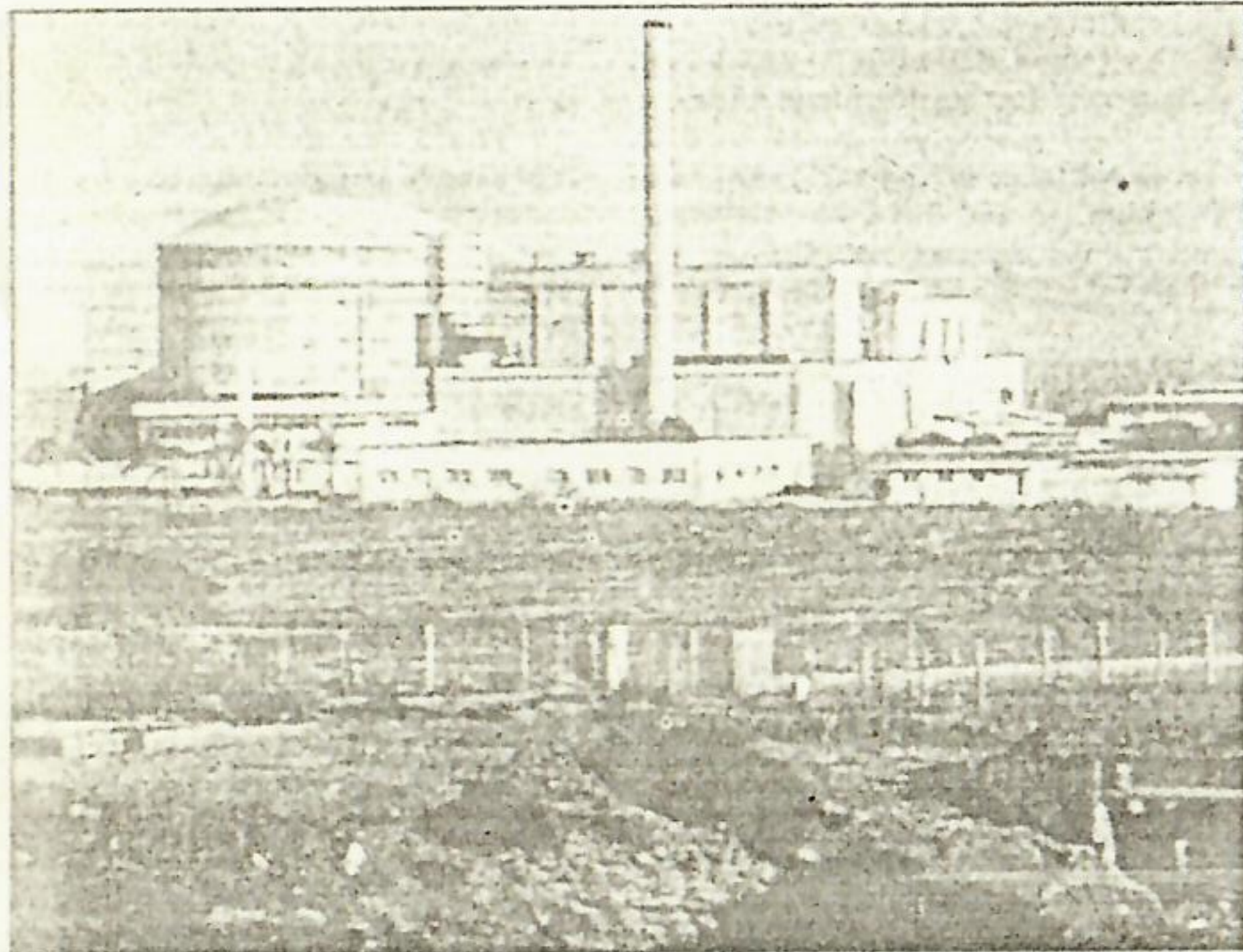
NPT Treaty Prolonged Indefinitely

As of May 11 at 12:15 p.m. New York time, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was prolonged indefinitely. Until the last minute the prolongation seemed problematic.

Vladimir ORLOV,
MN special correspondent

Just a month ago the indefinite prolongation of this treaty, which is of key importance for international relations, seemed extremely problematic. Two weeks ago, when the New York conference was at its height, it seemed that the unpleasant procedure of voting (possibly even by secret ballot) was unavoidable. However, Jayantha Dhanapala, chairman of the conference and ambassador from Sri Lanka, confidently steered a course toward adoption by consensus, trying in the lobbies to reconcile the officially irreconcilable sides.

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The nuclear reactor in Pakistan, a country that has not joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, testifies to the fact that the treaty has failed to become a universal code of conduct for all states.

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Two hours before the historic decision on prolonging the NPT, Dhanapala talked with MN. It was already visible at that time that his "shuttle" diplomacy between the delegations of Russia, the United States, South Africa, Egypt, Canada, Mexico, Britain, Indonesia and another dozen key players at "the poker game of nuclear non-proliferation" had proved successful: "We will be able to adopt three documents in a package without voting. First, on the principles

might block the consensus in the offing. The day before a group of Arab countries headed by Egypt had presented a resolution denouncing Israel for its stubborn reluctance to join the NPT, demanding the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of any weapons of mass destruction, and recommending that the nuclear states extend special guarantees of security to the region's Arab countries. As a result of refined talks between the Egyptians and the Americans, the resolution obtained new "parents" — Russia, the United States

refused to begin the sitting until all the texts were translated into Arabic, as the conference rules allowed.

Thus, the opponents' resistance to the treaty's indefinite prolongation was broken. The non-participation of North Korea in the voting and the belated objections of Libya, Iraq, Syria and Malaysia will, of course, be entered into the protocol. But the official result is the universal consensus that the NPT should be in perpetual operation. In this way the world's division into five nuclear countries and the entire remain-

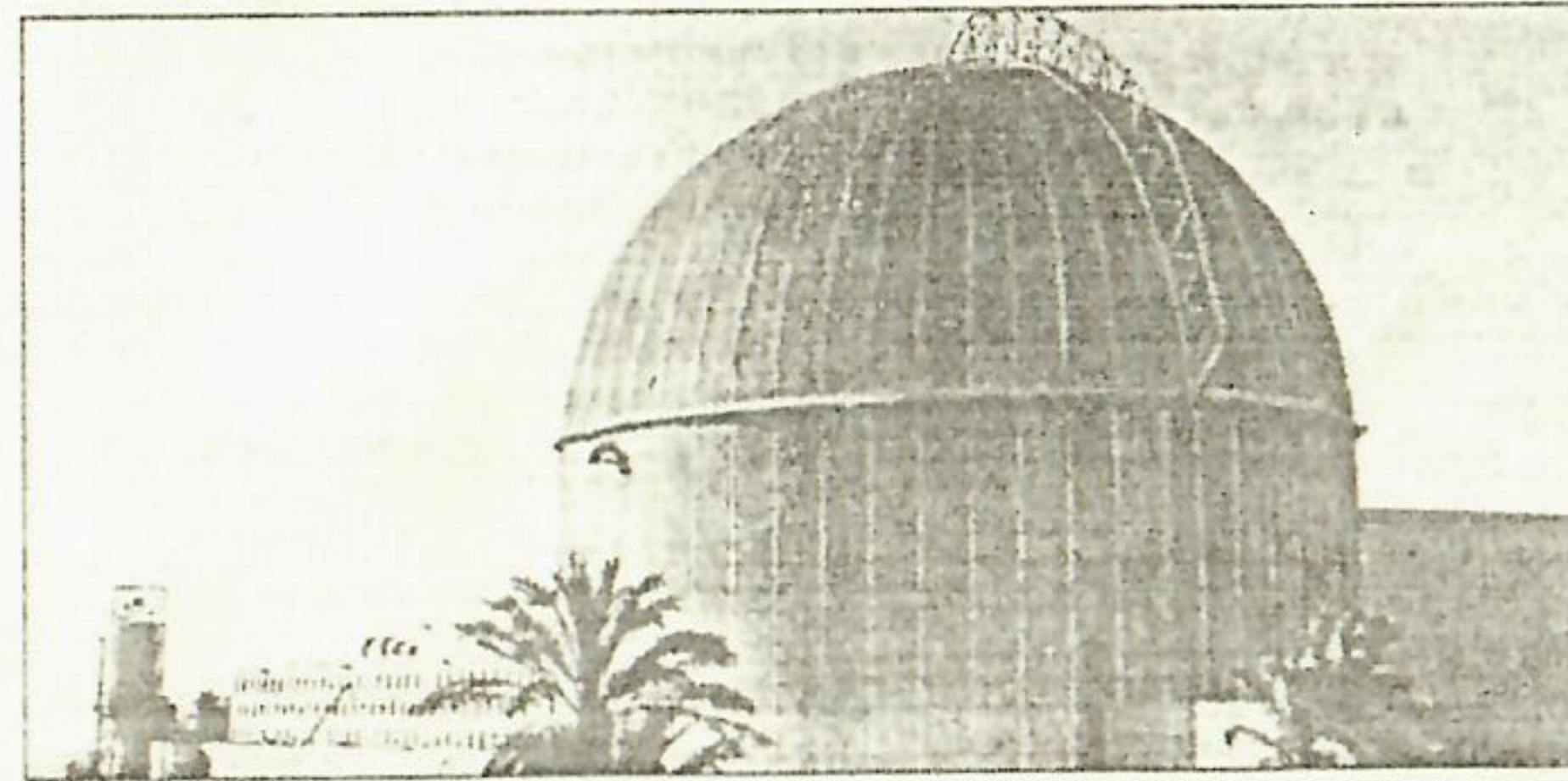
ing non-nuclear world has been permanently formalized. But this notwithstanding two resolutions contain some fairly vague demands on the nuclear powers on subsequent disarmament. The only really serious demand is that a treaty on a comprehensive nuclear test ban be concluded by the end of 1996.

From the standpoint of diplomacy the delegations of the nuclear countries were 100 percent winners during this month-long engagement. Having given their consent to strengthening the mechanism of examining the treaty, they have not ceded any one of their initial positions. But does the diplomatic victory scored by Russia and the entire group of five nuclear countries spell victory for the international community as a whole?

On the one hand, it of course does mean victory. Said Dhanapala: "First, it has been possible to reach what is in effect consensus and not to cut off critics from the treaty, which is the most important. Second, control over the fulfillment of the NPT's operation will be intensified. Third, the question about further prolongation will no longer haunt the participating countries and they will be able to concentrate on the essential questions of disarmament."

On the other hand, the specific commitments assumed by the nuclear states in the course of the conference are sufficiently modest. Besides, Israel, which was mentioned nearly every five minutes from the first day of the conference to the last as the main transgressor of the non-proliferation regime, is mentioned in the final documents only once — somewhere between Djibouti and Vanuatu, which were recommended to join the treaty. "Holiday tables are literally being laid in Tel Aviv," said an Israeli diplomat. India and Pakistan were in general not censured. Finally, the conference proved incapable of adopting its final declaration, and thus its ending happened to be slurred over.

New York



The nuclear reactor in India.

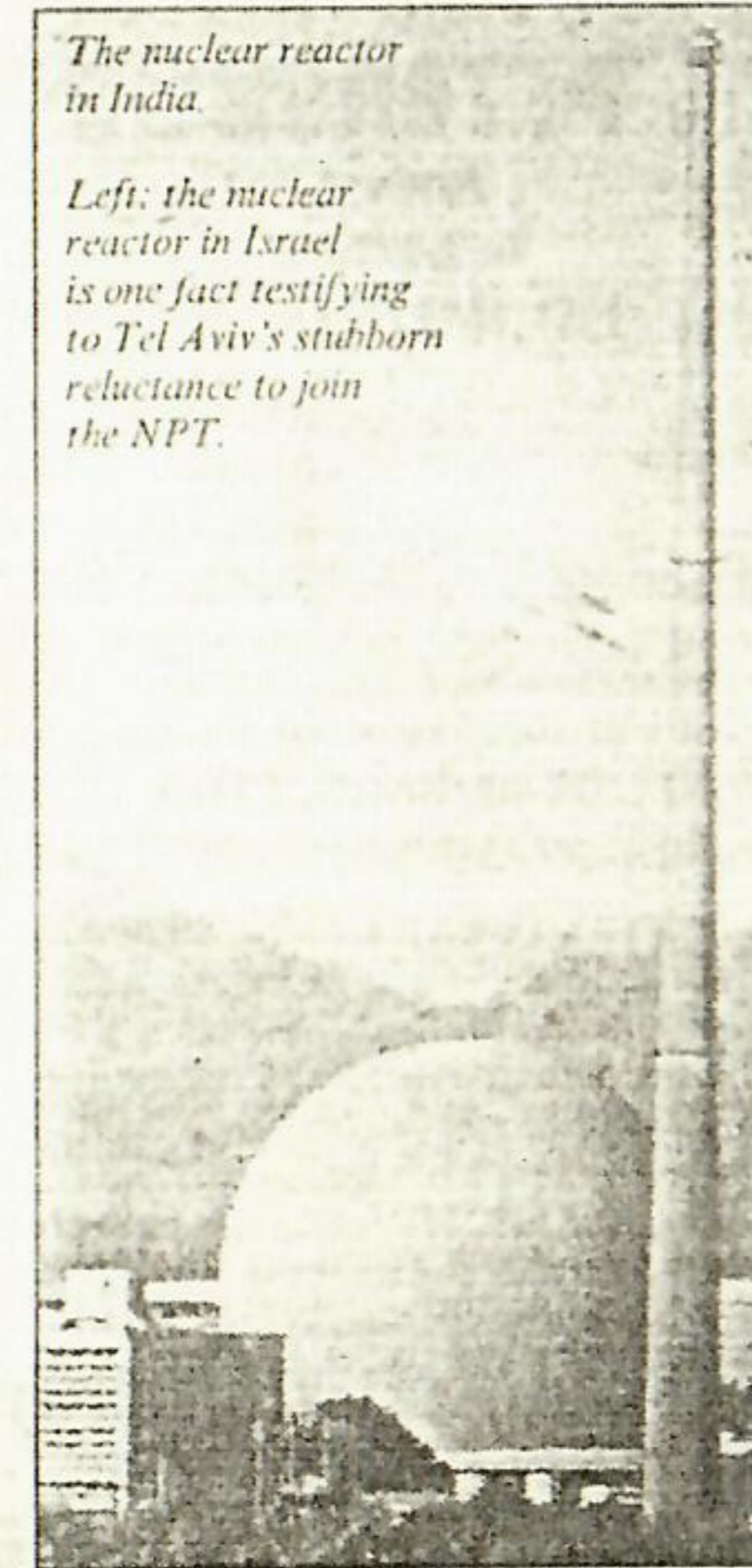
Left: the nuclear reactor in Israel is one fact testifying to Tel Aviv's stubborn reluctance to join the NPT.

and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Second, on raising the effectiveness of examining the treaty's operation. Third, the decision on the NPT's indefinite prolongation. It is important that the drafts of all the three resolutions, prepared as a result of joint consultations, have officially been put forward by the NPT's depository states: Russia, the United States and Britain. This will undoubtedly impart leverage to them."

Dhanapala spoke about the outcome as if it was a foregone conclusion, although it could not be ruled out that at the last minute the Arab countries

and Britain — and was considerably mitigated. Israel was not even mentioned once. Egypt, though with undisguised vexation, swallowed this pill. America's economic aid to Cairo was just too great. The question still remained, however, if the remaining Middle Eastern countries would swallow this pill, or if they would, to save face, nevertheless declare their disapproval of the precarious compromise.

The final decision was being put off in the course of two hours. It became clear that Iran demanded deleting only one insignificant phrase from the resolution on the Middle East, and Syria



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