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Pugwash in Africa

At the recent fifteenth Pugwash meeting, held in Addis Ababa, an unusually large number of distinguished Africans joined with physical and social scientists from the more industrialized Communist and non-Communist nations to discuss problems of common interest.

It was encouraging that both the Soviet and the African participants in the Addis Ababa meeting tended to take moderate and responsible positions which are reflected in the conference's final statement. Thus there was no Russian attempt to make disruptive propaganda about Vietnam, and the meeting's closing call for "energetic measures to restore peace in Vietnam" could be heartily approved by the Johnson Administration. The Soviet conferees emphasized their continuing interest in a nonproliferation treaty and in a ban on underground tests. This gave some basis for cautious optimism about the Geneva disarmament meeting that convened yesterday.

Pugwash participants do not, of course, represent or bind governments. But the tone of the discussions and the agreed statement shows that influential figures in many lands want to get on with the task of improving humanity's lot and safeguarding humanity's future, rather than trying to inflame old animosities or to speed up the arms race.