

Now this is the kind of proposition that we understand and that we believe in. We are willing to negotiate with Mr. Vishinsky and his colleagues 66 times, or even 666 times, provided that Mr. Vishinsky really believes that there is some possibility of a firm and honest accommodation emerging from these discussions. There cannot, however, be such a settlement unless both sides, in the give and take of negotiation, are willing to adjust their positions when necessary, to write the agreement in simple and precise terms, to carry out its provisions in good faith, and to regard the matter as settled. We get nowhere, however, if negotiations are carried on in what is called "double talk" -- that is, if people turn up after the negotiations are ended and assert that at the conference table they had meant something quite different from what they had seemed to mean.

Let us assume, however, that Mr. Vishinsky really means what he says when he suggests that his government is willing to go steadily and patiently to the end of the long road of negotiation by which international problems are settled. This is hopeful news. It will mean more to the world than any number of five-power pacts, for it will enable us to set about solving the many outstanding problems which have been left over since the end of the war. The most dangerous feature in the immediate situation is that we may be led to think that it is hopeless to try to make this effort. History meanwhile, is adding new complications to these problems, hardening the moulds that must be changed, giving permanency to situations which we all regarded as temporary. These problems can be found at every point on the circumference of the Russian sphere of influence, and in all the major issues that stand between us. They cannot be settled without concessions on both sides. The most useful contribution that Mr. Vishinsky and his government could make to the maintenance of peace would be to come forward with practical suggestions which he honestly thinks might form a basis for reasonable negotiation for the settlement of any one of these outstanding problems. Even if we could settle one of them, the temperature of international relations would start to go down, the fevers would start to abate, and the peaceful objectives which he and his friends vociferously proclaim would come within our reach.

What we lack, of course, is mutual confidence. I do not suppose that we can restore confidence solely by talking, but I think it will be useful to us all if we study the statements that have been made in this debate. Perhaps we shall at least understand one another better. From the study that I have been able to make of them so far, I am surprised to find that Mr. Vishinsky and his colleagues seem still to be obsessed with the old fear of encirclement and intervention. At one point he said with a great show of enthusiasm that six hundred million people in the world shared his views. I presume that he reached the figure of six hundred million by adding together the two hundred million people of the Soviet Union and its borderlands in Europe and the four hundred million people of China whom he now claims to be within the communist world. Time alone will tell whether the Chinese are as zealous converts as he now assumes, but at least he is entitled to take what comfort he can out of the present circumstances. Since he reaches his figure of six hundred million people in this way, one must conclude that he regards the entire balance of the world outside this area as being hostile to the Soviet Union. Let me assure him, however, that the Russian people do have friends in the free world -- not only communist friends, but friends of all sorts who admire the courage and resourcefulness of that people and who sincerely desire to live at peace with them on the basis of mutual toleration and respect. Intervention was certainly a fact in Russian history, but it is long since dead. Why does Mr. Vishinsky feel that he must frighten people of his own country by making this ghost walk again. As for encirclement; well, we are all encircled, if we choose to look at the world that way. Surely the leaders of the Soviet Union, whose power is greater than ever before in Russian history, cannot have any real fear of encirclement. This again may be something which Mr. Vishinsky is talking about because of its effect on his own people; because of the desire of the ruling circles in Russia to hold these people together even if fears and suspicions must be manufactured for that purpose. It is an old device