

The main issue again raised in connection with these Soviet proposals was whether the Soviet Union would itself permit effective international inspection to be carried out in its territory to determine both quantitatively and qualitatively the armaments and armed forces at its disposal. Without an undertaking by all countries concerned that they would open their frontiers to international inspection, it was clearly impossible to arrive at a plan of disarmament which might be directly related to the needs of international peace and security. The arbitrary arithmetical formula suggested by the Soviet Union would leave that country in a position of advantage in relation to those countries, which, like the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, had already reduced their armaments and armed forces substantially since the conclusion of hostilities.

A counter resolution was submitted by the United Kingdom delegation asserting the principle already taken by the majority in the Commission on Conventional Armaments, that disarmament could only take place in an atmosphere of international confidence and security. The Canadian representative, in supporting this position in the First Committee, pointed out that no country would welcome more sincerely than Canada any progress towards effective measures of general disarmament. It was not possible, however, for Canada to support measures of disarmament at the cost of insecurity to Canada or to other nations desirous of maintaining international peace and security on the basis of the principles and purposes of the Charter. The Canadian representative emphasized in particular that the problem of inspection, verification and control lay at the root of the disarmament problem, and urged that the Soviet representative should declare whether the Soviet Government was prepared to open its territory to international inspection.

The first Committee of the General Assembly, where the question of disarmament was discussed, rejected the Soviet proposals and adopted a resolution, based upon the United Kingdom proposal, that the Commission for Conventional Armaments should continue its work in formulating proposals for the general regulation and reduction of armaments, which would include provisions for the receipt, checking and publication by an international organization of their armed forces and their conventional armaments. This proposal was adopted by the General Assembly on November 19 by a vote of 43 (including Canada) in favour, 6 (Soviet Bloc) against, with one abstention.

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During 1949 the Commission was hampered in its attempts to implement this resolution by the continuing fundamental disagreement between the U.S.S.R. and the Ukraine on the one hand, and the remaining members of the Council on the other. The Soviet Representative made his Government's position clear, when the question was reconsidered in February 1949, by reintroducing the disarmament proposals which the Third Session of the General Assembly had decisively rejected in Paris. These proposals provided the measures be formulated to reduce the armaments and armed forces of the permanent members of the Council by one-third; and that two draft conventions were necessary, to take effect simultaneously, concerning the prohibition of atomic weapons and the control of atomic energy. The Soviet Representative added a further proposal to those which the Soviet Union had submitted to the General Assembly to the effect that the permanent members of the Council were to submit full data on their armed forces and armaments, including atomic weapons, no later than March 31, 1949. Western representatives characterized this Soviet draft