

United States and other Governments, and to seek in private an acceptable solution and to report to the General Assembly and the Security Council as soon as sufficient progress has been made. But I wish to repeat that in no way would we be in favour of any move today or tomorrow that would restrict the generality of this debate.

Some abridgement of the gap between our respective points of view, I think, is possible, and agreement will, I submit, be easier to reach in private informal meetings of the Powers which the Disarmament Commission considered "principally involved": France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and my country. Whatever views may be held as to the membership of the Sub-Committee, it will be conceded, I think, that the Sub-Committee, where the Anglo-French proposals were born, is competent to find out what the possibilities of making further progress now are. If headway cannot be made among those five countries, I very much doubt whether it can be made among any larger group of nations. But let us underrate neither the possibilities nor the difficulties.

The other day, when we were debating the inclusion of the Soviet Union item in our agenda, Mr. Vyshinsky complained of what he interpreted as a critical attitude adopted by the United Kingdom representative toward the new Soviet Union proposals, and on Monday he also referred to Mr. Moch's "inquisition". I suppose this is the danger which all of us run in any attempt to obtain a clearer understanding of what exactly the Soviet Union means by its proposals -- although I suppose that danger would exist with regard to any proposal, whether it was offered by the Soviet Union or not. Although one apparently runs the risk of having one's questions interpreted as criticisms, that risk exists both here and in the private Sub-Committee if we should decide to re-establish one. I shall therefore try, in a constructive spirit, to indicate some of the problems which the new Soviet Union proposals, as we understand them, present to my Government.

Let me acknowledge in advance that in several respects the new Soviet Union proposals appear to be an improvement on the Soviet Union's former position. I shall not make the mistake which Mr. Malik made, I think, in London when he rejected the Anglo-French proposals as being "indistinguishable" from the previous Western position. Other speakers who have preceded me have already analysed certain ambiguities and uncertainties in the Soviet Union draft resolution. They have asked Mr. Vyshinsky certain questions which also seem to my mind to require an answer if we are to understand one another and to make progress. I can well understand that there may be questions -- as indeed there are -- which Mr. Vyshinsky will want to take time to answer, although he has thus far, I think, been very generous in his readiness to participate in the debate and to answer questions. This matter is so important that one should not draw hasty conclusions from a refusal at a given moment to furnish a full reply to a particular question.

But, after examining the Soviet Union proposals with care and attention and having heard Mr. Vyshinsky's preliminary reply and further exposition yesterday and the day before, I am, I confess, left in some uncertainty as to how far the Soviet Union has really gone towards the Western position. Indeed, the Soviet Union's basic provisions,