

Between these two resolutions lie almost nine years of disagreements and successive deadlocks. As we look back on these years, however, and in particular as we review the past year, there has been without question a narrowing of the gap between the positions of the principal powers involved. That the gap remains wide and deep no one would, I think, deny.

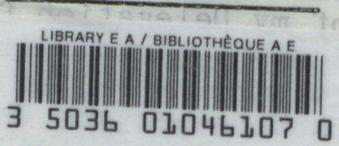
To minimize the remaining gap in a mood of wishful optimism would be as irresponsible as to ignore the fact that headway has been made.

We shall, in the weeks and months ahead, have every chance to find out just how far we have gone towards agreement and how far we have yet to go. We shall have, I believe, the best conditions in the Disarmament Commission's Sub-Committee for finding out in private what further abridgement of the gap may yet be attainable. We must allow sufficient time for those who have indicated they wish to do so to present their views to the Disarmament Commission. The members of the Sub-Committee will also need time for digestion of four weeks of debate in which important and valuable suggestions were made by delegations which have not been participating in the work of the Sub-Committee.

It is, however, the hope of my government that there will be no needless delay in pressing on with the vital task the Assembly is entrusting to the Sub-Committee. The unanimous adoption of the procedure and general terms of reference for these talks will get them off on the right foot with the best possible chance of success in what is bound to be a very difficult and perhaps lengthy series of negotiations.

I am particularly glad that this unanimous resolution should have been achieved at this session of the General Assembly. In these days when there is an uneasy feeling that the United Nations is too often being by-passed on important questions, it is some encouragement to know that in one corner of a big problem negotiations inside the United Nations have proved successful.

All of us now have a great opportunity to make a constructive contribution in the cause of peace. I venture with great respect to say, let none of us fail to grasp this opportunity.



The adoption of this resolution is but one stage in a continuing process -- a process which began with the very first resolution of the General Assembly on January 24, 1946 -- also adopted unanimously -- establishing an Atomic Energy Commission. The partial forerunner of the Disarmament Commission.