

It seems to me, therefore, that by taking the first step as recommended by the President of the United States, we would be doing immediately something practical and effective, something which we would be required to do in any case as part of any general agreement on this subject. But in so doing now, we would have already travelled part of the way towards our goal and to a considerable extent we would have improved the prospect of achieving agreement on how to proceed the rest of the way. The adoption of the plan, it seems, could not possibly prejudice the situation in any way.

As I understand the position of the Soviet Union, they find one main fault with the plan. They say: it involves no guarantee that it will lead to an agreement on the reduction of armaments and of armed forces. My answer to this point is that it is clear to us that it provides part of the answer to our problem, and that at this stage a partial answer is better than no answer at all. Furthermore, such a partial and limited answer will help create the psychological and political framework which will render the solution of the rest of the problem very much easier. Finally, to be frank, I recognize that the prospects of further agreements will depend on the sincerity and moderation of all the parties concerned in the negotiation. The Soviet leaders argue that there is no guarantee that a further agreement will be acceptable to the Western side, but we wonder, and we wonder sincerely, whether they can have any possible reason to believe that if the Soviet Union were to accept the Eisenhower plan, the West would be unwilling later on to agree to a scheme which would be generally satisfactory.

Everything, in fact, turns on confidence, everything turns on willingness to accept the fact that the other side is sincere and prepared to do what is necessary to bring about agreement. And that is again, as we see it, where the Eisenhower plan is so admirably fitted to the situation. It is essentially devised as a mark of confidence and as a means of promoting it.

Now, this is not to suggest that in its present form and in isolation from any other arrangements for disarmament, the plan should be implemented as such at once. But, it provides, in my view, a reasonable nucleus around which an initial and limited agreement could be developed and a most convenient approach to the solution of a problem which is so urgent and apparently otherwise intractable.

Now, although the situation is not without some encouraging features, I must stress in conclusion that we are still at the phase of plans and schemes, all of which require a great deal more development in detail. Such agreement as has been made between governments covers only parts of the various proposals advanced. We still face very serious scientific and technical obstacles which cast doubt on the possibility in present circumstances of effectively guaranteeing the observance of any scheme for the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Progress in solving the disarmament problem must also be related to progress with respect to other major international problems since armaments are to a large extent a reflection as well as a cause in part of international tension.