

which promise even the possibility of progress in the important field of armament control.

At this early stage in our debate it is not, I think, necessary for this Committee or the General Assembly to come to any final conclusion regarding the substantive proposals of the Soviet Union or of the Western Powers as they stand before us at present. Our principal effort at this stage, as I see it, should be to seek to clarify and to understand, and above all to create the best conditions for further negotiation.

In taking stock of our position we can, however, recognize that, as a result principally of the efforts of the London Sub-Committee, where the Anglo-French proposals were worked out and presented, the gap between the two sides, though still formidable, is narrower than when the Assembly last debated this question over a year ago. Without wishing in any way to belittle the Soviet Union proposals of September 30, I hope that one of the direct results of our Committee proceedings this year will be the recognition of the true significance of the Anglo-French proposals of June 11 last.

If these proposals are carefully examined against the background of previous Western proposals, it is, to my mind, not surprising that they have now been accepted by the Soviet Union as a basis for negotiation or, as I think Mr. Vyshinsky put it, as a basis for discussion. They represent indeed a very serious and a very generous effort toward compromise and conciliation of previously irreconcilable positions.

Methods of diplomacy are not everywhere the same, and it may not be helpful to underscore the differences too heavily. However, I think it is worth noting that the Anglo-French proposals were first presented to the Soviet Union privately and informally, so that they might receive the serious and sympathetic consideration which we felt they deserved. No attempt was made to capitalize publicly on the step forward the Western Powers were then taking. Our object was not publicity but agreement. No extraneous conditions were attached to these proposals, and they dealt simply and solely with the question of disarmament. There has never at any time been the slightest suggestion that, if the foreign policy of the Soviet Union were not changed in one or other major respects, the Anglo-French proposals might be withdrawn. The fact is that any real agreement on a substantial measure of disarmament would so alter the international scene as to affect the course of foreign policy not only in one field but in every field, and not only in one country but in all countries.

One cannot help but recall the reception of the Anglo-French proposals by the Soviet Union in London. This reception, I think, was in contrast to the reception the Western Powers have accorded the Soviet counter-proposals which are now before us. On the very day that he received the Anglo-French memorandum in London, Mr. Malik accused the United Kingdom and French Governments of proposing merely to "legalize" the use of atomic weapons. Mr. Vyshinsky's counter-proposals, put forward a few weeks ago, have not only been welcomed by the Western Powers and other nations but were at once promised the most careful consideration. And I can say to Mr. Vyshinsky that my Government has given and is giving his proposals the most serious and careful study and consideration.