

so contributed to tension. But it is well for all of us to bear in mind that in the world as it is the problem of disarmament must be seen against this real background of international tension. Polite unrealism or artificial abstractions are no service at this time to the cause of disarmament or, in the view of my Government, to the cause of the United Nations.

This is not, however, to say that no progress can be made in the disarmament field itself. Success, or even partial success, in negotiating a disarmament agreement would, in time, facilitate, of course, agreements in other fields.

Moreover, there are reasons to believe that progress under present conditions may be less difficult than it has been hitherto. For one thing, I think it quite possible that men in the governments principally concerned, on either side of the Iron Curtain, are beginning to fear the awful power that scientists are putting and have put at our disposal. Certainly, I am not ashamed to admit myself that I find the situation most disquieting. For the stakes are incomparably higher now than they were a few years ago. I think that only those associated with governments which have some direct experience of atomic processes and direct access to classified information of technicians working in this field can be aware how serious is the threat which contamination and other effects of nuclear explosions can pose to the very existence of organic life on this planet.

None of us should be ashamed or too proud to admit that we are concerned. I am the Minister of National Health and Welfare in my country, and I am sure that it will be appreciated that in that capacity alone I would have added reasons to be vitally concerned about the cataclysmic possibilities of the future and the great draining of resources which heavy levels of armament mean to countries which wish to improve their health and their social services. Humility before the awesome power which our scientists are placing in our hands is, I suggest, a becoming attitude for members of governments now in any part of the world.

We have barely begun to realize, still less to work out, the implications of the growing interdependence which technology is forcing on the human race. But in face of this interdependence, we dare not shut the door on any possibility of negotiations to bring nuclear powers under civilized control.

It may be that it is awareness of these growing dangers that, at least in part, has prompted the apparent advances in the Soviet position which the able Mr. Vyshinsky has outlined during the last few weeks. On the one hand, we of the democratic world dare not be naive. It would be foolish and dishonest to pretend that those who are most sceptical may not be right. Certainly, the timing of the Soviet Union's proposals suggests that the men in the Kremlin may have their eye rather on debates elsewhere -- in London, in Paris -- concerning the unity and the defence programmes of Western Europe than on the desirability of a disarmament programme in itself.

But though one cannot help being to some extent sceptical, my Government dares not, and suggests that none of us dare, write off as exclusively propaganda any advances