

And finally, they propose that an international control organ established within the framework of the Security Council should conduct inspection on a continuing basis but should not interfere in the domestic affairs of states.

Although there are a number of difficulties in these superficially simple proposals, the most fundamental objection which we have to them concerns the Soviet concept of inspection.

Now ... whatever disarmament plan could ever be arrived at would inevitably require a system of safeguards which would give both sides the maximum possible warning and protection against violations and evasions of the provisions of the disarmament agreement. The key to any such system of safeguards is inspection.

At the present stage at least, inspection seems to me to be the nub of the technical problem as distinct from the more general political problem - the problem of confidence to which I have already referred. The Soviet Delegation's position in the Commission has been, in the words I have quoted, in favour of strict international control and of inspection on a continuing basis. That sounds promising. But then this is qualified and perhaps undercut entirely by the insistence of the Soviet Delegation that inspection should not interfere in the domestic affairs of states.

Another possible escape-clause in the Soviet proposals of June 1947, which the Soviet representative re-read yesterday, is the unexplained formulation that they will agree "to study production operations", as they say, "to the extent necessary for the control of the use of atomic materials and atomic energy".

We have not been able to find out what the effect of these qualifying phrases means. We simply do not know how far the Soviet Union will go on the question of inspection. As things stand at present they will not go very far. They have not, as I understand it, been able to agree to continuous inspection but only to inspection "on a continuing basis". The best we have been able to find out about the meaning of this phrase is that it does not include the right of international inspectors to be stationed all the time in atomic installations, for example. We consider this an essential component of any plan covering the inspection of atomic energy. The Soviet Delegate says that this would be interference in their domestic affairs. If I am wrong about this, I hope he will correct me and explain his position more clearly.

The fact of the matter is ... that any form of international inspection can be interpreted as interference in the domestic affairs of states. Certain forms of co-operation require less stringent measures of inspection, others more. Are we to take the mere say-so of the Soviet Government on matters of such vital concern to the future of the peoples for whom we speak? If they were able to do so, there would be no problem. We should not be faced with the problem of rearmament and increasing international tensions and the risk of war. The whole point is that neither side trusts the other. Both may be able to trust the United Nations. We would. Would they?

United Nations inspectors must be permitted to go anywhere at any time in any of the major countries . . .