

The perennial Soviet proposals in this field call for an immediate prohibition of atomic weapons and a one-third reduction of conventional armaments. Western governments mistrust these suggestions, at least in the form in which they have been put forward by the Soviet Union, for two basic reasons. In the first place, the measures of inspection and control which the U.S.S.R. has so far advanced to ensure that disarmament would actually be carried out, are totally inadequate. The West is not prepared to accept Soviet good faith alone as their guarantee that both sides would in fact disarm. In the second place, the government of the free world are conscious of present conditions of military preparedness. The Soviet Union carried out no comparable general demobilization on the conclusion of hostilities with Germany, as the West did in 1945 and 1946. Moreover, since that date the Soviet military forces have been extensively re-equipped with weapons of the most modern type. Under such conditions any proportional disarmament, even if honestly implemented by the Soviet Union, could only enhance the present military unbalance. In view of the aggressive policy followed by the Soviet bloc in the last five years, the free world cannot seriously entertain the Soviet terms for disarmament until it has brought itself to some measure of military parity with the U.S.S.R., and until an adequate system of safeguards has been established.

Although the Western countries in the United Nations are still keeping the door open, the Soviet bloc continues to refuse to consider any disarmament proposals which would not leave the Soviet Union in its present position of military preponderance. In other words, it has been unwilling to discuss any plan for genuine disarmament. Until there is a readiness on the part of the U.S.S.R. to seek a real settlement of the fundamental issues separating the Powers, it would be unduly optimistic to expect agreement on atomic energy and disarmament. Nevertheless, the Western nations stand prepared to resume serious negotiations should the U.S.S.R. be disposed to participate.

CANADA AND THE UNITED NATIONS 1951-52, pp. 11-16:

The Committee of Twelve recommended to the sixth session of the Assembly that such a new commission, which should be under and report to the Security Council, should be established and that the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments should then be dissolved. There was no indication beyond this of what the detailed terms of reference of the new commission might be.

The Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, however, had been carrying on tripartite consultations on this problem and they submitted to the sixth session of the Assembly comprehensive proposals for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments; the task of elaborating these proposals and embodying them in a draft treaty was to be assigned to the proposed new commission. These proposals were placed in perspective by a tripartite statement issued by the sponsors just before the opening of the Assembly, which emphasized that, while in existing conditions the three Governments were determined to develop the strength needed for their security, the danger of war could be appreciably reduced if all governments would work together on a programme to reduce and limit armed forces. Although such a programme could not be implemented while United Nations forces were resisting aggression in Korea, discussion should begin without delay. Three new and notable features of these proposals were (a) that they provided, as a first step, for a progressive and continuous system of international disclosure and verification of all armed forces and armaments,