

the Commission as a whole or by informal meetings of its permanent members, to break new ground in an effort to reach agreement. Both methods were tried without success. The deadlock continued; but some useful work was accomplished before the Fourth Session of the Assembly met. The Atomic Energy Commission's vast documentation was organized by the Secretariat in a handier form, at the suggestion of the Canadian Representative. The majority had the opportunity, in the talks held privately among the six permanent members, to make a new approach to the whole problem by condensing their proposals into the form of a few general principles. The document\*, subsequently published as a report to the Assembly by the five Western members, provided the best available summary of the reasons why the majority believe that the Soviet Union is holding up an agreement on atomic energy for political reasons, despite the fact that scientists of all countries consider the control of atomic energy for peaceful purposes to be technically feasible.

The atomic energy debates which preceded the Assembly had, therefore, stalled at dead centre. Little or no improvement in this situation can be recorded to the credit of the Fourth Session of the Assembly. Yet the undercurrent of urgency was never stronger. As a result of the discussions, the overwhelming majority of the United Nations has put itself on record as supporting the principles of the majority plan approved by the General Assembly in Paris in 1948, and has condemned by implication the alternative proposals of the U.S.S.R. which, the great majority obviously believes, offer no hope for genuine international security. But the Soviet Representative did not budge from his position.

Throughout the United Nations discussions of atomic energy, since the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission in January 1946, it has been difficult for the majority to get any precise and detailed statement of the Soviet plan from the various representatives of the U.S.S.R. In his major speech on this subject at the meeting of the General Assembly on November 23, 1949, Mr. Vishinsky added only a few footnotes to the Soviet proposals put forward on June 11, 1947, before he turned with greater relish to the usual theme of Soviet statements on atomic energy—denunciations of the majority plan for the prohibition of atomic weapons and the control of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The Soviet position continues to be based on the premise that a loose system of inspection is the only form of international control that is needed to give those nations which possess atomic weapons sufficient confidence to destroy their existing stockpiles.

The position which is being worked out by the majority is very different. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs said in his main statement on atomic energy to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Assembly on November 7, 1949:\*\*

The Soviet proposals for control admit only of fixed periodic inspections, and even that inspection is merely of such facilities as the national governments concerned may choose to declare to an international authority. The Soviet proposals also include special investigations, when there is evidence of illegal activity. But how is such evidence to be obtained? If we had enough confidence to convince us that it would be given automatically by every national government to an international agency, then we would have so much confidence we would not need any international control at all . . . .

\*See Appendix 2, pp. 212-219. Also published in *External Affairs*, November 1949.

\*\*For the full text of the statement, see Appendix 3, pp. 219-225.