

In the opening meetings of the General Assembly the Atomic Energy Commission's proposals were given wide support and the urgency of establishing effective control was expressed by many nations except the Soviet and its satellites whose delegates reiterated their insistence on "prohibition" of atomic weapons and the destruction of existing stocks.

To this end the Soviet raised two separate sets of proposals. In the one the prohibition of atomic weapons was combined with a project for an immediate arbitrary reduction of one-third in the conventional armaments of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The discussion of this proposal was principally related to conventional armaments and in the end the fallacies of this approach were fully exposed.

The other Soviet proposal introduced the idea of "simultaneous" conventions, the one for the prohibition of atomic weapons and the other for what the Soviet described as "effective international control." Both conventions were to be signed and to "enter into force and actual operation simultaneously."

Formerly the Soviet had insisted on prohibition and destruction of existing stocks as a first step. Now they claimed that in their new proposals they had made a great concession to promote agreement.

There is no doubt that, for a time, this new Soviet insistence on the world "simultaneous" confused the issue and raised false hopes in the minds of some of those who were anxiously concerned about the future. However in the discussion it soon became evident that the Soviet ideas on what would constitute effective international control had not advanced at all from their previous scheme which had already been subjected to the most meticulous examination as a result of which it had been rejected by the Commission as fundamentally inadequate.

It did not add in the least to the safety of the world to have "simultaneous" control when the elements of that control would lack the character deemed necessary to provide acceptable safeguards which would dispel suspicion and promote co-operation between nations. I can only describe the Soviet proposal as "specious". It was so recognized by a great majority in the General Assembly and decisively rejected. No nation outside the Soviet group voted for it.

The draft resolution put forward by Canada became the framework of the debate and after development in the Political Committee it provided that the Assembly should endorse the relevant portions of the majority proposals of the Atomic Energy Commission "as constituting the necessary basis" of an effective system of international control which would give adequate protection against the hazards of violations and evasions.

The Canadian resolution recognized the practical situation caused by the flat rejection of the Commission's proposals by the Soviet and its consequent inability to make progress in the technical matters within its competence until this "impasse" had been resolved. It recognized that these difficulties were largely political and it therefore provided a political method of endeavour to reconcile the dispute. This was that the six original sponsors should "meet together and consult in order to determine if there exists a basis for agreement on the international control of atomic energy. We proposed that this meeting should take place on "a high level" to determine a basis on which the Commission's work could be resumed.

A number of delegations reminded the General Assembly that the Atomic Energy Commission was not subject to the "veto" and suggested therefore that it should resume its work, ride over any Soviet objections and prepare a Treaty. On the other hand, most delegations supported us in the view that this would be unwise at this time as this procedure would result in accentuating and hardening the divisions of opinion between the Soviet and the rest of the world.