

Although we should, I believe, temper our debate by looking more to the future than to the past, we cannot and should not in all candour ignore the Disarmament Commission's record during the past year. I should like for a moment to turn to what the Disarmament Commission has been doing and state as simply and objectively as I can, and without rancour or bitterness, the essential positions on both sides as I see them.

I think I can do this best by taking the proposals of the Soviet Union as a starting point. As reiterated yesterday, they are disarmingly simple; but that is the only disarming thing about them. I must confess... that I was disappointed in the Soviet representative's statement. To my mind one of the most discouraging features of the Disarmament Commission's work last year was the inability of any Western delegation - and my delegation among others tried on several occasions - to get concrete answers from the Soviet representative as to what his government meant by the slogans in which it had expressed its proposals during the Assembly's debates on disarmament in Paris when the Disarmament Commission had been set up. Yesterday he said that the Soviet position was perfectly clear and then went on to repeat word for word proposals that we have heard on every occasion when disarmament has been discussed since 1947. As far as my delegation was concerned... we would have been very glad to have devoted more time to discussing the Soviet proposals in the Disarmament Commission last year. There was ample room under the agreed plan of work for a full discussion of them. But there is a limit to the amount of discussion that is possible when every time you try to elicit information on a point which seems unclear, the only reply you get is a repetition of the same all too carefully worded formula. It was for this reason that there was very little discussion of the Soviet proposals. From our point of view there was very little to discuss.

Without wishing to impose upon this Committee a technical review which I feel more properly belongs to the Disarmament Commission, I should like, in view of the Soviet statement yesterday, to explain some of the points on which we need further clarification from the Soviet representative, either here or in the Commission, if any further progress is to be made or indeed if there is to be any real discussion - as distinct from repetition - of the Soviet proposals. I hope I am not being unfair to the Soviet position if I summarize it in the following way, using as far as possible the language employed by Soviet spokesmen.

In the first place, they think the Assembly should proclaim the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons and the establishment of strict international control over enforcement of this prohibition, it being understood that the prohibition of atomic weapons and the institution of international control should be put into effect simultaneously.

In the second place, they propose that the permanent members of the Security Council should reduce their armaments and armed forces by one-third within one year.

In the third place, they say that all states should within one month submit complete official data on their armaments and armed forces including atomic weapons and foreign military bases.