A Fresh Outlook On Disarmament

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A YEAR AGO, disarmament seemed only a topic for crank letters and Ph.D. theses. Disagreement over even first steps had become chronic in the U.N. Commission for Conventional Armaments. Its counterpart, the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission, had ground to a full halt in 1950, after two years of increasing paralysis. By the end of 1950 the arms race—atomic and conventional—was in full swing. Disarmament, it seemed, would have to wait until after another world war.

Today disarmament has again become a lively topic. A new and active U.N. commission has been set up, and the U.S. State Department has recently called together a distinguished group of citizens to take a fresh look at both our disarmament policies and the directions in which the international arms race is carrying us. The composition of this panel is impressive. Its chairman is Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was in charge of the atomic-weapons operations at Los Alamos. Other members are Dr. Vannevar Bush, President John S. Dickey of Dartmouth, Allen W. Dulles, and Dr. Joseph E. Johnson, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The executive secretary of the panel is McGeorge Bundy of Harvard.

These are all knowledgeable and hardheaded men, free from political commitments to the Administration's present policies. The panel's forecasts of new developments in the arms race are not likely to be given much publicity, but its other job, the examination of disarmament policy, must certainly be brought to public attention. If this country is to achieve any sort of agreement on arms control with Russia—indeed, if our efforts to that end are not to appear palpably hypocritical—we shall have to depart before long from positions in which we have been firmly entrenched for six years.

Formulas and Fulminations

At the U.N. General Assembly in Paris, from November, 1951, well into January, 1952, disarmament held the limelight. Both the Soviets and the western powers sought to demonstrate their sincerity by proposals that edged in the direction of agreement. Though each greeted the other's efforts coldly or with derision, we witnessed, out of these travails, the birth of a new agency, the U.N. Disarmament Commission, which is charged with planning controls for both atomic and conventional weapons.

U.S. delegate Benjamin V. Cohen has submitted to the Commission a carefully worked out proposal for an arms census. Since the proposal went in the teeth of known Soviet objections, it has produced only a series of diatribes by Soviet delegate Jacob Malik on the subject of germ warfare.

A more promising move was made May 28 by the British delegate, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, who submitted, for Britain, France, and the United States, a working paper proposing an over-all ceiling of 1.5 million men for the respective armed forces of the United States, Russia, and "China" (a political entity that was not more specifically identified); eight hundred thousand for Britain; seven hundred thousand for France; and one per cent of the population for every other country. Though Russia has long demanded a uniform one-third cut in armed forces, Malik assured the Commission that the proposal would be considered carefully. The Commission then made its first report to the Security Council, noting the proposals and promising to keep on working.

If every departure from our previous position is not to seem the product of hoodwinked idealism, it is important that the problems facing the new Disarmament Commission be understood in the light of both the earlier U.N. efforts to bring armament under control and the significant changes that have taken place subsequently.

The U.N. Commission for Conventional Armaments was created in 1947. It considered a world-wide census of existing armaments an essential first step. Russia insisted that the census include atomic weapons. We rejected this view as going beyond the Commission's powers. So the first step was never taken.

The attempt to achieve atomic arms control has been more persistent. In January, 1946, a distinguished five-man board, the counterpart of today's Oppenheimer panel, was established by Dean Acheson, then Assistant Secretary of State. The board, which was headed by David Lilienthal, then TVA chairman, was instructed to develop a plan for the international control of atomic energy. Three months after the Acheson-Lilienthal report, Bernard Baruch laid before the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission a plan embodying its essentials. Baruch added a requirement that the veto would not be available to shield a nation which violated the agreement from punishment.

Apart from its prohibition of all atomic weapons, the central feature of the American plan was the relegation to an internationally staffed control agency of the ownership and management of all "dangerous" atomic facilities and all stocks of fissionable materials. Production of these materials for peaceful purposes was to be governed by quotas, and provision was to be made for inspection of national territories

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to guard against secret production. Against the risk that a nation might seize the atomic plants and stockpiles within its borders, the principle of "strategic balance" was invoked. This required such a balanced distribution of plants and stockpiles that one nation's illegal seizure could be offset by the other producing nations. The program was to go into effect by stages, in the last of which the United States would reveal the bomb "secret."

The Russians objected to this proposal on many counts: The waiver of the veto they considered an attack on the U.N.'s basic structure, although they conceded the necessity of majority rule for the "day-to-day" operations of the control agency. International ownership and management they called an invasion of sovereignty and an attempt by the power-rich United States to stifle Russia's economic development. Atomic plants, they said, should be under national management and subject only to accounting controls and "periodic" inspection, while inspection elsewhere should be permitted only where grounds for suspicion existed. The program of going through progressive stages they called a transparent trick to let us learn their military secrets without having to give up our own. Russia insisted that atomic weapons be banned at once, leaving the development of a control plan for later. The debates that ensued were bitter and fruitless.

Changes Since 1946

The atomic control plan to which we are still committed was laid down in 1946. Since 1946, however, important changes have occurred. The American monopoly on the bomb has been broken. Our stockpile of bombs has grown from a few to perhaps a thousand or more, and Russia's stockpile may be approaching a hundred. Hope for the peaceful coexistence of our systems has been called into serious doubt, and the West, stirred by the cold war in Europe and the hot fighting in Asia, is rapidly rearming. Finally, as the creation of the Disarmament Commission itself bears witness, atomic controls can no longer be planned apart from the control of conventional weapons.

Oppenheimer's panel of consultants will have to gauge the heavy impact these changes have had on the disarmament problem.

Consider the first change—the breaking of the American atomic monopoly. Our supposition that we alone possessed the terrible secret made us insist upon the disclosure of information only by gradual stages. The problem is still difficult, but now that it is known that each side has its own secrets, the chance of working out some reciprocal plan of disclosure would seem to have been increased.

The development of the huge American stockpile and the much smaller Russian one makes one wonder how attached the United States government can still be to the principle of strategic balance. Obviously we are not going to equalize the present disparity by a gift of several hundred bombs to Russia. And to let Russia build up its hoard to equal our own would scarcely seem like disarmament.

The growth of the stockpiles clearly means that no plan can possibly be airtight. Back in 1946, the draftsmen of the U.N. majority plan went to great lengths to plug loopholes, to make sure that not one kilogram of fissionable material could slip through the control agency's fingers. This was one of the reasons for international ownership and management rather than for reliance on accounting and inspection of national plants and stockpiles.

It is too late to devise a control that is airtight. Any new control plan will

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have to allow for a margin of evasion. Each side will have to be trusted to account for its output of fissionable materials over the recent years during which there has been no international inspection. To accept such accounting is to swallow the camel. Surely we should not thereafter strain at the gnat of possible small-scale leaks in a carefully designed system of accounting and inspection covering all known facilities.

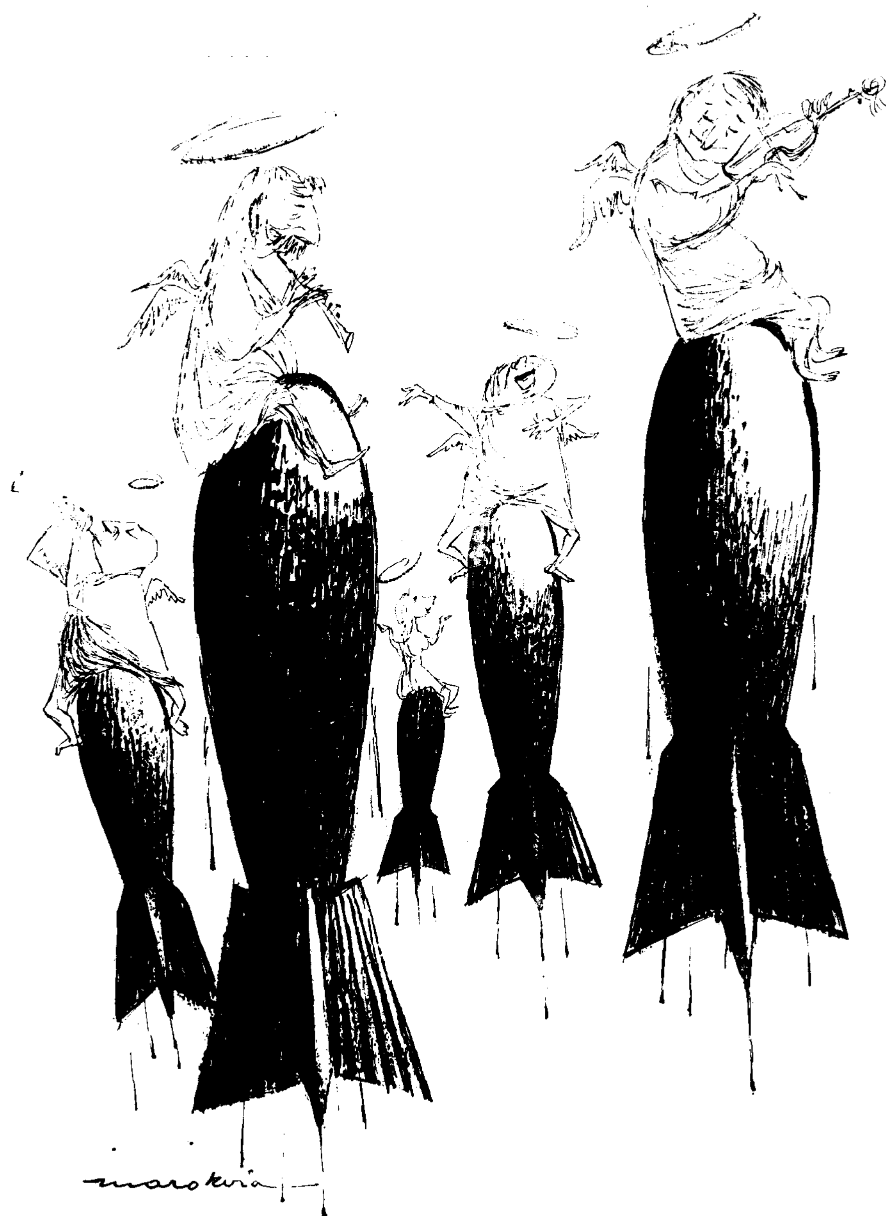
Once we recognize this change, we can do away with a major impediment to agreement. International ownership of production facilities could not prevent either side from seizing its stockpile of existing bombs. Nor would international ownership guard against the next most serious hazard, the risk of secret production. This can be met only by thorough inspection.

Here again the events since 1946 drastically change the problem. The designers of the U.N. majority's control plan believed that what was needed was an effective system of atomic inspection that would not compel an inspected nation to lay bare all of its other military secrets. Today no nation can rely on any general disarmament agreement unless it is backed up by a continuing inspection of all armed forces of the signatories as well as their basic industrial establishments.

The Russian attitude at Paris last fall concerning the inspection required for general arms reduction offered a little encouragement. Though distrustful of our plan to defer disclosure of atomic armaments to a final stage, the Russians did concede that a function of "the international control organ" should be the "checking of information by the states about the status of their armaments and armed forces."

If, as the context of the quoted report seems to suggest, this contemplates *recurrent* inspections, then another big stumbling block has been removed.

A basic difficulty of disarmament lies in the fact that the negotiating powers do not depend on the same weapons, and that we ourselves rely chiefly on a weapon whose potentialities are not fully known. Further, it is a weapon which we apparently expect to see prohibited, one way or another, even though we reject the Russian proposal to ban atomic weapons and then cut all others by a flat one-third. Perhaps we shall insist that during the period of progressive, balanced reduction



of armaments which we propose, atomic weapons should be treated like any other weapons.

Boldness out of Pessimism

Surely these fundamental changes in the problem of arms control call for a fresh approach on the part of the Oppenheimer panel. But, in view of Russian intransigence, is the effort worthwhile? Three reasons argue for the attempt:

First, although we consider the Russians intransigent, they, given the record, may well think the same of us. A testing of the Soviet position is overdue.

Second, if our efforts fail to move the Russians, we shall at least have demonstrated to the free world that our desire for disarmament is as genuine as is our determination to rearm in the absence of controls.

Third, revised proposals will represent a continuing open bid to the Politburo to end the arms race. We know far too little of the inner workings of that body to predict that while our bid remains open, no faction wishing to accept it will come to power. Indeed, the very existence of the bid might help such a faction gain power.

The odds are long, but we and all mankind have much to win. In any event, what can we lose by a fair try? The predecessors of the Oppenheimer panel were bold amid the optimism of 1946; the panel cannot afford to be less bold amid the pessimism of 1952.

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Red Bridgeheads On the Subcontinent

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COMMUNIST successes in India's first national elections were a jolt to the ruling Congress Party of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. They surprised most foreign observers as well. Re-examining the Indian political picture on the basis of the voting, many conservative Indian analysts agree with outside opinion, including that of western diplomats here, that the next five years will be the crucial period in the struggle between Communism and democracy for control of this vast, strategically placed country.

The outcome, it is generally thought, will depend upon how successfully the Congress Government deals with the economic problems now besetting India's masses. Unless there is a perceptible improvement in the position of the common man in India, the next general elections in 1956-1957 may see a deepening of the Communist bridgehead now existing in India's Parliament and state legislative assemblies. Some observers go so far as to predict that unless Congress accomplishes something spectacular between now and 1956, control will pass to the Reds in many states.

So the next five years in India are of the deepest interest to the entire anti-Communist world. With China already in the Communist fold, India is the next biggest target on which the Reds have leveled their sights; India is now the largest democratic nation, containing nearly one-sixth of the population of the globe. Only the conquest of India remains to give the Communists full control of Asia and the adjacent strategic seas. The neighboring countries, particularly those of Southeast Asia, are not strong bastions of democracy even now, and they might well fall to the Reds before India. This eventuality would, of course, tend to hasten Communist capture of India either by peaceful means at the polls or through the method of violent agrarian uprising that has already been tested here in localized areas, notably in the Telengana region of Hyderabad State and in the little eastern State of Tripura.

Ballots and/or Bullets

While the Communist Party of India, generally referred to as the C.P.I., has officially abandoned violent methods to devote its energies to exploitation of its new political foothold, the party's leaders have quite frankly and openly told the Indian press that they consider armed revolution a legitimate means, to be employed whenever it is necessary or desirable. This is fair warning to the Nehru Government, and the various police agencies under the Home Ministry have accepted it as such. The new Communist political headquarters, in the smartest residential section of New Delhi, is believed to be under constant surveillance of the authorities. Since the elections, however, legal restrictions on the party have been lifted everywhere except in the former State of Indore, in the Madhya Bharat Union of Central India.

At present, the Communists are in a position to disrupt, if not to supplant, the Congress Administration in several important states. They have already succeeded in overturning the Congress Ministry in the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (commonly called "Pepsu"), and have installed a leftist-dominated coalition in power in this highly strategic state near the West Pakistan border.

There were only three avowed Communists in the "Pepsu" Legislative Assembly, which has a total membership of sixty. They combined with the Akali Dal (which stands for the special interests of the Sikh community) and some others to obtain a small majority which immediately voted out the Ministry appointed by the Congress Party, which has the largest single bloc in the state assembly.

The Communists have employed similar tactics in other states where they are largely and ably represented in the legislative assemblies, and have announced that they will try the same thing in the national Parliament. Unless there is a wholesale defection from Nehru's party, Congress, with 362 out of 499 members against twenty-seven for the C.P.I., will continue to hold control of Parliament. But in several important states the Congress majority will have to fight hard to retain power.

In the national Parliament the Communists and their allies, lacking real voting strength, may be expected to take advantage of the forum open to them to broaden their popular appeal among the electorate for 1956. Their numbers include many sharp and witty speakers. They have already set up a high-powered parliamentary headquarters, with sections for research, statistics, press relations, and so on.

Southern Strongholds

The principal Communist strength lies in the southern states of Madras, Hyderabad, and Travancore-Cochin. In any of these, Red-inspired coalitions are in a position to make a serious bid to turn out Ministries set up by Congress. This can be done by a simple no-confidence vote on some issue in the state assembly. It would then be incumbent upon the Congress Cabinet to resign, whereupon the state governor would have to offer the Opposition

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