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WHAT BLOCKS DISARMAMENT?

By Leo Szilard

I am often being asked by disarmament enthusiasts whether the manifest lack of progress towards disarmament is due to the obstruction of the industrial-military complex to which President Eisenhower referred in his last speech in office. ~~It is conceivable that a time might come when we would have to become concerned about the vested interests opposed to disarmament.~~ My stock answer is that progress is as slow as it is not because there are such powerful interests opposed to it, but rather because there are so few people who are wholeheartedly in favor of it. I have spent over a year in Washington and so far have not yet met anyone in a responsible position who was clear in his mind that he would want general disarmament even if Russia offered us an agreement that would provide for adequate inspection.

Disarmament would not automatically guarantee peace, and even in a generally disarmed world with inspection going full blast, an army equipped with machine guns could spring up, so to speak, over night.

How could peace be secured in such a disarmed world?

To my knowledge, no one appears to know the answer to this problem *and*
to This may well be the reason why Americans in responsible positions do not know whether or not they would want to have a disarmed world during their lifetime.

John J. McCloy, up to recently in charge of Disarmament in the State Department, recently said on television that America desires to have disarmament, but that there must be created an international armed force so strong that no single nation would be in a position to stand up to it. It would be physically impossible to set up an international armed force of such an overwhelming strength short of making it the sole possessor of atomic bombs, and neither the Soviet Union nor America would accept the creation of such a force if she cannot control it. It follows that tying the acceptance of ~~ax~~ disarmament to the creation of such a force is tantamount to saying that one does not want disarmament.

During the month of December 1960 which I spent in Moscow on the occasion of the Sixth Pugwash Conference, I found that few of our Russian colleagues had given serious thought to the problem of how the peace may be secured in a disarmed world, and the only Russian who was quick to concede and ~~xxxx~~ its crucial importance/was ~~quickxxxx~~ willing to enter into a free-wheeling discussion of it was N. S. Khrushchev. An extended conversation which I had with him in October of 1960 covered a number of topics. An important portion of it started off by my saying that a centrally controlled world police force with the Secretary-General of the United Nations as Commander-in-Chief, would not be acceptable to the Soviet Union in the circumstances which prevail today, and might not be acceptable to the United States in the circumstances which might prevail a full year hence. Starting from this thesis, we then proceeded to explore the possibility of setting up a number of regional police forces, a separate such force for each ~~disarm~~

disturbed region of the world. Each such force might be controlled by a committee of five to seven nations, preferably drawn from outside of the region. These regional forces would be set up under the auspices of the United Nations, in the sense that the committees would have to have the approval of the Security Council with the concurring votes of the permanent members of the Council. The regional police force would be equipped with high fire power in order to be stronger than the police forces maintained by the nations within the region, but the regional force would be a police force rather than a military force and would primarily operate by arresting if necessary the officials of the offending nations ~~xx~~ rather than by making war on its population. Khrushchev stressed that regional police forces of this sort might abuse their power and that the regions under their control might come under the influence of one or another of the great powers.