

July 16, 1957

THE GREAT DILEMMA

The Great Dilemma

In the years immediately following the last war there developed a power conflict between Russia and America which resembled in many respects the conflict between Sparta and Athens that led to the Peloponnesian war, ~~and the destruction of Greece.~~ ~~In these years which followed the Second World War~~ <sup>A</sup> an all-out war between America and Russia was regarded as possible, and as time went on it was increasingly regarded as probable. The rising power of Russia threatened the United States, and the rising power of the United States threatened Russia just as <sup>two</sup> a thousand years ago the rising power of Sparta threatened Athens and the rising power of Athens threatened Sparta. As the probability of war increased, strategic considerations became more and more important both for Russia and for America. 'Who is ~~going~~ to win the war, if war comes' became

<sup>during this period</sup> for awhile the overriding consideration. Almost every conflict that arose between these two nations had strategic implications. ~~If it~~ <sup>it</sup> had been settled one way it would have increased America's chances to win the war and ~~if it~~ <sup>it</sup> had been settled the other way it would have increased Russia's chances to win the war.

~~Since, clearly, it is not possible to reach a compromise on the issue of who is going to win the war, none of these issues was negotiable.~~ <sup>since it is not possible to reach a compromise on</sup> In these circumstances none of the existing conflicts could

be settled, but new conflicts arose from time to time and the situation became more and more explosive. <sup>3</sup> What ~~we~~ <sup>the</sup> have just described is a classical vicious circle which operates in <sup>a</sup> the <sup>||</sup> classical <sup>||</sup> power conflict, for which the period before the Peloponnesian War represents the <sup>best studied known</sup> ~~clearest~~ <sup>a</sup> example.

<sup>1</sup> After the Second World War <sup>with</sup> America and Russia were jockeying for the ~~most~~

favorable strategic position. Each <sup>showed to</sup> increased the number of <sup>his</sup> their allies until almost all nations were either in the camp of Russia or in the camp of America, ~~and~~ neither of them was willing to tolerate that any nation within their sphere of influence <sup>we</sup> ~~be~~ neutral in the conflict. <sup>declare itself</sup> They did <sup>approaching armed</sup> in this respect exactly what Sparta and Athens had done <sup>just as</sup> a thousand years <sup>been unwilling</sup> before this. ~~Neither Russia nor America actually wanted war, nor did Sparta and Athens want war. War came to Greece when~~ <sup>did not either</sup> ~~...~~ **Mr. Frost**

For a few <sup>in the years</sup> years after the Second World War American and Russian policy seem to <sup>follow closely</sup> move in a groove laid down <sup>long</sup> a thousand years earlier as the pattern of <sup>of the past</sup> a classical power conflict. The same vicious circle that operated in the conflict between Sparta and Athens operated for exactly the same reasons in exactly the same manner in the post-war power conflict between America and Russia. I have little doubt that the outcome would have been exactly the same -- a ~~Third World War~~ which would have destroyed Western civilization in much the same way as the Peloponnesian War destroyed the

Civilization of Greece. <sup>I believe</sup> What saved the world from this fate was <sup>the</sup> an accident -- the development of the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb <sup>of the discovery of the history of Uranium in 1935</sup> which introduced a new factor into the classical power conflict, <sup>is quite large</sup> a factor for which there is no precedent in history and which is, therefore, very <sup>is probably</sup> poorly understood by those who derive their political insight from studying <sup>post</sup> history and, I am sorry to say, <sup>but</sup> that it is even less understood by those who are not students of history. <sup>is probably</sup> In the measure in which American

stockpiles and Russian stockpiles of atomic and hydrogen bombs have grown, there have been changes taking place, <sup>slowly</sup> imperceptibly at first but quite <sup>more</sup> manifestly lately, in the pattern of international relations. <sup>years there has been a reported</sup> These changes have run through a sequence, and we have not as yet reached the end of this

sequence. **P** It is my contention that in the unprecedented situation toward

What is the real cause of the Russian-American conflict? Thucydides gave us the answer over 2,000 years ago when he wrote ~~the~~ the History of the Peloponnesian War.

~~Neither Sparta nor Athens wanted war; yet they went to war with each other. They fought a terrible war which lasted for thirty years. Sparta and Athens did not want war, but they looked upon war between themselves as a possibility for which they had to prepare. Gradually more and more states in Greece became the allies of the one or the other. Finally there was no city-state of any importance left in Greece which was not allied either with Athens or with Sparta. Whenever there was an opportunity for Sparta to take a step which would improve her military position, Sparta took that step. Whenever Athens had such an opportunity, she made use of that opportunity. But every such step that Sparta took and every such step that Athens took was of necessity a step which made war more likely.)~~ Finally the time came when Sparta reluctantly ~~and regretfully~~ decided that war <sup>maybe</sup> was inevitable and that she had better make preparations in earnest. ~~But it was just her who started the war.~~

~~Neither Sparta nor Athens wanted war and~~ <sup>But it was just her who started the war.</sup> But when the Peloponnesian War finally broke out, it did not start as a war between Sparta and Athens. <sup>That war came when</sup> Thebes, an ally of Sparta, attacked Plataea, an ally of Athens. Thucydides writes: "There was an old quarrel between the two cities, and the Thebans, seeing that war was inevitable, were anxious to surprise the place while the peace lasted and before hostilities had actually broken out."

Some 300 Thebans entered Plataea, were defeated and taken prisoner, and the prisoners were later killed by the Plataeans. They were killed shortly before the herald sent from Athens arrived in Plataea bidding her to do no violence to the prisoners but to wait for instructions from

Athens. Whether or not Plataea, in killing the Theban prisoners, actually violated an agreement and broke an oath is a question that up to this time has not been settled. But the war between Sparta and Athens was on. //

There is no reading more frightening and at the same time more sobering these days, than the History of the Peloponnesian War.

The statesmen of Athens tell us that the war was caused by Sparta, and the statesmen of Sparta tell us that the war was caused by Athens, for even in those times war was regarded by the civilized world as an evil and statesmen were anxious to avert the stigma of the aggressor. But Thucydides tells us that "the real reason for the war was that Athens' growing power threatened the security of Sparta."

which we are now moving -- which can be characterized by the phrase,  
 the ~~strategic~~ stalemate between the ~~striking~~ <sup>strategic atomic forces</sup> power of Russia and America --  
 the vicious circle which characterized the classical power conflict between  
 Sparta and Athens as well as the conflict between America and Russia in the  
 years following the Second World War ceases to be operative, and as a re-  
 sult of this unprecedented situation it ~~now~~ <sup>for the first time since the war ended</sup> becomes possible to negotiate  
 a settlement. <sup>this will soon</sup>

It is of vital importance for us to avoid operating here  
 with loose concepts, such as strategic stalemate and settlement, and to  
 use words of this sort within the narrow limits of their precisely defined  
 meaning.

We would only further add to the existing confusion by  
 using the terms, "stalemate" and "settlement", without defining more precisely  
 the narrow meaning within which ~~we are going to use these terms.~~

re-write.

3ms II

Insert 2, page 3

~~We are~~ using the terms, "stalemate" and "settlement", in the narrow meaning  
 of these terms which ~~we are~~ <sup>I am</sup> going to define presently in a <sup>more</sup> quite precise  
 manner.

*only*

What is Meant by Stalemate

*" and "Settlement" between the strategical*

We are now rapidly moving toward a situation where America and Russia will be able to destroy each other to any desired degree, and where neither can cripple <sup>appreciably</sup> in one single, sudden blow or even through repeated blows, the ability of the other to retaliate. I am not saying that we have reached this stage as yet <sup>I am merely saying that</sup> but, with the technical knowledge now at hand, such a strategic stalemate can be attained if America and Russia both consciously pursue this goal and devote a reasonable fraction of their defense budgets to its achievement.

Under what conditions such a stalemate might be stable and might be maintained over a long period of time is an important question. In certain circumstances the stalemate might be upset by certain military developments. The stalemate might also be rendered highly unstable, and is today in fact unstable <sup>for lack of a political</sup> in the absence of a "settlement."

What is meant by settlement

If America could destroy Russia's power ability to retaliate or Russia could destroy American ability to retaliate the stalemate would be inherently unstable. <sup>and I assume</sup> However, <sup>that</sup> ~~both countries will bend every effort to remain vulnerable in this manner and this kind of weakness to both.~~ <sup>It shall</sup> therefore disregard this kind of inherent instability, <sup>for the present</sup> at least for the moment.

If ~~America and Russia~~ <sup>people</sup> do not understand the nature of this stalemate, ~~what its dangers are and what it can accomplish~~ <sup>and what it can do</sup>, even a minor disturbance might lead to an all-out atomic catastrophe.

Such a stalemate is ~~inherently~~ <sup>not in itself</sup> neither stable ~~nor~~ unstable. Its stability depends on the rules of conduct which America and Russia may impose upon themselves. Clearly if they both adopt a policy of massive retaliation; if America proposes to respond to the destruction of one of her cities <sup>V</sup> assumed to be caused by a Russian atomic bomb <sup>V</sup> with an all-out attack against all of <sup>R</sup> Russia's cities, and vice <sup>V</sup> versa, ~~the atomic stalemate will be highly unstable~~ <sup>they</sup>, and an initial disturbance will lead in <sup>may</sup> ~~the shortest possible time~~ <sup>within</sup> to an all-out atomic destruction of both countries. <sup>P</sup> ~~Or~~ if Russia adopts as her policy the destruction of ~~all~~ <sup>many</sup> American cities for every Russian city destroyed, and vice versa, an initial disturbance <sup>may</sup> will lead, more slowly perhaps but just as surely, to an all-out atomic catastrophe. <sup>P</sup> ~~The atomic stalemate can be stable only if both~~

*Discuss later on in extenso.*  
The atomic stalemate, if it is maintained in the years to come, can be rendered stable against ~~minor~~ "disturbances" only if America and Russia adopt a rule of conduct which is specifically aimed at achieving such stability. I shall ~~describe~~ later on what such a rule of conduct might be, but this much is clear at the outset: Unless such rules of conduct are publicly proclaimed well in advance, are fully understood by all, and are guaranteed by deeply routed public support, they will be of little avail. ~~And~~ furthermore, deeply routed public support will be forthcoming only if ~~they~~ <sup>the rules of conduct</sup> are acceptable from the moral ~~point~~ point of view.

count on deeply routed public support. ~~XXX~~ <sup>not even the beginning of such a policy has been evolved</sup>

No general policy on the use to which bombs may be put -- morally acceptable or otherwise -- has so far been publicly proclaimed. Moreover, I suspect that no general agreement exists even within the American government on what an acceptable policy would be. We have small bombs suitable for use in combat, and we have big bombs suitable for the destruction of cities. Somehow we hope <sup>the</sup> small bombs will be used in small wars and that the big bombs will be used in big wars. We hope that there will occur no large wars and that, even though we may not be able to avert small wars, we may somehow keep the small wars from becoming big wars.

*otherwise this is for you and I suspect the general plan is to keep*

~~Small war hope there will be no large wars~~

large wars, even though we may not be able to avoid small wars. One is reminded of the story of Newton's two cats who slept in his bedroom and awakened him in the morning by scratching on the door wanting to get out. In order to solve this problem, Newton cut two holes in the door; a large hole for the large cat and a small hole for the small cat.

~~other reports to the states could be Newton's~~

In the absence of a clearly understood philosophy concerning the use of atomic bombs in certain contingencies, the atomic stalemate is inherently unstable, and this instability is rendered exceedingly dangerous by the likelihood of the occurrence of large as well as small disturbances. It is not likely that the war will start with a wanton attack by America against Russia or by Russia against America. But we are in constant peril because of the possibility that a war might break out somewhere between two smaller nations whose actions are not necessarily fully controlled by either Russia or America. If Russia and America intervene militarily on opposite sides in such a minor war and if the war is fought by using atomic bombs in combat, what started out as a local war might well end up in an all-out atomic catastrophe.

~~PToday~~

~~at present~~

~~the~~

~~my day~~

X Two possibilities

Page 6

~~would be nothing~~

It is very well to speak of limiting the war but it is difficult to conceive of either America or Russia, having sacrificed the lives of several thousand men, showing much inclination to cut their losses and concede defeat. It does not follow that such a local war must necessarily spread and lead to an all-out atomic catastrophe. Even though this is the more likely outcome, it is conceivable that the local war will remain local and will go on until the contested area is completely devastated with hardly any survivors of the civilian population left and with practically all of the houses and factories in ruins, and one of the villagers might decide on abandoning the territory which has been rendered valueless to the enemy. This is conceivable but it would be foolhardy to put our hopes on this, morally most reprehensible, but in every other respect most fortunate, outcome of an ~~all-localized~~ atomic war.

~~for~~

~~will remain local~~

~~other worse~~ ~~belly~~

me

ll

Therefore, what we need to have now in order to reduce the risk of an all-out atomic catastrophe is <sup>always</sup> a political settlement of the controversial issues, and by settlement <sup>we</sup> mean an arrangement between the nations involved which will reduce the risk of an outbreak of a war and which will make it reasonably certain that Russia and America may not intervene militarily on opposite sides in a local conflict. <sup>if war can not be</sup>

That the dangers of the atomic stalemate make it necessary to have a settlement -- at least in this narrow sense of the term -- is clear enough. But is there any reason to believe that it is possible to settle the issues outstanding between Russia and America even though not a single one of these issues proved to be negotiable in the past ten years?

*R* It is my contention that the <sup>very</sup> atomic stalemate which makes it so necessary to settle these issues has <sup>f</sup>created a novel situation and that these issues are now negotiable. I believe that in the atomic stalemate the vicious circle which operates in the classical power conflict will operate no longer, and that the issues which were of strategic importance in the past will be important no longer.

8

~~6~~

What renders the stalemate highly unstable at present is the possibility that a war might break out somewhere between two smaller nations whose actions are not fully controlled by either Russia or America, that Russia or America might militarily intervene on opposite sides, and that such a war might be fought by using atomic bombs in combat. What starts out as a local war might well end up in an all-out atomic catastrophe, particularly if atomic bombs are used in the tactical area at the outset. This danger can be eliminated only by a political settlement, and we mean by settlement an arrangement between nations which will reduce the risk of an outbreak of a local war and which will make it reasonably certain that if a local war breaks out America and Russia may not intervene militarily on opposite sides. It is obvious that the atomic stalemate makes it necessary to have a settlement at least in this narrow sense of the term, and it is our contention that the atomic stalemate makes it possible to have a settlement. In this respect the atomic stalemate has created a novel situation. For as long as this stalemate is maintained, America and Russia can destroy each other as well as any other nation or combination of nations to any desired degree, and therefore neither of them need to be afraid of being vanquished. They no longer have to jockey for strategic positions in order to make sure not to be vanquished in the war that may come. The basic concepts of foreign policy which govern the actions of the Great Powers in the past lose their validity in the atomic stalemate. America has gone twice to war in this century, mainly motivated by the consideration that, if Germany were permitted to win the war and to militarily dominate the continent of Europe, she would acquire a war potential which would render her dangerous to America. America might then have been in danger of being vanquished by Germany in a subsequent war. concepts, like war potential, military strength, etc., cease to be valid concepts in the atomic stalemate. There is no reason, at least not from a

purely military point of view why America need be concerned about the war potential of any other nation or the military strength of any other nation. In the atomic stalemate America is invincible, and she can remain/invincible forever <sup>if she chooses to do so, here</sup> after provided only she adopts a new basic policy which <sup>to us</sup> makes <sup>in</sup> adequate use of the atomic stalemate.

~~None of the controversial issues which arose after the war~~

between America and Russia have any longer any bearing on the outcome of a war between America and Russia. From this point of view it is no longer of any importance whether these issues are settled one way or another, and therefore it should be possible to settle all of the controversial issues which have accumulated in the post-war years. ~~While it no longer matters from a strategic point of view which way they are settled,~~ <sup>all that matters is that</sup> ~~from the point of view of the stability of the stalemate it matters a~~

~~great deal that they be settled one way or the other. Settling all these controversial issues, and thereby making reasonably certain that America and Russia will not militarily intervene in a local conflict on opposite sides would go a long way toward stabilizing the stalemate. But even in all issues are settled which might lead to military conflict in the foreseeable future, the situation will remain unstable as long as America and Russia retain large stockpiles of bombs and means for their delivery without having developed a clear policy, understandable to all, setting forth in what contingency and in what manner such bombs might be used. Is there a policy that is both rationally and morally acceptable that would permit Russia and America to retain the military power which they now possess and to stabilize the stalemate to such a degree that it might become acceptable to people, and eliminate the vicious circle which rendered power conflicts in the past dangerous to the peace of the world? Or, alternatively, is there any way to get rid of the bombs altogether without incurring the~~

*And further*

*Y*

*Y*

Such a settlement made possible by the stalemate would also go a long way toward ~~establishing~~ *making accomplished* cooperation between the Great Powers. ~~At the end of the last war,~~ *possible* it was generally believed that as long as the Great Powers act in concert with each other, the United Nations organization may be able to guarantee the security of the smaller nations and may make it unnecessary, as well as impossible, for them to go to war with each other. Attempts to use the United Nations in the past ten years for purposes other than those for which it was designed have weakened this organization, but perhaps they have not damaged it beyond repair, and it might perhaps be possible to restore the United Nations to its original function once there is a "settlement" between the Great Power -- ~~at least in the narrow sense in which we are using this term for the purposes of the present discussion.~~ *In the absence of the* ~~As long as the stalemate between Russia and America is maintained,~~ *stalemate* there is no reason for Russia to object to the maintaining in various ~~regions~~ *frontiers* of the world of small, highly mobile forces, armed with conventional weapons ~~only~~ *rule* for the purpose of maintaining under the auspices of the United Nations ~~the~~ *an* status quo. ~~I am not speaking here of total forces but of highly mobile forces equipped with high-firing power which are superior to any of the national forces maintained in the region, and which would relieve the nations of the region of the necessity of maintaining expensive forces of their own, and by relieving them of a heavy financial burden,~~ *will* open the way to their economic development. ~~One might ask at this point in a hopeful vein why not reach a settlement which goes beyond the narrow sense of the term used in this discussion and which would also provide for disarmament and, above all, rid the world of the bomb. We shall examine in the course of this article whether,~~ *aim of a real* ~~taking into account the laws under which the great nations operate at present,~~ it appears likely that both America and Russia would be willing to relinquish the military power which they now

possess, ~~due to their possession of~~ <sup>by giving up their</sup> stockpiles of bombs, and to accept the shift <sup>in</sup> of power <sup>balance</sup> which getting rid of the bomb would entail for them.

P Assuming, for the sake of argument, that they would be willing to agree to this, what would be the consequences for peace? ~~Could we have~~ <sup>we then</sup> rid the world of the spectre of an all-out atomic catastrophe? P Had the bomb been eliminated from the nation's arsenal right after the end of the last war, no nation would have known how to make a bomb, ~~and even America might~~ <sup>except America</sup> have forgotten it within a few years. The world would have been in much the same position <sup>then</sup> in which it was before the war -- no worse off and perhaps somewhat better off, at least as long as the memory of Hiroshima ~~might~~ <sup>still</sup>

~~have~~ lingered on. P Today the situation is rather different. Even if we get rid of the bombs now, it is not likely that we shall forget how to make them. ~~Nothing except~~ <sup>Will</sup> the memory of Hiroshima will ~~then~~ prevent ~~new~~ <sup>a</sup> power conflicts from arising, ~~and when there is no atomic stalemate,~~ <sup>de novo? and of</sup> the same vicious circle ~~will~~ <sup>not</sup> operate again in this power conflict <sup>just</sup> as has operated in the past. <sup>st</sup> Strategic conflicts ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> arise again, ~~none of~~ <sup>however</sup> these conflicts ~~can~~ be settled, <sup>2</sup> ~~unsolved issues will~~ <sup>Will</sup> accumulate <sup>not</sup> and create a more and more explosive situation. <sup>2</sup> ~~If there is another war,~~ <sup>one thing is certain</sup> then that war will end up as an atomic war even though there were no stockpiles of bombs at the outbreak of the war, ~~and it may well end up in an all-out atomic catastrophe.~~

~~Moreover~~ <sup>however</sup> one might argue that this forecast does not take into account the advent of the hydrogen bomb and the horror of ~~the~~ radioactive fall-out. ~~It~~ <sup>which</sup> made a deep impression on men's minds, that knowing that hydrogen bombs could be made will profoundly modify the behavior of our statesmen, that once the statesmen can agree -- if they can agree -- on getting rid of the bomb ~~starting~~ <sup>then they will start</sup> from scratch, ~~they~~ <sup>and</sup> will be eager and ~~willing~~ <sup>able</sup> to build a peaceful world. Far be it from me to argue that this is not conceivable. No one can predict how human behavior ~~will~~ <sup>may</sup> be modified under condition which are rather different from those prevailing today, but it is

.....necessary for us to examine, and we shall examine the difficulties of a settlement of this kind.

Concerning the strategic stalemate, we may be faced with a fundamental dilemma. In this stalemate the vicious circle of the classical power conflict does not operate, and it becomes possible to settle the controversial issues of strategic importance which are not negotiable within <sup>old</sup> the pattern of the ~~classical~~ power conflict. But because it is poorly understood in what manner such a strategic stalemate could be rendered stable, we long to get rid of the bomb, and by getting rid of the bomb <sup>we should make</sup> ~~win~~ the strategic stalemate. <sup>also</sup> But in the absence of a stalemate the power conflicts are likely to assume once more the classical pattern. The vicious circle will operate once more and strategic conflicts will arise de novo. **P** Conceivably the memory of Hiroshima, the hydrogen bomb, and radioactive fall-out has made such a deep impression on the minds of our statesmen that they will no longer conform to the old pattern of behavior. It is by no means certain, however, that the effect of these memories would be strong enough to affect the course of events. For this reason we are forced to examine whether it might not be possible to render somehow the atomic stalemate stable in a sufficiently reliable manner to make the stalemate acceptable, <sup>and perhaps for as long as thought can reach</sup> at least for the foreseeable future. Achieving an adequate stability will certainly be difficult, but it would be irresponsible to say that achieving such stability is impossible. We shall, therefore, try to examine what it would take to accomplish such a stability, and what the difficulties are that attempts in this direction are likely to encounter.

~~New Chapter~~

all of us are

*It would be probable*

~~The greatest mistake we can make is to seek the solution~~  
of an unprecedented situation within the framework of a conservative  
policy. ~~Let us face~~ <sup>*We must face*</sup> the fact that man by nature ~~is~~ <sup>*essentially*</sup> conservative. ~~Our~~ <sup>*we*</sup>  
~~best chance to envisage~~ <sup>*But perhaps we can force ourselves to see*</sup> how our thoughts might change in the years to come  
consists. ~~I believe~~ <sup>*if we had*</sup> in reviewing how our thoughts have changed in the  
past ten years. "I do not know what makes a man more conservative -- to  
know nothing but the past or to know nothing but the present." ~~I shall~~ <sup>*With*</sup>  
~~therefore, to put myself and the reader in a less conservative mood, de-~~  
~~scribe~~ <sup>*Here*</sup> in the following the evolution of my own thinking from the discovery  
of fission to the close <sup>*ing*</sup> of this article. I shall state as frankly as I  
can what I thought at various times and why I thought what I thought. I  
shall record when I was right and I shall record when I was wrong. I shall  
record my own entirely subjective interpretation of why the American govern-  
ment did what it did, and ~~on this basis~~ <sup>*on this basis*</sup> I shall try to evaluate what the  
American government is likely to ~~do~~ <sup>*find acceptable in*</sup> in the years to come, what the ~~consi-~~  
~~derations will be which will affect its actions, and what the reasons will~~  
~~be that it may put forward for public consumption.~~

*This version of the facts.*

July 22, 1957

THIRD VERSION

### The Great Dilemma

The time is approaching rapidly when we must make up our minds what we want to do. We must either get rid of the bomb or we must accept the fact that America and Russia will retain the bomb, and then we must find some way to live with the bomb. We shall examine at present as well as we can what the obstacles are that stand in the way of getting rid of the bomb. What are the underlying reasons why no substantial progress has been made in the last ten years in this direction. <sup>2 In this connection</sup> There was much talk about the difficulty of devising a foolproof system of inspection that may be acceptable both to Russia and the United States. Some of these difficulties are real but these are not unsurmountable, and I do not believe that they are the real cause of the conspicuous lack of progress in the disarmament negotiations of the past ten years.

The current negotiations in London do not seem to be aimed at getting rid of the bomb. If these negotiations succeed at all, they would lead to an agreement between Russia and America as well as the other nations involved that will leave America and Russia in full possession of their stockpiles of bombs, but will prohibit ~~and presumably enforce~~ the production of bombs anywhere after a certain fixed date. In this respect the date acceptable to Russia and America will be presumably the date on which both of these nations will possess all the bombs that they might conceivably use in an all-out war. ~~Such an agreement, if it were acceptable to all nations, would be of some value and would at least prevent~~

Such an agreement, if it were acceptable to all ~~nations~~ nations, would prevent most of the nations from manufacturing bombs, and this might be of some value for so far nobody has succeeded in figuring out what the likely course of

*may*  
events would be in <sup>a</sup>the world in which many nations ~~can~~ dispose of large ~~quantities~~ <sup>stockpiles</sup> of bombs.

~~As~~ <sup>I believe that</sup> far as getting rid of the bomb is concerned, no serious negotiations aimed at this objective are in sight. Progress in this direction is blocked by real obstacles, and it is not certain that these obstacles are surmountable.

If this, in fact, is true, the sooner we become aware of it, the better off we shall be, ~~for~~ <sup>if</sup> we know for certain that in all likelihood we must live with the bomb, perhaps for another generation, we might then turn our full attention to what might be the most important question at present: Is there any rule of conduct that both America and Russia might impose upon themselves ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> respect to the use to which the bomb might be put in any conceivable ~~contingency~~ <sup>contingency</sup> that would make reasonably sure *that we will avoid an all out atomic war.*

If it were clearly ~~enunciated~~ <sup>enunciated</sup> and understood by all the world would make reasonably sure that the stalemate between the strategic atomic striking forces of Russia and America, which we are now rapidly approaching, will not lead to an all-out atomic catastrophe.

One might, for instance, ask: could not America and Russia <sup>each</sup> ~~both~~ pledge ~~themselves~~ <sup>himself</sup> not to resort to the use of atomic weapons in case of war unless atomic weapons are used against <sup>her</sup> ~~them~~. We shall examine this possibility with some care further below. ~~But~~ it is clear at the outset that in the case of a war in which America and ~~Russia~~ fight on opposite sides there may be an overwhelming temptation, either for Russia or America, to break this pledge, and therefore the likelihood that this pledge would be kept is not large. It is true that the Great Powers were pledge not to use gas warfare, and they ~~in fact~~ did not resort to this kind of warfare in the last war. ~~But~~ <sup>are</sup> as we shall see, there ~~were~~ reasons why we ~~must not base our forecast concerning a similar pledge that would ban atomic weapons on the success of the outlawing of gas warfare.~~ <sup>a ban on the use of atomic weapons might be more successful than the ban on gas warfare.</sup> ~~would be likely to fail where the ban on~~ <sup>succeeded.</sup>

In favor of the proposal for outlawing atomic weapons is the fact that it would meet a public demand that is largely based on moral considerations. It is probably for this reason that this demand was able to gain mass support in many countries of the world. With the approaching stalemate between the strategic striking forces of America and Russia, there will arise a wholly unprecedented situation. The unprecedented dangers which will arise out of this situation are rather obvious. Today <sup>today</sup> it is less clearly recognized that this unprecedented situation also offers, for the first time perhaps in history, possibilities for safeguarding the peace which are wholly unprecedented. ~~One of these possibilities appears to deserve examination in some detail.~~ <sup>provided only that the stalemate could be some how rendered</sup>

stable.

c o r r e c t i o n

But <sup>could</sup> it might be that the strategic stalemate will permit both Russia and America <sup>would</sup> to impose upon themselves a rule of conduct by which they may be able to render this stalemate stable, and that <sup>a</sup> the particular rule of conduct which <sup>satisfies</sup> specifies this requirement ~~could count on widespread public support because it would be in accordance with moral considerations.~~ <sup>and would thereby command public</sup> Even though Russia and America may not be able to pledge themselves not to use the bomb in case of war if the bomb is not used against them, they might be able to make a somewhat similar pledge; namely, to use the bomb only, if it is used at all, as an instrument of demolition in circumstances where it is reasonably sure that neither civilians nor soldiers will be killed. We shall examine this possibility in some detail further below. Above all we shall scrutinize whether, if such pledges were given by both America and Russia, there might be an appreciable temptation for either to break the pledge in case of war. But I must not get ahead of myself.

That Russia and America must impose on themselves some rule of conduct *that involves restraint* in the stalemate between the strategic atomic striking forces of Russia and America is, I believe, evident for, as will be discussed further below, even if we were to assume that we can reach an agreement that will provide for a stepwise disarmament aimed at ultimately getting rid of the bomb, eliminating the strategic/atomic striking forces of Russia and America is likely to represent the last step rather than the first step in the sequence.

Insert:

(Taken from Topchiev's letter)

The atomic stalemate toward which we are now moving is an unprecedented situation and, therefore, it is likely that the solution of the problem which it poses will involve unprecedented measures, if indeed the problem is capable of solution. At this point, it might be well to face the fact that at the bottom of our hearts we are all conservatives. Therefore, any measures which are really unprecedented most of necessity appear somewhat ridiculous to all of us. But what impresses us as a ridiculous suggestion at one time may appear, when put forward later, as not ridiculous at all. At one of his recent press conferences, the President was asked whether we ought not to share our secret of how to make a clean bomb with Russia. The President said that this thought came to his mind as soon as he heard about the possibility of making clean bombs and that he raised this question with the scientists who come to discuss with him the clean bomb. The scientists, so the President said, told him that they would want to share the secret with Russia as soon as they were in possession of it. In response to further questions the President agreed that congressional approval would be needed for the sharing of any secret with any other nation.

If anyone had predicted five years ago that the President of the United States would propose to share the secret of the clean bomb with Russia at one of his press conferences people would have laughed in his face. Even today the President's attitude is unprecedented enough to provoke a smile but now it is a smile with a tolerant quality rather than the grin of ridiculing.

In the past ten years our views on just what the bomb meant and how best to cope with the problem which its existence has created in the world had to be revised again and again. At present the true meaning of the stalemate between the strategic atomic striking power of America and Russia is not as yet fully understood, and therefore it is a foregone conclusion that our views are going to undergo a change as our understanding of this situation gets more profound. We shall have a much greater willingness to change our views in response to a challenge posed by the approaching atomic stalemate if we are familiar not only with the current views that are a product of the present political and military situation, but if we also know in what manner the prevailing thought on the subject of the bomb has changed during the past ten years. "I do not know what makes a man more conservative," wrote John Maynard Keynes, "to know nothing about the past or to know nothing about the present." With this in mind, and faced with the difficulty of arriving at the right conclusion in a wholly unprecedented situation, I propose to take the reader along with me on a journey from the ~~time~~<sup>news</sup> of the discovery of fission, which reached this country in January 1939, to the present date.