

PROPOSAL FOR AN INQUIRY

In a Letter to the Editor which appeared in the New York Times on Sunday, February 6, I tried to get across the following thoughts:

It is not likely that governmental negotiations will produce in the near future a clear picture of an ordered world in which the possibility of war occurring can be considered as remote. Only if such a picture emerges and finds universal acceptance will it be possible for governments to negotiate, with a clear goal in mind, the necessary steps through which such an ordered world can evolve.

It will take resourcefulness and imagination to develop such a goal and also to find suitable paths which may lead towards this goal with comparative safety. What is needed now are discussions, of the real issues involved, among men who, being free from governmental responsibilities, can experiment with ideas and explore the feasibility of solutions without committing in any way any government.

The response which this Letter elicited thrust upon me something of a mandate to try and set up a "working group" that would engage in such discussions in America, Russia and elsewhere.

This "working group" will have between five and ten members, who will work full time for one year. They will be selected for their personal qualities regardless of their nationality. Thus the "working group" will not be an American group; non-Americans may serve on it as well as Americans.

The "working group" must not look at the problem primarily from the point of view of the enlightened self interest of the great powers -- as will be stressed further below -- but the conclusions of the "working group" must, of course, be consistent with the national interest of these powers if they are to serve a useful purpose.

It is proposed to set up a panel of evaluators in America and to ask the Soviet Government to help to set up such a panel of evaluators in the Soviet Union. The members of these panels will be asked to scrutinize the thoughts developed by the "working group" as their deliberations move along from the point of view of the interests of their own nation and also to judge the validity of the final conclusions reached by the "working group."

The members of the American panel of evaluators will be selected from among distinguished citizens who have no direct governmental responsibility. There is no need for them to meet with each other and they do not assume any responsibility collectively.



The "working group" is conducting an inquiry and the fund for its operation could be well administered by a university or some research institution. American contributions to the fund would, therefore, be tax exempt.

It is proposed to ask the Russian Government whether they would be willing to put up half of this fund; the other half would have to come from foundations and private individuals in America.

The result of the "working group" work would be presented in the form of a working paper. This paper would embody the "working group's" experience. It would describe the various measures that they have contemplated, the difficulties which these measures would encounter and the manner in which these difficulties might be overcome. Such a working paper should be useful to the governments involved when they wish to negotiate a far-reaching agreement for the purpose of creating a setting in which the chance of war will be really remote.

The discussions of the "working group" with members of the panels might lead to a clarification of ideas on the basic issues and this in turn might lead to emergence of a more vigorous intellectual leadership in the field of international relations.

#### The Character of the "Working Group":

What kind of considerations should guide the members of the "working group"? It is not likely that any group which attempts to think through the problem of resolving the present power conflict on the basis of enlightened self-interest will succeed in coming up with the right answers.

The right answers cannot be found by a straight application of logical reasoning and, in order to find them, one must have ideas. We do not know just how ideas come about, but somehow or other, enlightened self-interest does not seem to be very conducive to their generation. Somehow, enlightened self-interest lacks in appeal to the imagination of Man.

Bertrand Russell, in his book, Icarus, discusses how the "fixed price" came into existence in England. Up to that time, it took protracted negotiations to buy a pair of shoes in a shop. The shopkeeper started out by asking a price which was way too high, and the customer offered a price which was way too low. After long negotiations, the pair of shoes changed hands at a reasonable price -- if one does not count the time invested by customer and shopkeeper in the negotiation of the price. The first shopkeepers to introduce the fixed price were -- according to Russell -- Quakers, who felt that it was wrong to ask for a higher price than the merchandise was worth. The customers saved time by buying in these Quaker shops, and preferred to buy in them, with the result that the



Quakers became prosperous. Russell stresses the fact that any merchant could have arrived at the same conclusion on the basis of enlightened self-interest which the Quakers reached on the basis of a moral argument, but the fact remains that enlightened self-interest did not produce the "idea" which was required.

Ideas of greater depth are needed today if we are to find the right answer to the problem that confronts the world. To come up with these ideas is a task that requires qualities of the heart as well as qualities of the intellect. The members of the "working group" must have these qualities, for it will be a task of the "working group" to generate ideas and to explore their feasibility.

It will be the function of the American and the Russian panels to scrutinize the conclusions of the "working group" from the point of view of the respective national interests.

The work of the "working group" can succeed only if the members agree in advance on what they regard as the true nature of the problem that is before them and beyond that, agree on a general approach which they regard as promising.

The Nature of the Problem (As I Personally See It):

What is the nature of the problem and what could be such a promising approach?

The thoughts touched upon here have been worked out in even greater detail in a 10,000 word memorandum that I have prepared. Many of these details are arbitrary and may have little or no validity. They should be regarded as representing only one man's very tentative views which have no claim to any special attention of the members of the "working group." If they are useful at all, they are so because they help to define a general approach and to illustrate certain difficulties. This should make it easier to draft the terms of reference for the "working group" and also to draft the premises which they may accept as a basis of their deliberations.

The Atomic Stalemate which is close at hand, poses to the statesmen a problem for which there is no precedent in history. Always in the past the legitimate aim of foreign policy has been to prolong the peace. A good foreign policy was one which succeeded in eliminating the most acute causes of conflict and left the remaining problems untouched in the hope that they would disappear in time. Time does in fact solve many problems but unfortunately it creates as many problems as it solves.

A good foreign policy meant in the past a policy which prolonged the peace, i.e., one which lengthened the interval between two subsequent wars. And up until now, that is all that any foreign policy has ever done. Today it is no longer



enough to postpone the war and since the devices applied in the past can do no more than just this much, it is now necessary to find an entirely new approach, and it may take political and social inventions to implement such a new approach.

Is it possible to outline an arrangement acceptable to both America and the Soviet Union which may be kept in force because the great powers consider it in their interest to keep it in force?

It is physically impossible to coerce either the Soviet Union or America into keeping an agreement in operation if they no longer wish to keep it in force. Only if the agreement offers to the Soviet Union, America and some of the other great powers involved, strong continuing incentives for keeping the agreement in operation will the agreement be self-sustaining.

What should these incentives be? Military security of the nation, political security of its government and economic prosperity are the most important things that such an agreement must provide in order to be attractive. Can any agreement provide enough of it to be self-sustaining?

What kind and what degree of disarmament must the agreement provide in order to permit a rapid rise in the standard of living of the Soviet Union during the next twenty-five years? And what about other Nations?

How can we make sure that secret evasions of the disarmament clauses will not endanger the security of any of the great powers?

The magic key to this last question might perhaps be obtained by reserving in the agreement to America, the Soviet Union and a few other nations, the right to abrogate it either in toto or in part. The agreement might contain a number of specific clauses of limited abrogation and each of these could be invoked without cause by America, the Soviet Union and those other nations who have retained the right to abrogate. Clearly such a right could be reserved to a few nations only.

If there was no such right to abrogate then it would be necessary to spell out in the agreement an inspection system that would give both America and the Soviet Union ironclad guarantees for the detection of secret violations. It would then take lawyers many years to devise such a system if indeed it is possible at all to write into the agreement a system that would cover every conceivable contingency.

But with the right to abrogate written into the agreement it may not be necessary to write into the agreement anything about an inspection system at all. If both Russia and America want to keep the agreement in force, then the real question is not what kind of ironclad guarantees we should write into the agreement



but it is rather the following: How can Russia and America -- always assuming that they want to do so -- convince each other that no secret violations occur in their territory? For clearly if one of them suspects the other one of a secret violation that might vitally endanger her security, then the other nation must convince her that this suspicion is unfounded. Otherwise the former would have no choice but to invoke one of the abrogation clauses of the agreement and in time perhaps to abrogate the agreement in toto.

Disarmament will presumably go into effect in stages. There is some reason to believe that one might want to carry disarmament very far in all tactical weapons in the early stages while leaving the strategic Air Force and their bombs unaffected. This kind of disarmament could lead to great economic saving and yet secret violations of the agreement could not, during these early stages, vitally threaten the security of either America or the Soviet Union. However, if one proceeds beyond these first stages toward total disarmament and eliminates the strategic Air Force as well as all other means suitable for the delivery of bombs, together with the bombs themselves, then secret violations could become very dangerous for both America and the Soviet Union.

At this late stage when there are, strictly speaking, no military secrets left then in order to convince each other that there are no secret violations, America and the Soviet Union might find it convenient to permit each other to maintain spies in their territories. At this stage the American Government might have to speak to the Russian Government as follows: "We do not have enough spies operating in Azerbaijan. Unless you facilitate their operation or convince us in some other manner that our suspicions are unfounded, we will have no choice but to invoke one of the abrogation clauses of the agreement."

What are the conditions under which the Soviet Union could tolerate American agents to act as plainclothes inspectors whose identity is not known to the Soviet Government? How can America convince the Soviet Government that her agents are merely spies and are not secretly organizing a political party that could be dangerous to the Soviet Government?

I, personally, do not believe that it is too difficult to find an answer to such questions. I believe that what needs to be done is not really difficult but merely unprecedented.

No disarmament provisions agreed upon could of course remain in force for long unless there was a far-reaching political settlement. If a conflict breaks out anywhere in the world and leads to fighting, and if America and the Soviet Union line up on the opposite sides, then rearmament will quickly replace disarmament.



To give the agreement the stability that it must have, it will be necessary to use devices never before used in international relations, and social and political inventions may be needed in order to make politically acceptable all that needs to be done.

The Premises:

For the "working group" to be effective, it is necessary to agree at the outset on certain basic premises. What should these premises be? I tentatively propose the adoption of the following premises:

1. That it is impossible to enforce the observance of the agreement against the United States, the Soviet Union and some of the other great powers.
2. That the agreement will remain in force only if it offers these powers strong continued incentives for maintaining the agreement in operation.
3. That in order to provide a sufficient incentive in the economic field, the agreement must provide for far-reaching disarmament.
4. That such a state of disarmament can remain in force only if it is based on a far-reaching political settlement.
5. That the great powers must find a way to convince each other that no secret violations of the disarmament ~~provisions~~ of the agreement take place in their territory that could vitally threaten each other's security.
6. That if the great powers retain the right to abrogate the agreement in toto or to invoke specific abrogation clauses without cause, it may not be necessary to spell out in the agreement the means through which the great powers may convince each other that no dangerous secret violations take place in their territory.
7. That not every nation can retain the right to abrogate and that some form of enforcement, against nations which have no such right, may be necessary.

The Terms of Reference for the Working Group:

Clearly the problem goes far beyond the need to resolve the present power conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. The terms of reference of the "working group" would have to deal with the points enumerated under "premises," but would not be limited to them.

What new devices in the field of international relations will have to be introduced in order to make it unlikely that there will be a major war during the next few generations? And what social and political inventions are needed in order to permit the world to evolve during these next few generations, towards an organized world community in which the occurrence of war will be virtually impossible?

These questions should receive much of the attention of the "working group."



Mode of Operation of the "Working Group":

a. The "working group" might devote perhaps three months to discussing what kind of solutions are desirable and need to be explored from the point of view of feasibility. During this period of time, they will have to spend much of their time in consultation with experts, particularly since all the required knowledge and skill cannot possibly be represented on the "working group." But while the "working group" may have to spend much of their time discussing their problems with experts, yet the experts must not run the show.

b. Having clarified ~~their own minds as to what~~ kind of solutions appear desirable, the "working group" would then discuss their thoughts in Russia and in the United States with men who have direct governmental responsibilities, or who are close to the Government. If time permits, they will have such discussions also in China, England, France and a few other nations whose point of view may be different from that of the great powers.

The "working group" would want to find out through such discussions how statesmen look -- ~~as individuals, as representatives of their governments, as representatives of their nations~~ upon the specific measures that the "working group" might consider to recommend. Some of these measures would adversely affect vested interests wielding political influence and the "working group" will want to assess ~~by means of such discussions~~ ~~the~~ the practical difficulties which such measures are likely to encounter.

It is assumed that this phase of the work of the "working group" might take about three months.

c. Subsequent to these discussions in the various countries, the "working group" would then reconsider the tentative conclusions which they have reached earlier and prepare a working paper that might ultimately be made public.

All through their work, but particularly during this later phase, the "working group" will keep in close contact with the Panel of Evaluators set up in America and in Russia. This will enable these Panels to understand the reasons why the "working group" favors certain solutions and rejects others, the nature of the difficulties that the various solutions proposed may encounter in the countries explored by the "working group" and the various ways in which these difficulties might be overcome.

Mode of Operation of the Evaluating Panels:

The members of these Panels act as individuals and assume no collective responsibility unless they themselves wish to form a committee and engage in an exchange of views with each other. The only obligation that each member of the panel assumes is to follow the "working group's" deliberations, form an opinion



as to the validity of their thinking, and if any thoughts are developed by the "working group" that meet with their approval, bring these thoughts to the attention of the different branches of the government or to the attention of the public, depending on the opportunities open to each individual member of the Evaluating Panel.