

The Problems of Disarmament

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We talk about many problems like disarmament, and sometimes one has the feeling that although there is apparent agreement, really behind it there is not that faith in disarmament that is necessary, and that talks are more of some kind of attempt to put the other party in the wrong rather than to achieve something, while it is of the utmost importance that achievement should take place. I am convinced that the modern world cannot continue for

long without full disarmament. All these problems have come up again and again. Ultimately it is perhaps true that the material advance which has taken place in the world, and that is magnificent, has gone far ahead of the development of human minds, which lag behind. They do not fit in with the modern age, and the mind still thinks in its narrow terms of 100 to 200 years ago of how nations function, how diplomats function and how wars took place.

We know, we have heard and we have read about the new possibility of a nuclear war. Nevertheless, emotionally, we do not understand it fully. Otherwise it seems to me impossible why there should be these continuing deadlocks and impasses because the fact is that under modern conditions war must be ruled out or the world of civilisation or humanity has to submit to the ending of all it has laboured for thousands of years. If that is true, then surely it is important and urgent that we should approach this question with speed, deliberation and a determination to solve it rather than merely show that the other party is wrong.

I mentioned disarmament. This Assembly last year, I think decided almost unanimously in favour of general, widespread disarmament. The great nations of the world have all committed themselves to that. The United States, through its President, recently put forward proposals which are in line with what this Assembly has decided. The Soviet Union has put forward proposals to the same effect, varying slightly but essentially aiming at the same thing. Even in broad outline there is a good deal of commonness about them. If that is so, what comes in our way, why should we not grasp this opportunity when there is so much agreement and remove this fear and terror from people's minds and devote all the great energies and

resources of the people to world advancement. I do not know except what I have said, that we are quite unable to get out of old ways of thinking which ought to have no place in the modern world, old ways of hatred and violence of yesterday but a violence which could exterminate all of us, not realizing that there is no victory today for any country in a major war—only defeat and extermination for all. If that is so, then surely this major and outstanding question must be dealt with speed and those great countries, especially those which have the greatest responsibility because they possess the biggest weapons of warfare—nuclear weapons—should address themselves again and again to negotiations, to talks, to the consideration of this problem together to find some remedy, with the determination that they will not separate until they have come to some agreements, of course. Those agreements cannot be merely agreements of some countries, however great. They must represent all the members of this United Nations in this great body. But I do think that it is better for those countries—a few of them—to deal with this problem rather than for a larger body to deal with it to begin with. I feel rather strongly on this question although we in India are not situated in the major theatres of a possible war—probably not. Nevertheless, I feel that everything that man has striven for in the past thousands of years is at stake today. As strongly as I feel about these colonial matters, about the freedom of colonial countries and others, I do think that the major question and the biggest question of war and peace and disarmament. There is no conflict between those.

In fact, the whole atmosphere of the world will change if disarmament comes in and these present problems go towards solution. How then are we to do it? I do not know. The president was good enough to refer to the wisdom of

the East or to my wisdom. It was kind of him to make that reference to me, but I possess no greater wisdom than each one of us here. Only perhaps in some matters, some of us may feel a little more, some of us who have experienced many ups and downs in their lives may think more deeply about them. But it is wisdom that we want, it is the common wisdom that should come to everyone. It is no mystery. In the problems before us there are no mysteries. They are obvious problems, and the fear of war is obvious. The fear that grips mankind is obvious. How can we go on dealing with the secondary questions of the world, discussing them, etc., when this basic problem deludes us? As a part of this question of disarmament there is the particular question today of nuclear tests. The General Assembly passed a resolution recently about them. It was, I think, a great misfortune that after a period of abstinence from nuclear tests there was resumption. There can be no doubt that that turned the attention of the world in a wrong direction, apart from the harm it might do. Immediately the idea of a possible war became more prevalent. Immediately it became more difficult to have treaties for ending nuclear tests because while treaties are essential, are necessary for this, when the whole atmosphere becomes one of fear and apprehension, it becomes more difficult to get a treaty. I do think, and I would beg the countries concerned to realize, that they are doing a grave disservice to the world, to their countries even, by not putting an end to this business of nuclear tests by a treaty as rapidly as possible.

The Assembly has passed a resolution in favour of some kind of moratorium. No one imagines that a voluntary moratorium is going to solve this question. There must be stricter controls by treaty and otherwise. But while that should be aimed at and worked for and achieved as rapidly as possible, one should not leave the door open, while you discuss it, for these nuclear tests, to go on. Arguments may

be raised that one party or one country gets an advantage over the other and these arguments may have substances. Yet my own reaction to these nuclear tests is a very strong one. I think they are basically evil. They encourage evil. Therefore, the sooner this evil is dealt with the better.

*From Speech at United Nations of General Assembly,
New York, 10 November 1961*