

# A forerunner of the NPT? The Soviet proposals of 1947

*A retrospective look at attempts to control the spread of nuclear weapons*

by Bertrand Goldschmidt

On 17 May 1948, scientist Niels Bohr put the finishing touch to a memorandum that he was to submit to the US Secretary of State as a basis for conversations due to take place in Washington, D.C., the following month.

In this memorandum, Bohr deplored the increasing distrust and suspicion between nations that had prevented agreement being reached in the United Nations organization on the control of atomic armaments and he called upon the pioneering countries in this field to take an initiative towards "openness on a mutual basis".

The same day, the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC) – after nearly 2 years of existence and more than 200 meetings in New York and Lake Success – reported that it had reached an impasse in its work and that no useful purpose could be served by carrying on further negotiations at the Commission's level.

The UNAEC had been created in January 1946 by the 51 nations of the first UN General Assembly. Its major objectives were to make specific proposals for the control of atomic energy to ensure that it should be used only for peaceful purposes, as well as proposals for the elimination of atomic weapons from national armaments. The UNAEC was to report to the Security Council and its membership was limited to the 11 States of this body, as well as Canada when it didn't belong to this Council.

## **"Tragedy of mutual distrust"**

The tragedy of the UNAEC to reach a consensus was a tragedy of mutual distrust and one of the early manifestations of the Cold War. It resulted from the fact that it had been impossible to find any American-Soviet agreement either on the type of organization that would supervise and control the peaceful development of the new force on a worldwide scale, or on the definition of the stages through which the United States would have given up its few existing weapons. These latter numbered only about half a dozen in mid-1946 when the UNAEC met for the first time, and about two dozen by mid-1948

when the UNAEC made public its deadlock. The limited size of this stock would then have made it quite impossible for the American Government, even had it so wished, to keep secret a significant number of unaccounted bombs.

With this failure of the UNAEC, the last chance for humanity to return to a world free of nuclear weapons had vanished for an indefinite period. The nuclear arms race, which Niels Bohr had predicted with extraordinary foresight as early as 1944, and which he had courageously tried to prevent through the meetings he had with Churchill and Roosevelt, had now become unavoidable.

Nearly four decades later, the arsenals of the two superpowers include tens of thousands of infinitely more destructive bombs than those which terminated World War II, while many hundreds of these same dreadful weapons are in the hands of the three lesser nuclear-weapons States.

Should complete nuclear disarmament ever be attempted, there will be no way to check the declaration of a country possessing a large number of these arms, for a significant amount of them easily could be concealed. Therefore, it is unlikely that there can ever be again a complete sense of security in this field until the day, alas how far distant, when the world will finally be open and united under a single government.

At the present stage, vertical proliferation, although theoretically proscribed in an undefined future by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), seems to proceed unhindered, while the only instruments we have to contain horizontal proliferation are the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system and the NPT with its fundamental discriminatory aspects.

If the UNAEC – in 1948, 20 years before the conclusion of the NPT, at a time when there was still only a single nuclear-weapon State possessing a small stock of bombs – had agreed on the principles of a similar treaty, and if this treaty had obtained universal adhesion, the nuclear armament race and its tragic acceleration probably could have been slowed down considerably or even avoided. This is not quite a dream of historical fiction, as indeed the Soviet Union in 1947 tabled a proposal at the UNAEC that bears a great similarity to the NPT.

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Mr Goldschmidt is the former Director of the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) and a former Chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors. This article is based on a paper he presented in September 1985 at the University of Copenhagen Niels Bohr Centennial seminar "The Challenge of Nuclear Armaments".

I was at that time scientific adviser to the French delegation at the UNAEC. This article is a summarized account – as I see it today in retrospect – of this proposal and the conditions in which it was advanced and rejected.

### The American proposals

It all started with the early launching by the American Government of the first study on the international control of atomic energy, which resulted in the famous Acheson-Lilienthal report made public in March 1946. Its revolutionary philosophy, largely inspired by Robert Oppenheimer, the wartime director of the Los Alamos atomic bomb laboratory, was fundamentally to influence the work of the UNAEC.

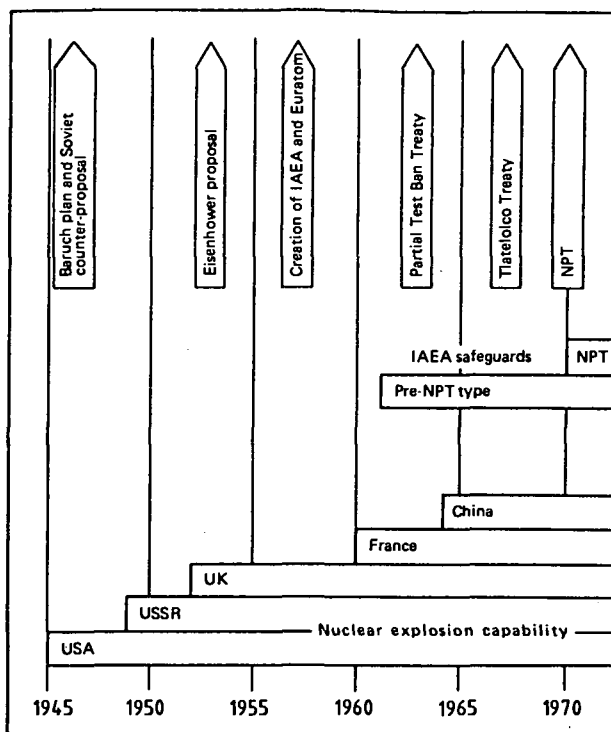
This report, issued under the responsibility of Dean Acheson, the US Under-Secretary of State, and David Lilienthal, the Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, asserted that a complete protection against national nuclear military ambitions could not be assured even if all nations undertook to outlaw atomic weapons and accepted to submit all their peaceful nuclear activities to international safeguards. Or, in today's terminology, they did not believe that an NPT – universally adhered to in a world free of nuclear weapons – would be sufficient guarantee against a possible military misuse of atomic energy.

They therefore proposed that no facility, easily transformable for weapons production, should be left in national hands, and concluded in favour of setting up a supranational authority which would exploit and develop the applications of the discovery of nuclear fission in the name and interest of all nations. In fact, they recommended an embryo of world government to deal with this problem of world importance.

It must be underlined that, in 1946, nobody knew what would be the scope and the timetable of the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and what would be the part that individual countries would play in this promising new venture.

At that time, the essential "know-how" and the only nuclear facilities of industrial size belonged to the United States and the report proposed a series of transition stages from national to international exploitation. The United States was to have handed over to the authority successively its technical know-how, its nuclear installations, its fissile materials, and only lastly its military laboratories and finished weapons.

This transitional operation, which could have taken years, was to be accompanied simultaneously by the worldwide establishment of the international authority. The first task of the authority was to be the preparation of a global inventory of uranium resources, which as well as all of the fissile materials were to be placed under its ownership. This would have implied an early admission of foreign personnel in the Soviet Union, far earlier than the time when the United States would have had to surrender its nuclear weapons to the authority.



1945–1970: The main international steps or proposals to stop the spread of nuclear weapons leading up to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

### Response to Baruch plan

Such a plan was put forward on 14 June 1946 at the first meeting of the UNAEC by the financier and veteran statesman Bernard Baruch, an *éminence grise* to many US Presidents. The American negotiator had added a political clause withdrawing, for the purposes of atomic energy control, the right of veto – the privilege of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In his words, "There must be no veto to protect those who violate their solemn agreement not to develop or use atomic energy for destructive purposes."

This clause was especially distasteful to the Soviet Union, since the introduction of the right of veto in the Charter had been, at the San Francisco conference in 1945, one major condition of its participation in the new world organization.

Five days later the Soviet Ambassador to the UN, Andrei Gromyko, then in the early days of his extraordinary long career, proposed an international convention of infinite duration, open to all States and calling for an absolute prohibition of the use and the production of atomic weapons, and for the destruction of existing ones within three months of the convention's ratification. Signatory States would undertake, within six months, to enact national legislation severely punishing any breach of the treaty, which would be considered a crime against humanity. Being national legislation, the Signatory States would, therefore, each undertake the duty of ensuring their own observance of the treaty, the very opposite of international inspection.

This was tantamount to an American unilateral disarmament without any counterpart or international control to verify the respect of the convention.

The two positions seemed irreconcilable from the start. The United States, at a time when it was reducing its conventional forces and relying on its nuclear might to contain the powerful Soviet divisions in Europe, wanted the opening up of the Soviet Union before relinquishing its atomic weapons. The Soviet Union, which was relying on the secrecy covering the location of its military and industrial establishments as a protection against a possible American atomic attack, was not ready to consider any opening up of its territory or intervention in its future nuclear peaceful development before complete American atomic disarmament.

The Soviets only had the support of Poland, while the nine other members of the UNAEC were favourably inclined towards the Americans, a considerable majority. This did nothing to allay the Russian distrust, which was all the greater because of the clause suppressing the right of veto.

The impasse was initially somewhat masked by the work of the experts, who first agreed that the control of atomic energy was technologically feasible. Then, during the autumn of 1946, with a background of mounting Cold War verbal hostilities at the UN General Assembly, and of certain dissension among American officials on the effect of their plan on their country's safety, the work of the UNAEC centered around the search for compromises on the most delicate points: the extent of international management, the transitional stages, and the suppression of the right of veto.

#### The majority's veto plan

Finally, the principles of the American proposal were incorporated as "Findings and Recommendations" in a first report to the Security Council. Backed by US President Truman, Baruch decided to force the Soviets to take a clear stand on this report and insisted that the UNAEC vote upon it. It was adopted, on 30 December, by a vote of 10 to 0, the Soviet Union and Poland having abstained. Having failed to rally the Soviets to a plan he had not conceived except for the clause most unacceptable to them, Baruch, dissatisfied, then promptly resigned. He was replaced for the rest of the UNAEC's life by Frederic Osborn, a corporation executive, who had directed the wartime army's education and entertainment programme.

Unknown to diplomats and scientists of the UNAEC, the world was rapidly embarking on the road of proliferation. Six days before the vote on the Baruch plan, on Christmas Eve 1946, the first Russian reactor had achieved criticality. The Soviets were aiming at (and eventually succeeded in) achieving the same pace as the American wartime project — less than 3 years between the startup of Fermi's pile and the first explosion.

A few months before, in July 1946, the US Congress had passed the Atomic Energy Act which was to govern the American development of atomic energy in peace time. This legislation was to isolate the United States completely from the rest of the world in this field and, therefore, to encourage other countries towards autonomous atomic programmes, a trend diametrically opposite to the one which had inspired the Acheson-Lilienthal report.

Indeed, in January 1947, a few weeks after the fateful UNAEC vote on the Baruch plan, the British Labour Government, deprived by the application of the new US Act of the nuclear collaboration it was enjoying at the end of the war with the United States, decided to develop, in greatest secrecy, the production of nuclear weapons.

During the following February, peace treaties were concluded with five of the defeated countries: Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Italy, and Romania. These treaties all included a clause obliging these States to renounce possession, production, and testing of atomic weapons — proof that nobody believed anymore in the conclusion of a universal convention on the prohibition of the bomb. Furthermore, these treaties introduced for the first time non-proliferation discrimination between the victorious countries and the defeated ones. This discriminatory advantage of France over Germany at that time was to be used, some 8 years later, as one of the arguments in favour of a French nuclear weapons programme.

Meanwhile, the UN discussions on the control of atomic energy were continuing somewhat independently of the above major political events. In March 1947, the Security Council urged the UNAEC to pursue its work in order to submit a draft treaty based on the UNAEC's report. By then, some American officials, such as Robert Oppenheimer, convinced that the Soviets would never agree to lift their veil of secrecy, recommended the rupture of negotiations.

Nevertheless, the Baruch plan, by now the "Majority Plan", was thereafter elaborated in detail in the UNAEC, between March and September 1947, by Western diplomats and their scientific advisers. This took place in the critical presence of the Soviet and Polish representatives, who were firmly decided never to accept the somewhat utopian structure being developed for the projected International Control Agency.

The Americans themselves never considered the possibility of implementing their plan without the participation of the Soviet Union and therefore also were conscious that the work was unrealistic.

Even within the majority, agreement on the extent of the rights of the Control Agency was sometimes difficult to reach. For instance, many sessions were devoted to the question of whether or not uranium ores still in the ground should belong to the Agency. In the end, it was decided that these ores would remain the property of the States where they were located, so long as they were not yet extracted.





Just about 20 years before the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was signed, a Soviet proposal very similar to it was presented to a UN body in 1947 by Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko, shown here (second from right) in 1968 on the day of the NPT's signing. A.N. Kosygin, Chairman of the USSR Council of Foreign Ministers, spoke.

The Agency was, therefore, to own all fissile materials from the mined ores to the most concentrated ones – plutonium and uranium-235. It was to own and manage all facilities readily usable for the production of the nuclear explosives and was to license the management of all less dangerous ones. It was expected to fix quotas for the mining of ores in all countries as well as for other operations concerning the nuclear fuel cycle and the production of recoverable energy. It was to be in the forefront of research and development and could even study the fabrication of explosive devices. It was further given extensive rights of inspection to detect any clandestine mining or other undeclared nuclear activities anywhere in the world.

It is quite extraordinary – seen in the light of today's individual national nuclear power programmes in some two dozen countries in the world – how deeply the philosophy of the Acheson-Lilienthal report had, after their extensive discussions and negotiations, impregnated the minds of the Western experts. Unlike most of their governments, which still needed to be definitely convinced, they were completely won over to the dogma that the peaceful applications of nuclear energy were far too dangerous to be left in national hands.

#### The Soviet proposals of 1947

It is in this context, just a year after the first meeting of the UNAEC and the presentation of the Baruch plan, that Ambassador Gromyko on 11 June 1947 put forward a series of proposals for the control of atomic energy, which, in addition to the earlier June 1946 proposal for a convention prohibiting atomic weapons, could be con-

sidered as an alternative to the majority's plan. But this time these proposals were based on the assumption that all nuclear activities and decisions would remain in purely national hands.

A week before, in an address to the Security Council, Ambassador Gromyko had defined the whole concept of ownership and managerial control supported by the majority as "thoroughly vicious and unacceptable" and as a threat to the internal affairs and international life of States.

The Soviet plan was spelled out in "basic provisions" (see accompanying box) on which an international agreement or convention on atomic energy should be based. It proposed the establishment, within the framework of the Security Council, of an International Control Commission composed of the same States as the UNAEC and which would periodically carry out inspections of facilities for mining atomic raw materials and for the production of atomic materials and energy in all the countries concerned.

It was to be a complement to the universal convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The role of the proposed Commission was very similar to the one the IAEA would have assumed if it had been created in the late 1940s for the monitoring of a universal nuclear weapons renunciation treaty in a world free of these weapons.

#### Initial reactions to proposals

The day following the Soviet presentation of this plan, I wrote from New York to my colleagues at the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique (CEA) that "this plan is a new concession of the Soviets and, should it

The Soviet Proposals of 1947

The Government of the USSR, "in addition and in development of" its proposal of June 19, 1946, calling for an international convention prohibiting atomic and other major weapons of mass destruction, presented for the consideration of the Commission the following "basic provisions" on which an international agreement for convention on atomic energy should be based:

"1. For ensuring the use of atomic energy only for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the international convention on the prohibition of atomic and other major weapons of mass destruction and also with the purpose of preventing violations of the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons and for the protection of complying States against hazards of violations and evasions, there shall be established strict international control simultaneously over all facilities engaged in mining of atomic raw materials and in production of atomic materials and atomic energy.

"2. For carrying out measures of control of atomic energy facilities, there shall be established, within the framework of the Security Council, an international commission for atomic energy control, to be called the International Control Commission.

"3. The International Control Commission shall have its own inspectorial apparatus.

"4. Terms and organizational principles of international control of atomic energy, and also composition, rights and obligations of the International Control Commission, as well as provisions on the basis of which it shall carry out its activities, shall be determined by a special international convention on atomic energy control, which is to be concluded in accordance with the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons.

"5. With the purpose of ensuring the effectiveness of international control of atomic energy, the convention on the control of atomic energy shall be based on the following fundamental provisions:

"(a) The International Control Commission shall be composed of the Representatives of States Members of the Atomic Energy Commission established by the General Assembly decision of 24 January 1946, and may create such subsidiary organs which it finds necessary for the fulfilment of its functions.

"(b) The International Control Commission shall establish its own rules of procedure.

"(c) The personnel of the International Control Commission shall be selected on an international basis.

"(d) The International Control Commission shall periodically carry out inspection of facilities for mining of atomic raw materials and for the production of atomic materials and atomic energy.

"6. While carrying out inspection of atomic energy facilities, the International Control Commission shall undertake the following actions:

"(a) Investigates the activities of facilities for mining atomic raw materials, for the production of atomic materials and atomic energy as well as verifies their accounting.

"(b) Checks existing stocks of atomic raw materials, atomic materials, and unfinished products.

"(c) Studies production operations to the extent necessary for the control of the use of atomic materials and atomic energy.

"(d) Observes the fulfilment of the rules of technical exploitation of the facilities described by the convention on control as well as works out and prescribes the rules of technological control of such facilities.

"(e) Collects and analyses data on the mining of atomic raw materials and on the production of atomic materials and atomic energy.

"(f) Carries on special investigations in cases when suspicion of violations of the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons arises.

"(g) Makes recommendations to Governments on the questions relating to production, stockpiling and use of atomic materials and atomic energy.

"(h) Makes recommendations to the Security Council on measures for prevention and suppression in respect to violators of the conventions on the prohibition of atomic weapons and on the control of atomic energy.

"7. For the fulfilment of the tasks of control and inspection entrusted to the International Control Commission, the latter shall have the right of:

"(a) Access to any facilities for mining, production, and stockpiling of atomic raw materials and atomic materials, as well as to the facilities for the exploitation of atomic energy.

"(b) Acquaintance with the production operations of the atomic energy facilities, to the extent necessary for the control of use of atomic materials and atomic energy.

"(c) The carrying out of weighing, measurements, and various analyses of atomic raw materials, atomic materials, and unfinished products.

"(d) Requesting from the Government of any nation, and checking of, various data and reports on the activities of atomic energy facilities.

"(e) Requesting of various explanations on the questions relating to the activities of atomic energy facilities.

"(f) Making recommendations and presentations to Governments on the matters of the production and use of atomic energy.

"(g) Submitting recommendations for the consideration of the Security Council on measures in regard to violators of the conventions on the prohibition of atomic weapons and on the control of atomic energy.

"8. In accordance with the tasks of international control of atomic energy, scientific research activities in the field of atomic energy shall be based on the following provisions:

"(a) Scientific research activities in the field of atomic energy must comply with the necessity of carrying out the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons and with the necessity of preventing its use for military purposes.

"(b) Signatory States to the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons must have a right to carry on unrestricted scientific research activities in the field of atomic energy, directed toward discovery of methods, of its use for peaceful purposes.

"(c) In the interests of an effective fulfilment of its control and inspectorial functions, the International Control Commission must have a possibility to carry out scientific research activities in the field of discovery of methods of the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The carrying out of such activities will enable the Commission to keep itself informed on the latest achievements in this field and to have its own skilled international personnel, which is required by the Commission

for practical carrying out of the measures of control and inspection.

"(d) In conducting scientific research in the field of atomic energy, one of the most important tasks of the International Control Commission should be to ensure a wide exchange of information among nations in this field and to render necessary assistance, through advice, to the countries parties to the convention, which may request such assistance.

"(e) The International Control Commission must have at its disposal material facilities including research laboratories and experimental installations necessary for the proper organization of the research activities to be conducted by it."

have been forwarded one year earlier, it would have had a great influence ... The Russians tell the Americans, raise your nuclear secrecy curtain and we will raise our iron one enough to allow you to visit periodically our mines and our plants. Naturally the Americans are not satisfied and want to be paid for their secret know-how by much more efficient guarantees. But obviously we have here the first Russian effort to put in deeds what Stalin [in a speech of October 1946] meant by a strict control and international inspection, and it deserves to be called a plan. I do not believe that a general agreement on this problem can ever be reached, but the chances have passed from one in ten thousand to perhaps one in fifty and as this is finally the chance to avoid war, it is worth a serious study".

Only a very few meetings were devoted to the Soviet proposals during which explanations were sought (including a written list of questions from the British representative) and critics were forwarded. In his answers, the Soviet representative explained that the Control Commission would carry out periodic inspections at various intervals and that it would also be entitled to carry out special investigations conducted only in the case of suspicion of violations to the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons. The inspectorate was to be selected on an international basis. Continuous inspection was ruled out as "it would cease to be inspection and become supervision and management".

The Commission activities also would have included accounting for raw materials, working out and assigning the rules of technological control, asking governments for information, and submitting recommendations to governments concerned and to the Security Council.

The Control Commission also would have had the facilities to carry out research on the peaceful uses of atomic energy but not on weapons technology. In conducting such research, it would have ensured a wide exchange of information and been able to render assistance to countries requesting advice.

It also was stated in the basic provisions that Signatory States to the convention on the prohibition of atomic weapons must have a right to carry on unrestricted scientific research activities towards peaceful uses of atomic energy — a statement similar to the one on "inalienable rights" in Article IV of the NPT.

A fundamental stumbling block remained: the insistence by the Soviet representative that the convention on prohibition must not only be signed but also be put into force before the conclusion of the other convention creating the International Control Commission. The Soviet Union wanted to see American nuclear disarmament first, before surrendering, through international inspection, the secrecy covering the location of its uranium ores and nuclear centres. For its part, the United States, before transmitting its secret atomic know-how and giving up its bombs, wanted first to ensure the establishment of an international management system throughout the world and especially in the Soviet Union.

#### Rejection of the Soviet proposals

The Soviet proposals were never considered by the majority as a possible basis of discussion and were rejected on 5 April 1948 by the usual vote of 9 to 2. The rejection followed the endorsement, by the majority, of a joint statement by an expert of each of the four delegations of Canada, China, France, and the United Kingdom (I represented France in the preparation of this statement). If the following arguments, which we then put forward, had been applied 20 years later to the NPT they would indubitably have led to the rejection of this treaty which is now the main pillar of our non-proliferation regime.

Our conclusions were summarized in the following terms: "The Soviet Union proposals are not an acceptable basis for the international control of atomic energy. The UNAEC cannot endorse any scheme which would not

prevent the diversion of atomic material, which provides no effective means for the detection of clandestine activities and which has no provision for prompt and effective enforcement action. The Soviet Union Government has not only proposed a scheme that is fundamentally inadequate for the control of atomic energy, but at the same time has made the overriding stipulation that they will not agree to establish even such a feeble scheme of control until all atomic weapons have been prohibited and destroyed. It is completely unrealistic to expect any nation to renounce atomic weapons without any assurance that all nations will be prevented from producing them".

The irony of this last sentence is that 40 years later 127 non-nuclear weapon countries, in adhering to the NPT, have precisely done what we then deemed completely unrealistic.\*

At the time the Soviet proposals were put forward, we were in the majority group of the UNAEC, deeply involved in drafting the details of the American plan. We had been convinced – and rightly so – of the advantages of the multinational management approach to periodical inspection. Thirty years later the Carter policy on non-proliferation was based on the same assumption that periodical inspection was insufficient.

It was a case of the better being the enemy of the good. We were too influenced by the world government philosophy to grasp the relative merits of the Soviet plan and accept these proposals as an alternative basis of discussion with a hope that, later on, a possible compromise could be found on the timetable for dismantling the American bombs. We could not guess that the Soviets were offering us the maximum opening up of their territory that they were ever to propose to the international community.

We felt that the Soviets were playing for time, but we certainly did not realize that they were getting very close to their first nuclear test. Although most scientific experts had calculated that it would take the Soviet Union between 3 and 6 years to produce a first device, government authorities had disbelieved or forgotten their forecasts. Even many scientists, forgetting the passage of time, had even continued to believe that this major event in world politics was several years ahead.

It is also possible that the Politburo was convinced that its proposals had not the slightest chance of acceptance by the West as long as they included the precondition that the convention on prohibition must first be put into force. Therefore, the Soviets in advancing their plan ran no risk of finding themselves obliged to submit all their national facilities to the same kind of periodical inspection that both they and the Americans

were able to impose, 20 years later, for the sake of non-proliferation, on almost all the rest of the world.

It is indeed curious that, at the time of the creation of the IAEA and later of the conclusion of the NPT, the Soviets never tried to take advantage of, or even make allusion to, the fact that the Western countries were now adopting the Soviet approach to control which they had refused with contempt in the late 1940s.

#### **A missed opportunity?**

Having participated personally in the "killing" of these Soviet proposals, I have sometimes wondered since then whether we did not miss a unique chance. Not that I believe that an American or a Soviet renunciation of the bomb could have been obtained in 1948, on the eve of the Berlin blockade and only 15 months before the first Soviet test. But the Soviet Union had proposed for all States, and said it would accept for itself, what we call in our present jargon "full-scope safeguards". These were even more comprehensive than the actual NPT ones. They would have applied to the uranium mines which are today exempt from international inspection following the request of some of the main Western producing countries who have been keen to protect the commercial secret of their mining operations.

Even if we had overcome our distrust and taken the Soviets at their word, and even if they had not retracted, it is very doubtful whether, with the Cold War then raging, we should have been able to complete an international control convention before the first Soviet test. But if the negotiations on such a convention had been sufficiently advanced at that time, it could perhaps have led, before the advent of the H-bomb, to a kind of non-proliferation treaty whereby only two nuclear-weapon powers possessed a limited number of bombs. This would certainly even have led to an early détente between the two superpowers and have facilitated an agreement on the limitation of their nascent nuclear arsenals, to a size small enough not to render unfeasible a complete elimination at a later date.

But we must have no illusions. As long as we have not reached the stage of the open world that Niels Bohr advocated and as long as there are major sovereign States liable to engage in total armed confrontation, no system – whether of Soviet or American inspiration – will be able to stop any of them from making military use of nuclear weapons or of any other technology of mass destruction if they are convinced that their freedom or their existence depends upon such use.

It is not the elimination of nuclear weapons that will bring world peace but world peace that will render possible their elimination.

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\* Status of NPT as of 19 February 1986.

