

**Address by the Soviet Representative (Andrei Gromyko)
to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission
June 19, 1946**

Address delivered at the second meeting of the Commission*

The Atomic Energy Commission created in accordance with the resolution of the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Three Powers¹ and with the resolution of the first session of the General Assembly,² must proceed to the practical realization of the tasks set before it. The significance of these tasks and, consequently, of the activities of the Commission, is determined by the importance of the very discovery of methods of using atomic energy, which led to the creation of this Commission. Scientific efforts have produced a result, the significance of which is hard to appraise. That which is already known regarding the significance of this discovery and which, undoubtedly, is merely the preliminary to still greater conquests of science in this field in the future, emphasizes how important are the tasks and activities of the Commission.

As the result of the definite course of events during the last few years the circumstances were combined in such a way that one of the greatest discoveries of mankind found its first material application in the form of a particular weapon -- the atomic bomb. However, although up to the present time this use of atomic energy is the only known form of its practical application, it is the general opinion that humanity stands at the threshold of a wide application of atomic energy for peaceful purposes for the benefit of the peoples, for promoting their welfare and raising their standard of living and for the development of science and culture.

There are thus two possible ways in which this discovery can be used. One way is to use it for the purpose of producing the means of mass destruction. The other way is to use it for the benefit of mankind.

The paradox of the situation lies in the fact that it is the first way that has been more studied and more effectively mastered in practice. The second way has been less studied and effectively mastered in practice. However, this circumstance not only does not diminish the importance of the tasks that lie before the Atomic Commission but, on the contrary, emphasizes to an even greater degree the significance of these tasks for all that concerns the strengthening of peace between the nations.

* Reproduced from *Documents on Disarmament 1945-1959*, Volume 1 1945-1956, Department of State, Washington D.C. 1960, pp. 17-24.

¹ Moscow Communique by the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, December 27, 1945.

² General Assembly Resolution 1 (1): Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, January 24, 1946.

There can be no active and effective system of peace if the discovery of the means of using atomic energy is not placed in the service of humanity and is not applied to peaceful purposes only. The use of this discovery only for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the peoples and widening their scientific and cultural horizons will help to strengthen confidence between the countries and friendly relations between them.

On the other hand, to continue the use of this discovery for the production of weapons of mass destruction is likely to intensify mistrust between States and to keep the peoples of the world in a continual anxiety and uncertainty. Such a position is contrary to the aspirations of the peace-loving peoples, who long for the establishment of enduring peace and are making every effort in order that these aspirations may be transformed into reality.

As one of the primary measures for the fulfilment of the resolution of the General Assembly of 24 January 1946, the Soviet delegation proposes that consideration be given to the question of concluding an international convention prohibiting the production and employment of weapons based on the use of atomic energy for the purpose of mass destruction. The object of such a convention should be the prohibition of the production and employment of atomic weapons, the destruction of existing stocks of atomic weapons and the condemnation of all activities undertaken in violation of this convention. The elaboration and conclusion of a convention of this kind would be, in the opinion of the Soviet delegation, only one of the primary measures to be taken to prevent the use of atomic energy to the detriment of mankind. This act should be followed by other measures aiming at the establishment of methods to ensure the strict observance of the terms and obligations contained in the above-mentioned convention, the establishment of a system of control over the observance of the convention and the taking of decisions regarding the sanctions to be applied against the unlawful use of atomic energy. The public opinion of the whole civilized world has already rightly condemned the use in warfare of asphyxiating, poisonous and other similar gases, as well as all similar liquids and substances, and likewise bacteriological means, by concluding corresponding agreements for the prohibition of their use.³

In view of this, the necessity of concluding a convention prohibiting the production and employment of atomic weapons is even more obvious. Such a convention would correspond in an even greater degree to the aspirations of the peoples of the whole world.

The conclusion of such a convention and the elaboration of a system of measures providing for the strict fulfillment of its terms, the establishment of control over the observance of the obligations imposed by the convention, and the establishment of sanctions to be applied against violators of the convention will, in the opinion of the Soviet delegation, be a serious step forward on the way towards the fulfillment of the tasks that lie before the Atomic

³ See Geneva Protocol of June 17, 1925 (League of Nations Treaty Series [hereafter cited as LNTS], vol. 94, p. 65; Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Disarmament, *Disarmament and Security: A Collection of Documents, 1919-55* (Committee print, 84th Cong., 2d sess.), pp. 169-170).

Energy Commission, and fully corresponds to the aspirations and conscience of the whole of progressive humanity.

The necessity for the States to assume the obligation not to produce or employ atomic weapons is also dictated by the fact that the character of this weapon is such that its employment brings untold misery above all to the peaceful population. The results of its employment are incompatible with the generally accepted standards and ideas riveted in the consciousness of humanity in the course of many centuries to the effect that the rules of warfare must not allow the extermination of innocent civilian populations.

The situation existing at the present time, which has been brought about by the discovery of the means of applying atomic energy and using them for the production of atomic weapons, precludes the possibility of normal scientific co-operation between the States of the world. At the very basis of the present situation, which is characterized by the absence of any limitation in regard to the production and employment of atomic weapons, there are reasons which can only increase the suspicion of some countries in regard to others and give rise to political instability. It is clear that the continuation of such a situation is likely to bring only negative results in regard to peace.

Moreover, the continuation of the present situation means that the latest scientific attainments in this field will not be a basis for joint scientific efforts among the countries for the object of discovering ways of using atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Hence there follows only one correct conclusion, namely, the necessity of an exchange of scientific information between countries and the necessity of joint scientific efforts directed toward a broadening of the possibilities of the use of atomic energy only in the interests of promoting the material welfare of the peoples and developing science and culture. The success of the work of the Commission will be determined in a large measure by the extent to which it succeeds in solving this important task.

The proposal for a wide exchange of scientific information is timely because such a scientific discovery, as the discovery of methods of using atomic energy, cannot remain for an indefinite time the property of only one country or small group of countries. It is bound to become the property of a number of countries. This confirms the necessity of a wide exchange of scientific information on the problem in question, and the necessity of drawing up corresponding measures in this field, including measures of organization.

I have stated the general considerations regarding the tasks and the character of the activities of the Atomic Energy Commission. In order to develop these general statements, on the instructions of my Government, I will place before the Commission for consideration two concrete proposals which, in the opinion of the Soviet Government, may constitute a basis for the adoption by the Commission of recommendations to the Security Council and play an important role in the strengthening of peace. These proposals are as follows:

- (1) concerning the conclusion of an international convention prohibiting the production and employment of weapons based on the use of atomic energy for the purpose of mass destruction.

(2) concerning the organization of the work of the Atomic Energy Commission.

I will read the text of the first proposal.

*Draft International Convention to Prohibit the Production and Employment of Weapons
Based on the Use of Atomic Energy for the Purpose of Mass Destruction*

[Here follows a list of signatory states.]

Being profoundly aware of the vast significance of the great scientific discoveries connected with the splitting of the atom and the obtaining and use of atomic energy for the purpose of promoting the welfare and raising the standard of living of the peoples of the world, as well as for the development of culture and science for the benefit of mankind;

animated by the desire to promote in every way the fullest possible utilization by all peoples of scientific discoveries in the sphere of atomic energy for the purpose of improving the conditions of life of the peoples of the world and promoting their welfare and the further progress of human culture;

fully realizing that the great scientific discoveries in the sphere of atomic energy carry with them a great danger, above all, for peaceful towns and the civilian population in the event of these discoveries being used in the form of atomic weapons for the purpose of mass destruction;

recognizing the great significance of the fact that international agreements have already prohibited the use in warfare of asphyxiating, poisonous and other similar gases, as well as all similar liquids, substances and processes, and likewise bacteriological means, rightly condemned by the public opinion of the civilized world, and considering that the international prohibition of the use of atomic weapons for the mass destruction of human beings corresponds in still greater measure to the aspirations and the conscience of the peoples of the whole world;

being firmly resolved to avert the danger of these scientific discoveries being used to the detriment and against the interests of mankind;

resolved to conclude a convention to prohibit the production and the employment of weapons based on the Use of atomic energy, and for this purpose appointed as their plenipotentiaries... [here follows the list of plenipotentiaries], who, after presenting their credentials found to be in good and due form, agreed as follows:

Article 1. The high contracting parties solemnly declare that they are unanimously resolved to prohibit the production and employment of weapons based on the use of atomic energy, and for this purpose assume the following obligations:

(a) not to use atomic weapons in any circumstances whatsoever;

- (b) to prohibit the production and storing of weapons based on the use of atomic energy;
- (c) to destroy, within a period of three months from the day of the entry into force of the present convention, all stocks of atomic energy weapons whether in a finished or unfinished condition.

Article 2. The high contracting parties declare that any violation of article 1 of the present convention is a most serious international crime against humanity.

Article 3. The high contracting parties shall, within a period of six months from the day of the entry into force of the present convention, pass legislation providing severe penalties for violators of the statutes of the present convention.

Article 4. The present convention shall be of indefinite duration.

Article 5. The present convention shall be open for the adhesion of any State whether a Member or non-member of the United Nations.

Article 6: The present convention shall come into force after its approval by the Security Council and after the ratification and delivery of ratification documents to the Secretary-General for safekeeping by one half of the signatory States, including all the Member States of the United Nations named in Article 23 of the Charter of the Organization.⁴

Article 7. After the entry into force of the present convention it shall be binding on all States whether Members or non-members of the United Nations.

Article 8. The present convention, of which the Russian, Chinese, French, English and Spanish texts shall be authentic, is drawn up in one copy and shall be kept in the archives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall communicate certified copies to all the parties to the convention.

I will read the text of the second proposal.

Concerning the organization of the work of the Atomic Energy Commission

In accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly of 24 January 1946 regarding the establishment of a commission to deal with problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy and other related matters, and in particular with article 5 of the said resolution relating to the terms of reference of the Commission, the Soviet delegation deems it necessary to propose the following plan of organization of the work of the Commission for the initial stage of its activity.

⁴ The permanent members of the Security Council.

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES OF THE COMMISSION

In pursuance of the aim indicated in the resolution of the General Assembly "to proceed with the utmost despatch and inquire into all phases of the problems," it appears to be necessary to set up two committees which as auxiliary organs of the Commission would ensure a thorough examination of the problem of atomic energy and the elaboration of recommendations, which the Commission must make in fulfillment of the resolution of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations.

It is proposed that the following committees should be set up:

Committee for the exchange of scientific information

This committee shall be set up for the purpose of carrying out the aims indicated in point (a) of item 5 of the resolution of the General Assembly of 24 January 1946.

The tasks of the committee shall include the elaboration of recommendations concerning practical measures for organizing the exchange of information:

- (1) concerning the contents of scientific discoveries connected with the splitting of the atomic nucleus and other discoveries connected with obtaining and using atomic energy;
- (2) concerning the technology and the organization of technological processes for obtaining and using atomic energy;
- (3) concerning the organization and methods of industrial production of atomic energy and the use of this energy;
- (4) concerning the forms, sources and locations of the raw materials necessary for obtaining atomic energy.

Committee for the prevention of the use of atomic energy to the detriment of mankind

This committee shall be set up to carry out the aims set forth in points (b), (c) and (d) of item 5 of the resolution of the General Assembly.

The task of the committee shall be to elaborate recommendations:

- (1) concerning the drafting of an international convention for outlawing weapons based on the use of atomic energy and prohibiting the production and use of such weapons and all other similar kinds of weapons capable of being used for mass destruction;
- (2) concerning the quest for and establishment of measures to prohibit the production of weapons based on the use of atomic energy and to prevent the use of atomic weapons and all other main kinds of weapons capable of being used for mass destruction;

- (3) concerning the measures, systems and organization of control over the use of atomic energy and over the observance of the terms of the above-mentioned international convention for the outlawing of atomic weapons;
- (4) concerning the elaboration of a system of sanctions to be applied against the unlawful use of atomic energy.

II. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEES

Each committee shall be composed of one representative of each State represented in the Commission. Each representative may have assistants.

III. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEES

The rules of procedure of the committees shall be drawn up by the Commission.

The proposal for the conclusion of a convention and the proposal for the organization of the work of the Commission are both capable of being put into practice at the present time.

The convention would be a definite and important step towards the creation of an effective system of control over atomic energy. This measure would have an immense moral and political significance and would contribute to the strengthening of political stability in the world and of friendly relations between the peoples.

The creation of the two committees that I have proposed, with the terms of reference laid down in the proposal, will mean the adoption of a concrete plan of work of the Commission for the initial stage of its activities, and at the same time, the adoption of the necessary organizational forms for carrying out its work which will facilitate the speedy preparation by the Commission of proposals concerning the wide exchange of scientific information, as well as concerning matters relating to the prevention of the use of atomic energy to the detriment of mankind.

The activity of the Atomic Energy Commission can bring about the desired results only when it is in full conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations which are laid down as the basis of the activity of the Security Council, because the Commission is an organ of this Organization, working under the instructions of the Security Council and responsible to the same.

Attempts to undermine the principles, as established by the Charter, of the activity of the Security Council, including unanimity of the members of the Security Council in deciding questions of substance⁵, are incompatible with the interests of the United Nations, who created the international organization for the preservation of peace and security. Such attempts must be rejected.

⁵ The rule of unanimity appears in art. 27 of the Charter.

I deemed it necessary to make this statement in order that, from the very beginning of the work of our Commission, I might make clear the position of the Soviet Government regarding the question of the character and basis of the work of the Commission, regarding the question of the recommendations to be prepared by it, and regarding the measures of control over atomic energy to be submitted to the Security Council.

In conclusion I wish to say that in my present statement I set myself the task of emphasizing the extreme importance of the proposal for the conclusion of the above-mentioned convention prohibiting the production and employment of atomic weapons.

The conclusion of such a convention would constitute an important practical step towards the fulfilment of the tasks that lie before the Commission.