

Md. Abdul Halim*

THE ROAD TO DISARMAMENT : TRENDS AND IMPEDIMENTS

In the contemporary world, the existence of mankind is under constant threat from the nuclear weapons possessed by a handful of powerful nations. The first atomic bomb which was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6 1945, had the power of 15,000 tons of TNT-15 kilotons. But at present the Super Powers have succeeded in producing such devastating nuclear weapons that their destructive power is measured in terms of megatons (each megaton is equivalent to 1,000,000 tons of TNT). Only a 20 megaton nuclear weapon, which is 1,000 time more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, is capable of total destruction in an area of 48 square miles. If such 50 weapons are launched "on fifty of the most important metropolitan areas of the United States" it would "bring under fire 40 per cent of our population, 50 per cent of our key facilities and 60 per cent of our industry."¹

At present a number of countries are in possession of nuclear weapons, and a few more have already acquired the necessary technology for developing such weapons. The U.S. atomic monopoly was ended when the Russians exploded their first atomic bomb on September 23, 1949, followed by Great Britain (October 3, 1952), France (February 13, 1960) and the People's Republic of China (October 16, 1964). These five powers may be termed as the mature members of the 'nuclear club.' The other aspirants to join them are

* In preparing this article, I have been benefitted through consultation with Mr. N. Momen and Mr. M. Shahiduzzaman, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor respectively in the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka. I feel grateful to both of them.

1. Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: The Norton Library, abridged edition, 1967) p. 11

India who was successful in detonating what she described as a 'peaceful nuclear device' in 1974, South Africa and Israel who have already detonated nuclear test in the late 1970s, and also Pakistan who is working on the development of the so-called 'Islamic bomb'.

According to Herman Kahn, the ever changing weapons technology succeeded in effecting a 'revolution' about once every five years and thus we see that after atom bomb came hydrogen bomb in 1954 which ushered in the nuclear age. Gradually the successful launching of satellites into orbit by the Russians on October 4, 1957, initiated the missile or the space age. The newest weapons—Inter-continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), the Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV) and the Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) with multiple warheads—each could be fired at separated targets as the carrying missile kept on changing trajectory. "A large scale use of nuclear weapons would inflict damage and inexorably lead to retaliatory damage which would be totally unacceptable to any society... the outcome could be complete destruction of our civilization".²

These new developments have changed the strategic thinking of the great powers and posed a serious threat to the peace and security of all states, great and small. It has been aptly observed by D.W. Crowley that "the new weapons have revolutionised warfare in a manner completely different from all previous developments in military techniques".³

This new development in weapons technology is the result of an 'arms race' between opposing power blocs. The bid to acquire quantitative as well as qualitative superiority in weapons by both the power blocs has created an air of tension in international relations. Apart from this uneasy situation, it also entails heavy financial burden to keep this arms race alive.

-
2. Joseph Frankel, *International Politics : Conflict and Harmony* (London: Pelikan Book, 1973) p. 167.
 3. D.W. Crowley, *The Background to Current Affairs* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1963), p. 359.

The two Super Powers of the world who are already assured of their invincible position from the point of view of national defense are the ones who are spending more on armaments. For example, the defense budget of the U.S. for fiscal year 1983 authorises an amount of \$ 258 billion that will grow by billions of dollars in the coming years.⁴ It has been suggested by the *Newsweek* magazine that the U.S. defense budget may be cut. In such a way as to save \$ 2.7 billion in the fiscal year 1983 as well as \$ 56.4 billion over the next five years without harming her national security.⁵

Considering the deadly nature of modern weapons and also their manufacturing cost, we can not but think seriously how this mad competition for manufacturing and stockpiling of armaments could be ended. In fact, disarmament may be viewed as one of the burning topics of the contemporary world. "In 1945", wrote C.L. Sulzberger a decade later, "it was a question of peace. Now it is a matter of humanity's survival".⁶ That disarmament has now really become a question of survival is well recognized through the pronouncement in the Final Document of the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament: "Mankind is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation".⁷ And it can hardly be doubted that the present period, i.e., the early 1980s is decisive for arms control and disarmament. Considering the fact that armaments themselves are major cause of tension and conflict, producing arms races which ultimately lead to war, an attempt has been made in the present article to examine the impediments which hinder the cause of disarmament to show why the various efforts made so far in this respect have

4. See *Newsweek*, December 20, 1982.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Quoted in Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins *International Relations : The world Community in transition* (Calcutta: Scientific Book Agency, 1970) p. 726.

7. *Disarmament*. (A periodic review by the United Nations). Vol. V. No. 2 (November. 1982), p. 11.

not succeeded in effectively checking the arms race. At the same time a few suggestions have been made as to what should be done to enhance the prospect of disarmament.

II

We begin our discussion with the definition of disarmament and arms control. Very often the two terms are used interchangeably—that is they convey the same meaning. But though their ultimate aim is the same—to reduce, control or even totally diminish the possibility of war and thus the prospect of destruction—there is a subtle difference between them. The difference is not in kind but only in degree: “Disarmament suggests elimination or reduction of armaments; arms control suggests, at least to some, that armaments might continue to exist, but would be subject to regulation”.⁸ ‘Disarmament’ is the traditional concept but when nations become unwilling to disarm, that is, they do not abolish or eliminate or reduce their armaments, a new approach is taken to tackle the problem and that is through ‘arms control’, the modern phase of disarmament. Arms control rejects the feasibility of abolishing weapons, rather it tries to enshrine man’s best hope for earthly salvation in ‘controlling’ the use of armaments. “In actual fact, arms control is a modest enterprise. It is basically cautious, conservative, and oriented to the status quo”.⁹ However, in spite of their difference in approach, they include any sort of reduction of arms or weapons, limitation on production of future weapons and even future weapons research (as, at present, ‘the real armaments race is in the laboratories’) as well as stopping nuclear tests. According to the Institute for Defence Analysis of Washington D.C., any disarmament measure includes: “A plan, arrangement or process, resting upon explicit or implicit international agreement, governing any aspect of the following: the numbers, types and performance characteristics of weapons systems,

8. Cf: Norman J. Padelford and George A. Lincoln. *The Dynamics of International Politics* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962). p. 454.

9. Joseph J. Kruzal. “Arms Control and American Defence Policy: New Alternatives and Old Realities”, *Daccaplus*, Winter 1981 p. 151.

including their command and control and logistics support arrangements and any related intelligence-gathering mechanism, and the numerical strength of the armed forces retained by the parties".¹⁰

III

Now it is necessary to discuss the various efforts made so far to achieve disarmament. The growing menace of competition for the enhancement of national armaments became an international concern in the early 19th century but it was not until the end of that century that the first major effort was made in an international conference to deal with the problem. The First Hague Conference of 1899 sought to 'humanize' war by outlawing barbarous weapons like bullets, poison gas, projectiles dropped from balloons, etc. The Second Hague Conference of 1907 also endeavoured to check the arms race but no real progress was achieved in limiting arms production or reducing existing weapons stockpiles.

In 1914 started the first destructive warfare in the history of mankind and it awakened the good sense of statesmen for the necessity of checking such acts of violence in future. This kind of thinking got its most hopeful expression in the famous 'Fourteen Points' of President Wilson in his address to the United States Congress on January 8, 1918, when he called for "adequate guarantees that armaments would be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety". Arms control was imposed by the victorious upon the vanquished in the Treaty of Versailles.

In the interwar period disarmament efforts proceeded along two parallel lines: both within the League and outside it. The League of Nations could not contribute much in this respect owing to lack of agreement among the member states. But agreements could be reached freely outside it on many important disarmament measures. Thus the Washington Conference (1922-23) succeeded in reducing certain categories of naval armaments. The London Naval Conference (1930) also resulted in further limitation upon production

10. Quoted in Padelford and Lincoln. *op. cit.* p. 454.

and use of certain kinds of naval weapons. During the same period the most important positive step was taken when the signatories of the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928) agreed to renounce war as an "instrument of national policy"—thus adding new hope for arms control.

With the starting of the 1930s, the road to disarmament was blocked by various odd circumstances. First, "the Great Depression gave rise to feelings of national insecurity and suspicion".¹¹ Secondly, the rise of Hitler to power in Germany resulted in regeneration there and the Germans become determined to take revenge for the insult inflicted by the Treaty of Versailles. This would require German rearmament and in practice, Hitler undertook the programme vigorously. Thirdly, the colonial aspiration of Fascist Italy gave a fresh impetus to the production of armaments. Finally, the rise of militarism in Japan and her expansionist policy set the stage for heavy rearmament by all powers.

The Second World War started in 1939. This was the most destructive and terrible war in human history. The starting of this war within about one generation, at a very short time when the memory of loss of human lives and property in the First World War was still fresh, roused consciousness in men's thinking once again to stop such barbarous acts. This time also the main initiative in this respect came from the United States. President Roosevelt, in his 'Four Freedoms' envisioned a world free from fear which required, *inter alia*, "a world-wide reduction of armament to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against a neighbour—anywhere in the world".

During the Second World War, the United States was successful in testing the atomic bomb. With this new development of discovering atomic power and using it in warfare, a major qualitative difference occurred in disarmament proceedings. Henceforth disarmament discussions centred upon the problem of controlling nuclear weapons.

11. Cecil V. Crabb, Jr. *Nations in Multipolar World* (New York : Harper & Row, 1968). p. 180.

In the postwar era, the UN Charter, like the previous League Covenant, identified arms control as a major goal and continued its efforts towards achieving it. Every nation has recognized that disarmament should be the main issue in international relations. Even the two super-powers have agreed that disarmament is the most baffling problem faced by them.

On June 14, 1946, the US presented the 'Baruch Plan' (based on the Acheson-Lilienthal Report) in the 12-nation UN Atomic Energy Commission (established by the General Assembly in January 1946 for eliminating atomic weapons from the national hands) for achieving nuclear disarmament. The plan called for complete international ownership, management and control of the sources of nuclear energy through an International Atomic Development Authority (IADA) to be created for the purpose. It also provided that following the establishment and operation of IADA, any nation violating the disarmament agreement would be punished by enforcement action against it which would not be subject to veto.

The American presentation of the Baruch Plan for controlling nuclear weapons soon started a 'tug-of-war' between her and the Soviet Union concerning postwar disarmament negotiations. It met with a mixed Soviet response. She accepted the principle of international control but rejected international ownership by insisting upon the continuance of national ownership. She also insisted that any proposed enforcement action must be a subject to a veto.

On June 19 of the same year the Soviet Union presented her own proposal, known as the 'Gromyko Plan'. It provided for an agreement prohibiting the production and employment of nuclear weapons and destruction of all existing stocks of the same. It also proposed for the creation of an International Atomic Energy Commission, functioning under the Security Council, to carry out peaceful development of nuclear energy.

The Russian demand for immediate destruction of all existing nuclear weapons was unacceptable to the Americans as this would

mean their exclusive stocks. The opposing viewpoints and the resultant disarmament impasse now revolved around the problems of priorities. The US insisted that effective control through an international machinery should come first and disarmament would follow. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, took, the reverse view-point: that disarmament in the form of destruction of American stockpiles must come first and then control would follow. It is needless to say that these attitudes reflected the strategic realities of the moment. The Americans insisted on firm international control of all fissionable materials so that her monopoly could not be ended by the Russians whereas the Russians viewed this American attitude as a sinister design to perpetuate her monopoly of atomic weapons, this keeping Soviet Union in a permanent position of inferiority.

However, the UN Atomic Energy Commission discussed both the Baruch Plan and Gromyko Plan from 1946 to 1948 without any reconciliation between these two diametrically opposing viewpoints. Meanwhile the Soviet Union continued her effort to destroy American atomic monopoly in which matter she was successful in September, 1949.

The emergence of two nuclear powers representing two opposing power blocs resulted in their further bid to develop more sophisticated weapons by turning aside any consideration for discussing arms control measures. This continued for about two years. After that, the three Western powers—the US, Great Britain and France—revived disarmament discussions in 1951. They tacitly dropped the Baruch Plan and presented a new plan which provided for the “regulation, limitation, and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments”.

As a response to this Western move, the new Soviet delegate, Vashinsky, came forward with his new disarmament proposals: prohibition of atomic weapons could be “put into effect simultaneously” with control, instead of in advance of it as provided in the Gromyko Plan. But in spite of these new initiatives, the basic difference regarding their respective viewpoints continued to exist.

In 1952, the General Assembly amalgamated the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments into one Disarmament Commission for effective functioning and in the following year asked it to set up a subcommittee to facilitate disarmament negotiation. When that subcommittee met in London in May, 1954, Britain and France sought to work out a compromise formula to break the deadlock on the question of 'timing' of disarmament and control. As already mentioned, the deadlock resulted from American priority for control to atomic prohibition and Russian demand for the opposite, i.e. prohibition first, control last. The British-French Memorandum outlined a comprehensive set of disarmament agreements: prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons first and proceeding, stage by stage, to total elimination of bomb stock-piles and total control. The Soviet Union accepted this memorandum as a 'basis' for future discussion, which virtually meant the abandonment of her old formula of prohibiting of nuclear weapons and a one-third reduction in arms-power.

In the first half of 1955, when the US was finalizing the programme for West German rearmament, the Soviet Union adopted a new tactic through a new disarmament plan for restricting the same. On May 10, 1955, Soviet delegate Jakov Malik offered a step-by-step plan demanding early dismantling of all US overseas bases, quantitative manpower ceiling for early ban on nuclear testing—all of them being unacceptable to the US because they would block West German rearmament as well as hamper US interests abroad.

On July 21, 1955, President Eisenhower, in his 'Open-skies Plan' urged an exchange of military 'blue-prints' and aerial inspection so that each side could keep the other under permanent observation from aircraft or satellites in orbit round the globe. But the Soviet Union opposed this idea on the ground that it would result in aerial espionage.

One of the most important events in the history of arms race was the successful launching of Sputnik I into orbit by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957. It ushered in a new era for the develop-

ment of ballistic missiles. Soviet success in launching the satellite had profound impact on the disarmament picture because it gave them an immense, though temporary, psychological and moral boosting comparable to that of the US atomic monopoly in the 1940s. They could now negotiate the disarmament question from a position of strength. The US also did not lag far behind the Soviet Union as she was successful in this respect a few months later. This new development in weapons technology changed the existing outlook on disarmament problems. Really it introduced a new era in disarmament diplomacy.

In the same month Moscow adopted a new stand in disarmament talks by demanding the dissolution of the five nation subcommittee. For enhancing Russian image in the Third World by propaganda means, she demanded 'parity', i.e. equal representation of the two blocs in a larger body to be established for disarmament purpose. The following year, the General Assembly yielded to the demand of Moscow by setting up a Disarmament Commission where Russia was given parity in a 10-nation negotiating organ.

In the latter part of 1950s, the nuclear powers voluntarily suspended nuclear tests for a short period without any signed agreement. Though the Soviet Union was pressing for test ban in the plan of May 10, 1955, it was the US which took the initiative in this respect since October, 1958. The Soviet Union, after a hastily completing one more test series, followed suit. Considering this voluntary suspension of nuclear tests, it seemed that the gap between the Super Powers was narrowing.

In September, 1959, Khrushchev visited the US for two weeks. During his tour, he addressed the General Assembly of the UN in which he presented a new Russian plan for 'general and complete disarmament (GCD)'. He offered the world the complete elimination of armed forces, general staffs and foreign bases within four years, leaving only national militias equipped with limited conventional arms. The idea behind this plan was that total disarmament would benefit them more than the West.

Khrushchev's proposal for GCD was formally laid before the 10-Nation disarmament committee in March, 1960, by the new Soviet delegate, Valerian Zorin. The West opposed the idea by trying to convince him of the value of reaching some single, tangible, first step agreement, such as the prohibition of bomb-carrying earth satellites. But the Soviet delegate would agree to nothing other than GCD.

At that time the spy activities of the American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft over the USSR in May, 1960, created much anger and suspicion in the Russian mind. The result was the abandonment of the proposed summit conference on 16 May and with this the temporary rapprochement between the US and the Soviet Union which continued from the Geneva Summit of July, 1955, came to an end. The 10-nation disarmament conference in Geneva was also shortlived.

However, when President Kennedy came to power in early 1961, Khrushchev again became interested in resuming disarmament talks. The US government responded by appointing John J. McCloy to conduct a thorough review of their disarmament policy. The high-water mark of the negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union at that time was the McCloy-Zorin recommendations (1961). They agreed on a set of principles which would govern future disarmament negotiations aimed at GCD. "This document was in effect an agreed statement of what had to be agreed".¹²

Perhaps the most promising first agreement effecting the limitation of armament as was the signing on August 5, 1963, in Moscow of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. In spite of all the high sounding drum beating, the Moscow Treaty was essentially a 'partial' test ban treaty because it imposed ban on nuclear tests only in atmosphere, outer space and under water, but it did not ban subterranean nuclear tests. This gap proved to be futile at that time because the nuclear powers were left with the option of undertaking nuclear tests underground freely, thus minimizing the value of so promising a first

12. Perter Calvocoressi, *world Politics since 1945* (London: Longman, 1971), p.41

positive step towards disarmament. China called, perhaps rightly, the Test Ban Treaty a 'fraud' and Chairman Mao Tse-tung asked President Kennedy to join in a world-wide summit conference which would proscribe and destroy all nuclear weapons.

In the meantime, Britain and France had acquired nuclear know-how. China also went ahead with her own nuclear programme independently. These developments threatened the nuclear monopoly of the Super Powers who now turned their attention to preserving their own nuclear superiority vis-a-vis other powers. This they sought to achieve by working out a formula for a treaty banning the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thus the disarmament diplomacy in the mid-1960s centred round the concern of the Super Powers as to how they could prevent more states from joining the 'nuclear club'. They were already convinced that they were far superior in nuclear weapons which could not be successfully challenged till then by other powers and hence their common interest was to fortify their superior position by freezing the nuclear club at its membership of five—the US, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and Communist China—together with keeping the last-mentioned three powers in perpetual inferior position. After lengthy, often fruitless, negotiations, they prepared a joint draft treaty on non-proliferation which was presented to the 17-member Disarmament Conference in Geneva in January, 1968. It encountered violent opposition from the other prospective nuclear powers, viz. China, France, India, Israel, etc. There were also knotty problems like inspection which made the progress on the treaty slow. Nevertheless, coincidence of interest of the super powers for halting the progress of other powers provided the ground for optimism and they, together with Britain, concluded the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on July 1, 1968, to which they invited all other states to adhere. It entered into force on March 5, 1970.

As could be expected, France and China refused to sign it. General de Gaulle regarded the Non-proliferation Treaty as being essentially designed to discriminate against lesser nuclear powers.

More or less the same view was shared by Communist China who condemned it as an "out and out unequal treaty" and "a tactic of power politics being played by big nations". She also regarded it as a "serious plot" designed for the purpose of protecting "big powers nuclear monopoly". Sounds of discontent were heard from the non-nuclear but prospective nuclear states because they saw in it an evil design of the Super Powers to keep modern weapons out of their reach for ever. They also raised the question regarding the good intention of the nuclear powers because they asked them to sign the Non-proliferation Treaty without controlling their own arms race.

After this the ever-changing weapons technology precipitated a fresh intense, controversial and lengthy debate over the most sophisticated weapons—the ICBM, the MIRV and the ABM. As a result of the nature of employment and destruction of these newest types of weapons (already mentioned), they alarmed both Washington and Moscow. For example, deployment of the ABM system, called Galosh, by Moscow would provide limited defence by intercepting American ICBMs, say Minuteman missiles. Similarly, Washington also developed an ABM system, first the Nike-Zeus and then the more advanced Nike-X, the deployment of which would render any Moscow-launched ICBM inactive. Thus the deployment of the ABM system precipitated a real controversy over the prospect of defence through the stability of mutual deterrence. The development of MIRVs and the ABM systems, "which could counter a first strike and so destroy the deterrent stability...were enormously increasing the cost of the arms race".¹³

In these circumstances, the Super Powers could well understand the suicidal folly of the employment of the very arsenals, which gave them superiority vis-a-vis other powers, against each other. This mutual awareness—in the words of McNamara, that "there is a kind of mad momentum intrinsic to the development of all new nuclear weapons"—paved the way for the talks about the control

13. *ibid.* p. 48.

of the use and development as well as proliferation, of these newest kinds of nuclear weapons.

President Johnson first developed the idea for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in November, 1966. But at that time American heavy involvement in Vietnam retarded the process. In 1967, at the U.S.-Soviet summit meeting in Glassboro, New Jersey, Soviet Premier Kosygin expressed his opinion that the newly developed ABM systems were "human weapons" which could serve the purpose of defense rather than posing a threat to the security of mankind. But the US President Johnson and his defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara refuted this argument by saying that "just the opposite was true: that the first nation to achieve both offensive and defensive capabilities might well be tempted to launch and devastating nuclear first strike."¹⁴ This convinced Gromyko who, in June, 1968, declared that "Moscow was ready for 'an exchange of opinion' on 'mutual restrictions and subsequent reduction' of both offensive and defensive strategic weapons 'including anti-missile'. Again Red Army's invasion of Czechoslovakia in August shelved the starting of the SALT.

During the Nixon administration, the principal pressure for arms control talks came from the Congress, especially the Senate, because it would help employing the probable financial saving profitably for various other development projects. So President Nixon with the help of his top adviser, Dr. Henry Kissinger, agreed with Moscow in October 1969 for the opening of the SALT in Helsinki on 17 November of the same year.

Thus at long last the SALT opened ceremoniously in Helsinki November 17, 1969. The delegates of both the parties—the US and the USSR—continued the negotiations in 7 sessions, 4 in Helsinki and 3 in Vienna, in the period from November, 1969 to May, 1972. There were various interruptions during the course of their talks and on many occasions the talks were at the breaking point. However, some progress was made and during President

14. See *Newsweek*, April 4, 1983.

Nixon's first visit to the Soviet Union in May, 1972, the SALT-1 agreement was signed in Moscow on 26 May by Mr. Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev. It visualized parity in their respective strategic nuclear weapons. SALT-1 produced four agreements, but only two of them—the ABM Treaty and the Interim Offensive Agreement—deal with arms control as such.

The ABM Treaty is evidently the most important agreement concerning the limitation and control of strategic arms. It severely limited ABM systems by various quantitative, qualitative and geographical constraints. Under the terms of the agreement, the US and the Soviet Union both limited their respective ABM deployment areas to one centering their national capital and another one containing ICBM silos. The agreement also limited the deployment of three principal ABM components: ABM launchers, ABM interceptor missiles and ABM radars. Another characteristic feature of the ABM treaty is that it prohibits the development and testing as well as deployment, of certain types of ABM systems and ABM components.

A critical analysis of the ABM treaty reveals that it limited the deployment of the ABM systems only. i.e. the defensive armaments. The US and the Soviet Union could not reach any final agreement concerning the limitation and control of strategic offensive arms. The only thing they could do was to reach a temporary agreement — Interim Offensive Agreement — constraining certain strategic offensive systems by calling for a 'freeze' on new construction of ICBM launchers with numerical limits on ballistic missile submarines and SLBMs. However, the ABM treaty committed the two powers to continue negotiation for limitation on strategic offensive arms in order to replace the Interim Offensive Agreement with a comprehensive treaty under SALT II.

It has already been mentioned that the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was partial test ban treaty as it did not ban nuclear tests under ground. So fresh negotiations started for signing an underground test ban treaty. In September, 1971, negotiation was dea-

dlocked on the question of the US demand for on-the-spot inspection which the Russians did not comply with. However, the signing of SALT—1 agreement by them paved the way for reaching agreement on this vital issue also. At that time negotiations for this matter continued together with SALT aimed at signing the proposed SALT—II agreement.

President Nixon visited the Soviet Union in June-July 1974 for his third summit meeting with Mr. Brezhnev. At the end of his visit on 3 July, Mr. Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev. signed in the historic St. Vladimir Hall of the Kremlin (a) a joint communique; (b) a Soviet American treaty on the Limitation of Underground Weapon Tests; and (c) a protocol to the treaty on the Limitation of ABM systems.

More important achievement was the signing of the Treaty on Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests which obligated the US and the Soviet Union, as from March 31, 1976, not to carry out any underground nuclear weapon tests on a yield exceeding 150 kilotons. One of the striking features of this treaty was that the Soviet Union accepted the principle of on-site inspection, which had hitherto been persistently opposed by Moscow in every disarmament negotiation.

The SALT II negotiations began in November 1972 with the goal of signing a long-term comprehensive treaty on the limitation strategic offensive weapons system. But it took seven years of painful negotiations before the SALT-II Treaty or the Offensive Arms Treaty, as it is generally known, was signed on June 18, 1979, in Vienna by President Carter and General Secretary Brezhnev. At the same time, the two leaders also signed a joint statement of Principles and Basic Guidelines for Subsequent Negotiations on the Limitation of Strategic Arms. It was submitted to the U.S. Senate for ratification on June 22 of the same year. But it has been shelved in early 1980 as a protest to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at that time. Though SALT II Treaty is still unratified, both President Carter and President Reagan on the US side and President Brezhnev on the

Soviet side have declared that they would not do anything which might jeopardise the treaty. In spite of that, recently President Reagan has declared that he is determined to go on with his decision of producing MX, a new mobile missile, which is designed larger than Minuteman, and carries ten warheads in place of three in Minuteman III.

The new development in this regard has been the introduction of Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) in place of SALT by President Reagan during his speech in Eureka College in May 1982. The START talks have been taking place in Geneva since June of the same year. The issues involved in the these talks are strategic weapons like ICBMs and long-range bombers. These talks are aimed, as the name implies, "not merely at getting limits on both nation's strategic arsenals, as the SALT talks were, but at actually reducing them."¹⁵

Parallel to the above-mentioned efforts made by individual states, the U.N. also took some steps to further the cause of disarmament. Its Charter under Article 11 authorised the General Assembly to consider, *inter alia*, "the principles governing disarmament and the the regulation of armaments". Article 47 of the same provided for the establishment of a Military Staff Committee to advise the Security Council on "the regulation of armament and possible disarmament". The General Assembly took a major initiative in this respect when it convened its first Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD I) in 1978. It adopted a final document which set forth principles by which the international community would be guided in disarmament matters in the coming years. The second Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD II) took place in June-July, 1982. Though these two special sessions could not achieve anything concrete in the field of disarmament, their importance lies in arousing "a world-wide public awareness of the threats posed by the arms race and the urgency to bring it to an end".¹⁶

15. *Newsweek*, November 30, 1981.

16. *Disarmament, op. cit.*, p. 63.

With this long but very often unsuccessful history in mind, it would now be worthwhile to discuss the problems of disarmament in general and also to show what measure could be taken to put an end to this mad competition for arms. Though various powers, including the superpowers, acknowledged that disarmament was the most baffling and crucial problems of the post-war world, and declared achievement of some sort of disarmament and arms control as the basic objective of their foreign policies, they could not deal with the problem satisfactorily and hence fulfil their 'desire' because of military, political as well as technical difficulties.

First of all, disarmament negotiations very often failed because many nations believed in the old dictum: "If you want peace, prepare for war". Hard-headed military leaders who had important voice in decision-making in many countries failed to recognize that disarmament contributes to peace and security and thus serves national interest in a better way. Their and also other decision-makers' interest was to increase armaments for the purpose of promoting their national defence capability.

Secondly, many nations talk loudly of disarmament but in practice pursue such aggressive foreign policy that requires a heavy amount of armaments. As for example, the US and the Soviet Union emerged as the two superpowers in the post war scene with world wide interests, Though they proclaimed disarmament as a goal, yet they were not serious about it because of their conflicting interests in the context of the cold war: America took the lead in maintaining the independence of the free world and the Soviet Union became determined to maintain her hold in the socialist bloc.

Thirdly, any effective disarmament or arms control measure requires mutual trust. without sufficient mutual trust and goodwill among nations disarmament is unthinkable because under such circumstances, nations are profoundly suspicious that the opposing power bloc would seek to achieve some kind of military and political advantage which keeps the arms race living. "The lack of reciprocal trust on

all sides is both a cause and a symptom of the lack of progress in reducing national armaments. Pervasive distrust among nations makes agreement on arms reduction all but impossible; the disarmament deadlock in turn foments new suspicions and hostilities".¹⁷ There is also another form of mutual distrust. It was nicely expressed by former US President Calvin Coolidge as "foreign governments made agreements limiting that class of combat vessels in which we were superior, but refused limitation in the class in which they were superior".¹⁸ If we critically analyse various Soviet-American disarmament proposals, we can see that when the US held atomic monopoly, the Soviet Union pressed for prohibition of atom bombs and destruction of the existing stockpiles whereas the US proposal wanted reduction of manpower and conventional weapons first, because the Soviet Union was superior in this respect.

Fourthly, there is a technical problem in the form of lack of meaningful distinction between offensive and defensive weapons. Evidently, "what one side intends as a deferent, the other side regards [it] as an offensive weapon".¹⁹ This naturally gives rise to to an unstable and often dangerous, situation as a result of which arms race continues unabated. Armaments have become more complicated than ever in the modern period. Now the main concern of the great powers is not to pile up a great stock of existing arms but to invent new weapons systems to give offensive superiority as well as defensive advantage. Thus though quantitative disarmament may be possible, modern weapons technology has rendered qualitative disarmament and arms control technically next to impossible as "the real armaments race is in the laboratories. No reduction of forces, however scrupulously carried out, could protect the powers against a technological breakthrough".²⁰

17. Crabb, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

18. Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 191.

19. *Newsweek*, October 5, 1981.

20. Kissinger. *op. cit.* p. 175.

Fifthly, there is another minor problem arising from "the fear of national governments that they will be 'locked in' to a disarmament agreement that will jeopardize their interests".²¹

Sixthly, there is also the problem concerning disarmament planning rather than that on the way to it. Those who wish to visualize a disarmed world are immediately faced with the problem of working out adequate procedures for peaceful change in such a situation. Richard A. Falk is of the opinion that "the problem should be considered a part of the wider need to establish an international environment suitable for disarmament. This environment can only be created by action and events that are formally independent of a disarmament treaty in every respect".²²

Finally, there is the problem of violation, that any party to a disarmament may either keep hidden nuclear weapons stockpiles or conduct clandestine activities for the purpose of producing such weapons. To have effective guarantees against such clandestine stockpile as well as production, inspection and verification should be resorted to. Inspection can assure that other parties to a disarmament agreement are fulfilling their obligations. Undoubtedly the problem of inspection and control constitutes the heart of the disarmament deadlock. It is this issue which divided the US and the Soviet Union in their disarmament negotiations more than any other thing. The US in the very first disarmament plan (Baruch plan, that is) stressed the need for 'inspection and control'. The Soviet Union opposed the idea because the American proposal for inspection demanded free access to the Soviet territory which amounted to 'espionage' to the Russians. Eisenhower's 'Open Skies' proposal for aerial inspection added further suspicion to the Soviet mind. It seems that inspection for any disarmament agreement was 'indispensable' to the West but 'unacceptable' to the Russians. The present position is that

21. Richard J. Barnet and Richard A. Falk (eds.), *Security in Disarmament* (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 5.

22. Richard A. Falk, "Provision for Peaceful Change in a Disarming World" in *Ibid.*, p. 360.

for verification purpose, the Pentagon is not likely to allow the Communists into America's secret cities. Richard J. Barnet rightly maintains that "the lack of clarity in thinking about inspection...has contributed so much on both sides to the impasse". America argues that "if their intentions were honest, they'd accept inspection". The Soviet Union, on the other hand, raises the question that "if they were serious about disarmament, they wouldn't ask for unreasonable inspection". She even holds that "the Western demand for effective inspection and control is a subterfuge".²³

It is necessary to mention here that whatever may be the pros and cons of inspection, the main problem lies with mutual distrust and suspicion arising out of the conflicting national interests of these two powers. As a result, American proposals encounter Soviet opposition for lack of proper confidence and Soviet proposals also lack American faith because she does not believe Soviet intentions. Hence, when sufficient mutual trust is lacking in any disarmament proposal, they seek substitutes in various technical requirements for inspection and control. "The result has been that while the debate on disarmament goes on, so does the arms race—producing the most deadly competition in national armaments known to world history".²⁴

Till now such an important issue like disarmament has not been taken by the appropriate authority seriously. They talked of achieving this goal for propaganda purpose only without making any honest and sincere effort in this regard. Disarmament or at least arms control is essential for the purpose of minimizing the possibility of war that clearly threatens destruction of mankind with their highly developed civilization and valued societies, no doubt, but the primary concern of the developing countries is that the heavy economic loss armaments entail may profitably be channelised for the more important necessity of developing the underdeveloped areas of the world. At present, annual world expenditure on armaments has been

23. Crabb. *op. cit.*, p. 201.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

estimated at \$600 billion which gives the grim figure of per capita expense of \$112 over the world as a whole in this field. "This is more than the per capita gross domestic product of some developing countries. The price of two strategic bombers of the latest type, approximately \$200 million, could sustain a world-wide literacy campaign. It cost the World Health Organization less than \$100 million to eradicate smallpox, while a considerably larger amount was spent on the development of a more advanced version of an air-to-air missile. One half of 1 per cent of one year's world military expenditure would pay for much of the farm equipment needed by low-income and food-deficit countries to achieve self-sufficiency in food by the end of this decade".²⁵

It is imperative that if the cause of disarmament is to succeed, both vertical and horizontal efforts are needed. Vertical efforts should be directed at halting the competition for developing new weapons systems by nuclear states together with a freeze of their existing stocks, and horizontal efforts should be directed at closing the door of the 'nuclear club' so that the newly aspirants cannot join it. At the same time it is equally important that there must also be an end to world-wide arms trade and other international transfer of weapons. But the crux of the problem remains that "no disarmament agreement will be reached unless and until the political climate in conflicting states has changed so much that not only agreement on disarmament *per se* but adequate political agreements could be achieved sufficient to establish political institutions capable of controlling a world army".²⁶

25. Disarmament, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

26. Arthur I. Waskow, "Conflicting National Interests in Alternative Disarmed Worlds", in Barnet and Falk (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 365.