

Remarks Delivered by Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman,
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission

to

Conference on the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency
United Nations, New York, Sept. 20, 1956

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Mr. President and distinguished delegates:

It is my privilege and great honor, on behalf of my fellow countrymen, to welcome you to the United States for the historic deliberations which you are about to undertake.

I bring you warmest greetings from President Eisenhower and his sincere good wishes for the success of this conference.

The fervent prayers of all mankind attend your labors here. Peoples of many lands look hopefully to you -- not alone to spread the bounties of the beneficent atom that their lives may become healthier, and more abundant -- but that in so doing you will also provide the foundations upon which a durable structure of peaceful understanding will eventually be erected.

This is the largest conference of nations to be held since the end of the Great War, indeed perhaps the largest in the entire history of international collaboration. Thus, your voice can be the voice of humanity itself, the conscience of the world of men.



Since the end of the last war, the nations of the earth have been caught in the endless spiral of an atomic arms race. As recently as three years ago, there appeared to be no formula, and no hope, for averting mutual disaster. Indeed, three years ago a convocation for a purpose such as that which has brought you together today would not have been thinkable.

In the midst of the thick darkness of those days a lamp was kindled. Its light first shone forth in this very hall. Some of you perhaps were so fortunate as to be here on that late December afternoon in 1953. Standing at this very lectern before the representatives of your governments, standing in effect in the presence of all humanity, President Eisenhower pronounced the words which broke the evil spell that war had cast upon the world.

They were words which will be long remembered and it is fitting to recall them today.

"It is not enough," he said, "to take this weapon out of the hands of the soldiers, it must be put into the hands of those who will know how to strip its military casing and adapt it to the art of peace. The United States knows that if the fearful trend of atomic military buildup can be reversed, this greatest of destructive forces can be developed into a boon, for the benefit of all mankind."

And he went on to say this:

"The United States knows that peaceful power from atomic energy is no dream of the future. That capability, already proved, is here -- today. Who can doubt, if the entire body

of the world's scientists and engineers had adequate amounts of fissionable material with which to test and develop their ideas, that this capability would rapidly be transformed into universal, efficient and economic usage."

He then outlined his plan for the International Agency, including the pooling of fissionable materials for peaceful uses and the establishment of safeguards against any use of those materials for other than peaceful purposes. He said this:

"The United States pledges before you -- and therefore before the world -- its determination to help solve the fearful atomic dilemma -- to devote its entire heart and mind to find the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life."



When he reached the conclusion of his message, an ovation swept through the great assemblage. It evidenced the profound effect which his pronouncement had made upon his listeners. I shared with many of you the drama of that moment and sensed, in what will always remain as one of the most moving experiences of my life, the electric response which began in this room and extended around the world, lifting the hopes and stirring the imaginations of men everywhere.

No longer could it be said that man's genius in pushing back the frontiers of the physical universe had outstripped his moral inspiration to control his discoveries.

What the President proposed was motivated solely by desire to find a way out of the atomic dilemma which had fastened itself upon the world and thereby to lift the darkest cloud overhanging peace. His proposal was a product of bold vision yet it had the great virtue of simplicity. It was above all else an easily workable plan, practicable and uninvolved.

As you know, in the months following President Eisenhower's proposal, discussions were undertaken among those nations having either developed resources of nuclear raw materials or advanced atomic energy programs, and on December 4, 1954, the General Assembly of the United Nations by unanimous vote endorsed the proposal to create an International Atomic Energy Agency.

In late February of this year, representatives of 12 nations met in Washington. After some months of earnest, cooperative labor, they produced the draft statute which will be before you.

We all recognize that this statute, or charter, is not a panacea for all the ills of the world. It will not within any precisely measured time, turn all deserts into green pastures. It will not relieve man of the necessity to labor for his daily bread. It will not usher in the millennium.

However, the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency under the conditions envisaged by the draft statute will do these things:

It will accelerate the application of the peaceful uses of atomic energy everywhere, reaching the uttermost parts of the earth.

It will divert important amounts of fissionable material from atomic bomb arsenals to uses of benefit to mankind and those amounts will steadily

grow with the maintenance of peace. More tons of these materials will be devoted to welfare, fewer tons to weapons.

It will stimulate the discovery of new fundamental data on which all progress depends.

It will provide an opportunity for nations which have little or no atomic capability at present, to acquire atomic facilities best suited to their needs either individually or in combination with their neighbors.

It will increase man's knowledge of his own body and that of the plants and animals that nourish him, and of the pests which threaten him, to the end that the art of healing will be advanced and new ways found to increase the food supply of the world. Man's span of useful life thereby should be prolonged.

It will be the means by which nations may obtain electrical energy to lighten their burdens and increase their productivity. It will thus contribute to higher standards of living in the world.

It will encourage young and imaginative minds in many countries to seek careers in the new disciplines of nuclear science and engineering to the end that they may improve the economy and health of their homelands.

And, of course, most important of all, the successful operation of the Agency will contribute mightily to focus world attention and understanding on the gifts which atomic energy can make toward enriching human life and thus dispel some of today's doubts and fears.

The cooperation which is foreseen under the provisions of the draft statute will be international. This is proper, for the atom itself is international. It has no politics, follows no party line and recognizes no geographical frontiers or allegiances. The language it speaks is concern to us all.

The little group that witnessed the first controlled chain reaction in Chicago in December 1942, included men native to many lands. Their leader was the great Enrico Fermi, by birth a son of Italy. Among his colleagues were scientists from Canada, Hungary and Germany. And contributing to that moment of triumph were the genius and the accumulated discoveries of other men and women from other lands. Such names as Einstein, Hahn, Strassman and Meitner of Germany, Bohr of Denmark, Rutherford and Chadwick of England, the Curies of Poland and France, Mendeleev of Russia, and Raman of India, to name only a few of an illustrious galaxy.

Knowledge of the atom is no monopoly of a few large countries. This fact was dramatically highlighted at the great Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy at Geneva in August of last year, when the scientists and engineers of 73 nations met in a atmosphere of friendship and mutual purpose and exchanged information on the peaceful development of the atom. I am happy to have been concerned with the inception of that fruitful and memorable gathering.

This process of pooling knowledge of the atom has continued in the year that has passed since the conference. Scientific delegations have been

exchanging visits and ideas, motivated only by the spirit of human progress.

A scientific committee has been established under the United Nations to study the effects of radiation. Nuclear science symposiums have been held in a number of countries and a large and important sharing of the results of current research has resulted from smaller international conferences, such as those dealing with high energy physics held earlier this year.



In the spirit of these events, it is our hope that while in the United States you will find it possible to visit our national laboratory at Brookhaven which is not far from this city and -- if your time permits -- I hope you will journey to Shippingport, Pennsylvania to see our first full size atomic power plant exclusively for commercial power production which we began just two years ago this month and which is nearing completion there.

Through all of these activities to which I referred a moment ago, the United States has contributed, in keeping with our confidence in the eventual success of this conference. The steadily expanding extent of our cooperation with other nations in atomic energy matters, including agreements which we have negotiated with 39 nations, is an earnest of that fact. We believe that our technology and atomic materials should benefit other peoples as well as our own. We also believe that necessary safeguards to health and peace must accompany the development of the atom.

You will recall that President Eisenhower in his address of December 8, 1953, spoke of allocations of fissionable material to the Agency, by ourselves and by others, "to the extent permitted by elementary prudence."

Last February 22, the President gave concrete form and vitality to the determination of the United States to aid other countries when he announced

that the Atomic Energy Commission would make 20,000 kilograms of Uranium-235 available for distribution to other nations for peaceful uses. This was an amount exactly equal to the Uranium-235 made available for such uses in the United States. The President, in announcing the allocation, emphasized that the United States welcomes the progress toward the International Agency and will cooperate with it wholeheartedly when it is established.

The faces of millions of people of every race and faith are turned toward this place today. Their hopes, indeed their prayers, that success shall here reward your efforts will surely overcome any barriers and resolve any differences that may yet block attainment of the great objective which has brought you to this place.



By Mr. Strauss

This is the largest conference of nations to be held since the end of the great war, indeed perhaps the largest in the entire history of international collaboration. Thus, your voice can be the voice of humanity itself, the conscience of the world of men.

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We all recognize that this statute, or charter [of the proposed international atomic energy agency] is not a panacea for all the ills of the world. It will not within any precisely measured time turn all deserts into green pastures. It will not relieve man of the necessity to labor for his daily bread. It will not usher in the millennium.

Agency's Aims Listed

However, the creation of the international atomic energy agency under the conditions envisaged by the draft statute will do these things:

It will accelerate the application of the peaceful uses of atomic energy everywhere, reaching the uttermost parts of the earth.

It will divert important amounts of fissionable materials from atomic bomb arsenals to areas of benefit to mankind and those amounts will grow with the expansion of peace. More tons of materials will be devoted to peaceful uses, fewer tons to war.

It will stimulate the discovery of new fundamental data on which all progress depends.

It will provide an opportunity for nations which have little or no atomic capability at present to acquire atomic facilities best suited to their needs either individually or in combination with their neighbors.

It will increase man's knowledge of his own body and that of the plants and animals that nourish him, and of the pests which threaten him, to the end that the art of healing will be advanced and new ways found to increase the food supply of the world. Man's span of useful life thereby should be prolonged.

It will be the means by which nations may obtain electrical energy to lighten their burdens and increase their productivity. It will thus contribute to higher standards of living in the world.

It will encourage young and imaginative minds in many countries to seek careers in the new disciplines of nuclear science and engineering to the end that they may improve the economy and health of their homelands.

And, of course, most important of all, the successful operation of the agency will contribute mightily to focus world attention and understanding on the gifts which atomic energy can make toward enriching human life and thus dispel some of today's doubts and fears.

International Cooperation

The cooperation which is foreseen under the provisions of the draft statute will be international. This is proper, for the atom itself is international. It has no politics, follows no party line and recognizes no geographical frontiers or allegiances. The language it speaks is common to us all.

In the spirit of these events it is our hope that while in the United States you will find it possible to visit our National Laboratory at Brookhaven [L. I.] which is not far from this city and, if your time permits, and I hope it will, journey to Shippingport, Pa., to see our first full-size atomic power plant exclusively for commercial power production which we began just two years ago this month and which is nearing completion there.

The United States has contributed in keeping with our confidence in the eventual success of this conference. The steadily expanding extent of our cooperation with other nations in atomic energy matters, including agreements which we have negotiated now with thirty-nine nations, is an earnest of that fact.

Last Feb. 22, the President gave concrete form and vitality to the determination of the United States to aid other countries when he announced that the Atomic Energy Commission would make 20,000 kilograms of Uranium-235 available for distribution to other nations for peaceful uses. This was an amount exactly equal to the Uranium-235 made available for such uses in the United States.

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