

Johnson's Aides Differ With Him Over Italian Technological Plan

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PARIS, Oct. 17—Some of President Johnson's diplomats in Europe are politely differing with their chief.

The issue is an Italian plan to close the gap between technically advanced American industries and their lagging European counterparts.

Mr. Johnson thinks the scheme is grand and has drawn attention to it several times, most recently in his speech on Europe ten days ago.

Ranking American officials on the continent, however, are much less enthusiastic. None of them object to closing the technology gap. That would be like favoring sin. But the Italian proposal is regarded as too vague, located in the wrong place and aiming at the wrong targets.

Raised by Fanfani

Rome's idea was raised at the meeting of NATO ministers last spring in talks between the Italian Foreign Minister, Amintore Fanfani, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

Fanfani spoke a "Marshall Plan" to close the breach, and image diplomats here think is wrong because it implies Americans giving and Europeans receiving.

The project would be centered in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Its members would study and recommend joint projects in space, electronics, nuclear energy and communications, among others. Some of the more specific projects mentioned are research into desalting sea water.

As a starter under the Fanfani scheme, the United States would speed the flow of technical information across the Atlantic. Federally supported research would be made available to Europeans promptly and the United States would undertake to press private firms to share their knowledge.

Regarded as Imprecise

Leading American officials regard Fanfani's proposal as imprecise and lacking "institutional structure." This jargon means that no new agency would be created to deal specifically with the gap question.

The diplomats also think that the proposal should not be centered in NATO. This, it is said, gives the plan too much of a military flavor, turns it over to officials who have no special expertise in technological affairs and ignores the work in this area of

non-military agencies like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Officials here doubt the lack of information really hampers the continentals and note that many of the postwar advances came from European laboratories.

Prevailing U.S. View

The prevailing American view is that Europeans have fallen behind because they cannot exploit what they know and this in turn is because they are individually too small. In other words, the diplomats think that their goal of a politically integrated Western Europe would also serve the economic objective of better technological balance.

All this leads American officials to think Fanfani's scheme drew Mr. Johnson's praise because Washington wanted to give another boost to Rome's center-left government. The Italians, unlike almost everybody else of size in Western Europe, do not make trouble for Washington and, to the contrary, provide considerable diplomatic support.

The Fanfani plan is to get another look when the NATO ministers hold their semi-annual gathering in December, either in Paris or Brussels.