

Hoover Cited As Not Against Consular Treaty

Secretary of State Dean Rusk made public yesterday an exchange of letters saying that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover did not oppose the U.S.-Soviet Consular Treaty nearly two years ago.

The 4-month-old correspondence was released in preparation for the reopening of hearings Monday on the stalled treaty before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

No explanation was offered by either the State Department or the Federal Bureau of Investigation why it took nearly two years to clarify the Hoover testimony. What is more, Hoover did not say he now supports the treaty either.

The treaty, now intended as evidence of President Johnson's policy of "bridge-building" between East and West, was signed on June 1, 1964, but never ratified by the Senate.

Approved by the Senate Committee on Aug. 3, 1965, on a 19-to-5 vote, the treaty has been sidetracked primarily because of an opposition campaign based on testimony given by Hoover. The attack has been led by the right-wing Liberty Lobby.

The FBI Director told a House Appropriations Committee on March 4, 1965, that, as Rusk noted in a Sept. 14, 1966, letter to Hoover, the establishment of Soviet consulates in this country would make the FBI's work "more difficult."

Rusk's letter to Hoover, however, omitted mentioning that Hoover's testimony also characterized the signing of the treaty as "a cherished goal of the Soviet intelligence services . . ."

Rusk's 500-word letter to Hoover said in part:

"Your statement was widely interpreted as one of opposition to the proposed treaty. I did not so interpret it. I thought, rather, that you were merely pointing out that any such agreement necessarily results in an increased problem of internal security proportionate to the number of Soviet consulates actually established, without, of course, implying that the problem could not be handled by the FBI.

"I assume also," Rusk continued, "that you were not expressing any judgment as to the relative value of countervailing advantages for the United States and American citizens under the (Consular) Convention.

"As you know from my testimony . . ." Rusk said, "the Administration attaches importance to the Convention and considers that it would afford markedly increased protection to large numbers of Americans who visit the U.S.S.R. as tourists or on business or under the exchange program."

Rusk's letter went on to reiterate that the treaty granted no blanket right to establish consulates, and "We would expect initially to see established perhaps one consulate in each country, on a basis of reciprocity."

On Sept. 16, Hoover, in a carefully-phrased, 57-word reply, said that "upon closely examining the contents" of Rusk's letter, Hoover found "you are basically correct with respect to your interpretation of my testimony . . ."

"The facts as mentioned in the second paragraph of your letter are, therefore, correctly stated," Hoover said. That referred to the paragraph in which Rusk said he did not interpret Hoover's remarks as "opposition" to the treaty.