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A-Pact Bar In Europe May Drop

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Administration sources are strongly indicating that the United States is prepared to eliminate any possible German finger on the nuclear trigger in exchange for a Soviet promise to permit a European nuclear force if Western Europe ever joins together politically.

So far, however, officials say, there is no firm agreement on this issue, the central point in the argument over the proposed treaty to halt the spread of nuclear weapons.

But the prospective agreement, and many officials view it as that, is said to have been the result of President Johnson's talk here with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko and of Gromyko's subsequent meeting with Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

At the moment, American officials are trying to produce language to meet this prescription.

Hope Rises

No one here is prepared to say that the treaty is likely to be finally agreed upon until sometime next year, if then. But the degree of hopefulness has markedly risen since Gromyko's visit to Washington. For example, Canada's Lt. Gen. E. L. M. Burns said at the United Nations yesterday that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are "close enough in object and scope" that the world can reasonably expect a treaty.

Central to the agreement between Washington and Moscow, if it comes off, is acceptance by the West German government. This has not yet been obtained but political events in Bonn appear to be moving in that direction, in Washington's view.

The effect of the proposed

agreement would be to finally bury the various schemes for a multilateral nuclear force (MLF), an American idea, and an Atlantic nuclear force (ANF), a British idea.

British Position

During his recent visit here, British Foreign Secretary George Brown made it very clear that London has backed away from its own idea and very much favors the proposed compromise.

American proponents of the MLF scheme in the past are

now saying that the critical point is to retain the long-range "European option." They concede that French President de Gaulle has halted the postwar movement toward European political union, but they contend the United States must look beyond de Gaulle.

Hence they are indicating they would be satisfied with a clause in the treaty which would make it possible, should European union ever come, for the British and French nuclear forces to be pooled in a European force.

McNamara Committee

The Soviet Union apparently figures that in such an unlikely event that it is willing to allow for it in exchange for a bar to any immediate new German finger on the nuclear trigger. They consider MLF and ANF as devices to that end despite American and British denials.

The American view increasingly is that the so-called McNamara Committee, a consultative body expected to become a formal part of the NATO structure in December, is an adequate substitute for West Germany.

This procedure, which would bring Bonn in on continuing basis in the planning of possible use of nuclear weapons in NATO, has yet to be publicly accepted by Bonn as a substitute, however. Some factions in Bonn, nonetheless, are prepared to agree.

One Problem Resolved

Meanwhile, one important related problem—how to satisfy the worries of the non-nuclear powers other than West Germany—has now been resolved by a proposal agreed to yesterday by the United States and the Soviet Union.

This is a statement which declares that the major nuclear powers, the U.S., U.S.S.R. and Britain, do not consider the non-proliferation treaty an end in itself but only a step toward the goal of "general and complete disarmament."

The amendment to the treaty was proposed by Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden and the United Arab Republic. Some of these nations wanted a firmer pledge but in the end settled for the generalized language.