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## Nuclear Treaty Snags

This country and Russia may be near agreement on a "non-proliferation" treaty that could help make China the most powerful nation on earth, even if China refuses to sign it. Both the American and Soviet drafts of a treaty to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons perpetuate the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China as the nuclear military Big Five, entrenching their nuclear military status while denying it to the have-nots. Nations without nuclear arms forego ever having them by signing the treaty. China would be confirmed as the only Asian nuclear power, and since it is already the most populous nation and in 30 or 40 years one out of every three human beings may be Chinese, the effect of the treaty may be to make China chairman of the board, not just one of five powerful directors of world affairs. That prospect has triggered some misgivings.

India and some other countries that have reached a point of being able to start their own production of nuclear weapons are reluctant to sign the treaty without conditions. They want the superpowers to halt further production of nuclear weapons and to cut back existing stockpiles and delivery systems. It is a reasonable demand. The US could, without undue risk, reduce its nuclear arsenal without waiting for Russia to cut back by an equal amount. Someone has to take the lead if nuclear arms are to be outlawed, and sooner or later China's as well as Russia's participation has to be obtained if there is to be nuclear disarmament. It is fine to prevent nuclear weapons spreading, nevertheless a non-proliferation treaty is not the same as agreement to disarm. Yet seeming Soviet willingness to sign up is tempting this country, and Britain, to hail it as if it were. Lord Chalfont, speaking for Britain, told the UN he hopes a treaty will be adopted even before the Assembly session ends on December 20. India and the other countries that have been expressing reservations are regarded impatiently as obstructionist nuisances. The chances are that, if the Russians really are serious, Washington will put considerable pressure on the doubters to get on the team, not rock the boat, and so forth, and India at any rate is in no position to stand up to such pressure.

Yet India's doubts will remain, and they are twofold: that the treaty is little more than a gimmick which may even get in the way of progress toward nuclear disarmament; and also that it offers nothing in the way of security to the non-nuclear countries, though it will compel them to give up all thought of ever having a nuclear deterrent of their own. Washington has been aware of the second point, and, in order to

persuade protesting countries to sign on the dotted line has suggested to them that they will receive in return a compensatory guarantee of their security. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg told the UN that the US is "studying" what action it might take to protect a country like India against nuclear attack. President Johnson, in Malaysia, repeated that "nations which do not seek national nuclear weapons can be sure that they will have our strong support if they need it, against any threat of nuclear blackmail." There has been talk of a "nuclear umbrella" held over India's head by the US and Russia jointly, but this has evoked no encouraging noises in Moscow. To be effective, such an "umbrella" would presumably entail an adequate warning system against missiles - none exists in India - and probably nuclear weapons stationed in India. By the terms of the non-proliferation treaty, these would be under foreign control and very likely manned by foreign crews. There is evidence that an Indian government that accepted that arrangement in preference to India's developing its own nuclear weapons would come under heavy domestic fire.

American hopes for a non-proliferation treaty rose when Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko said on October 10 in Washington, after meetings with Mr. Johnson and Secretary Rusk, "It looks like both countries, the US and the USSR, are striving to reach an agreement." The gap between the American and Soviet draft treaties seems to have narrowed, and may be further removed by more American concessions on wording. The Soviet position is that no sixth country shall "participate in the ownership, control or use of nuclear weapons," directly or indirectly. The US draft treaty pledges the nuclear powers not to help non-nuclear countries get nuclear weapons "directly, or indirectly through third states or association of states, or through units of the armed forces or military personnel of any state, even if such units or personnel are under the command of a military alliance." The American wording seems to rule out nuclear sharing even in an alliance like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, at least as far as concerns West Germany and other allies that are not nuclear powers. Goldberg told the UN that such allies "are entitled to have a voice in their collective nuclear as well as in their conventional defense," but the West Germans suspect that what the US really wants is to make a deal with Russia in Europe, perhaps in return for eventual Soviet pressure on Hanoi to end the Vietnam war. Talk of "nuclear sharing" in NATO has always been unreal, anyway, in the light of this country's continuing veto on the firing of nuclear weapons by its allies. The US draft treaty's wording may be further revised to convince the skeptical Russians on this point.

Soviet interest is understandable; they fear both the

Chinese and the West Germans. The Czech radio said on October 24 that China has already hatched 30 to 50 big atomic bombs and has laid claim to Soviet border areas where, according to Soviet Communist Party chief Brezhnev and other Russian leaders, the Soviet Union maintains "unremitting vigilance." On October 20, Moscow's chief delegate to the UN, Nikolai Federenko, stated West Germany produces enough plutonium to make 13 atomic bombs a year and by 1970 will be able to turn out almost 200 bombs a year. The Russians want strengthened security in Europe so as to feel freer to deal with any Chinese threat.

The Administration is thinking about China, too. Reacting to China's firing of a missile with a nuclear warhead which Peking said exploded on target, Mr. Johnson on October 30 in Malaysia warned China that its continued testing of nuclear weapons "invites danger to China itself," for "the leaders of China must realize that any nuclear capability they can develop can and will be deterred." Grumbling that China's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal makes arms control vastly more difficult, he expressed the hope that China, being poor, will concentrate on economic development, presumably leaving development of nuclear arms to richer and nicer folks like ourselves. Of course this makes no sense to the Chinese. It may make even less sense, from this country's own point of view, to strive for a treaty which as it stands contributes nothing to nuclear disarmament and leaves China as the only Asian country with nuclear weapons. India and other protesting countries may sign a non-proliferation treaty only for a limited number of years, with the right to renege on it and resume freedom of action if the US and Russia meanwhile failed to disarm. A treaty whose real purpose seems to be to keep nuclear weapons from West Germans and so strengthen Russia against China offers non-nuclear countries more restrictions than benefits.

When it exploded its first nuclear device on October 16, 1964, China proposed a world summit conference to discuss eliminating nuclear weapons. France, the other nuclear country which probably wouldn't sign a non-proliferation treaty, also favors nuclear disarmament. At his October 28 press conference, General de Gaulle said he objected to the world's being "under the yoke of a double hegemony" of the US and Russia, and he defended French possession of nuclear weapons by declaring: "Because America and the Soviet Union did not destroy their absolute weapons, the spell had to be broken." China and France aren't going to consider halting their development as nuclear military powers until this country and Russia become serious about nuclear disarmament; and countries that don't now have nuclear weapons but can probably produce them won't willingly abandon that option forever by signing a treaty that seems to shirk the main issue.