

U.S. Eases Its Stand on A-Controls

LBJ Signals Shift As Geneva Talks On Treaty Open

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GENEVA, Feb. 21—The United States today softened its insistence on international controls to police an East-West treaty to ban the spread of nuclear weapons.

The shift, apparently a concession toward both the Soviet Union and West Germany, was signaled to the opening session of the fifth year of the 18 nation disarmament conference in a special message from President Johnson—later spelled out to newsmen by the U.S. chief delegate, William C. Foster. The conference had been in recess for six months.

In negotiations last fall, the United States had proposed that, in a nuclear non-proliferation treaty, states possessing civilian nuclear reactors but no nuclear weapons submit "as soon as possible" to the safeguards against the misuse of nuclear material of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), U.N. affiliate with headquarters in Vienna.

Plan Is Protested

This U.S. proposal had caused sharp protests in West Germany and among officials of Euratom, which receives data on some of the atomic programs of the six Common Market states.

President Johnson today, in a message which seemed largely designed to calm these protests, noted that "through IAEA, through Euratom and through other international channels, we have shared—and will continue to share—the knowledge we have gained about nuclear energy."

Mr. Johnson's message

added, "We must work toward a broad international system of safeguards satisfactory to all concerned."

Ultimate Safeguards

Foster later said that safeguards should "ultimately" be exercised by a wholly international agency, IAEA, of which 95 countries are members. Asked if this meant that the treaty might be signed first and safeguards provided later, he said that he hoped that a system of safeguards would be "indicated in some way in the treaty, or at least foreshadowed when the treaty is signed."

Foster also indicated his belief that "Russia will accept. See DISARM, A16, Col. 1

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saunders." However, chief Soviet delegate Alexei Roshchin said it was "premature" now to talk about "the technical question" of safeguards and controls.

It appeared that the United States, attempting to set a precedent in this treaty for international arms control systems, had met resistance from two sides.

On the one hand, elements in the Bonn government, Euratom and NATO have opposed mandatory IAEA supervision of nuclear research in the West. On the other hand, the Soviet Union, while apparently agreeable to the principle of IAEA supervision, is not yet prepared to expand the agency's powers and functions along the lines proposed by the United States.

Agreements Needed

Foster confirmed the frustration of the original U.S. hope that "we might be able to table a set of draft formulations . . . on behalf of the U.S. and Soviet governments" at today's opening session. It was "impossible to reach that

stage," Foster explained, because there was agreement yet with the Russians and "no agreement yet between our allies and ourselves."

The U.S. delegate said he hoped to convince the "doubting Thomases" in West Germany and elsewhere that "many of their doubts are not founded in fact."

Most of today's public messages seemed directed to the problem of West Germany, where opposition to the treaty has been high.

Mr. Johnson's message declared: "I have instructed our negotiators to exercise the greatest care that the treaty not hinder the non-nuclear powers in their development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes."

Pledge Reiterated

He also reiterated a previous pledge "to make available nuclear explosive services for peaceful purposes on a non-discriminatory basis under appropriate international safeguards."

Roschin said that "at present in some countries, particularly in the German Federal Republic, statements are made by politicians or appear in the press against the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. . . . Allegations are being spread to the effect that a non-proliferation treaty would hinder peaceful use of scientific discoveries in the sphere of nuclear energy by the states not possessing nuclear weapons."

Such statements, Roshchin said, "do not help at all."

The fact that Roshchin did not attack the Bonn government as such, and that Foster reiterated his belief that there has been "no change in the basic Soviet desire to get a treaty," strengthened the impression that Moscow as well as Washington would like to help Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Foreign Minister Willy Brandt and other West German moderates against the rightists in Bonn who are now attacking the treaty and who previously demanded German participation in a multilateral or allied nuclear fleet.

In Bonn, Kiesinger said the projected treaty was not a genuine step toward disarmament, Reuters reported. "The nuclear powers do not only keep their terrible potential," he told a radio interviewer,

"they can even enlarge it at will."]

The participating members of the Disarmament Conference are: the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, Canada, Italy, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, India, Burma, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria and Sweden.

France is also a member, but does not attend the sessions and is not prepared to sign a nonproliferation treaty.