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To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes

Subject: Dobrynin's October 29 Oral Statement on Nonproliferation

Dobrynin's October 29 statement to the Secretary appears to have been intended to renew Soviet pressure on Western decision-making rather than to address specific issues in nonproliferation talks. Soviet editorialists in recent days have anticipated the end of the pause in Western discussions of nuclear sharing arrangements, and Dobrynin's statement warning that a new sharing arrangement might make agreement on nonproliferation impossible seems intended to keep Soviet objections before American policymakers while they prepare for renewed talks on NATO arrangements during Chancellor Erhard's visit and the forthcoming NATO Defense Ministers' meeting.

Dobrynin's statement that Moscow hoped the President personally would consider Soviet views may have been designed to remind high American officials of Kosygin's suggestion to Governor Harriman that a nonproliferation agreement might be the basis for a productive summit meeting on neutral ground. But Moscow was evidently not ready to commit that notion to paper even in ~~an~~ ephemeral document as Dobrynin's "oral statement."

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Presumably, Moscow will approach other Western governments with parallel demarches. The subject is in all likelihood being raised with Couve during his current visit to the Soviet Union. An approach to the British either before or during Foreign Secretary Stewart's projected trip to Moscow is likely. Whether Moscow will -- as it has not to our knowledge done so far -- approach Bonn directly remains to be seen.

Specific Issues. Dobrynin introduced new uncertainties rather than clarified specific issues in US-Soviet bilateral talks on their respective draft treaties.

Indeed, his emphasis upon the futility of nonproliferation talks if the US intended to go ahead with plans for a multilateral NATO force might be read as suggesting that Moscow was backing away from the bilateral talks to which Gromyko had agreed a month ago. However, in his subsequent conversation, Dobrynin seemed to assume the bilateral talks would continue.

In what seemed a slight shift from what Gromyko had said in his New York talks with the Secretary, Dobrynin referred to a NATO nuclear force (rather than to the more specific term MLF) as the main obstacle to agreement (Gromyko had called it the only one). Although both these slight amendments are a bit more accurate as descriptions of the Soviet position as it has emerged in recent months, Dobrynin did little to answer some of the questions which the Soviet position has raised.

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Thus, Dobrynin did not specifically address the idea of a NATO Special Committee on nuclear questions which has recently come in for renewed criticism by Soviet propagandists. Instead, he merely referred to Soviet opposition to "any forms and means of dissemination" and to the plans for a multilateral nuclear force "or other similar plans to bring nuclear weapons" within the reach¹¹ of West Germany." He thus leaves open Moscow's appraisal of whether the Special Committee does or does not fit these Soviet strictures as something to be decided later.

The Soviet Ambassador was reluctant to talk about existing arrangements in either NATO or the Warsaw Pact. Only when pressed by the Secretary's question, did Dobrynin reply that if existing NATO arrangements provided for proliferation, the Soviet Union was against them. That, of course, was a circular argument since the point at issue is the extremely broad and somewhat vague definition of proliferation in the Soviet draft treaty of September 24.

Dobrynin's only hint that Moscow's definition might not be so sweeping as a reading of the Soviet draft treaty would indicate was his remark that "In no way can we be blamed for taking any steps which even with a most fault-finding approach would look like disseminating nuclear weapons." This was the most authoritative

1. Dobrynin did not explain whether or how the term "within the reach" might differ from the standard Soviet reference to "access" (dostup) to nuclear weapons. Possibly it was nothing more than the Soviet Embassy's alternative translation.

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answer we have had to date to American prodding on the question of Warsaw Pact nuclear arrangements. On the face of it, it is absurd. For under the literal terms of the Soviet draft treaty, the arrangement described by a recently defected East German private for rapid supply in the event of war of nuclear warheads by helicopter for tactical missiles in East German hands would be ruled out. Indeed, so would East German and other bloc countries' possession of such missiles. Moreover, the simulated nuclear exchange which the East German press described as the climax of the Warsaw Pact exercise last month makes a public record of the fact that at least some information on the application of nuclear weapons has been disseminated in the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, the East German accounts do not specify that it was only the Soviet forces which fired nuclear weapons on behalf of the Warsaw Pact forces (Polish missiles were at the exercise, too). If Dobrynin's remark is something besides mere effrontery, it is a suggestion that Moscow is prepared quietly to wink at some of the provisions of its draft treaty as they might apply to existing arrangements in the Warsaw Pact and in NATO, too. On the other hand the Soviets, if pressed, may repeat Dobrynin's response that NATO arrangements are bad if they contribute to proliferation and perhaps go on to renew their old proposals for a denuclearized zone in Central Europe as the way to eliminate the problem of existing nuclear arrangements.

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Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu