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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

26 November 1958

PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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SOVIET TACTICS IN GENEVA CONFERENCES

The Soviet bloc delegates at both Geneva conferences concentrated last week on establishing a record which they hope will place on the West the onus for any failure to reach agreement. There were no hints of any major changes in bloc positions. In formal meetings and private conversations with Western delegates, bloc representatives attempted to probe the firmness of Western views on major issues in both meetings.

Nuclear Test Cessation

In the talks on nuclear test cessation, the Soviet delegate continued to direct his attack on what Moscow regards as the most vulnerable points in the Western position--the short-term implication of a year-by-year extension of a test suspension and the linking of a test-cessation agreement to progress on other disarmament measures. In the meeting of 21 November, Soviet delegate Tsarapkin tried to test the firmness of this position by a direct question to the American delegate.

Tsarapkin contended that a link to other disarmament questions would render any cessation treaty "conditional, purposeless, and without prospects" and stated that his delegation was authorized to discuss only test cessation. On 24 November he insisted that the conference begin the actual drafting of a test-cessation agreement. He strongly rejected Western requests for Soviet views on a control organ and reiterated the standard Soviet refusal to discuss controls until the West agrees to a permanent cessation. Tsarapkin declared that the USSR has

reached the limits of its concessions.

Moscow appears confident that its demand for an immediate agreement in principle on a permanent test cessation contrasts favorably with the Western position, which makes extension of a year-by-year suspension conditional not only on satisfactory progress in installing a control system, but also on progress on other disarmament measures.

Surprise Attack

Soviet bloc moves in the talks last week on measures to prevent surprise attack were aimed at strengthening the bloc's case that the West is seeking to evade agreement on "practical measures" by insisting on an abstract, technical approach to the problem. Bloc delegates charge that the West is interested only in controls and the collection of intelligence information, not on specific measures. They argue that the bloc approach is more realistic because it deals with causes, not symptoms, of surprise attack.

In a private talk with the chief American delegate on 21 November, Soviet delegate Kuznetsov probed the American position that the talks should be confined to nonpolitical, technical problems. He said the USSR believes it is impossible to agree on a complete system at this time, in view of the mutual hostility and suspicion, but he claimed that Moscow hopes for a gradual introduction of measures which would reduce the danger of surprise attack.

Kuznetsov stated that the USSR is willing to accept ground

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observers and limited aerial photography, but only if these are accompanied by "practical measures." He advocated a step-by-step approach, with controls broadened as disarmament measures are implemented. He specifically noted that the lack of agreement on banning nuclear weapons sets limits on measures for preventing surprise attack. This line reflects Moscow's earlier notes, which insisted that surprise-attack talks would be useful only if they resulted in recommendations "in combination with definite steps in the sphere of disarmament."

The chief American delegate believes that if the talks make no progress, Kuznetsov may soon abruptly suggest a recess of the conference. Kuznetsov said on 21 November that the Western position during the week of 24 November would determine whether any real progress in the next two weeks is possible. This statement suggests that Moscow may be preparing for an early breakoff. The Soviet note of 15 September stated that the talks should be concluded within four or five weeks.

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