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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

26 February 1959

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NUCLEAR TEST TALKS

Statements on the nuclear-test-cessation issue in Khrushchev's 24 February speech in Moscow were intended to support the Soviet delegation's efforts at the Geneva talks to prepare Moscow's public position should the negotiations break down. Khrushchev charged the United States and Britain with seeking to prevent agreement so that they may resume nuclear tests and warned that, while the USSR would regret it, "we shall be compelled to do the same in the interests of our security until a wise settlement is found."

The principal burden of his remarks on the test issue was to present the Soviet position in a "reasonable" light in contrast with that of the West. He strongly attacked the Western position as "absurd and unacceptable," treating at length the Anglo-American viewpoints on voting in the control commission, staffing of control posts, the functions of the control organization administrator, on-

the-site inspection teams, and new data on detection of underground explosions.

Khrushchev charged that, while "only two or three weeks" should have been needed to prepare and sign a treaty on test cessation, the United States and Britain have delayed the negotiations with the apparent intention of "thwarting" the talks and laying the blame on the Soviet Union. He stated that Western proposals at Geneva were designed to give the United States and Britain power "to dictate their will to the Soviet Union" through majority control in the commission. He charged that the Western proposal on staffing of the control posts would force the USSR "to hand over our territory to supervision by the aggressive NATO bloc ... such proposals do not stand a chance of being accepted."

The Soviet delegation at Geneva this week continued its efforts to discredit the Western

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position in the talks. Charging that the Western delegations were ignoring world public opinion, Soviet chief delegate Tsarapkin on 24 February read into the record a long series of highly emotional messages from individuals inside and outside the bloc appealing to the conference to reach agreement.

On 20 February the Soviet team complained about "distortions" in the Western press of Moscow's position on staffing of the control posts. Tsarapkin then "restated" the Soviet position on this issue, suggesting for the record that foreign "controllers" in the Soviet plan for staffing the posts predominantly with nationals from the host country would perform not only operating tasks but also "some executive functions."

Queried on this statement on 23 February, he stated that there had been "no change" in the Soviet position concerning operating and executive functions of the controllers, but that the Soviet delegation would be prepared to discuss later the question of what technical or administrative functions could be assigned these foreign personnel.

On 23 February Tsarapkin introduced a draft article on peaceful uses of nuclear explosions, stating that, although the Soviet position remains that explosions of all types should be subject to universal cessation forever, Moscow wants to prevent the peaceful-uses issue from becoming an obstacle to agreement.

The article would require submission in advance of "a full description and blueprints" of the device to be detonated, internal and external inspection

of the device, and strict international control of the site of the explosions. The Soviet delegate charged that failure of the American proposal on peaceful uses to provide for technical inspection of the device is evidence of the West's desire to evade real cessation of tests by testing bombs under the guise of peaceful explosions.

In New York, members of the Soviet United Nations delegation have approached the American mission in an effort to discover whether the United States will break off the talks at Geneva and refer them to the 82-member Disarmament Commission. According to one Soviet representative, the possibility of reaching agreement in the commission after a breakoff at Geneva is remote. There are still no indications, however, that Moscow will take the initiative in ending the negotiations. UN Secretary General Hammarskjold doubts that a majority of UN members would be overwhelmingly convinced by reading the record of the Geneva talks that the West's position is unassailable. He fears the West has a tendency to feel too confident that its case on record would carry in debates in larger forums.

A member of the Soviet delegation in Geneva said privately that the USSR did not expect any Western moves at the talks until after the conclusion of the Macmillan visit to Moscow. Despite the rather severe tone of Khrushchev's remarks on the test-cessation issue on 24 February, Moscow probably still hopes to succeed in including in a joint communiqué at the close of the visit a statement which it could claim represents British endorsement of Soviet views on a permanent cessation of tests.

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