

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

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NUCLEAR TEST BAN TALKS

At the opening session of the test ban conference which resumed in Geneva on 21 March, chief Soviet delegate S. K. Tsarapkin introduced two entirely new issues. Instead of a single administrator for the control system, he proposed a three-member administrative council composed of representatives from the West, the bloc, and neutral states. The USSR last summer had accepted a compromise plan offered by the [redacted] for a neutral administrator first deputy, plus two deputies each from the West and the bloc.

Tsarapkin justified this reversal by referring to the role of the UN secretary general in the Congo, and claimed a triumvirate was necessary to protect the interests of the three powers against a similar situation. He made it clear that the three-member council would act as a unit, thereby granting the USSR a veto over the operation of the system.

For the first time, the Soviet delegate raised the question of French testing. Following up similar statements by Khrushchev and other Soviet officials prior to the resumption of negotiations, Tsarapkin alleged that the Western powers were prolonging the talks as a device to permit French testing and to obtain a military advantage for NATO over the USSR. He expressed the Soviet Union's "great preoccupation" over French testing and stated that French actions would "reduce to naught" the possibility of agreement and make a treaty "pointless."

He called on the Western powers to draw the appropriate conclusions, and insisted that the communiqué distributed after the meeting include the statement that the Soviet delegate had issued a "serious warning" of the "negative effects" of French testing on the conference. In an interview with the East German news service, Tsarapkin declared, "We cannot permit this state of affairs to continue." However, he did not formally propose that France join the negotiations.

The Soviet delegate opened the first session with a long statement reaffirming the Soviet position on all outstanding issues and blaming the West for failure to reach agreement. He made no effort to comment on the details of the new US [redacted] proposals but told the press afterward that "at this late stage" there still seemed to be "too many reservations" and "too many ifs" in the American approach. Following the second meeting on 22 March, Tsarapkin told the press that the new American proposals were almost the same as former positions and contained "very little movement."

At a background briefing for bloc correspondents on 21 March, Tsarapkin said the USSR would not yield on the number of on-site inspections. He also termed the new Western proposal for East-West parity on the control commission unsatisfactory, since the West could "easily buy off" the additional neutral members.

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Tsarapkin's statements provide further evidence that the USSR is losing interest in a treaty. In view of the Western powers' long-standing opposition to self-inspection and a veto power over the control system's operation, the Soviet leaders are undoubtedly aware that the proposal for a three-member administrative council would be unacceptable. Khrushchev is also fully aware, as a result of his talks with De Gaulle in the spring of 1960, that France is not likely to adhere to a test ban without an over-all destruction of stockpiles. The USSR therefore may be using the French question and the proposal for a tripartite administrative council as a pretext for refusing to conclude an agreement.

The generally negative attitude of the chief Soviet delegate was foreshadowed in the line taken by Khrushchev and other Soviet officials prior to the resumption of the talks. In addition to the Soviet premier's remarks to Ambassador Thompson on 9 March, Soviet Ambassador Soldatov told [redacted]

[redacted] the negotiations were not hopeful and that no progress had been made since the discussions between the foreign ministers at Geneva in 1959.

Tsarapkin, in a conversation with the Austrian ambassador, was pessimistic over the outcome of the talks. He said reports from Washington were not hopeful, and that no con-

cession could be expected from the Soviet side on the main issues. [redacted]

Soviet officials in Paris followed up Khrushchev's remarks to Ambassador Thompson on the need for French adherence to a treaty. The Soviet minister counselor told an American official that while the USSR was willing to make some concessions at the talks, the question remained of what would happen if an agreement were reached and France continued to test. Soviet officials also are reported to have taken a similar position in talks with the [redacted] in Paris.

Pre-conference propaganda, however, was more reserved. Soviet broadcasts quoted President Kennedy and Ambassador Dean on the "serious and hopeful" US attitude toward the talks and found some ground for "optimism" that these "reassuring" statements would be followed by deeds a mutually acceptable pact. Moscow made it clear, however, that the success of the negotiations depended on a "sensible" approach by all the participants, "particularly the US."

As the talks resumed, Soviet propaganda commentators began to refer increasingly to grounds for concern over the success of the talks. Tsarapkin's opening remarks were widely broadcast, with emphasis on the proposal for a tripartite council and warning of French testing. [redacted]

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