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US says spy issue won't stop talks

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Spies and embassy security problems notwithstanding, superpower diplomacy remains on track.

The scandal involving United States Marine guards at the US Embassy in Moscow has caused a wave of concern in Washington about Soviet penetration of American communications. But amid investigations into the security threat, US Secretary of State George Shultz is preparing for his trip to Moscow next week for crucial talks with Soviet leaders.

President Reagan said at the White House yesterday that he is "deeply concerned" about the security breaches in Moscow, but that the US intends to proceed with arms control talks and other areas of negotiation.

The President also announced that US diplomats would not occupy the embassy under construction in Moscow until he is sure it is secure from Soviet eavesdropping. And he said that the Soviets would not be allowed to move into their new office tower on a Washington hilltop until the Americans move into the Moscow facility.

The President said a decision on the new facility would be made following a wide-ranging review. He acknowledged that tearing down the building might be among the courses of action considered.

"It's a mess," a State Department official says of the security issue. "It will have repercussions on reconstruction of our embassy in Moscow, and it has a negative impact on the Marine Corps, with which we have a good relationship. . . .

"But the dialogue with the Soviets will go forward," the official says. "We're gearing up [for the Shultz visit] and do not see this as a bilateral issue."

It has often happened in the past that, just when Washington and Moscow are about to embark on a serious effort to reach agreement or to im-

prove ties, something unexpected occurs to derail the effort. In September 1983, for instance, the Soviets shot down a Korean airliner, plunging relations into a deep freeze. Last year the Soviet arrest of American journalist Nicholas Daniloff threatened to disrupt planning for a Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting.

The embassy-security issue falls into a somewhat different category in that secure communications at the US Embassy in Moscow are a perennial concern of the US government. It is assumed that the Soviets do everything possible to enhance their intelligence gathering, including riddling US facilities with eavesdropping devices and luring vulnerable Americans into espionage activities. It can be assumed that the US similarly uses its sophisticated technology to penetrate Soviet installations, including the Soviet diplomatic mission in Washington.

But the breach of security in Moscow is a serious one and has sparked investigations by the Navy, the State Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Two members of Congress who inspected US facilities in Moscow this week said "tens of millions of dollars" may be required to make the current US Embassy secure again in the wake of the Marine spy scandal. One of the lawmakers, Rep. Dan Mica (D) of Florida, said yesterday that the embassy is moving quickly to restore its security, but Secretary Shultz may still have to operate out of a special trailer in Moscow next week to ensure communications with Washington are secure.

The White House said yesterday that steps have been taken to ensure that Shultz's conversations will be private. Messages for the secretary from Washington, for instance, will be flown in by courier from West Germany.

After touring the US facility under construction, Representative Mica and Rep. Olympia Snowe (R) of Maine said yesterday that the security problem there is potentially even worse than at the existing embassy.

"We might recommend that it be demolished," Representative Snowe said of the new building, which has cost about \$190 million and is years behind schedule.

Lawmakers in Washington also say the new building may need to be entirely dismantled. At a minimum, say sources familiar with embassy security matters, finding and removing what could be hundreds of listening devices implanted in the new embassy will cost millions of dollars and require months to correct.

The State Department says the US will take "whatever action is necessary" to ensure that the new embassy is completely secure. But at the moment it is awaiting a report by James R. Schlesinger, a former secretary of defense and director of central intelligence, who is investigating the construction and security of the new facility.

A second State Department review team, headed by Ambassador William A. Brown, is looking into ways to revamp US management and security procedures at

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the embassy.

There have been charges and counter-charges about who is responsible for the security disaster. But dozens of American diplomats and other officials may have been involved through the years, and it may be difficult to pinpoint blame.

"It's been general knowledge among people in the threat-assessment area that there's been a serious security problem there for years," says one former US intelligence official. "One problem may be that the people who have to initiate corrective measures are often the people responsible for security in the first place."

In general, American diplomats say, probably too much reliance was placed on US technology in detecting Soviet listening devices in the new US Embassy and not enough emphasis on supervision of the construction by US officials.

Mica and Snowe claimed yesterday that the security breakdown was the result of a number of factors: "a failure of leadership and authority" at the highest levels of the embassy; a breakdown in the overall attitude toward security, including strained relations between the marines guarding the embassy and other personnel; and inadequate alarm devices.

Under a 1977 agreement the Soviets are barred from occupying their own new embassy now nearing completion in Washington until the US is ready to occupy its new embassy in Moscow. Soviet inspectors carefully oversaw every phase of construction as the Soviet embassy in Washington was being built.

In Moscow, however, the US allowed Soviet workers to fabricate basic building components offsite without supervision.

A related issue is the drawdown of Soviet employees at the US Embassy. The Soviet withdrawal of some 200 drivers, cooks, and other employees last year in retaliation for the expulsion of Soviet diplomats from the US inconvenienced American diplomats in Moscow. But the new US ambassador to Moscow, Jack Matlock Jr., has said that the removal of Soviet workers will improve security.

President Reagan said yesterday that even if the Soviets relented and allowed the US to employ Soviet workers at the Moscow Embassy, he would be opposed.