

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

21 January 1960

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PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

NUCLEAR TEST CESSATION TALKS

In his address to the Supreme Soviet on 14 January, Khrushchev exuded confidence that he can afford to stand firm on his present position at the nuclear test cessation talks in Geneva. He gave notification that such moves as the recent US announcement reserving the right to resume testing, "designed to bring pressure on the USSR," will be of no avail. While conceding that existing technical equipment "cannot provide absolute certainty" that underground nuclear explosions can be detected, he contended that violators "would cover themselves with shame, and they would be condemned by the peoples of the world."

Khrushchev appears to be playing for time on the assumption that the USSR, capitalizing in part on the British disposition for compromise, can extract further concessions from the United States on the nuclear test cessation issue.

The Soviet delegates at Geneva continue to avoid any further discussion of the difficulties in detecting underground tests, arguing that once a "fixed" quota of annual on-site inspections is agreed on, the reasons for the clash between American and Soviet experts on this question will disappear. The Soviet delegation is attempting to encourage the British to promote a compromise between the American and Soviet positions on the deadlocked technical issue.

Soviet delegate Tsarapkin asserted that British remarks on 15 January could "possibly" provide the way for resolving the technical impasse. The British delegate had asked whether the Soviet Union could agree to "temporary" control measures while the control system is being installed, if the West were to accept the on-site inspections quota proposal. The Soviet delegate said the British questions deserved "careful attention" and that he would reply shortly.

Moscow may calculate that British willingness to discuss any compromise which would assume settlement of the quota issue prior to final determination of the criteria to be used to send out inspection teams presents an opportunity for major inroads on the formal Western position that a technically reliable control system must be agreed on before agreement on a comprehensive test ban.

Moscow probably also assumes that the British line of questioning implies agreement to a moratorium on underground tests during the time the permanent control system is being set up. The Soviet delegate indicated privately last November that in event of disagreement in the technical talks, the USSR might consider a phased treaty, but stressed that the "crux of the matter" must be an obligation to halt all tests at the outset, regardless of the temporary nature of a ban on underground tests. Moscow may

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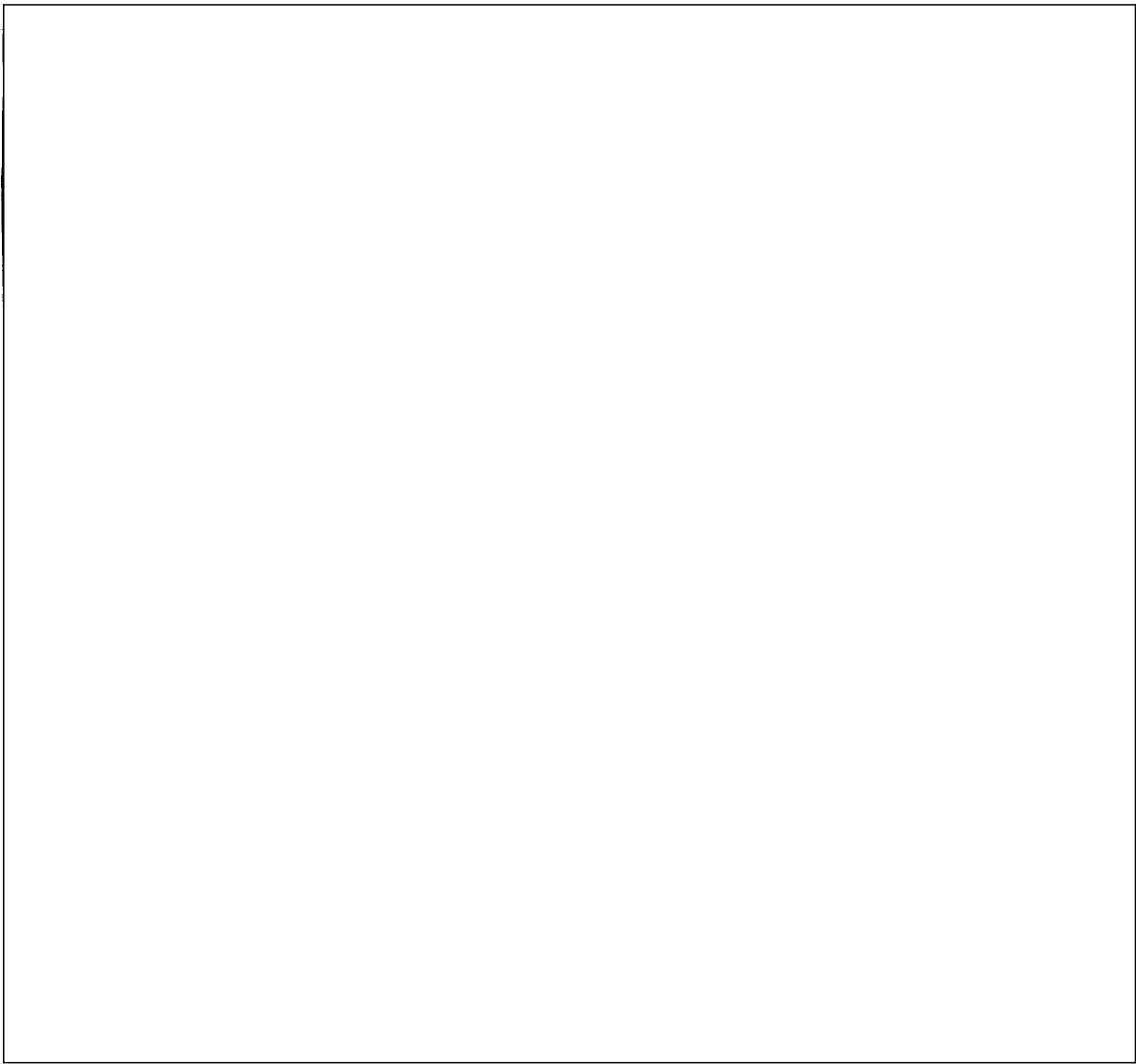
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believe that the British suggestion could lead to a formula to ban all testing "temporarily" until a satisfactory system for detection and identifica-

tion of small underground explosions is developed, after which the ban would become permanent. [REDACTED]

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