

~~SECRET~~

The Communist World

MOSCOW PREPARES FOR TEST-BAN TALKS

On the eve of the 15 July three-power talks on a nuclear test ban, Moscow has made a number of gestures toward the West calculated to create a favorable atmosphere for the beginning of the talks. This contrasts with the exchange of broadsides with Peiping immediately prior to and even during the early stages of the Sino-Soviet talks.

During his visit to the US Embassy for the Independence Day reception, Mikoyan praised the policy of peaceful coexistence and stressed the need for an end to the Cold War. In marked contrast with last year's treatment, President Kennedy's telegram thanking Khrushchev and Brezhnev for their 4 July congratulatory message was published in full in *Izvestia* and *Pravda*. The Soviet press on 7 July carried an article by P. T. Gobets, a Soviet participant in the Geneva "hot line" talks. The article noted that US and Soviet experts had begun work on resolving "complex technical problems" connected with setting up the "hot line" between "the White House and the Kremlin." Moscow announced on 10 July that the line would go into operation on 1 September.

Khrushchev's primary move to indicate to the West his interest in the forthcoming talks was his invitation to Belgian Foreign Minister Spaak to visit the USSR for an exchange of views. TASS characterized their 8 July meeting in Kiev as "marked by an atmosphere of sincerity and mutual understanding." Moscow TV

promptly carried films showing the two leaders in friendly conversation.

The substance of their conversation has not yet been reported. The former NATO secretary general, however, is well known as an advocate of some type of NATO - Warsaw Pact nonaggression treaty. The invitation to Spaak at this time reflects considerable Soviet interest in the nonaggression issue, which Khrushchev linked with a partial test-ban treaty in his 2 July speech in East Berlin.

Moscow has evaded clarifying whether Khrushchev's latest proposal for a partial nuclear test-ban agreement is contingent on Western acceptance of a NATO - Warsaw Pact nonaggression treaty. Moscow broadcasts have widely repeated Khrushchev's 2 July proposals but provide no indication of the exact relationship of a nonaggression treaty with a test ban.

Mikoyan and Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin, responding to Western press queries at the US Embassy reception of 4 July in Moscow, seemed purposefully vague on the Soviet position for the three-power test-ban talks. Mikoyan said that Khrushchev's 2 July speech "directly" called for a "connection" between a partial test-ban agreement and a nonaggression treaty. Zorin, however, stated that the nonaggression treaty is not a condition for a test-ban agreement--but then said it is "part of the whole."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

The Communist World

In a brief conversation with Ambassador Kohler at the reception, Mikoyan was generally noncommittal on the details of the test-ban offer. He made the routine complaints over the US rejection of the Soviet offer to permit two or three on-site inspections to police a ban on underground testing, but would not say whether the demand for a moratorium on such testing had been dropped.

A possible indication of Moscow's serious interest in the three-power talks is its refusal to grant visas to US and British newsmen to cover the talks. The Soviet embassies in Washington and London have so far refused to grant such visas on the grounds that there is a firm three-power understanding that the talks would be "secret" and that there would be no press briefings. After the US Embassy informed the Soviet Foreign Ministry on 5 July that the US had no objection to the issuance of Soviet visas to US newsmen, a Soviet official took note of the statement but gave no indication that the USSR is changing its position.

Zorin's presence during the Khrushchev-Spaak meeting suggests that he may have been

tapped to represent the USSR at the talks.

Denial of Soviet Testing

Soviet journalist Yuri Zhukov, who is often used as an unofficial spokesman for the Soviet leadership, has denied US press speculation on possible recent Soviet nuclear testing. He told a US Embassy official on 1 July that the rumored explosions were "earthquakes, as announced by the Soviet press."

Zhukov expressed the hope that the US Government now shared the view of "certain Western observers" that the risk of an "isolated" one-kiloton test is "nothing" compared to the danger if additional countries gain a nuclear capability.

His remarks suggest that the Soviet leaders wish to prevent such press speculation from having adverse repercussions on the test-ban talks.

Following Zhukov's private denial, a few Soviet broadcasts also denied that the USSR had recently tested, and ridiculed the AEC's comments on the possibility of Soviet testing.

~~SECRET~~