

B/E d
JK

OCI No. 3965
Copy No. 8

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
13 May 1953

CURRENT SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD DISARMAMENT

During the recent session of the UN General Assembly there were hints that the USSR was adopting a conciliatory attitude toward disarmament. In the coming months Moscow may encourage further UN talks on this subject and make procedural concessions in order to open big-power talks outside the UN, thereby improving its propagandist position. There is no indication, however, that the original Soviet position on the control of either conventional armaments or atomic energy has substantially changed.

During the discussion of the Disarmament Commission's report in the UN in March and April, the tone and content of Soviet speeches were considerably milder than in the past. In its draft resolution on disarmament, which was rejected, the USSR for the first time failed to reiterate its insistence on disarmament by a flat percentage cut. In addition, it did not make an outright call for the prohibition of atomic weapons, suggesting rather that the Disarmament Commission should reach decisions on "the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons ... and the establishment of strict international control over compliance with these decisions."

Furthermore, although the USSR rejected the US-sponsored 14-power resolution on disarmament, the Communist bloc did accept certain principles which it has rejected in the past. These were: (1) the basic UN formula for effective international control of atomic energy; (2) a disarmament program carried out under effective international control, and (3) the limitation, regulation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments.

When the 14-power resolution came up for final approval on 8 April, the USSR proposed only two amendments. The first, deleting the commendation of the Disarmament Commission's work, was accepted by the sponsors. The second, deleting a reaffirmation of the Western position on disarmament as approved by the General Assembly in the fall of 1951, was defeated.

The Soviet attitude was not further clarified in the Pravda reply to President Eisenhower's five disarmament proposals. Pravda recalled that the USSR had in the past made its position known and that, while it did not object to the president's

Document No.	18
No Study in Class.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review	
Auth.	NR 10-2
Date	1 JUN 1953
File #	11

proposals, they were too general in nature. Apparently recognizing disarmament as one of the "contentious international problems," Pravda emphasized that the USSR was ready for a "serious, businesslike discussion" of such problems "both by direct negotiations and, when necessary, within the framework of the UN."

In view of Moscow's criticism of the UN as "Western-dominated," the USSR may prefer to discuss disarmament and other problems by "direct negotiations." Accordingly, the Soviet leaders may call for a big-power disarmament conference. This would be in line with Molotov's statement of 28 April supporting the World Peace Council's proposal for a five-power peace pact. The Soviet leaders are aware from past experience that the disarmament theme can be effectively utilized in propaganda to promote confusion and dissension in the West at little cost to Moscow.

Both Molotov's answer to the peace partisans and the Pravda article appear to leave the door open for further disarmament talks. On the other hand, Marshal Bulganin's official May Day speech reiterated the call for the further strengthening of the Soviet armed forces so that they may "be ready at any time to rebuff the attempts of any hostile forces to interfere in the peaceful victorious advance of the Soviet people toward its great goal -- communism." It appears unlikely, therefore, that Moscow plans to repudiate its doctrine that the Soviet Orbit must continue to increase its armed strength, particularly at a time when the West enjoys apparent superiority in atomic arms and possesses a superior industrial base from which to build military force.

Moreover, it is improbable that Soviet intransigence will decrease on such matters as adequate international inspection of conventional and atomic armaments facilities or the international control of atomic energy. In the past Moscow has emphasized the view that free inspection inside the USSR would be a cover for Western espionage. Similarly, it has rejected the idea of the international ownership of atomic energy facilities as being an encroachment on its sovereignty. Moscow's extreme security consciousness and its abiding suspicion of Western intentions make highly unlikely the disclosure of basic Soviet military and economic strength which is essential to any fundamental change in the East-West impasse over disarmament.