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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

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16 April 1959

NUCLEAR TEST TALKS

Soviet delegate Tsarapkin, at the Geneva nuclear test talks which resumed on 13 April after a three-week recess, indicated distress and alarm in his initial reaction to the new American proposal for a phased approach to a test ban, beginning with a cessation of atmospheric and underwater tests. He said this proposal bears out the USSR's "worst apprehensions" concerning the outcome of the talks. At the end of the 13 April session, the Soviet delegate told reporters that the American proposal is not acceptable and that all nuclear tests must be stopped. Soviet propaganda quickly charged that the proposal ignores the "demands of the world public for a permanent, unconditional cessation of tests."

Khrushchev had told Prime Minister Macmillan during the

latter's visit to Moscow that he was not interested in an agreement confined to atmospheric tests. Soviet propaganda had attacked Senator Gore's suggestion last winter for an American unilateral cessation of atmospheric tests, terming it evidence of American opposition to an over-all cessation agreement. Tsarapkin recalled during the 13 April session that the American delegation had stated, when originally queried on the senator's proposal, that the United States continued to seek a comprehensive agreement.

On the eve of the resumption of the talks, the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued a lengthy statement summarizing Moscow's position since the conference began on 31 October. The statement seeks to present the Soviet stand on the remaining points in controversy

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in a "reasonable" light contrasting it with the Western position. It gives all credit for progress made thus far to Moscow and asserts that, in order to reach a solution, the United States and Britain must "show the same willingness to reach agreement as the USSR."

The tone of the statement recalls two letters by Khrushchev to groups of private citizens in the United States and India, published during the recess, in which the Soviet premier attacked alleged Western attempts to "obstruct" agreement. It charges that the Western proposals concerning the composition of the control commission and vote by majority are efforts "to foist on the Soviet Union unilateral decisions on questions affecting "vitally important interests of the Soviet Union's security."

Ambassador Thompson believes there is some chance Moscow will attempt to "sweeten the general atmosphere" before the forthcoming foreign ministers' conference by making "enough concessions at the atom test talks to produce agreement there."

Thompson suggested that this would be intended to strengthen the hands of those Westerners who urge flexibility and advocate European security arrangements involving arms limitation and inspection schemes independent of progress

toward settlement of European political questions. He believes, however, that any major new Soviet proposals on either nuclear tests or broader disarmament questions probably will be held back for Khrushchev himself to introduce at a summit meeting.

To further the appearance of a conciliatory attitude on its part prior to negotiations on Berlin, the USSR may plan to make further adjustments in its position at the nuclear test talks on such issues as the staffing of control posts and permanent inspection teams: Khrushchev told Macmillan he thought agreement could be reached on staffing of control posts.

Tsarapkin on 15 April modified the Soviet position on the functions of "foreign specialist" members of control posts and contended that agreement on staffing would open the way for an over-all cessation of tests, thus obviating the need to discuss the American plan for a partial agreement.

While Moscow may introduce some formula designed to appear as a compromise on voting procedure, it is unlikely that the Soviet leaders would accept any control and inspection arrangements which would preclude an effective Soviet veto over the activities of the control bodies. [REDACTED]