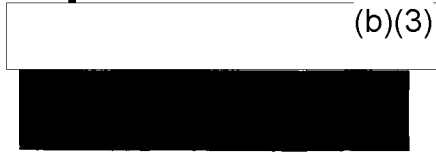


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EURATOM-IAEA: New French reservations about safeguard verification arrangements between EURATOM and the IAEA threaten further delays in European ratifications of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

Ratification of the NPT by the non-nuclear-weapon members of EURATOM has depended on an agreement with IAEA to verify EURATOM's safeguards and thus satisfy NPT provisions. France now says no IAEA-EURATOM agreement can be completed until the EC Council has approved the negotiations, and Paris is objecting to the arrangements negotiated with IAEA by the EC Commission. Paris apparently will argue that the Commission has exceeded its authority. In return for its approval of the verification arrangements, Paris is likely to seek concessions that could further weaken the applicability of EURATOM safeguards to France. As the only nuclear weapons state in EURATOM, France has long argued that it should be under no more constraints than are the super-power signatories of the NPT.

Most of France's EURATOM partners are apparently willing to put off notification of the agreement with the IAEA in order not to provoke the French. They probably believe that France does not want to be responsible for delaying the NPT indefinitely--and its controls over any West German nuclear ambitions. They may be prepared eventually to grant Paris further exceptional status within EURATOM, although this could pose considerable political problems, especially for Bonn.

A formal announcement that the EURATOM-IAEA agreement is ready for ratification had been scheduled for September. Any delay will almost certainly draw a sharp Soviet response. Moscow has already protested Washington's decision to continue to supply fissionable materials to EURATOM before NPT ratification by EURATOM's non-nuclear-weapon members.

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