

April 30, 1969

Thomas Hughes, Director, Office of Intelligence and Research, to Secretary of State, 'FRG - Further Delay on NPT Signature,' Intelligence Note-327

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Summary:

Noting that the same objections to the NPT remained, INR opined that some West German politicians were using them "to rationalize an opposition that is really based on nationalistic emotions and on the political advantages to be derived from playing upon these emotions."

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Intelligence Note - 327

April 30, 1969

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *tlh*
Subject: FRG - Further Delay on NPT Signature

The action of the West German Cabinet on April 23, further postponing a decision about NPT signature pending additional "clarifications" of the Treaty and renewed diplomatic efforts to get a more satisfactory response from the USSR, appears to indicate that, as the FRG approaches a national election, domestic political preoccupations are beginning to outweigh the international pressure that Bonn has been under to sign. It is now extremely unlikely that West Germany will sign before the Bundestag election on September 28. How soon it will sign after that, if at all, depends to a degree on the results of the election. An unexpectedly large vote for the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and for the Free Democrats (FDP) would make an early signature much more likely. Conversely, an absolute majority victory for the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union) -- considered unlikely at this juncture -- might well strengthen opposition to the Treaty, especially since its leading opponent, CSU Chairman Strauss, could be expected to emerge as a major figure in such a government.

As of now, domestic political opposition remains strong. In the current Bundestag, the SPD and FDP favor adherence; the CDU is split; and the CSU, the Bavarian sister party of the CDU, is 100-percent opposed. If, as

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many observers expect, the radical right-wing National Democratic Party (NPD) gets more than 5 percent of the vote in the coming election, another group of deputies adamantly opposed to the Treaty will be installed in the Bundestag.

Lack of US Pressure Gives FRG Leeway. Kiesinger's dilatory tendencies as Chancellor, the extent of opposition to the Treaty in his own party, and external circumstances such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the consequent delay in US Senate approval of the Treaty have combined to enable the FRG to postpone a decision. Now, in addition to political sensitivities associated with the electoral campaign, another factor is at work -- FRG assumptions about the attitude of the new US administration. FRG press spokesman Diehl on April 11 cited the lack of US pressure as an important reason why Bonn had plenty of time to obtain required clarifications and did not need to reach a "precipitate" decision about signature.

Opposition Uses Traditional Arguments. Familiar arguments -- of both a political and technical nature -- that opponents have used ever since FRG adherence to the NPT became an issue are still being put forward.

They relate to:

- 1) the need for further assurances against Soviet claims, based on the UN Charter, of a right to intervene in the affairs of the FRG;
- 2) the belief that Bonn ought to obtain a counter-concession from the USSR in return for the "concession" represented by FRG signature;
- 3) the importance of assuring continuing nuclear protection for the FRG should NATO dissolve while the NPT remains in force;

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- 4) the desire to spell out the terms of a European option -- i.e., the conditions under which a supranational European defense establishment (presumably including the FRG) could succeed to the nuclear weaponry of one or more of its members -- in such a way as to permit this to happen before a full European federation was achieved;
- 5) the problems of inspection, especially the difficulties in reconciling the inspection systems of EURATOM and IAEA, the expensiveness of inspections, and the danger of industrial espionage;
- 6) the desirability of having the super-powers make serious progress toward disarmament before the non-nuclears undertake their obligations under the NPT.

Appeal to Nationalistic Sentiment. At one time or another, the FRG has appeared to be satisfied on most of these points except the first two; Kiesinger said last year that the US interpretations given by former Secretary Rusk had removed West German misgivings on almost all major questions. The fact that the same issues continue to crop up in West German criticisms of the Treaty indicates, in part, that some of the stronger opponents never were satisfied that these questions had been adequately answered. Beyond this and more significantly, however, it shows that these issues are being used by some West Germans to rationalize an opposition that is really based on nationalistic emotions and on the political advantages to be derived from playing upon these emotions in the public at large. The underlying sensitivities that many conservative German politicians have about the NPT were expressed most tellingly by CSU leader Strauss when he said that an FRG signature would constitute a "Versailles of cosmic proportions."

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Treaty Supporters Weaken Their Stand. While the opponents of the NPT are maintaining their position as strongly as ever, supporters of the Treaty, to judge by the actions of their chief exponent, Foreign Minister Brandt, are beginning to tread more softly than before. Brandt did not press for signature at the April 23 Cabinet meeting as hard as many had expected him to do. He has favored the Treaty primarily because he believes German adherence would help him to attain his foreign policy goals. Now that domestic political motivations are beginning to predominate, he and the SPD are adopting an attitude of caution on the NPT, as they are doing also on broader questions of All-German and Eastern policy. In this election year, they are none too sure that touting the NPT and pressing for signature -- particularly if such pressure produced a serious squabble within the Coalition -- would not hurt them at the polls.

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