

April 1, 1963
Memorandum by Ambassador Aristov

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Summary:

Document memorandum by Soviet Ambassador to Poland Aristov regarding potential nonproliferation treaty

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Memorandum

Striving to the utmost to promote the consolidation of peace, to prevent the threat of thermonuclear war and to relax international tensions, the Soviet Government, as we already informed our friends, has been exchanging views with the U.S. government over the past year regarding the conclusion of an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. In the course of this exchange of views, consent was obtained from the USA that such an agreement would provide that nuclear weapons would not be transferred directly or indirectly, or through military alliances to the national control of states that do not yet possess such weapons and that these countries would not be assisted in the production of such weapons.

The Americans also consented that an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons will contain an obligation on the part of non-nuclear powers not to produce nuclear weapons; to refrain from acquiring directly or indirectly, or through military alliances national control over any nuclear weapons; and not to receive or seek to receive assistance from other states in the production of any nuclear weapon.

Still, the USA objected to our position regarding the inclusion in an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons a clause that would impede the creation of multilateral or any other such unified nuclear forces in NATO with the participation of West Germany.

In considering the next steps in the struggle for solving the problem of the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Government is proceeding from the idea that it would be particularly important for the socialist states with regard to this question at the present stage to secure a statement that the West German revanchists will not be able to get their hands on nuclear weapons. It should thus move things towards preventing the West German government, or the Bundeswehr, or even its individual subdivisions, from gaining the possibility of having nuclear weapons under its control within NATO or outside NATO. [Gomulka note in margin: For now, no one is putting {nuclear weapons} into their own hands.]

Based on these considerations, the Soviet Government has reached the conclusion that it is expedient to announce to the Americans our readiness to conclude an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons even in the case that the agreement will not contain a statement prohibiting outright the creation of multilateral nuclear forces in NATO, but either in the same declaration or in some other form, the Americans [will have to] take upon themselves the obligation not to permit a situation in which West Germany might obtain the possibility of being in charge of nuclear weapons.

We believe that an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons would still be advantageous to the socialist states even in this case because the main goal would be achieved: placing a serious obstacle in the path of the West German revanchists' accomplishing their dangerous plans to take possession of nuclear weapons. It goes without saying that the socialist states, as before, will remain opponents to the plans for establishing multilateral or in general any other sort of unified NATO nuclear forces and will continue its struggle against the establishment of these forces. As long as the West German revanchists' hands would be bound with regard to nuclear weapons by an agreement on nonproliferation, our struggles against the creation of NATO nuclear forces will be waged from a more advantageous position.

It can be expected that China and likely France will not agree to become parties to an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, but this will not detract from the advantages for the socialist community that will ensue from the conclusion of such an agreement.

We also have in mind that an agreement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons similar to the treaty regarding the prohibition of nuclear weapons tests should contain an article expressing the right of any state in keeping with the realization of its national sovereignty to leave the agreement if by maintaining the concluded agreement, circumstances would place the higher interests of the given state under threat. That statement will guarantee us the possibility to take counter-measures in case of need if the Americans, in violation of the understanding, nevertheless move towards actually transferring nuclear weapons to the West German revanchists in accordance with the NATO line. [Gomulka in margin: Prohibit the creation of multilateral nuclear forces now, and you will not [need to] reserve yourself the right to tear up the treaty.]

The Soviet Government is proceeding from [the idea] that this tactical line on the question of the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons is in keeping with the interests of preserving peace [and] the security interests of all the socialist states and that it derives from the commonly agreed-upon line of the states of the socialist commonwealth in the international arena. [Gomulka]

The Soviet Government would like to know the opinion of our Polish friends regarding the aforementioned considerations. The problem of the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons will clearly be broached in the current, ongoing discussions of USSR Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko with Dean Rusk on measures leading to a further relaxation of international tensions and the consolidation of peace.

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