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SUBJECT: German Views on NPT and NATO

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Baron Guttenberg, who is here for the Atlantic Bruecke Conference, called on the Secretary today to discuss some German concerns over policy matters that affect both countries. After the exchange of normal greetings and amenities, Guttenberg said that there is considerable worry in Germany over two matters in particular, the Nonproliferation Treaty and the complex of questions centering about United States troop rotation and the future of NATO.

1. Nonproliferation Treaty

Guttenberg said that Chancellor Kiesinger feels it may not be possible to hold the coalition together and obtain the necessary parliamentary majority for the nonproliferation treaty unless a limited-duration clause is made part of the treaty. He said that certain personalities would withdraw from the Government unless this were done, and there would be internal political instability. As for the length of duration, he said that the FRG does not necessarily support the Italian proposal for a five-year duration: the Germans have in mind a somewhat longer time-frame, middle-range rather than a short term. A limited-duration clause is necessary in order to allow some leeway for changes in circumstances that cannot now be foreseen but which could affect the desirability or appropriateness of the NPT in the future.

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Guttenberg continued that the basic problem for Germany on the NPT is political. The Soviet Union is not merely an adversary but an enemy of the Federal Republic, because it is the Soviet Union which is responsible for the continued division of Germany. The Soviet Union is interested in the NPT primarily because it will provide the Soviet Union with a guarantee that the FRG will not become a nuclear power. Most Germans don't understand why this major political objective should be granted to the Soviet Union without extracting a counter-concession. The Soviet Union has a real fear of a Germany armed with nuclear weapons and would be willing to make substantial concessions for a guarantee that Germany would not acquire nuclear arms. It has been the German conception that the military configuration of Germany should be determined within the context of an all-German peace treaty; a nonproliferation treaty without some progress in this direction is difficult for Germany to accept. Soviet propaganda, and especially Kosygin's remark in London, had added to public uneasiness in Germany.

The Secretary said that while it was true three years ago that the Soviet interest in nonproliferation was based almost entirely on their views concerning Germany, this was no longer the case. True, Germany is still an important factor in Soviet eyes, but the Russians have become aware of the broader aspects of the problem. The Secretary said that it would be a mistake for Germany to see the nonproliferation treaty as a one-sided German obligation to the Soviet Union. The FRG should also view it as an obligation that Germany undertakes towards its allies and toward other countries such as India and Japan. It could also regard the nonproliferation treaty as a guarantee that Germany's eastern neighbors would not become nuclear powers. The Secretary said that he had been working on behalf of German reunification for all of the six years in which he has held this office. He would continue to do so. Unfortunately, progress had been impeded because of Soviet unwillingness to move. We will continue to strive for German reunification. But, in the meantime, it would be unreasonable to expect the rest of the world and all other problems to stand still. A great many people would interpret German intransigence on the nonproliferation treaty as an indication that there are some in Germany with ambitions for FRG to acquire national nuclear weapons.

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Baron Guttenberg told the Secretary that there were no responsible Germans who harbor such ambitions.

The Secretary then pointed out that a limited duration clause in the nonproliferation treaty would act as an incentive to various countries to get ready to go nuclear as soon as the treaty has run its course. The Secretary asked Guttenberg to imagine what the world would be like ten years from now, if there were no nonproliferation treaty, and, for example, the various Arab states, Israel, India, and Pakistan were all confronting each other with nuclear weapons. It is to avert this alarming situation that the United States supports the nonproliferation treaty. This is the simple explanation of our policy. There is no need to look for hidden subtle motives. Guttenberg said he thought inspection procedures could avert the worst consequences of a limited-duration clause. The Secretary replied that this would be impossible. Countries could stockpile nuclear fuel and conduct the engineering research.

II. Troop Rotation and NATO

Baron Guttenberg said that many Germans are worried over the announced rotation of two United States brigades (which Guttenberg said was really a withdrawal dressed up to look like a rotation). He said this was viewed in Germany as an indication of lessened concern in the United States over European security, particularly since it comes up in conjunction with the nonproliferation treaty problem. Guttenberg said that he personally did not view the troop rotation with alarm; but all would have to take account of the rather widespread concern in Germany over this development. Guttenberg said that it was most important that proposals that arise periodically for revision of NATO plans, force levels, political roles for NATO, etc., be shelved for a few years. Guttenberg thought it necessary to leave NATO undisturbed for awhile so that it can become stabilized in the new situation that has arisen and perform its primary task, which is to provide security for the Atlantic world.

Guttenberg said that he had seen a report from London that the United States had proposed a binding agreement for NATO

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that would fix force levels and guarantee NATO against further troop withdrawals. He asked the Secretary to comment on this.

The Secretary said that such a formal proposal had not been made, but we would be willing to look at proposals for an agreement on force levels that would be binding on the other members of NATO as well as on the United States. The Secretary said that the troop rotation plan was an effect and not a cause. The American people and Congress found it hard to accept the double standard by which the European members of NATO expect the United States to live up to all of its commitments, on the grounds that the Soviet threat still exists; but the same European NATO members seem to govern their own military contributions by the much looser standards of East-West detente. The Secretary told Guttenberg that the United States had suffered 200,000 casualties since 1945 in defense of the free world against communist aggression; we were losing 200 men a week right now. The Secretary said he did not understand how, in the face of these facts, our determination to honor our commitments in Europe could be questioned.

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