

December 29, 1966

**Memorandum of Conversation with West German
Ambassador Heinrich Knappstein, 'German Concern
Over Draft NPT Text'**

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Summary:

In this conversation, Ambassador Knappstein expressed concern over the draft of the NPT that Washington and Moscow had agreed on. Knappstein worried that the draft articles would foreclose "all of the available options for participation in nuclear defense."

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: December 29, 1966

SUBJECT: German Concern Over Draft NPT Text

PARTICIPANTS: H.E. Heinrich Knapstein, Ambassador, German Embassy
Berndt von Staden, Counselor, German Embassy

The Secretary
Alexander C. Johnpoll, Acting Country Director for Germany, EUR/GER
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Reviewed by: Raymond J. Felton, FSO

Ambassador Knapstein called on the Secretary this afternoon at the Ambassador's request. He explained that Chancellor Kiesinger had called him back to Bonn for consultations, and that he would leave Washington on January 2. The main purpose of the consultations was to brief Chancellor Kiesinger on the current status of the NPT negotiations. The Foreign Office had prepared a preliminary legal analysis of the partial text and interpretive comments we had provided, and on January 11 the German Cabinet will meet to discuss the matter.

The Foreign Office preliminary legal analysis of the NPT material was causing the FRG some concern. The Germans fear that most if not all of the available options for participation in nuclear defense would be closed. Any hope for a future MLF or ANF would be finished. Sharing of non-nuclear parts of nuclear weapons, the McNamara Committee, and the two-key system would all seem to be prohibited. Even peaceful use of nuclear devices would apparently be barred, which would be dangerous to the future of Euratom. The draft text could be used to stop the process of European integration. If a United States of Europe were in the distant future to emerge as a new State, it is not inconceivable that the NPT as presently drafted could be used to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Knapstein said that the Germans recognized that their fears might be unfounded. The Federal Republic Government has not formulated any policy or reached any firm conclusions. It was still in the process of studying the problem. He thought that it was particularly important that the Russians be nailed down to

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interpretations of the text so that they could not in the future use the NPT against our common objectives.

Ambassador Knappstein suggested that two steps were now necessary for the German Government: the United States should show a complete text to the Germans (particularly Article II); and there should be a meeting between experts from both sides to study the text closely. The German experts would identify the parts which they don't understand fully or which cause concern, and the American experts would clarify those parts.

The Secretary said that we would welcome such a meeting of experts, and hoped that it could take place as soon as possible, preferably before the January 11 German Cabinet meeting. He accepted Foreign Minister Brandt's suggestion that the Germans send their experts to Washington for this purpose. It would be necessary, of course, that this be done without any publicity whatever.

The Secretary said that we had no doubt at all that the NPT text we have in mind would not affect the two-key system, the McNamara Committee, or the right of a future federated European State to possess nuclear weapons. Delivery systems would not be barred, and some type of ANF could be worked out. If a European defense community were to be created, its nuclear interests would be protected by the five-year review clause and the withdrawal provisions.

The Secretary said that our recent talks with the German Government on this subject were part of our consultations with the FRG and the 4 NATO members of the Geneva Conference prior to any agreement with the Soviet Union.

The Secretary said that he agreed there should be a clear common interpretation of the NPT. There is no point in having a treaty that only serves to conceal differences. He said that he had the impression that while the Soviet Union still felt some concern about the FRG, it was less focused on Germany these days and more worried, as we are, over countries like India, China, and Japan, and over the amount of plutonium lying around. Verification will be an important problem, and this will bring in the problem of Euratom and its relations with IAEA.

The Secretary at this point gave Knappstein an informal memorandum recapitulating the information that had already been delivered to the German Government. He told Knappstein that while this paper did not answer all the questions he had raised it would be useful to the Germans in their current study.

Knappstein thanked the Secretary and promised to let us know when the German experts would be coming here. He thought that Schnippenkoetter would come with one or two of his assistants; and he would urge on his Government that this take place before the January 11 Cabinet meeting.

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