

July 14, 1959

**Notice from First Secretary Eoin MacWhite To All
Irish Diplomatic Missions (Except Washington)**

Citation:

"Notice from First Secretary Eoin MacWhite To All Irish Diplomatic Missions (Except Washington)", July 14, 1959, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs/6/440/8/5 US Agreements with NATO, 1959. Contributed by Mervyn O'Driscoll. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/300650>

Summary:

First Secretary Eoin MacWhite informed all missions of Aiken's concerns that U.S. nuclear information agreements with selected NATO partners could impede efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. He was nonetheless reticent when it came to lodging a formal protest, having been advised by Eoin MacWhite that a strong denunciation would be counterproductive. From MacWhite's reading no actual nuclear information would be transferred to Allied personnel after all. The agreements related specifically to information necessary for the training of Allied personnel in the employment of U.S. atomic weapons in their hosts' territories, so Aiken recoiled from further diplomatic protests. He appreciated the need to maintain some nuance on nuclear sharing as he pursued an East-West consensus. The strength of NATO's feelings in favor of enhanced alliance nuclear defense and cooperation in the aftermath of the Sputnik shock was well known. The Irish were aware of the Eastern bloc's objections to NATO nuclear sharing as a dangerous precedent that strengthened NATO's political and security position. Moscow was especially exercised by any prospect of West German access to nuclear weapons as part of the normalization of German rearmament and progress toward reunification. Moscow opposed any semblance of Bonn's finger on the nuclear trigger, or its troops gaining proficiency with nuclear weaponry.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Archives are subject to copyright and should not be copied
or reproduced without the written permission
of the Director of the National Archives

υμμ. 5ΑΣ
Refce. No.



ΑΠ ΡΟΜΗ ΓΝΩΤΑΙ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ,
Department of External Affairs

440/8/5

ΒΑΙΛΕ ΔΕΣ ΚΛΙΑΣ.
Dublin.

Airmail

14 Ιούλι, 1959.

*To ALL MISSIONS
EXCEPT WASHINGTON.*

I am directed to state the Minister is very much afraid that the agreements which the United States recently concluded with the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Canada and Greece, whereby those countries will receive classified information on nuclear weapons and non-nuclear parts of nuclear weapon systems, will seriously affect the prospects of our United Nations initiative to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. As you know, these agreements have been referred to the Joint Committee for Atomic Energy and will become operative after lying before the Committee for 60 days unless they are blocked by a Congressional resolution of disapproval. The agreements are at the present moment being discussed in the American Congress.

The principal object of these agreements is the communication of classified information as is jointly determined to be necessary to the training of personnel in the employment of and defense against atomic weapons and other military applications of atomic energy. A memorandum summarizing the Minister's views on this matter is enclosed for your information.

The Minister has expressed his concern to the American Ambassador here on the 9th instant at the potential adverse effects that these agreements may have on efforts to restrict the further spread of nuclear weapons.

While the Minister does not desire you to raise the matter in any formal way, he wishes that, should the question arise in any discussion, you should follow the line of argument in the attached memorandum.

Eamon de Valera
Z Rúnaí.

Nuclear Information Agreements between the U.S.
and certain NATO States

Agreements have been recently concluded between the United States Government and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Greece and Canada respectively, which provide that the United States will transfer non-nuclear parts of atomic weapons systems to those countries and also provide them with classified information necessary for the training of personnel in the employment of atomic weapons, the development of delivery systems for atomic weapons, etc.

Each of the agreements provides that there will be no transfer by either party of atomic weapons or non-nuclear parts of atomic weapons and it is noted that the type of materials and information covered by the agreements may be transferred only if the transfer does not contribute significantly to the atomic weapon design, development or fabrication capacity of the receiving parties.

It seems clear, however, that serious consequences, adversely affecting the prospects of a lasting world peace, MAY well ensue if the agreements become operative. Whatever qualifications or conditions may be attached to them, they would appear to constitute a significant move in the direction of an eventual wider dissemination of nuclear weapons. It is not unlikely that they may be represented as such in certain quarters and the conditions of mistrust unfortunately prevailing in international relations are such that similar or more far-reaching counter-moves on the part of other Powers may naturally be anticipated.

There are grounds for believing also that the agreements could have a serious effect on public opinion in Eastern Europe and other sensitive areas. If the agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany becomes operative, it will naturally cause concern in those Eastern European countries which have vivid memories of German occupation.

It is noted too that when the agreement becomes operative, its continuation can be demanded, as long as Nato lasts, irrespective of the wishes of the United States Government. This might mean that the Governments with which U.S. has made their agreements will be in a position to veto certain agreements affecting the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons.

It is the impetus which they may give to the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons that occasions concern regarding these agreements.

14. 7. '59.

Department of External Affairs
Dublin

Refce. No. 440/8/5

14 Iuil, 1959.

Airmail

[Handwritten] *To All Missions, Except Washington.*

I am directed to state the Minister is very much afraid that the agreements which the United States recently concluded with the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Canada and Greece, whereby those countries will receive classified information on nuclear weapons and non-nuclear parts of nuclear weapon systems, will seriously affect the prospects of our United Nations initiative to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. As you know, these agreements have been referred to the Joint Committee for Atomic Energy and will become operative after lying before the Committee for 60 days unless they are blocked by a Congressional resolution of disapproval. The agreements are at the present moment being discussed in the American Congress.

The principal object of these agreements is the communisation of classified information as is jointly determined to be necessary to the training of personnel in the employment of and defense against atomic weapons and other military applications of atomic energy. A memorandum summarizing the Minister's views on this matter is enclosed for your information.

The Minister has expressed his concern to the American Ambassador here on the 9th instant at the potential adverse effects that these agreements may have on efforts to restrict the further spread of nuclear weapons.

While the Minister does not desire you to raise the matter in any formal way, he wishes that, should the question arise in any discussion, you should follow the line of argument in the attached memorandum.

[signature]

Rúnaí

[page break]

Nuclear Information agreements between the U.S. and certain NATO States

Agreements have been recently concluded between the United States Government and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Greece and Canada respectively, which provide that the United States will transfer non-nuclear parts of atomic weapons systems to those countries and also provide them with classified information necessary for the training of personnel in the employment of atomic weapons, the development of delivery systems for atomic weapons, etc.

Each of the agreements provides that there will be no transfer by either party of atomic weapons or non-nuclear parts of atomic weapons and it is noted that the type of materials and information coveted by the agreements may be transferred only if the transfer does not contribute significantly to the atomic weapon design, development or fabrication capacity of the receiving parties.

It seems clear, however, that serious consequences adversely affecting the prospects of a lasting world peace, may well ensue if the agreements become operative. Whatever qualifications or conditions may be attached to them, they would appear to constitute a significant move in the direction of an eventual wider dissemination of nuclear weapons. It is not unlikely that they may be represented as such in certain quarters and the conditions of mistrust unfortunately prevailing in international

relations are such that similar or more far-reaching counter-moves on the part of other Powers may naturally be anticipated.

There are grounds for believing also that the agreements could have a serious effect on public opinion in Eastern Europe and other sensitive areas. If the agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany becomes operative, it will naturally cause concern in those Eastern European countries which have vivid memories of German occupation.

It is noted too that when the agreement becomes operative, its continuation can be demanded, as long as NATO lasts, irrespective of the wishes of the United States Government. This might mean that the Governments with which U.S. has made their agreements will be in a position to veto certain agreements affecting the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons.

It is the impetus which they may give to the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons that occasions concern regarding these agreements.

14. 7. '59.