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SECRET

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OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Dear Joe:

The following is an effort to respond for Bob McBride, Hal Sonnenfeldt and myself to your letter of March 7 concerning the Soviet use of the argument that cessation of nuclear tests has important implications for the fourth country problem.

I think it is true that this Soviet argument would have some appeal to large areas in the uncommitted countries, and to certain elements within Western Europe. The Soviet delegation to the 1957 London disarmament negotiations did exhibit somewhat more awareness of the fourth country problem than did Gromyko and the rest of the Soviet delegation at the 1956 conference, where Soviet reference usually was to "your fourth country problem". As to the argument about the implications of nuclear test bans to that problem, it is not new, for the Soviets played that line both in 1957 and in 1956, although in 1956 their emphasis in the London negotiations was more on the conventional field.

On April 28, 1956, Gromyko told Stassen in London that a ban on H-bomb tests (which Moscow was then proposing) would "at least do something to prevent or minimize the problem of other countries acquiring H-bombs." In September 1956, Jim Pratt reported a talk with Usachev of the Soviet delegation in which the latter argued that a test ban would allay United States fears about the fourth country problem "since it is impossible to develop atomic weapons without testing." In, I think, a unique allusion to possible Soviet concern regarding Chinese nuclear weapons production, Usachev stated that under present conditions China was an example of a country that could very easily develop nuclear weapons.

Then, in 1957 in London, the Soviets made comments such as the following.

"We cannot but endorse this view, for it is based on a realistic appraisal of the facts. Only one conclusion can be drawn from it: the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests will undoubtedly slow down the preparation of new types of such weapons in countries already manufacturing atomic weapons, and

will

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will be an obstacle to countries which do not yet possess them but may in time become able to organize their manufacture. Thus the prohibition of tests will put a brake on the armaments race from which the security of all States is bound to benefit." (Zorin, USSR, DC/SC.1/PV.94; p.30; 3/28/57)

"...Mr. Stassen, moreover, explains the inability of the United States to proceed to the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests by its concern that its own security should not suffer and that, as he said, the outlook for peace and security of other nations should not be undermined.

"How far is this line of reasoning justified? The prohibition of tests as proposed by the Soviet Union delegation must affect all States equally, and therefore our decision will have the same consequences for all States. One such consequence will be that the process of further development and improvement of atomic and hydrogen weapons will be slowed down, if not halted altogether." (Zorin, USSR, DC/SC.1/PV.91; p.13; 3/25 & 3/26/57)

In the July 12, 1957 meeting of the Subcommittee, Mr. Zorin ran through a list of the other major countries outside the Subcommittee in an attempt to prove that they would also accept a test ban.

The Soviets probably do believe that a test ban would be a relatively cheap way of stopping or at least inhibiting fourth country nuclear weapons capability. In addition to their argument about testing being necessary for fulfillment of a weapons production program, they probably see a test ban as establishing a sort of "rationale" - by a supposed beginning of an effort to reverse the nuclear weapons race - which might make it difficult (a) for our allies to receive any form of nuclear weapons assistance, and (b) for democratic legislatures to vote the funds needed for independent fourth country nuclear weapons development. In the field of further speculation, the Soviets might see a test ban as setting a climate of opinion which would enable them more easily to resist any pressure from satellite countries, including Communist China, for nuclear weapons deliveries.

I hope that the above informal comments may be of some help to you.

Sincerely yours,

Philip J. Farley  
Special Assistant to the Secretary for  
Atomic Energy

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cc: EUR;Mr. McBride

DRS: Mr. Sonnenfeld

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