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By NARA Date 6/18/08

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

10684

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: July 23, 1968
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: The Secretary's Office

SUBJECT: Non-Proliferation
Part IV of V

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PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary
Eugene V. Rostow, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Alfred Puhon, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, EUR
Edwin D. Crowley, EUR/GER

His Excellency Franz Josef Strauss, Finance Minister, FRG
His Excellency Heinrich Knappstein, German Ambassador
Dr. Walter Rieger, Personal Assistant to the Minister

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Secretary Rusk asked Minister Strauss what was at the heart of the German problem on the NPT. Strauss said he would express opinions which were his and not those of the Cabinet nor of the SPD. He was aware that his government had inquired concerning a number of details and he did not want to go into them further. The FRG had been satisfied on most of them. He agreed with the goals of the Treaty. Who would want Nasser, etc., to have a nuclear weapon? The German problem is what will be the political changes over the longer range as a result of the Treaty. If the FRG does or does not sign, it will not change the real situation. He continues to agree that the FRG should not have a nuclear potential. This would be wrong for political reasons. He wondered what rights the Soviets might get from the Treaty for permanent intervention in Germany.

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Secretary Rusk said he did not quite understand how the Treaty gave the Soviets any new power in that respect. Minister Strauss said the Soviets gave up nothing but got everything including a permanent right of accusing the FRG of doing things it should not do under the Treaty. They will never be satisfied. The USSR would never give access to nuclear weapons to their friends. China already has them. He was also worried whether the Treaty would discourage or encourage unification of Europe. One had to live with the bomb just as one had to live with de Gaulle.

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1/23 TO SECRETARY

(Drafting Office and Officer)
EUR/GER:EDCrowley:mk:hmo

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Secretary Rusk said he did not see how the Soviets could interfere on the basis of the Treaty. The FRG did not have to accept Soviet safeguard inspectors. Mr. Strauss said his concerns were strengthened by the Soviet communication to the FRG of July 5. He was particularly concerned with references to Article 53 and Article 107 of the UN Charter. In the U.S. view, he knew that their application was overtaken by events. However, the Soviets continued to maintain their right to use military means against those defeated in World War II. Chancellor Kiesinger agreed with him, although he did not say it publicly, that there should be more assurance on interpretations. We have them from the U.S. but not from the Soviets.

Secretary Rusk recalled we had gone over the interpretations in NATO. We have told the Russians what we are going to say. We do not expect their public agreement. It is clear if they object, the question arises as to whether there is a Treaty. He said the Russians were fully aware of our view on this subject. He understood it to be the clear desire of the FRG not to leave an option for the FRG but for Europe. The Soviets might object to unification even without a Treaty. France and the UK were not going to give up their nuclear weapons. Strauss said in the case of European unity they eventually would have to transfer them to the unified Europe.

Secretary Rusk did not see the use of the withdrawal clause as any more difficult than a decision not to sign the Treaty. If the FRG did not sign, they would still be open to accusations. Strauss said we should not always worry about Soviet accusations. Secretary Rusk recalled that these problems did not just come from the East but from the West.

Under Secretary Rostow said, with regard to Strauss' concern a about the European option, he had discussed the problem at length with several, including Birrenbach. As a result, he had reviewed the international law of succession, and concluded that whether Europe was formed federally or confederally, the doctrine applied when the parties said it did. Minister Strauss agreed. He recalled that the Secretary once said that the FRG should get rid of the Mercator Projection. It was a fact that the USSR had three neighbors--

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the United States, Communist China and Europe. If he were a Russian leader, he would do anything to avoid a unified Europe, even a unified Communist Europe.

Secretary Rusk said that is why we want a unified Europe since if Europe were secure there would be no reason for war between the USSR and the US.

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