

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM: Amembassy DUBLIN

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 4, 1961

DATE

REF: Emb. Despatches 42 and 48.

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SUBJECT: Article by Mr. Aiken on Preventing Wider Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons.

There are enclosed six copies of Issue 539, dated September 4, 1961, of the Weekly Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs, containing an article by the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Frank AIKEN, entitled "Can We Limit The Nuclear Club". As stated therein, the article is reprinted with permission from the Sept. 1961 issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and the copyright is held by the Educational Foundation for Nuclear Science Inc. of Chicago. The Embassy is aware that the Department receives at least one copy of the Weekly Bulletin and surmises that it may have already seen the article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, but believes that it may be useful for the Department to have additional copies of this issue in view of its relevance to the Irish item on the prevention of wider dissemination of nuclear weapons intended for introduction as a resolution in the 16th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Department may wish to forward several of the copies of the enclosure to the United States Mission to the United Nations.

In this article Mr. Aiken describes the background to and purpose of earlier resolutions introduced by the Irish delegation to the United Nations. He sums up this purpose by stating "Any proposal which is to be successful must provide against a double risk: independent manufacture by small nations and nuclear powers giving the weapons to smaller allies". He makes clear later on (page 7) that in their proposals the Irish delegation is not seeking more than this insurance, for their proposals would not prevent the holding of weapons on the territory of the allies of the nuclear nations as long as the nuclear powers retain control.

The most interesting part of the paper is deemed to be the Minister's attempt to rebut criticisms made of the Irish proposals

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in the past. He admits that, although it is unlikely that a smaller power could develop its own nuclear weapons unnoticed, it is possible that a nuclear power could transfer weapons to its allies in secret. To this objection he answers that it would be against the self-interest of a nuclear power to reduce its influence by sharing its nuclear weapons - even with one of its allies. Even if a country saw a temporary advantage in breaking its pledge, he argues, it would be deterred from doing so by the fear of suffering a major propaganda defeat if the violation were discovered. Furthermore, the enormous dangers involved in placing other fingers on dangerous triggers would outweigh any apparent temporary military advantage to a great power in letting direct control over some of these weapons pass from its own hands.

It will be noted that this rebuttal skirts the question why an agreement is necessary if, in any case, it is against the interests of the nuclear powers to give their weapons to smaller allies. The only argument which touches on this question is that a flagrant breaking of a Government's own free pledge is worse than a refusal to accept a resolution of condemnation after the event, and that by breaking such a pledge the nuclear power concerned would run the risk of being pilloried. Such an argument scarcely carries as much weight today, following the resumption of nuclear testing by the Soviet Union on August 31, as it may have when Mr. Aiken wrote his article. In fact, Mr. Aiken appears to weaken the force of his own position by stating later (page 7) that the danger coming from a breach of an agreement not to spread nuclear weapons would in no way be comparable to that of a breach of an agreement to destroy all nuclear weapons. Such being the case, and it obviously is, it may be permissible to observe that the breach of an agreement not to disseminate would be regarded with far less horror than the breach of an agreement to destroy all nuclear weapons. Hence, in Mr. Aiken's context of mere propaganda losses, a breach of the former might be risked more readily than a breach of the latter.

A second objection, that the value of any ban for prohibition is equal to the efficacy of the control system which it establishes, is answered by the Minister as follows: "But it would be foolish to become so preoccupied with the question of physical control measures that we lose sight of the fact that the keeping of a given agreement may be so clearly in the interests of all nations that fully effective physical control measures are not necessary." In this sentence Mr. Aiken appears to sum up the inherent weakness of his proposition that it is important and necessary to obtain an agreement. If the keeping of such an agreement were in fact so clearly in the interests of all nations, it is difficult to see the necessity for an agreement; if the keeping of such an agreement were not so clearly in the interests of all nations, then the need for control and inspection measures would seem to be very great.

The Minister's last argument is that an agreement is also necessary to deter from embarking on the development of nuclear weapons

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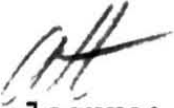
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those nations which now or soon will have the capability of developing such weapons on their own. He simply expresses the belief that an agreement in accord with the Irish resolutions might persuade such nations not to undertake a nuclear weapons program because of the assurances given that its neighbors will not press on with similar programs. Considering the nature of the political regimes in power in some of these potential nuclear powers, particularly Communist China, such a belief seems to be a pious but wholly unrealistic hope.

For the Ambassador:



Edward P. Prince
 First Secretary of Embassy



Enclosure: Six copies Weekly Bulletin.

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