Science in the News

Disarmament: A New Agency Is Organized To Coordinate Research and Planning of Policy

The State Department has quietly announced the organization of a United States Disarmament Administration, a move that reflects the increasing disposition to put more effort into the question of arms control and related problems than has been done in the past. But the importance and exact role of the new organization remains uncertain even to those within it, and will remain so until some time after the election.

As described by State Department spokesmen, the Disarmament Administration will be an interdepartmental agency headed by a presidential appointee holding a rank roughly equivalent to Under Secretary of State, that is, the rank immediately below cabinet status. Its chief will report to the Secretary of State. Its staff, as presently planned, will consist of about 40 state department officers and about an equal number of representatives of other government agencies, drawn principally from the Defense Department, and to a lesser extent from the Atomic Energy Commission, the United States Information Agency, and perhaps others. Additional technical and scientific personnel will be recruited from outside the government.

The agency is seen as a staff organization: that is, it will not make or carry out policy, but rather organize and supervise policy studies and technical research and formulate policy recommendations to be presented to the Secretary of State and through him to the National Security Council and the President. This organizational setup reflects the widely held feeling that the intimate connection between arms control policy and over-all defense and foreign policy would make an independent policy-making (rather than policy-planning) Disarmament Administration unworkable.

Senator Kennedy and other Democrats have been calling for establishing a research agency. Last winter Kennedy suggested the organization of an Arms Control Research Institute, an agency quite similar to the newly organized Disarmament Administration. Administration officials, though, say that the study which led to the formation of the new agency was initiated last fall, before the Kennedy proposal was made.

Types of Research

The research program the Disarmament Administration will sponsor, and in some cases, conduct, is like almost everything else about the agency, highly tentative. Now that policy planners have begun to think more seriously about arms control and about the broader question of policies to enhance international stability and lessen the likelihood of war, they have become sharply aware of the number of questions for which there is no well-based answer. There is no tradition of research in this area, or of large-scale federal support for research projects generally in the area of foreign affairs. Congress has been leery of providing funds and the Administration has not been very aggressive in asking for funds. Everyone agrees that the amount of money currently available for research ($400,000 for fiscal '61) is trivial compared with the needs of a large-scale program. (Although comparisons tend to be misleading, the $400,000 for research to be sponsored by the Disarmament Administration amounts to less than 0.01 percent of the money that will be spent this year on weapon research and less than 0.001 percent of over-all defense spending.) But the small amount of money available is not an immediate problem since it will probably be at least 6 months or more before the research program takes definite shape and the Disarmament Administration is ready to get a substantial program underway.

Military Studies

At the minimum the research program will have to cover the military and technical studies necessary to gauge the implications of any proposals we might like to make, or of proposals that may be offered by other nations. To cite obvious examples: proposals for a neutralized zone in Europe or elsewhere, or for reductions of the size of standing armies or for the abandonment of foreign bases all require studies of the probable effect of such agreements on our relative defensive strength vis-à-vis the communist powers. A few years ago a proposal for abandonment of bases would have clearly weakened America's military position far more than the Russian position. The Russians were not relying to any important extent on air bases outside their borders; we were relying very heavily on our overseas bases. The development of long-range missiles and bombers has changed the situation. Perhaps a proposal for abandoning some or all of our bases would be acceptable now. But without careful military studies our negotiators would not be sure of how much we are giving up, or of how important whatever concessions the Russians might offer would be. Uncertainty as to what we might be getting into would very likely by itself prevent an agreement from being reached.

Technical and Scientific Studies

Again, the need for a reasonable degree of certainty requires technical and scientific studies. Any agreement we might reach on underground nuclear testing would involve some risk. No inspection and enforcement system is going to be absolutely foolproof. Current American policy is that some degree of risk is acceptable in return for the advantages of a test-ban treaty. But fruitful negotiations are unlikely if the negotiators have almost no idea of how much risk of evasion is involved under a given inspection system. Technical and scientific research is necessary to provide a basis for negotiations, and more research is necessary to try to develop inspection devices and techniques that reduce the degree of risk to an acceptable level.

Along with the technical and military research, studies are needed of the nonmilitary implications of arms control policies. Chester Bowles, Senator Kennedy's closest adviser on foreign affairs, last week suggested that we probably should not agree to a reduction of the Western garrison in Berlin. He said we have 10,000 men there and that although it did not really make much

difference from a military standpoint whether we happened to have stationed 5000 men more or less in Berlin, that the 10,000-man garrison had become symbolic of American determination to stand by West Berlin, and, on a broader scale, Western Europe. He suggested that an agreement to reduce the size of our garrison in Berlin might impress Europe as somehow suggesting a lessening of our commitments in that part of the world. Thus a very modest proposal for arms reduction, involving no significant military concession, becomes quite involved when examined from a broader viewpoint. The importance of these broader aspects explains why virtually no one in a responsible position believes it is sensible to set up a disarmament policy-making agency that would operate independently of the State Department, and why representatives of the United States Information Agency, which is concerned with public opinion abroad, are being included in the new Disarmament Administration.

International Negotiations

The policy, technical, and military research suggested above constitutes about the minimum responsibilities of the new Disarmament Administration if it is going to be a meaningful agency. This work would include studies to determine what types of agreements would tend most strongly to lessen the chance of war, and what types of agreements, given the state of world affairs, can realistically be aimed at. In addition to sponsoring and coordinating such research, the agency will be expected to back up American negotiators, providing them with the specific information they might need on a day-to-day basis during an international conference.

A fair amount of work along these lines is already being done. A large program of research into means of detecting underground tests is being sponsored by the Defense Department. Problems such as the effects of our giving up our foreign bases are being worked on in the Defense and State Departments. The President's Science Advisory Board has been used to organize technical teams to supply information to backstop the negotiations at Geneva. But the new Disarmament Administration will serve to give a focal point to such work, and as a central agency for supporting additional work that is needed.

But any work in the field of disarmament tends to find itself involved very quickly in the larger problem of promoting international stability as part of the effort to avoid the outbreak of war. As noted here in a previous report (*Science* 29 July) a good deal, probably most, of the modest amount of "disarmament" research being conducted at universities and research institutes around the country is actually research into the problem of stability. Although such research has been increasing, there is a wide feeling that not enough is being done. There is no central organization to coordinate and keep track of the work that is being done, and no government agency responsible for supporting such research. At this early stage officials of the Disarmament Administration are not sure what the role of the new agency will be in this broader area.

There are limits to what an agency can usefully do. The proposal of the Democratic Advisory Committee for a National Peace Agency (as opposed to Kennedy's plan for an Arms Control Research Institute) commands little support in Washington. The Peace Agency proposal would have involved a very broad range of activities, including even such things as work on ways to build up and stabilize underdeveloped countries. Such activities are not unrelated to the problem of arms control, but they would clearly involve areas that are already the responsibility of existing agencies. The Democratic platform gave token support to the idea but downgraded the National Peace Agency into "a national peace agency," suggesting that what the platform writers had in mind was something less elaborate and closer to Kennedy's proposal. Nevertheless, it is likely that even with more limited aims the Disarmament Administration would find itself getting involved in some of the much broader questions, at least to the extent of bringing the problems into clearer focus, even if the actual work would be the responsibility of other agencies.

Coolidge Commission

A year ago the Coolidge Commission was organized to conduct a study of American disarmament activities. It submitted its report in January, but its recommendations conflicted with administration policy at several points and the report was never made public. In April, though, the Washington *Star* published a summary of the recommendations, apparently leaked by a Defense Department official sympathetic to the report's criticism.

The report suggested that major disarmament effort be postponed for several years, until after the country had developed a stronger deterrent force; that our ability to fight limited wars was inadequate and should be strengthened; and that the underground nuclear test ban was probably unwise because it would prevent us from developing improved tactical nuclear weapons. Thus the report was not only critical of the test-ban negotiations but of the equally touchy question of whether the Eisenhower administration was spending an adequate amount of money on defense. It demonstrated how inevitably a study of disarmament policy finds itself dealing with the broader question of stability, even to the extent of recommending more of certain types of armaments.

But despite its generally bearish outlook, the Coolidge report did recommend a number of positive steps. It endorsed the ban on nuclear testing above ground, a policy which is no longer a matter of dispute; it recommended agreeing to a ban on nuclear weapons in satellites; it suggested we might agree with the Russians on a demilitarized zone in Central Europe. But the report also involved itself in much broader questions of international stability: It recommended a UN police force; greater use of UN official observers at trouble points; strengthening of the World Court; and a commission to codify international law.

Other proposals frequently made in the same area have been for a treaty providing for the international control of space, Rockefeller's recommendation that the United States take the lead in encouraging the formation of regional groupings of nations, and DeGaulle's endorsement of a Western European parliament. All of these proposals to some extent are aimed at reducing the possible areas of international conflict, and it would be difficult for the Disarmament Administration to avoid taking an interest in them, although actual responsibility would be with other agencies.

International Stability

Another group of questions involves the effects of unilateral American policies on international stability: How, for example, can our defense effort and our deployment of forces be made to best assure the communist powers that

we are building an invulnerable retaliatory force without frightening them into thinking that we are planning to initiate a war?

There is the question of informal and sometimes tacit agreements we have reached with the Russians under which it is understood that neither side will do certain things, even though it may be impossible to make the same agreement through formal negotiations. Neither we nor the Russians are supplying atomic weapons to our allies. There is no spoken agreement, but if either broke the unspoken agreement the other would probably follow suit.

As announced by the State Department, the Disarmament Administration would have responsibilities only in the area of formal international agreements on arms control. But even more than with the efforts to promote stability through strengthening international organizations and international law it is probable that the Disarmament Administration would find itself involved in studies of possibilities for unilateral or informally agreed upon steps we might take to promote stability.

One of the reasons for the great emphasis on stability research under the name of disarmament is that no one is really counting on major disarmament agreements in the foreseeable future. The reluctance of the communist countries to open themselves to inspection is almost by itself an impassable wall at this stage. Thus almost anyone who starts to work on disarmament tends to find himself interested in broader aspects of stability which offer more promise of being able to actually get something done to reduce the risk of war.

Some progress has been made at the test ban negotiations, but the parallel 10-nation disarmament conference at Geneva never reached the stage of serious negotiations. No one expected much of the disarmament debate at the United Nations this week. The formation of the new Disarmament Administration reflects a feeling that we may be able to take some small steps rather than a wave of optimism that big things are about to happen. It reflects a step away from the long-held belief that arms control is an area that has to be given token support for the sake of world opinion to a belief that it is worth making a more serious and concerted effort to try to do something positive, aside from building a strong defense, to minimize the risk of war.

News Notes

First Group of Publications Translated Abroad Now Ready for Distribution

The first delivery of Russian scientific and technical publications translated abroad as part of a cooperative federal agency program has been announced by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The program is financed by the overseas sale of surplus United States agricultural commodities. Countries that purchase this country's farm surpluses pay in local currency, which the United States may spend only in the country of purchase.

The translations were prepared by the Israel Program for Scientific Translations, Jerusalem, under contract with the National Science Foundation. Projects are now under way in Israel, Poland, and Yugoslavia to produce translations of 89,000 pages of scientific and technical material originally published in languages unfamiliar to most U.S. scientists.

Alan T. Waterman, NSF director, says, "The cooperation by participating scientists here and abroad—singly and in groups—has shown that the translation programs will have the important effect of stimulating expanded scientific information exchange without respect to national boundaries, and in recognition of true national scientific accomplishment. . . ."

In carrying out its functions under the program, the foundation assists participating government agencies in the selection of material to be translated. These agencies include the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Commerce; the Atomic Energy Commission; the National Library of Medicine of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; and the Smithsonian Institution. Final selection of material is made by government scientists on the basis of the needs of their agencies and the requirements of the scientific community. Lists submitted by agencies are checked by NSF for duplicate requests, and commercial publishers are consulted to determine their interest in the material recommended.

The Office of Technical Services of the U.S. Department of Commerce receives, catalogs, distributes, and sells the translations at approximately 1 cent a page. In cooperation with the Special

Officials responsible for the program examine the first Russian scientific and technical publications translated in Israel under a federal project financed by the overseas sale of surplus U.S. agricultural commodities. (Left to right) John Green, director, Office of Technical Services, U.S. Department of Commerce, the office which will distribute the translations; Ephrim Lahav, scientific counselor, Embassy of Israel; Avraham Harman, Israel's Ambassador to the United States; Burton W. Adkinson, National Science Foundation; and Alan T. Waterman, director, National Science Foundation.