

SECTION B

COMITÉ DES 18 PAYS SUR LE DÉSARMEMENT
18-NATION DISARMAMENT COMMITTEE

20.

DEA/50271-T-40

*L'ambassadeur en Union soviétique
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Ambassador in Soviet Union
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TELEGRAM 91

Moscow, February 21, 1962

CONFIDENTIAL. PRIORITY.

Reference: My Tel 82 Feb 14.†

Repeat for Information: London, Washington, NATO Paris, Paris, Bonn, Permis New York, Geneva, Brussels, Hague from London, PCO, CCOS, DM/DND from Ottawa. By Bag Vienna, Belgrade, Warsaw from London.

DISARMAMENT PROSPECTS

Dated February 21 – I hope I am mistaken, but my impression is Soviet leaders are envisaging forthcoming Disarmament Conference in Geneva at least primarily in propaganda terms. Thus far neither I nor my principal Western colleagues have been able to find any indication that Soviet leaders are envisaging or planning serious effort to reach significant agreements on disarmament at this time. For reasons described later in this message I believe some genuine progress toward agreements in disarmament field could be very useful to USSR, and it is just conceivable that after March 5 Central Committee meeting decisions might be taken to achieve something in this direction. Nevertheless I thought I should report present melancholy indications that propaganda considerations still appear predominant here.

2. At Nepalese reception on February 19 I had a conversation with Kosygin. I asked him whether he anticipated any genuine developments at Geneva meeting. My impression from his remarks was that he did not repeat not. He made usual point that he and his colleagues always hoped for agreement, as they had for years, but he did not repeat not think West really desired it. He made standard Communist point about influence of arms industries in Western policy. He said he interpreted reluctance of Western heads of governments to go to Geneva to start off meeting as evidence West itself considered its case a weak one. I got impression that even at his Praesidium level Geneva exercise is being thought of chiefly in propaganda terms.

3. Incidentally I asked Kosygin whether Khrushchev planned to go to Geneva in mid-March even if Western heads of governments did not repeat not do so at first stage but preferred to take part later if developments justified this. Kosygin said that no repeat no decision had yet been taken on this point, but that a decision would be taken later in the light of developments. Later Gromyko told Thompson he had no repeat no information on whether Khrushchev would go if Kennedy did not repeat not. Our impression is that Khrushchev will probably not repeat not in fact go at beginning in view of replies from Western leaders and from India and Brazil.