

I understand that your discussions have indicated that further nuclear proliferation is likely to occur in countries faced with a conventional or nuclear threat but lacking the protection and security afforded by membership in a nuclear alliance. In such circumstances, certain non-aligned countries might be persuaded to create a nuclear arsenal in the vain hope of improving their national security -- or in anticipation of a similar development by a hostile neighbour -- or in order to enhance their national prestige and their international influence.

The prevention of such nuclear proliferation is important and urgent. In his annual report for 1965 - no doubt reference has been made to this in your discussions - the UN Secretary-General describes this as "the most urgent question of the present time, which should remain at the very top of the disarmament agenda". President Johnson has made it clear that a central place in his Administration's policy is the effort to control, to reduce and ultimately to eliminate modern engines of nuclear destruction, to act now to prevent nuclear spread, to halt the nuclear arms race and to reduce nuclear stocks.

In his message to the ENDC of last February 1, Chairman Kosygin said: "If we do not put an end to the proliferation in the world of nuclear weapons, the threat of the unleashing of nuclear war will be increased many times." Unfortunately, all the potential nuclear powers have not taken such an unequivocal stand.

The issues involved in this matter are so complex that no single measure is likely to provide a solution. Where consideration of national security and international prestige are closely intertwined, answers must be sought in several directions if we are to succeed in preventing nuclear proliferation. Measures proposed will need to take into account the factors motivating countries to seek nuclear weapons and to make provision for appropriate dis-incentives. Obviously, too, we must concentrate on those countries capable of achieving nuclear status not in the more remote future but over the next decade and there are many of them.

The discussions at present going on - perhaps I should say dragging on - at the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee for an international treaty to limit the spread of nuclear weapons make little progress, despite the urgency of the matter. The time used for argument on general principles will have been wasted unless it results eventually in an instrument linking both the nuclear and non-nuclear countries. These discussions - and there are men here, I know, who have participated constructively in them - have revealed the existence of two different types of problems. The first is the question of multilateral nuclear-sharing. This has its origin in the desire of non-nuclear members of NATO, for instance, for a voice in the planning and management of the nuclear forces on which they feel their own security so largely depends. The discussion here has made plain the importance of a clear and precise definition of proliferation. What exactly does it mean?