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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**Memorandum of Conversation**

DATE: October 30, 1969  
Time: 11:45 a.m.  
Place: Mr. Hillenbrand's  
Office

**SUBJECT:** NPT Discussions

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ambassador Hellmuth Roth, FRG Commissioner for  
Disarmament and Arms Control  
  
Martin J. Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State  
for European Affairs  
Richard C. Barkley, EUR/GER

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Mr. Hillenbrand expressed the hope that the present NPT discussions were progressing to Ambassador Roth's satisfaction. He said he was aware that final FRG action on the NPT would have to await the outcome of further negotiations in IAEA and EURATOM, but would like to have Ambassador Roth's assessment of what procedures would be followed by the German Government in preparation for signature.

Ambassador Roth said the present talks here represent the final round of FRG/US discussions on NPT before German signature. He said some exchange of letters on fine points of the treaty may be expected but no further formal talks would be requested. He said that Bundestag debate on NPT at this time would not effect FRG determination to sign the treaty rapidly. He pointed out that signature was an executive action not requiring parliamentary approval. He added that he was optimistic that discussions in IAEA and EURATOM would proceed to the point that the Bundestag would consent to ratify the treaty by late February or early March of 1970. Ambassador Roth's discussion of these issues was often vague and convoluted.

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He appeared anxious to pass on his optimism regarding early signature and ratification of the NPT.

Mr. Hillenbrand asked Ambassador Roth how he intends to operate in his new position as Disarmament and Arms Control Commissioner in the Foreign Ministry.

Ambassador Roth acknowledged that he was in a difficult position, but said he hoped to keep friction at a minimum between the Chancellor's office and the Foreign Ministry on questions of disarmament. He said he hoped to use the Bundesverteidigungsrat as a forum to explain and coordinate governmental actions in his field with the Bundestag. He said he had a small but expert staff and foresaw no organizational problems.

Mr. Hillenbrand said we welcomed the FRG's forthcoming attitude on NPT. He said we were well aware of the political delicacy of the issue. He stated that the new government should be commended for its willingness to tackle sensitive problems of this nature.

Ambassador Roth said that the new government was determined to move forward in search of solutions to the many problems facing it. He said that they were working hard to present a good governmental case on NPT. He claimed that Foreign Minister Scheel was now discussing the NPT problem with Soviet Ambassador Tsarapkin. If all factors gelled satisfactorily, he maintained that the FRG position on NPT should assure not only signature but eventual ratification.

Mr. Hillenbrand asked Ambassador Roth's views on the survivability of the SPD/FDP coalition.

Ambassador Roth said that if the government was able to survive the first six months intact it had a good chance of lasting for four years. He noted that the German system makes it difficult to overturn a government once in power, which should assist the coalition through minor difficulties. He said he thought the FDP would prove cooperative in that it had little other choice. He said he also envisioned considerable support from the CDU in the Bundestag on domestic issues, citing the non-partisan stance of several CDU representatives during the Grand Coalition.

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Mr. Hillenbrand said we have known and worked with many of the members of the new government for many years and trust and respect them as capable and intelligent leaders. He assured the Ambassador that we have no concerns at all about the continuation of the excellent relations we have enjoyed with past German Governments. He remarked that in fact we may be even closer to the new government on several issues.

Ambassador Roth said that he fully expected the FRG to be franker in its relations with Washington than before.

Mr. Hillenbrand said we were happy to hear that Duckwitz would stay on for a while in the Foreign Ministry. His presence will give some important continuity to the Foreign Ministry and he will be a great help to Scheel in his new position. He said he looked forward to meeting Scheel in Brussels in December.

Ambassador Roth said he did not expect any major difference of opinion between Brandt and Scheel in the foreign policy area. He intimated that Brandt will prove to be the real leader in foreign affairs.

Mr. Hillenbrand said we will cooperate fully with the FRG as a friend and ally. He assured Ambassador Roth that if he had any concerns or difficulties to feel free to pass them on to us through our Embassy.

Ambassador Roth said he knew several members of the Embassy staff and would maintain contact there. He said the SPD was aware of the FRG's need for United States and NATO support and would maintain good contacts with officials here and in Brussels.

Mr. Hillenbrand expressed concern about Schmidt's apparent pessimism regarding the future of United States force commitments to Europe reiterating the warning it may be tempting the fate of a "self-fulfilling prophesy".

Ambassador Roth said Schmidt was concerned about preparing the German public psychologically for possible United States reductions. He said that now the German people felt each American soldier reduced indicated a reduction in United States commitment. This was not the case, as he well knew, but the public have been taught to believe it was. He said the FRG wanted to support the United States in preparing German public opinion should the American force posture in Germany change.

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Mr. Hillenbrand said we were not in the process of getting out of Europe, nor is there any inevitability as to United States reductions in Germany. We are determined to meet our obligations. He said that NATO may consider balanced force reductions in conjunction with SALT negotiations but they would not be reductions in the sense of a unilateral American decision. He also pointed out that the imponderables of the post-Vietnam period made it difficult to assess what if any public pressure for further military drawdowns abroad would continue.

Ambassador Roth said the FRG is primarily interested in maintaining an equilibrium in Europe. Not necessarily in numbers of men but in a total balance of military considerations. In this context he mentioned Schmidt's book "Strategie des Gleichgewichts" as a good encapsulated treatise on current FRG thinking on defense policy. He emphasized the need for a candid exchange on mutual military actions in Europe and the avoidance of surprise moves.

Mr. Hillenbrand said we would cooperate completely in this regard and reiterated that the FRG need not be pessimistic regarding our European commitment. He said that present military economy measures are specifically designed not to effect our European force posture.

Ambassador Roth reverted to the NPT talks and said only linguistic differences were left to be ironed out. He said that the one important point for the FRG was securing a continuing seat on the IAEA Board of Governors. He said he appreciates our support here. He said the major consideration in NPT was that the FRG not be hampered in the development of nuclear power for civilian use.

Mr. Hillenbrand said he never was too concerned about the problem of civilian use in that the treaty contained abundant safeguards to reassure the non-nuclear powers in that regard. He commented that the problems inherent in the use of civilian nuclear power were immense in themselves, particularly in their ecological effects. In that general area he said the new NATO committee on the Challenge of a Modern Society may serve a useful function in getting the Allies together on this potentially vital issue.

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Ambassador Roth said he was anxious to get the NPT signature out of the way so that he could concentrate in his new office on issues of more personal interest to him such as SALT and ESC.

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