

April 9, 1968

**Excerpts from Andrei A. Gromyko's speech at the
April 1968 Plenum of the Central Committee of the
Soviet Communist Party**

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Summary:

Gromyko discusses negotiations over the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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[...] One of the most important vectors of our party's foreign policy is the strengthening of cooperation among socialist countries. In recent years great work was completed to develop relations among socialist countries, to coordinate their actions on the international arena. This work also shows certain difficulties, as one sees, in particular, from Romania's position in relation to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Plenum participants already know from the report what efforts had to be expended by the C[entral] C[ommittee] and the Soviet government in order for our proposal about the prevention of further proliferation of nuclear weapons to take the shape of a draft treaty, which enjoys support of many countries. Before preparing the treaty, one had to torpedo different plans of the creation of NATO nuclear forces with the participation of the FRG.

The opponents of the treaty don't need to be that brainy to complicate the situation. It is enough for them simply to obstruct.

I will give just one example. A few days ago our Ambassador in Rome sent a message with the following content: the Italian M[inistry of] F[oreign] A[ffairs] wants to know whether the treaty will be signed, alongside the Soviet Union, also by the Ukrainian and the Belorussian republics. Then they specify: in what capacity will Belorussia and Ukraine, which are, as is known, members of the UN, can sign the treaty: as nuclear or non-nuclear powers. (Lively reaction in the hall).

The point of the request is clear: if Ukraine and Belarus position themselves as non-nuclear states, then be so kind as to permit international control over the use of nuclear energy on their territories. If they are considered nuclear, then the US and England, as participants of the treaty, will be in the minority among nuclear states, and this won't suit the West. One has to say directly that this is a question with a tricky subtext. They probably came up with it somewhere in the Vatican at a gathering of Jesuits. (Laughter).

One has to suppose that, together with the Ukrainian and the Belorussian comrades, we will be able to successfully resolve this question.

This, of course, is not the most difficult question, which one has to solve in connection with the conclusion of the treaty.