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## MOSCOW SEEKS A RETURN TO NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE WEST

Moscow is making a determined effort to restore a business-as-usual atmosphere to its relations with the West. The Soviet aim is to implant the notion that Soviet domination of Eastern Europe--on which Moscow has been insisting vehemently--is one thing, while "detente" is another. To this end, the Soviets have toned down their propoganda attacks on the West, have made a number of conciliatory gestures on particular issues, and have tried to revive interest in questions of mutual East-West concern.

The USSR has publicly and privately made clear that it is willing to begin exploratory talks with the US on limitation of strategic weapons. At a Soviet anniversary reception in London last week, for example, a Russian diplomat urged that the US get on with arms discussions. In the main address at the celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow on 7 November, First Deputy Premier Mazurov reiterated Russia's readiness to do so, as did the Soviet ambassador at the UN in a major speech on disarmament this week. Premier Kosygin was apparently eager to convey the same message to former defense secretary McNamara in Moscow this week.

The Russians also have moved recently to conclude some minor agreements with the US on which both sides had been marking time, including a long-planned exchange of new embassy sites. The purpose of these actions clearly was

to hasten the end of the period of coolness in Soviet-American relations which set in with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In addition, the Soviets and their East German allies refrained from retaliatory moves during a fortnight of West German meetings in Berlin, although Moscow may yet give East Germany the green light to impose new restrictions on West German access to Berlin. It seems clear, however, that the Soviets wish to avoid the kind of harassment that could lead to a Soviet-Allied confrontation.

The Soviets recently took pains to receive amiably the UK's new ambassador in Moscow. President Podgorny contended that Anglo-Soviet relations had suffered "unnecessarily" as a result of the Czechoslovak affair.

Moscow's diplomatic efforts have resulted in the rescheduling for this winter of a session of the Franco-Soviet "Grande Commission" on cooperative projects, which was due to meet in September but had been postponed by Paris. The Soviets have studiously avoided including France in their press attacks on the "imperialist" West since the Czechoslovak invasion in order to maintain at least the appearance of a special "detente" with Paris. Recently, some of the venom has been dropped from Soviet propaganda directed at West Germany, a favorite target. Indeed, Moscow has made the gesture of offering to reopen negotiations with Bonn on a civil air agreement.

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Moreover, the USSR has generally muted its anti-Western propaganda, and for several weeks has ceased to accuse the US of having incited Czechoslovak "reactionaries."

Other efforts to improve the Soviet image can be found in the

succession of high-level foreign visitors welcomed in the USSR. Since the invasion, ranking officials from all of the non-Communist countries on Russia's borders except Turkey and Norway have received the red carpet treatment.

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### WEST GERMANY PUSHES SALE OF LEOPARD TANKS

Having equipped its own forces with the Leopard tank, West Germany has negotiated contracts with Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway, and is seeking additional markets.

Belgium announced last year that it would purchase 334 Leopards at less than \$250,000 each. The total cost, including spare parts, was slightly over \$90 million, which the Germans agreed to offset completely through the purchase of Belgian products. Deliveries probably will run through early 1970, and Belgium is expected to phase out the US-made M-47s as the Leopards are received.

The Netherlands has agreed to purchase 415 Leopards with an option to buy 135 more. The Dutch will be paying about the same unit price as the Belgians. Deliveries will begin late next year and are to be completed by

1971. The new US-German main battle tank (MBT-70) was in competition but lost out because it will not be available for several years. The Dutch may buy MBT-70s later but they have already ordered enough Leopards to replace about two thirds of their present tank force.

Norway is purchasing 74 Leopards. Despite hard bargaining, the Norwegians will be paying considerably more per tank than the Belgians or the Dutch. The higher per-unit cost stems from more stringent offset arrangements and from the special equipment needed for Arctic operations. Deliveries are to be completed by mid-1970.

The 105-mm. cannon on the Leopard is effective to a range of more than 3,000 meters. The tank itself is capable of deep-fording with a snorkel, and can be buttoned up for protection

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