

USSR MARKING TIME ON BERLIN

Moscow is marking time on the Berlin autobahn issue and has given no indication as to how it would react to any joint Allied statement on existing access control procedures.

Since the detention of the British convoy on 16 October, the Allies have not sent any convoys in or out of West Berlin to which the Soviets could apply their new checking procedures. Last week, the Soviet checkpoint commander claimed that passengers in all convoys of five vehicles or more must dismount for headcounts. Following the perfunctory propaganda treatment of the 10-12 October US Berlin convoy incident, both Soviet and East German press media have ignored the subsequent British convoy incident.

Moscow appears anxious to avoid any impression that the autobahn incidents imply a Soviet retreat from the detente atmosphere. The USSR gave wide publicity to Gromyko's statement that a Western correspondent had distorted his remarks at Prestwich airport by applying his pessimistic assessment of prospects for disarmament to the whole range of issues covered in his recent talks with US and

British leaders. Soviet reports of President Kennedy's 19 October speech highlighted his remarks on the improved international situation, and Izvestia also hailed the unanimous General Assembly resolution banning nuclear weapons from outer space as a "new important step toward further relaxation of tension."

The Soviet leaders, however, served notice that their desire to further the East-West detente will not prevent a vigorous response to any Western moves which, in their view, might alter the status quo, particularly in Germany. A TASS statement of 21 October warned that renewed NATO discussions on establishing a multilateral nuclear force (MLF) will have an "adverse effect on the still infirm shoots of mutual understanding and trust." It charged that steps to provide West Germany with access to nuclear weapons "contradict the spirit" of the test ban treaty. The statement repeated in notably restrained terms earlier warnings that the creation of the MLF will oblige Moscow to consider "the need to ensure the safety of the Soviet Union and its allies." [REDACTED]

Approved for Release  
Date 21 NOV 1994

13