

BRIEFING PAPER FOR PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCEMarch 16, 1960EUROPENuclear SharingQUESTION

Mr. President, does the Administration intend to make changes in our present policy as regards the sharing of nuclear weapons with our Allies, and would it not be necessary to make certain changes to carry out General Norstad's plan for a mobile NATO task force?

ANSWER

As you know, the present NATO system is that Allied, as well as United States, forces in the European NATO area have certain delivery vehicles which could, in case of aggression against the Treaty area, carry nuclear weapons. The warheads are in the NATO atomic stockpile system, as to be readily available for the defense of the Alliance in case of need. This system, while providing the NATO shield forces with a nuclear capability, is fully consistent with the provisions of existing United States law.

While in the absence of a dependable disarmament agreement we must always keep under review possible ways in which this system might be improved in the light of changing conditions, we do not have any changes under consideration at this time.

There is no relationship between this question and General Norstad's plan for a mobile task force in NATO's European Command. Such a task force could very well be established within the framework of the present system.

QUESTION

Mr. President, the suggestion has been made that NATO might become the "fourth atomic power" of the West. Do you believe this idea has merit?

ANSWER

As you know, the present NATO system is that Allied forces in NATO, as well as our own, have certain delivery vehicles which can carry nuclear weapons in the event of aggression against the

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NATO area. The warheads for these weapons are in the NATO atomic stockpile system as to be readily available for the defense of the Alliance in case of need. This system, while providing the NATO shield forces with a nuclear capability, is consistent with the provisions of existing United States Law.

I would also like to say that in becoming a member of NATO we have undertaken basic commitments for the common defense. We have reaffirmed on repeated occasions that we stand by those commitments and I assure you we will continue to stand by them.

We do not have any changes as regards our policy on nuclear weapons under consideration at this time. However, in the absence of a dependable disarmament agreement, toward the achievement of which we and our Allies have just taken a new initiative, we must always keep under review possible means of improving the common defense system in the light of changing conditions. But we must carefully weigh the many complex factors involved before changing what at this time appears to be a satisfactory system.

