

Official White House Transcript

of

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S PRESS AND RADIO CONFERENCE #85(Filmed, Taped, and Shorthand Reported)

—
 Held In Room #474 Executive Office Building
 Wednesday, April 25, 1956
 At 10:30 a.m., e.s.t.

This Copy For:-

The President

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THE PRESIDENT: Please sit down. Good morning. We will go right to questions.

Q. Mr. President, Smith of the United Press. The Communist leader Khrushchev, in London, says that Russia will soon have guided missiles with H-bomb warheads capable of hitting every point, or any point in the world. Governor Stassen last night in London talked with Mr. Khrushchev on disarmament issues and Mr. Stassen said he was sending you an immediate report. I wonder if you could tell us first, sir, how you evaluate the Khrushchev statement, and second have you heard from Governor Stassen?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will answer it in reverse order, because I know the exact answer. Yes, I heard from Governor Stassen -- had his report this morning, which is long enough to require more study than I would -- than I have been able to give it before I would want to comment on it at any length.

Now I know of no reason why the Soviets should be making mis-statements in this field, and I certainly don't accuse them of any such thing. But I do want to point out: there is a very, very long distance between a laboratory capacity or capability of doing something and making an instrument a really efficient, effective instrument of war. These instruments are, of course, very expensive, require elaborate guiding equipment, and we know how expensive these things are when you put them on airplanes. So it is not a simple matter that we are talking about, when you talk about these things as useful in the event of war.

Q. Mr. President, Scherer, NBC. Could you give us any specific views on how NATO might be broadened politically and economically?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, no I couldn't give you specific views, Mr. Scherer, for this reason. Here is something that I have been interested in for the past four or five years, and I have always believed that greater usefulness was inherent in the organization that was established by the NATO nations than was to be represented merely in its usefulness as a military organization.

Now the Secretary of State at the meeting this coming -- within a few days -- the NATO meeting -- is going to make certain proposals, and they will be there discussed; and when they -- if there is any answer and agreement, rather, among the NATO nations, why then it will be published.

Q. Mr. President, ---

There are lots of people saying we are not. (laughter)
But there are only so many scientists. There are only
so many facilities, and you get to a point where mere
expenditure of money in a field like this does no good.
And my own conviction, supported by that of many, many
experts, is that in this field we are somewhere certainly
around the limit.

Now, no man, I believe, in the world can say that by just
doing one thing more, somebody out in the woods might find
out something, but so far as the employment of the best
scientists in several different areas, in several different
groupments, is concerned, we are working at top speed on
this whole thing.

I think Miss Craig.

Q. May Craig of the Press-Herald, Mr. President. Mr.
Stevenson and one of the members of the Atomic Energy Com-
mission have suggested the United States should halt its
tests of the H-bomb. Would you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I usually ask you people not to quote
somebody else when you want me to talk, because I don't
comment on somebody else's opinion. They are entitled to
their own opinions.

But I do want to point this out: It's a little bit of a
paradox to urge that we work just as hard as we know how
on the guided missile and that we stop all research on the
hydrogen bomb. Because one without the other is rather use-
less.

So we go ahead with this hydrogen bomb, not to make a bigger
"bang," not to cause more destruction, to find out ways and
means in which you can limit it, make it useful in defensive
purposes of shooting against a fleet of airplanes coming
over, to reduce "fall-out," to make it more a military weapon
and less one just of mass destruction. We know we can make
them big, we are not interested in that any more.

So this whole thing goes together. The guided missile, with
an expensive warhead that is a one-shot thing; it is really
effective, because it has a tremendous blow when it gets to
the end of its flight. So that if you don't work on one
and get the right kind of explosive to use there, why work
on the other?

So I think research without test is perfectly useless, a
waste of money. And goodness knows I don't want to do this.
If you would allow me to put this money in -- I mean, if the