

Briefing Paper for the President's Press Conference

April 27, 1960

DISARMAMENTQUESTION

Mr. President, there have been reports to the effect that you will establish within the Department of State a new disarmament agency. Could you tell us something about this?

ANSWER

The matter of meeting the requirements of current and possible future negotiations in the disarmament field has been a subject of continuing study within the Executive Branch. The ever-accelerating technological developments in modern weapons have made such a study imperative in order to assure that United States disarmament policy does not lag behind these developments.

One outgrowth of this study is reflected in the Department of State's fiscal 1961 request, now pending before Congress, for funds for disarmament studies, the hiring of consultants and additional staff within the Department's disarmament office.

While I do not wish to comment specifically at this time on the reports you have mentioned, I can assure you that active consideration is being given to additional ways and means of meeting the increasing demands, both short and long range, in this field.

QUESTION

Mr. President, General de Gaulle has emphasized, on a number of occasions, the importance of halting nuclear weapons production, eliminating nuclear weapons in all forms, and controlling nuclear weapons carriers. Is this view at variance with our policy?

ANSWER

As you know, the Allied plan submitted at Geneva sets forth as one of its ultimate goals the elimination of all nuclear weapons from national arsenals. While this is the desired goal, I believe all of the western nations currently participating in the Geneva disarmament negotiations recognize that elimination of nuclear weapons

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and other weapons of mass destruction can be achieved only through step by step measures.

What we are first trying to achieve is the reaching of specific agreements which would stabilize the existing military environment - or to put it another way - we want to place a lid on the current arms race. Once progress had been made toward this objective, then it would be possible to move on to more far-reaching measures of disarmament which in time would lead to general disarmament.

QUESTION

Mr. President, the Ten-Nation disarmament talks seem to be in deadlock. General de Gaulle and you seemed to feel that disarmament would be the number one subject of discussion at the Summit Conference. Do you believe that your Summit discussions will break this present deadlock in disarmament negotiations?

ANSWER

I do not believe it is wise to speculate on what the outcome of our Summit discussions may be, but I would say this: it would be the hope of the Western Heads of Government that useful discussions will be held on this subject at the Summit. We would further hope that these discussions in turn might serve to set in a positive direction the course of the Ten-Nation Conference when it resumes its deliberations after the Summit meeting.

QUESTION

Mr. President, will we put before Mr. Khrushchev at the Summit any new disarmament proposals?

ANSWER

I do not want to discuss Summit strategy here. However, whatever the Western Powers suggest in this field at the Summit, will reflect the position which we have already taken at Geneva, both from the point of view of substance and tactics. I would add that the Allies believe that our Five Power plan represents the most practical approach for moving toward the desired goal of general disarmament, although we are willing to consider any other workable proposal. We also believe that agreement on specific measures is the only logical way in which we can make progress toward general disarmament.

