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By	<u>MMK</u> NLDDE Date <u>10/22/10</u>

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE AT WHITE HOUSE

September 11, 1956



PRESENT WERE:

THE PRESIDENT
JOHN FOSTER DULLES, Secretary
of State
CHARLES E. WILSON, Secretary
of Defense
ADMIRAL ARTHUR W. RADFORD,
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
ADMIRAL LEWIS L. STRAUSS
Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission
SHERMAN ADAMS, Assistant to the
President
HAROLD E. STASSEN, Special Assistant
to the President
AMOS J. PEASLEE, Deputy Special
Assistant to the President
WILLIAM H. JACKSON, Special
Assistant to the President

REFERENCE:

Memo to Members of the NSC from Mr. Stassen, Special Assistant to the President, dated June 29, 1956, enclosing a memorandum to the President, subject: "Report Pursuant to NSC Action No. 1553."

Governor Stassen outlined the purposes of the meeting by presenting to the President a paper requesting answers to the following questions:

1. May quiet exploratory consultations, beginning with the British, be carried out, with participation by the Departments primarily concerned, by the Special Assistant

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to the President and the Deputy Special Assistant; with the President, the Secretary of State and all Members of the NSC kept advised of the course of such consultations?

2. What portions of the June 29th recommended courses of action are to be included in these consultations?

3. May such consultations be conducted on the basis of draft documents for the establishment of an armament control organization within the United Nations, such documents to reflect previous decisions of President Eisenhower and the current decisions of the President?

The meeting concerned itself first with paragraph A under Courses of Action on page 12 of the reference Memorandum, which provides as follows:

"The U.S. should propose an agreement by all states that after July 1, 1957, all production of fissionable materials shall be subject to effective international inspection, and thereafter all such future production shall be used or stock-piled exclusively for non-weapons purposes under international supervision. The installation of the inspection system to be reciprocally instituted promptly and to be completed prior to July 1, 1957."

Admiral Strauss contended that no inspection system could be completed by July 1, 1957. Admiral Radford went even further and questioned the practicality of ever achieving a reliable inspection system.

It was pointed out by Governor Stassen and Secretary Dulles that the meeting was only proposing that quiet exploratory consultations, beginning with the British, be carried out, with participation by the Departments primarily concerned, by the Special Assistant to the President and the Deputy Special Assistant; with the President, the Secretary of State and all members of the NSC kept advised of the course of such consultations.

Governor Stassen described the methods of inspection contemplated, the competence of the special task groups that had worked

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on the inspection problem and the types of scientific instruments and modern inspection methods that would be used.

Governor Stassen raised the question of the 2-1/2 million force level for illustrative purposes and as a first stage base for measurement as previously proposed, and the President confirmed that this decision of March 1st could continue to be used in U. S. consultations and negotiations.

Further discussion included a point stressed by Admiral Strauss to the effect that the U. S. must continue to stockpile fissionable materials for at least another two years. We are now making in a month what we formerly made in a year. Admiral Strauss thought his point was applicable particularly to defensive atomic weapons.

Admiral Radford supported Admiral Strauss by saying that the size of the U. S. stockpile has a vital bearing on the probability of our winning a global war. We are short in defensive weapons and we would have to revise all our war plans if we stopped atomic stockpiling in the next two years. From the standpoint of defense, the U. S. needs large stockpiles of nuclear weapons at various places all over the world.

The President at this point indicated disapproval. He said that some other way must be found. He said that from the standpoint of preserving our economy alone some alternative must be found. He referred to Secretary Humphrey's grave concern respecting our mounting expenditures and the growing foreign claims on United States gold. Admiral Radford and Secretary Wilson asked whether the President's Geneva aerial photography proposal was to be a condition precedent to any agreement of any kind in the disarmament field. The President stated that it was not to be a condition precedent, that it would be a desirable agreement and should continue to be supported on that basis, but that other beginnings should be examined on their own merits, and that alternative proposals for agreement should be considered by the United States.

The President emphasized the importance of avoiding the spread of nuclear weapons into the hands of many nations and agreed upon the likelihood that, if nations once decided to build nuclear weapons, it would be extremely difficult to stop them, as they then would want more and more weapons for both offensive and defensive purposes. He

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conceded that a general limitation of armaments pursuant to a broad inspection system would be necessary. The inspection system and the limitations of armament must cover not only fissionable materials but the means of delivery.

Paragraph E on pages 13 and 14 of the reference Memorandum reads as follows:

"The U.S. to propose that all states possessing nuclear weapons on July 1, 1957, negotiate an agreement for equitable reciprocal transfer of fissionable materials in successive increments, from previous production, over to supervised peaceful purposes, thereby reversing the trend toward larger stockpiles of fissionable materials devoted to weapons purposes. A very substantial nuclear weapons capability would always be maintained by the United States (and by the USSR and UK) in the foreseeable and conceivable future."

Governor Stassen stated that in his opinion this paragraph E was merely a restatement of the position taken by the President in his "Atoms for Peace" speech of December 8, 1953, and his reference to that speech in his March 1, 1956, letter to Chairman Bulganin.

Paragraph F on page 14 of the reference Memorandum reads as follows:

"The U.S. to express willingness to agree with other nations not to test nuclear or thermonuclear explosions after July 1, 1957, and to permit an effective inspection system to verify the fulfillment of the commitment."

In the discussion of this paragraph F, Admiral Strauss raised the question of whether the U.S. could ever stop testing nuclear weapons to detect deterioration of stockpiled materials and to effect improvements in control of fallout and in other directions. Discussion followed of various methods of limiting and supervising tests. There was also further discussion of July 1, 1957, as the proposed date for cessation both of production of fissionable materials for war use and the cessation of testing. Mr. Dulles suggested that the proper phrasing might be December 31, 1957, "or as soon thereafter as an effective inspection system has been installed."

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Paragraph G on page 14 of the reference Memorandum reads as follows:

"The U. S. to propose that all states agree that any research or development activity directed toward sending objects through outer space or traveling in outer space shall be devoted exclusively to peaceful and scientific purposes, and shall be open to international participation on a reciprocal basis. Further provide that no outer space tests or long or medium range missile tests will be conducted without appropriate international participation and that an effective inspection system be installed to verify the fulfillment of the commitment."

In the discussion of this paragraph G, Governor Stassen explained the recommendation with regard to missiles and sending objects through outer space, and the President gave some indication of concurring in the necessity of a policy in this field being included in any U. S. position.

The question of an effective inspection system was again raised at this point. Admiral Radford pointed out the danger that both production of fissionable materials and testing might be undertaken in China. Admiral Strauss then mentioned briefly some of the detailed problems involved in any system of inspection. Mr. Stassen brought out that paragraph L on page 16 of the reference Memorandum specifically mentioned for consideration the applicability of the proposed courses of action to China.

In conclusion, the President restated the position he had previously taken in the meeting. The United States must make some kind of approach to limitation of production of fissionable materials exclusively to non-weapons purposes and limitation or cessation of testing of nuclear weapons, both conditioned upon prior installation of effective, reciprocal inspection and detection systems. The President spoke of the rising concern of people everywhere over the effect of radiation from tests, of their reaction each time a test was reported, and their extreme nervousness over the prospective consequences of any nuclear war. At the same time the President emphasized the vital importance of an effective inspection for every portion of every agreement affecting armaments signed by the United States, the crucial nature of safeguards

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against surprise attack, and the contributions such safeguards would make toward a durable peace.

In response to a comment by Admiral Radford that the Joint Chiefs were confronted with some uncertainty in planning under such policies, the President stated that military planning should proceed on the assumption that agreement would not be reached, but that at the same time the United States should take affirmative leadership toward agreement, having in mind the psychological importance in the first instance, and the further fact that no one could be sure that a real opening for agreement might not arise if we were persistent. The President recalled the seeming hopelessness of the Austrian situation even one week prior to the sudden acceptance by the Soviets of Austrian independence and sovereignty.

Mr. Dulles and Mr. Stassen both expressed the view, with which the President seemed tentatively to concur, that the substance of paragraphs A, E and G of the reference Memorandum should permit of ready acceptance by those present at the meeting. Mr. Dulles thought that paragraph F should be restudied and the President concurred.

The President then directed that representatives of State, Defense, Atomic Energy Commission, and the Joint Chiefs, at high enough level to express the views of their respective departments and agencies, meet with Governor Stassen and his staff to prepare for submission to the President on or before October 15, 1956, a joint paper, with dissenting views if necessary, carrying out the President's suggestion that an approach must again be made to the limitation of production of fissionable materials exclusively to non-weapons purposes and limitation or cessation of testing of nuclear weapons, both conditioned upon prior installation of effective reciprocal inspection and detection systems.

William H. Jackson
Special Assistant
to the President

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