

LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP MEETING

January 7, 1968

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

National Security - Missiles - Satellites - Sen. Saltonstall noted the situation developing in the Defense Preparedness hearings, and how some heat generated from Gen. Gavin's resignation. The President commented that he had had absolutely no advance notice of Gen. Gavin's intention to resign until he saw it in the newspapers. His behavior was hard to understand, for if it was greater centralization he was after, that was what the President wanted too.

Sen. Saltonstall understood that Gen. Gavin had wanted assignment to the only 4-star post of the Army in the Continental U.S., but General Taylor had told him he ought to stay with missiles for another year, then there would be a post for him in Europe where he could expect promotion within the year. Sen. Saltonstall then went on to say that Gen. Gavin didn't want to stay with missiles for another year because he wasn't satisfied with the budget set-up for missiles, and he didn't want to have to testify before Congress on that. Only after that did he testify on unification. Sen. Saltonstall added that Gen. Gavin had originally requested \$519 million for Army missile development, had agreed to a figure of \$372 million, and had only gotten \$374 million, of which some \$18 million had to be devoted to the continuation of Jupiter and Redstone, which Gen. Gavin did not desire to do.

The President commented on how Dr. Killian had given much attention to the programs for research, that a very generous \$5 billion was set up for research and development, and that things were moving so rapidly that there might well be additional requests for 30 or 40 or 50 million dollars for basic research.

The President noted how inter-service rivalries had come out into the open. He knew of several specifics, but they were not so important as public reaction to this rivalry, so he was devoting a big piece of the Message to what the Administration intends to do about it.

There was extensive discussion of the actual strength of the United States that exists in contrast with the sudden concern about Russia being ahead.

The Leaders urged the President to make a strong personal-type statement that would inspire the trust and confidence of the American people. The President replied that actually he had been trying to play down the situation, but perhaps he had been guilty of understatement in regard to the strength of the Nation's defenses despite Sputnik.

The Leaders commented on the defeatism evident in so many newspaper columns. The President commented that history seemed to be

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repeating itself -- he recalled how there was such a tremendous gloom around Washington in 1942 after Pearl Harbor, the fall of Tobruk, and as the Japs approached Brisbane. But on July 4th, he had been asked to make a speech before the Red Cross in London, which he did, and he devoted his whole speech to how the Allies would win the war -- and quickly. It had seemed to be a very effective antidote.

Sen. Knowland was anxious to see a U.S. earth satellite go up successfully soon, to keep demands on the budget from going hog-wild.

On Sen. Knowland's mention of getting up a U.S. satellite, the President recalled that we had announced our plans for trying one as far back as May, 1955. Since that time, the scientists had come back several times for more money for the project, but no one had ever said anything about speeding it up. Only very recently had this psychological factor of beating the Russians to it been introduced. It seemed ironic, the President added, that we should undertake something in good faith only to get behind the eight-ball in a contest which we never considered a contest.

The President's final comment on the broad subject of defense was to highlight how this was a long term problem. It was possible to do almost anything you wanted for one year, but when it was a matter of having to carry on for thirty or forty years, that was entirely different. He referred to the import regulations that the British had had to have for so long, and he concluded that if we finally get to the point where the economy wont readily provide what is necessary, then we would have to put on controls. But what we really want is for people to do the maximum voluntarily, and if they would do that, then in his opinion that would be enough. But it certainly wasn't the answer just to say, "give the military another ten billion dollars."

Defense Unification - The President outlined his general objective, but said specifics would come later on. What he wanted to do was to get so organized that, just as the NSC brings together all the policymakers in the security field, so the JCS ought to bring together all elements of the military to resolve questions. He said he often had to settle disputes that ought to have been settled at the Defense level. He believed the new organization should be such as to avoid having each service head devoted only to running up the plans of his own service.

The President felt deeply that authority had to be centralized in the Secretary of Defense. If the Congressional Leaders would agree to it, he would have all appropriations made to the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary would have control of all appointments, promotions, etc.

In discussion of Congressional attitudes, the President asserted that one thing was sure: if there's any real fight in Congress on the things we need, he would take a large personal part in pressing the Administration view on the Congress.

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