

Box 34  
Staff Notes (2)

January 19, 1959

1959-Tab A  
*[Signature]*

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT  
January 12, 1959 -- 9:00 AM

- Others present:
- Secretary Dulles
  - Secretary Herter
  - Secretary McElroy
  - General Twining
  - Mr. McCone
  - Mr. Gordon Gray
  - Mr. Farley (State)
  - Mr. Irwin (Defense)
  - General Loper
  - General Goodpaster
  - Major Eisenhower



Secretary Dulles opened the meeting by presenting the basic policy program of whether the United States should change its hitherto held position in the Geneva negotiation with respect to the discontinuance of nuclear testing that such discontinuance of testing should be linked with overall disarmament. Secretary Dulles pointed out that initially the U.S. Government sought an agreement which would be subject to termination on a year-to-year basis if satisfactory progress were not made toward other disarmament measures. Mr. Dulles indicated that the State Department view, which accords with the view of the U.S. Delegation, is that this has been found to be difficult of formulation as a treaty article, and has exposed us to the charge of wishing to connect extraneous matters which conceivably could be under the control of others. He pointed out that the Soviets are pressing us hard on the matter and it appears to the Department of State that they will use it as a breaking point rather than the issue of the control system which we conceive to be the real heart of the matter. The President stated that this had been his opinion for some time.

Secretary McElroy then presented the viewpoint of the Department of Defense. In so doing, he called attention to the fact that Defense had always been reluctant to stop testing. He recognized that there are political reasons for so doing, but prefers that those reasons be evaluated in agencies other than the Department of Defense. The position of the Department is that separation of these issues represents a further chipping away of our military position. The Soviets

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E.O. 12065, Sec. 3-204

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will continue to chip away and we should receive concurrent gains if we give way on this point. Actually, Secretary McElroy is not so concerned over the issue of separation of testing and disarmament, but he is vitally concerned with the next two steps, which are, (a) the question of periodic inspection of the performance of control arrangements, and (b) the issue of the manning of the control sites.

The President stated that two years ago he had visualized much propaganda mileage to be gained by a positive stand on this question on the part of the U.S. It had been his belief that the Soviets had no intention of allowing a true agreement on nuclear testing and that we would make many gains by pressing the issue. However, he had given way on this position in the light of resistance on the part of Defense and AEC. In the meantime, Dr. Rabi of the Science Advisory Committee had pointed out the advantage in weapons we hold, and we had started negotiations. However, because of the delay (much of it to get the results of Operation HARDTACK in the field of anti-ICBM, anti-aircraft, etc.), we now will not, in the President's view, get the propaganda benefits which we would have received two years ago.

The President feels, however, that if we can get an agreement with respect to reciprocal inspection, the establishment of such a mechanism would be a great advance toward reducing the danger of war. He pointed out the further advantage to the Free World of obtaining a set of qualified observers within the USSR; he emphasized that any agreement which we sign must contain within itself a self-enforcing mechanism.

While agreeing with the Defense Department position on periodic inspection of the inspection system and of control post inspection manning, the President stated he visualized two courses which negotiations might run: (a) agreement based on recognizing the limitations of detection equipment, such as allowing explosions up to 20 KT underground, etc., or (b) an agreement going all the way -- i.e. no explosions permitted -- involving many, many stations. Either system must prove itself every day.

Some discussion on Soviet intentions followed in which the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense all agreed that



that the U.S. historically labors under the disadvantage in all its treaties of intending to fulfill these agreements, whereas other nations may not. In addition, the Secretary of State observed that the Soviets will probably insist on a veto in the control commission, and in this case, this would be a good issue to break on.

An examination of the draft reply to Macmillan then followed. (The difficulties in wording were later worked out between State and Defense and approved by the President.)



The discussion then took a somewhat philosophical turn with the President reviewing his theme that we should have pressed this issue some time ago in order to obtain the maximum propaganda value. He reiterated his belief that the Russians have no intention of making this system work. He agreed with Secretary Herter, however, that we would rather break the negotiations on the issues of control mechanism rather than the issue of linking of testing with disarmament.

General Twining then focused on the issue of the timing of evaluation of treaty enforcement. Specifically, he asked whether we are going to wait for two or three years before we evaluate whether the treaty is working. He expressed the view that we should be able to stop at any time. Mr. McElroy pointed out the possibility open to the Soviets of ambiguous breaches which are not sufficiently clear for us to abrogate a treaty. Mr. Irwin, in this connection, expressed the view that by breaking the link between test suspension and disarmament, the way is clear for more frequent inspection of progress in setting up the inspection posts and conducting inspection operations.

The President recognized that there are plenty of pitfalls in this matter and asserted that we must "read all the fine print" carefully. He visualized that in view of the complicated nature of treaty enforcement, we would probably have to allow two years from date of signing before we expect the control mechanisms to be implemented. Thereafter, its success should be subject to annual review. In addition, he visualized that we would have to allow for limitation in the present state of the testing art and allow testing underground below certain limits. General Loper added a thought that a specific

scheduling of the establishment of the inspection system by phases should be spelled out in a treaty annex, a draft of which is already in existence.

The Secretary of State now called attention to some of the difficulties of carrying out a treaty of this type on the U.S. side. He stated that we tend to focus on the obstructionism of the Soviets, but called attention to the fact that implementing legislation would be difficult to obtain, particularly since it involves State as well as Federal legislation.

In response to a question from the President as to the size of each control post, Mr. McCone and General Loper described a post as comprising approximately 30 people and involving perhaps a square mile of territory. (This does not mean that the government must own the entire square mile, but must have access to certain areas by easement.) Due to our new discoveries, this estimate of the size of control posts is larger than those made initially. In this connection, Mr. McCone pointed out that our techniques of detecting shots are undergoing continual evolution. We have fired only three underground shots. He pointed out that these techniques should be recognized as being in a state of evolution even after the treaty is enforced.

To this the President responded that such an approach would be possible if we were dealing with sensible people, but not when we are dealing with the USSR. We should take a definite standard and adhere to it, making the Soviets live up to that standard. He further pointed out that the world must approve of what we are doing. He agreed with Mr. McCone that the world is most concerned with atmospheric contamination, for which we have an effective method of detection at this moment. He reiterated that a treaty would probably have to specify a lower limit on the size of explosions that are barred with an added proviso that no contamination be put into the atmosphere.

The Secretary of State pointed up a final diplomatic consideration, which is that our reversal of position as to the size of explosion which may be detected underground (within the current state of the art) will



appear to the Soviets as a matter of bad faith. In Geneva the experts came out with unanimous conclusions on this matter and passed the question to the politicians. While the matter is in the hands of the politicians, we have now revised our technical estimates on nuclear detection capabilities. If the Russians did this, we would object strenuously. All present agreed that this fact has put us in a bad spot.

As a final thought, the President stated our treaty should include provision that specific schedules for annual construction, and operations should be reviewed by interested parties for satisfactory progress. He agreed that inspection must visibly indicate reasonable progress at all times. We cannot allow the concept, for example, that a country might plan for 2-1/2 years with a view to accomplishing necessary construction in the last 6 months.



*John S. D. Eisenhower*  
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