

lrsh(1)  
dsm1

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S PRESS AND RADIO CONFERENCE NO. 33;  
ACCOMPANIED BY ADMIRAL LEWIS L. STRAUSS, CHAIRMAN, ATOMIC  
ENERGY COMMISSION

In Attendance: 235

Room 474 Executive Office Bldg.,  
Washington, D. C.,  
Wednesday, March 31, 1954  
10:30 o'clock a.m.

THE PRESIDENT: As you can suspect, ladies and gentlemen,  
from the picture-taking this morning, we are trying a little  
bit of an innovation.

There has been some slight interest shown in the tests  
recently conducted in the Pacific, and for this reason, I  
brought along with me this morning the expert in that field,  
and after I take a certain share of the press conference  
time, I am going to turn the rest of it over to him and, of  
course, this will also give me a unique privilege of seeing  
someone else in this particular spot.

(Laughter.)

One of the things that I should like to take a moment  
to talk about is the excise taxes.

Now, the excise taxes, of course, have reduced revenues  
a very considerable amount more than I recommended. Neverthe-  
less, from the beginning, it was acknowledged that here was  
a field that was open to discussion. There is one school of



REPOSITORY Eisenhower Library  
Ann Whitman File  
COLLECTION Press Conference Series  
BOX No. 2  
FOLDER Press Conference 3/31/54

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This is not an official transcript. Under White House rules, the President must not be quoted directly. Therefore, this transcript must be paraphrased before any use is made of it. Verbatim duplication for distribution prohibited.

2

dsm2

thought that believes that cutting of excise taxes can have

such a great effect in stimulating of business that the

(2)  
no fls

revenues will not be hurt as much as we estimate.



Firsh.  
aol(2)  
pls.dsm

In any event, the bill, as it does, continuing certain needed excise taxes on beyond April 1st, that is tomorrow, is going to be signed -- I will sign it today -- and certainly, I accept it wholeheartedly, and we are certainly hopeful that the results, any damaging results, will not be as great as might be.

I should like to call attention to this one fact: On figures furnished to me by the Treasury, this will be the greatest single tax reduction in dollars ever accomplished by the American Government, \$7,400,000,000 taken off the -- reduced in one year in taxes. This includes, of course, the reduction in income taxes of January 1st, the abolition of the excess profits tax, and this excise tax, but that will be a huge amount of money in the hands of private citizens to spend themselves and, certainly, we have every reason to believe that it will be a stimulating factor in our economy.



Another point to discuss just briefly is housing.

Now, there has been a lot of different kinds of thinking on public housing, and I think most of you are aware of the general provisions of the plan that I submitted to the Congress some couple of months ago, and I am informed that Mr. Wolcott's

committee is bringing out that program largely in the same form as presented to him.

Now, in the public housing factor, there has been a very considerable struggle, but I am delighted that yesterday the leadership succeeded in getting the necessary appropriations, so that approximately 35,000 public housing units can be constructed this year, and the authorization will certainly be accorded to go for a like amount or something of that order next year in the authorization committee.

Oh, the other item that I wanted to mention was the Randall report, and my Message to Congress on foreign trade.

I think the report and the Message largely speak for themselves, but I do want to make this one observation: In making this kind of an adjustment, in trying to move from an era in which our friends abroad had to depend so markedly on direct aid, into an era where expanded trade will be of benefit to all of us, certain difficulties, even certain hardships can occur not only in our country but in others.



(4)  
m 1

The Government is alert to that situation, will constantly be vigilant to see that any damage of that kind does not become one that is unjustified, as you think of the welfare of the 160 million people, and will take such steps as are necessary to prevent them from becoming either widespread or severe, but that there will be some adjustment of that kind is, of course, inevitable.

I do believe that in this day and time, the free world must come more and more to realize that in an expanding, healthy, two-way trade lies our best insurance that the doctrines of stateism cannot come in and overcome our whole idea of free government.



Now, within our own country we don't feel that danger so intimately; the danger, in other words, is not in position, let us say, of breathing down our necks; but in some of the others it is, and we have got to take all of those things into consideration as we stand firmly for a principle which, in the long run, is for the good of all of us, and it is going to take very great firmness because, as I say, there are going to be some maladjustments and difficulties.

Now, that was my speech for the morning, ladies, and

dsm2 gentlemen, and the rest of my time that I have allocated to myself, I will take up with questions.

Q (Merriman Smith, United Press) Mr. President, I wonder if you could explore for us, sir, or amplify on Secretary Dulles' speech the other night in which he spoke of our readiness to take united action in the Far East.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, the speech must stand by itself, and I should say that I was over every word of it beforehand. Secretary Dulles and I, as usually, find ourselves in complete agreement.

Now, I have forgotten the exact words, but what he  that he used in respect to the question you raised, but he did point out that it is in united action of all nations and peoples and countries affected in that region that we can successfully oppose the encroachment of communism, and should be prepared to meet any kind of attack that would come in there because, he pointed out, the great value of the region to all the free world, and what its loss would mean to us.

So, I think, aside from just the assertion that we are seeking that kind of united action among all our friends, that the speech otherwise must stand by itself.

lrsh.  
1(6)  
s.dsm

Q(Martin Agronsky, American Broadcasting Company) Mr.

President, I wondered if I could ask one more specific question along those lines. The united action has been interpreted generally as indicating, perhaps, intervention, direct intervention or direct use, more accurately, of American troops.

Can you comment on that -- if necessary?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have said time and again that I can conceive of no greater disadvantage to America than to be employing its own ground forces, and any other kind of forces, in great numbers around the world, meeting each little situation as it arises.



What we are trying to do is to make our friends strong enough to take care of local situations by themselves, with the financial, the moral, the political and, certainly, only where our own vital interests demanded any military help.

But each of these cases is one that has its own degree, let us say, of interest for the United States, its own degree of risk and danger and, consequently, each one must be met on its merits.

I couldn't possibly give you a general rule of what the United States would do in a situation because no one could

REPRODUCED AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

ao2 know all of the circumstances surrounding it.

I think the best answer I have heard in diplomacy was that given by France, I believe, to Germany in late August or late July of 1914, when Germany asked her her intentions, she said, "France will do that which her best interests dictate," and I believe that is about the only answer you can give, except in terms of very great generality.



7) Q (Garnett Horner, Washington Evening Star) Mr. President,  
9ml

reports from Europe indicate that the European Defense Community project is bogging down. That raises again the question of whether we have all our policy eggs in that E.D.C. basket, or whether there is some alternative in mind if E.D.C. fails.

Could you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I did say that -- I have been threatened with defeat before, and I don't fight my second battle on the supposition that it is going to occur.

I am all out for the approval of E.D.C. and establishing it as a factor that will insure Europe's safety. Until that question is definitely settled -- and I still firmly believe in the affirmative -- I am not going to comment on it any further.



Q (Robert G. Spivack, New York Post) Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

Q (Robert G. Spivack, New York Post) (Continuing) --

an explosive situation seems to be building up in the Middle East between the Arab states and Israel, which the Soviet Union seems to be exploiting, if not fomenting.

I wondered if you favored bringing the Israel-Arab dispute before the U.N. Security Council, the whole dispute?

10

This page number (10)  
erroneously skipped.

Next page following No. 11

---



Firsh.  
aol(8)  
fls.dsm

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't comment on that at the moment. It would be, I think, speaking a little bit recklessly.

We have had a very definite program of our own that we have supported -- when I say "of our own" I don't mean it quite that way -- we have thoroughly approved the idea that is implicit in the U. M. plan that through some economic unity there we would achieve a better, let us say, psychological and political union and, therefore, we have been very strongly supporting the plan of development, including water development and sharing, that we hoped would be effective.



There is, of course, so much emotionalism in the thing that you can't tell from day to day how it is going to come out; but I do say it is a case where both sides ought to restrain their partisans and their extremists, and use a little bit of reason, and depend upon the judgments of outside people.

Now, this gentleman down here.

Q(Francis M. Stephenson, New York Daily News) I wonder if the Federal Government plans to take any action in the New York waterfront strike?

THE PRESIDENT: The question is about the New York

ao2 waterfront strike.

I, of course, want to be careful that I don't pretend that I am going to get into a field where it is so technical that I couldn't possibly expect to know the answers, so I will talk a little bit in generalities, but I think, clearly enough to show intention and concern.



9)  
dsml

Any strike of this kind is of the utmost importance to the whole nation and, therefore, to your Federal Government.

Now, whenever we touch this delicate transportation scheme, system, of the United States, and affect it seriously, we affect the economy, we affect the living, the welfare of many thousands; we affect even such things as health and sanitation, that sort of thing; so these things become serious instantly.



The second they occur, every Department of Government that has any possible connection, instantly keeps abreast of the situation: The Attorney General, the N.L.R.B., of course, largely independent, of course does so, and determines such things as elections and all that sort of thing; but, at the same time, Federal courts, an independent branch, they take action. Finally it becomes necessary to make sure that their orders are obeyed.

There is also, of course, the understanding in America that everything is handled locally as long as it can be, and you don't bring down Federal Agencies until it is necessary. There are city authorities, there are state authorities; they are doing their best, and again we have one of those cases where

sm2 partnership must be observed.

The Federal Government has certain grave responsibilities imposed by law, but there are also the police powers and that sort of thing, in keeping order, that reside in the local authorities; so it is a question of partnership, and our Attorney General, the N.L.R.B., the Secretary of Labor, everybody, is keeping up with this as closely as possible, and to keep me informed as to the whole situation, so that if it does become the responsibility of the Federal Government to take more positive action, that we are ready to move, in accordance with law, the Constitution and the merits of the case.

Now, there is very little more you can say, I think, on that matter.

Yes?



Irsh.  
ol(10)  
ls.dsm

Q(Otto Leichter, Arbeiter-Zeitung, Vienna, Austria, and Swiss and West German Newspapers) Mr. President, do you consider or contemplate any new initiative to obtain an Austrian independence treaty or the withdrawal of all Occupation forces, or at least to ease the occupation of Austria?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not sure that I understood every single implication of your question; but, generally, it was, do we have any new approach now to secure a general approval of the Austrian treaty.



Q(Otto Leichter, Arbeiter-Zeitung, Vienna, Austria, and Swiss and West German Newspapers) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: About the only observation I could make on it is this: For now, I think it is, for six or seven years we have stood firmly for the early completion of the Austrian treaty, believing it would be wholly unjust and unnecessary to continue the occupation of that country, in view, particularly, of the facts that early in the war it was agreed that Austria had been occupied country, and not an instigator of the war; so I know of no reason that we shouldn't continue to stand on that belief and, as a matter of fact, I know we do, and we will certainly be alert to every

possible way of easing the situation. But when you come down to asking me to predict success or what could be a brand new approach, I could not comment.

Just behind you.

11) Q(George E. Herman, CBS Radio) Mr. President, the last few weeks the Soviet Union has broken a considerable amount of precedent by publishing the details of nuclear and thermo-nuclear explosions. Could you tell us what your feelings are on their policies and intentions in making public these facts lately?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, no, I don't really know.



We have had many discussions on them, and I would say, inconclusive, but there are some who believe that it is indicating a slight change in public policy that might indicate a greater readiness to negotiate earnestly and honestly.

We are trying to keep ourselves in position that at any sign of negotiating honestly, so we can do so with confidence, on the plan that I suggested last December, which would be merely a beginning -- all things like that -- we would certainly welcome in view of the situation in the world today.

No, I am sorry, this one.

ao3 Q(Ray L. Scherer, NBC) Thank you, sir.

Mr. President, the last couple of weeks several members of your team have announced they are returning to private life, C. D. Jackson, Mr. Kyes, and Mr. Dodge. Could you discuss with us the problem of inducing such men to stay in Government?

sml2  
fls



(12)  
dsml

THE PRESIDENT: Well, today, I think it is perfectly clear to all of us, with the family responsibilities that men have, with the tax situation that they have, children to educate, and all of that sort of thing, it is only natural that they think this kind of public duty should be shared.

Now, each of the three men you name promised to stay a year. In each case, because of certain changes in the program and the need for having very intelligent expositions before the committees of the House and the Senate, they have agreed to stay a little longer.



They are difficult to replace, but in at least two instances, I have -- I am sure we have -- two very able and capable men to take their places.

I believe that any government such as this is not wholly damaged by some rotation of people and bringing fresh people in from the outside as long as they are capable in themselves and dedicated.

Now, the three men that are going, that you just named, I couldn't speak of them in terms of too great praise. I think they have done a remarkable job; I am indebted to them, and I think the people are indebted to them, so it is not

easy for any people to fill their shoes, but when you can do it, a certain amount of that rotation is good rather than bad.

Q (Clark R. Mollenhoff, Des Moines Register and Tribune)

Mr. President, several weeks ago I had asked if the White House had given up its efforts to obtain the resignation of Chairman Johnson of the I.C.C., and at that time you stated that you had no knowledge of that, and I wondered if you had an opportunity to acquaint yourself with the I.C.C. problem of personnel.

THE PRESIDENT: As a matter of fact I forgot about that; as a matter of fact I forgot the question -- and will you make a note, and I will. (Conferring with Mr. Hagerty.)

As a matter of fact, Mr. Hagerty says that I make an answer that is very, very unusual for me, because he says "No comment," because I don't know anything about it. But I will try again to look it up.

(Laughter.)

But, just a minute, that is my last question, and now Mr. Strauss is going to take over. I didn't realize that time had gone.

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Shall I go right ahead, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; time is getting short. Let them distribute it.

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Ladies and gentlemen, the President has authorized me to make available those portions of my report of yesterday to him, the publication of which would not compromise information vital to the national security.

In order to be precise and as brief as possible, I prepared a statement -- I believe it is being distributed -- and I shall only read the highlights from it in order to conserve your time and the time of the President.



I have just returned from the Pacific Proving Grounds of the Commission where I witnessed the second part of a test series of thermonuclear weapons. I will describe it as well as I am able, and in this statement, before the description, there is a short historical background summary which, for this morning, I shall skip unless you care to ask me questions about it later.

Early in January of this year, men and supplies began to move out to the Proving Grounds for this series.

The first shot took place on its scheduled date of

March 1st, and the second on March 26th. Both were successful.

No test is made without a definite purpose and a careful

determination that it is directed toward an end result of

major importance to our military strength and readiness, that

is to say, there are no idle or wanton tests.

(14)  
o fls



rsh.  
1(14)  
s.dsm

The results which the scientists at Los Alamos and Livermore had hoped to obtain from these two tests were fully realized, and enormous potential has been added, in consequence, to our military posture, from what we have learned.

I would also like to note that the testing of weapons is important in order to be fully aware of the possible future aggressive ability of an enemy, for we now fully know that we possess no monopoly in capability in this awesome field.

Now, about the specific tests: The first one has been variously characterized as "devastating" and "out of control," and with other somewhat exaggerated and mistaken descriptions.

I would not wish to minimize it. It was a stupendous blast in the megaton range, but at no time was the testing out of control.



The misapprehension seems to have arisen due to two facts: first, that the yield was about double that of the calculated estimate -- a margin of error which, I submit, is not incompatible with a totally new weapon. In fact, the range of guesses on the first A-bomb covered a considerably relatively wider spectrum.

The second reason was because of the results of the

ao2

"fall-out."

23

Now, I think, as you know, when a large explosion occurs on or within a certain distance of the ground, an amount of earth or water or whatever is beneath the center of the explosion, is sucked up into the air. The heavy particles fall out quickly, and the lighter ones are borne out in the direction of the wind until they, too, eventually fall out by gravity.

If the explosion is a nuclear one, then many of these particles are radioactive, as is also the vaporized parts of the weapon itself.



This is the reason that the Atomic Energy Commission from the beginning has conducted tests of larger weapons away from the mainland so that the "fall-out" would occur in the ocean and would be quickly dissipated, both by the dilution and by the rapid decay of most of the radioactivity, which is of short duration.

6)  
sml

The Marshall Islands were selected for this purpose, as a matter of fact, before the Atomic Energy Commission was created, in connection with Operation Crossroads, which was conducted by Admiral Blandy.

During the months of February, March and April of each year, the Marshall Islands are usually favored by winds which blow away from any inhabited atolls. The two atolls at Bikini and Eniwetok were chosen as the base of these operations. Each of these atolls, each of them, is a large necklace of coral reef surrounding a lagoon of two to three hundred square miles in area, and at various points at this reef, like beads on a string, there are a multitude of little islands, some of them a few score acres in extent, but most of them little sand spits.



rsh  
1(17)  
s.dsm

It is these small uninhabited treeless sand bars which are used for these experiments. As a matter of fact, shot one was fired on such an island which was created for the purpose by dredging.

That is a chart, that is a map, of the atoll of Bikini. The shaded portions represent a reef, the boundary reef, and the black spots on it are the pieces of land or sand and the coral which are above normal high water.

Now, before a shot takes place, there is a careful survey of the winds at all elevations up to many thousands of feet.



This survey is conducted by weather stations on islands and on fleet and Air Force units at widely separated points.

Contrary to the notion I had before I was acquainted with the subject, winds don't blow in only one direction at a given time and place. At various heights above the earth, winds are to be found blowing frequently in exactly opposite directions and at greatly varying speeds. An atomic cloud, therefore, which pushes up through these air masses is sheared in the direction in which the winds blow.

The staff of meteorologists attempt to forecast the wind

ao2

direction for the optimum condition, and the Task Force commander, therefore, thereupon decides upon the strength of these weather reports what day he is going to shoot.

The weather forecasts have to be a little bit long-distance, long-range, because it is the custom -- it was the custom -- in connection with this test and the preceding ones, that there is a search of the whole range visually and by radar conducted from squadrons of planes the day before the search and up to the time of the shot.

sm 18  
fls.



(18)

dsml

This search covers a warning area, and I think you might put up that map. The green on this map is the warning area, and the place where I have put my finger is the location of this particular group of atolls.

The warning area surrounds the Proving Grounds within which -- covers the area in which hazard to shipping or aviation is believed to exist. We have established many such areas, and so have other governments.



We have a large area off the Pacific Coast, Point Magu; there is a big area from Florida out across the Bahamas for guided missiles, a big area in the Hawaiian Islands; the British Government has one off the Coast of Australia, and in toto we have established some 447 different warning or danger areas, including Continental areas.

Despite these notices, there are many instances where accidents or near accidents have resulted from inadvertent trespass in such warning areas. The very size of them makes it impossible to fence them, and on the day of Shot No. 1, the meteorologists had predicted a wind condition which should have carried the "fall-out" to the north of the group of small atolls. Will you show the direction in which -- that line was

the direction of the wind predicted by the meteorologists.

The survey aircraft carefully searched the area and reported they found no shipping. The shot was accordingly fired.

The wind failed to follow the predictions, shifted south of that line, and the little islands of Rongelap, Rongerik and Uterik were in the edge of the "fall-out"

A Japanese fishing trawler, the Fortunate Dragon, appeared to have been missed by the search, but based on a statement attributed to the skipper to the effect that he saw the flash and heard the sound of the concussion within six minutes, he must have been well within the danger area.



The 23 crew members on the ship, 28 American personnel manning weather stations on the little islands, and the 236 natives on these islands were also within the area of the "fall-out."

The supposition that the actual blast of the bomb extended over such an enormous area is, of course, strictly untrue.

The task force commander, General Clarkson, promptly evacuated all of the people from these islands. They were taken to Kwajalein, where we have a naval establishment, and there placed under continuous and competent medical supervision.

Firsh.  
o 1(20)  
fls.dsm

I visited them there last week. Since that time it has been determined that our weather personnel could be returned to duty, but they are still being kept on Kwajalein for the benefit of further observation. None of these 28 weather personnel have any burns. The 236 natives also appeared to me to be well and happy.

There were two exceptions: one, an aged man, in advanced stages of diabetes, and the other one an old lady, with crippling arthritis. Neither of these cases, of course, had anything to do with these tests, and today, a full month after the events, the medical staff on Kwajalein have advised us they anticipate no illness, barring, of course, the possibility that disease hereafter contracted might always be experienced and, as a matter of fact, we have more natives than we started with. One child was born while I was there, and four more are expected. (Laughter.)

They named the child, a little girl, after my wife, and I thought she ought to be dowered, and since they have no use for money, I gave her ten pigs.

Q(Merriman Smith, United Press) What was the name of the child?



. This is not an official transcript. Under White House rules, the President must not be quoted directly. Therefore, this transcript must be paraphrased before any use is made of it. Verbatim duplication for distribution prohibited.

30

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: I think the family name is Majuro,

but I am not certain as to that.

ao2

dsm21  
fls.



1)  
dsml

Q (Garnett D. Howner, Washington Evening Star) What was

her first name?

Q (Mrs. May Craig, Maine Newspapers) What is your wife's

name?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Alice. That is not a part of this prepared statement.

(Laughter.)

The situation with respect to the 23 Japanese fishermen is less certain due to the fact that our people have not yet been permitted by the Japanese authorities to make a proper clinical examination.



When I wrote this last night, I was unaware of the fact that there was a message on the wires -- I received it this morning -- indicating that those restrictions would be removed today, and that we would see these people today.

But it is interesting to note that the reports which have recently come through to us indicate that the blood count of these men is comparable to that of our weather station personnel who, as I told you a moment before, are fit to return to duty.

Some skin lesions which have been observed are thought to be due to the chemical activity of the converted material in the

dsm2 coral, rather than to radioactivity, since these lesions are reported to be healing.

The men are under continual observation by Japanese physicians, and we are represented in Japan very adequately by Dr. John Morton of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, and Mr. Eisenbud of my office.

I am going to skip these other points unless you wish to discuss them.

(22)  
o fls.



Firsh.  
aol(22)  
fls.dsm

I would like to remark that a recent comment that I have seen which suggested that the incident involving the "fall-out" on inhabited areas was actually a planned part of the operation, has greatly distressed me. I would not wish to comment on that other than to characterize it as irresponsible and utterly false, and as doing a grave injustice to the men who are engaged in this patriotic mission.

And, finally, I would like to say that one important result of these hydrogen bomb developments has been the great enhancement of our military capability to the point where we should soon be more free to increase our emphasis on the peaceful use of atomic power at home and abroad. It will be a tremendous satisfaction to all of the men who have participated in this program that it has hastened that day.



Q(Merriman Smith, United Press) Mr. Chairman --

Q(Kenneth M. Scheibel, Gannett Newspapers) Mr. Chairman, you said that this particular explosion was not out of control. But is it possible that in any series of tests that a hydrogen explosion or series of them could get out of control?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: I am informed by the scientists that that is impossible.

ao2

Q(Charles S. von Fremd, CBS Television) Admiral

Strauss, yesterday, at his news conference, Secretary of Defense Wilson said the results of the March 1st test -- is the one he was referring to -- was unbelievable. Would you care to comment on that?

dsm23  
fls.



3)  
aml

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: No, I don't think I should comment on that. The use of that adjective, I think, was played up beyond the point where the Secretary intended it. I don't know what is meant by "unbelievable" and I would rather not comment.

Q (Nat S. Finney, Buffalo Evening News) Mr. Chairman, do you intend to imply by the last paragraph in this statement that the work on the weapon phase of the atom is reaching a completion; that we are approaching a point where pursuit of this will no longer yield very large profits, and that we will, therefore, turn our research power to the peaceful applications?



ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Mr. Finney, I think the answer to that is this: The Military have certain requirements. The Commission is engaged in attempting to fill those requirements. The ability of the Commission to devote attention and fissionable material to peaceful requirements, peaceful needs, is always junior to the defense needs, by definition of the Act itself.

The result of these tests has brought us very much nearer to the day of the satisfaction of military requirements, put us within sight of them, so that we can see the ability

sm2

to proceed aggressively with the peacetime development of

power to an extent that we were not able to before the tests.

Q (Nat S. Finney, Buffalo Evening News) Thank you, sir.

Q (Richard Wilson, Cowles Publications) Admiral Strauss,

can you go beyond this statement and describe the area of the

blast, the effectiveness of the blast, and give a general

description of what actually happened when the H-bomb went

off?

(24)  
so fls



Firsh.  
aol(24)  
fls.dsm

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: The area of the blast, Mr. Wilson,  
would be about --

THE PRESIDENT: Why not depend on those pictures they  
are all going to see?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: I understand you are going to see a  
film, a picture, of the 1952 shot. The area, if I were to  
describe it specifically, would be translatable into the  
number of megatons involved, which is a matter of military  
secrecy.

The effects, you said the effectiveness -- I don't know  
exactly what you meant by that, sir, so I don't know how to  
answer it.



Q(Richard Wilson, Cowles Publications) Well, I don't  
mean in the percentage of the effectiveness of or the  
efficiency of the blast itself. But many people in Congress,  
I think many elsewhere, have been reaching out and grasping  
for some information as to what happens when the H-bomb goes  
off, how big is the area of destruction in its various stages;  
and what I am asking you for now is some enlightenment on that  
subject.

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Well, the nature of an H-bomb, Mr.

This is not an official transcript. Under White House rules, the President must not be quoted directly. Therefore, this transcript must be paraphrased before any use is made of it. Verbatim duplication for distribution prohibited.

38

ao2 Wilson, is that, in effect, it can be made to be as large as you wish, as large as the military requirement demands, that is to say, an H-bomb can be made as -- large enough to take out a city.

(A chorus of "What?")

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: To take out a city, to destroy a city.

dsm25  
fls.



5)  
1  
Q (Merriman Smith, United Press) How big a city?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Any city.

Q (Merriman Smith, United Press) Any city, New York?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: The metropolitan area, yes.

Q (Martin Agronsky, American Broadcasting Company)

Mr. Chairman, may I ask this specific question: If you were to make a comparison, duplicating the explosion that occurred at Eniwetok, with this building in which we are right now as the center, what would be left of this city of Washington?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: Well, I couldn't say, Mr. Agronsky, because the precise measurements of these two shots have not been completely calibrated. It may be as much as a month or two before I know the answer to it. It would be a very extensive --



Q (Martin Agronsky, American Broadcasting Company) Will you provide that answer at some time, sir?

ADMIRAL STRAUSS: I won't make a definite commitment, but I would certainly like to.

Q (Merriman Smith, United Press) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Whereupon, at 11:09 a.m., the Press Conference was concluded.)