

Official White House Transcript
of
PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S PRESS AND RADIO CONFERENCE # 142
(Filmed, Taped, and Shorthand Reported)

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Held in Room 474, Executive Office Building
Wednesday, October 1, 1958
At 10:31 o'clock a.m.

This Copy For: -

The President



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THE PRESIDENT: Well sir, of course, anything like this is speculative. You are dealing with independent people, independent nations. You are dealing with people that are very emotional, where their prejudices and mutual hatreds are very deep. So what you can do is this: We have, we shall have, if we have a cease-fire, an opportunity to negotiate in good faith and that, I think, is about all you can say.

Now if you could demilitarize or something else, I'm not so sure as that is a final answer to which everybody could agree, but I do say, to do this thing peacefully and remembering the interests of each nation, its own self-respect, why, then I think possibly we could get somewhere.

Q. Edward W. O'Brien, St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Saturday, sir, will be the first anniversary of the launching of the first Russian sputnik. Could you discuss with us the evolution of our military position in the past year in relation to that of Russia. And as a somewhat related matter, could you tell us, sir, if we have the military power in the Far Pacific that is adequate for our possible needs in that area?

THE PRESIDENT: You are getting -- these guns are getting about three-barreled, rather than two. (laughter)

With respect to the sputnik incidents of the Russians, I should say they represent, as the whole world recognizes, remarkable achievements, and they are additional evidence of the quality of the top Russian scientists right down the whole field.



Our committees that come back to the United States, our Electrical Committee, the Steel Committee and the others, they come back and they report very great, tremendous advances in the scientific character of all of their steel-making facilities and everything else. In one or two instances it has been reported to me, said, "You know, these people in one or two kinds of items are ahead of us, even in quality, and you might say, in the height of the scientific ingenuity that has been displayed."

Now, we have in, I believe in the last seven months, put four satellites in orbit. Our scheme, our plan was devised, as I pointed out before, with an entirely different purpose from that that the Soviets had.

We started it as a part of the Geophysical Year. It was our responsibility that we voluntarily assumed. When it comes to the weaponry, as I pointed out to you again, that the Russians started with their German scientists that they had secured right after 1945.

Our own interest in this particular field was not very great. We went into long-range weapons, missiles, but they were aerodynamic. They were not the ballistic missiles. In other words, we didn't go it all into the IRBMs and the ICBMs.

So when I came in here, I got two successive scientific committees to go into this thing and find out what was going on, what we should be doing. And it took them quite a long time. But along about a year and a half after the first committee was organized, we believed that we knew what we should do, and that was the first time that anything was really dedicated -- any sizable sum -- to ballistic missiles of a long range. And that was, the whole project was now put on first priority, over every other expenditure.

But remember, with our curve starting over here, and theirs here, we had to get a very steep one. I think we have constructed a very steep curve of accomplishment, but naturally with that length of time, there are going to be some incidents here and there where we are not satisfied with our results.

But they are going ahead, and I believe we have the biggest, strongest, finest body of scientists amply armed with money to do the job, and that's that.

Now, in the Far East, I think our weaponry is in very good shape, and our forces are in good shape.

Q. (Arrowsmith, Associated Press) Thank you, Mr. President.

