

Official White House TranscriptofPRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S PRESS AND RADIO CONFERENCE #179(Filmed, Taped, and Shorthand Reported)

Held in Room 474, Executive Office Building  
 Wednesday, February 3, 1960  
 At 10:29 o'clock, a.m., EST




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This Copy For:-

The President

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for devotion to it. I believe it will be appropriated, and I believe that, let's say, implies not only the determination of the United States to go ahead rapidly with this thing, I believe we can look forward at the proper time to success.

Q. Mr. President, Scherer, NBC. In the general context of the so-called "Spirit of Camp David," do you think the fact that the Lend-Lease talks came to nothing indicates anything about the general Soviet desire to negotiate on outstanding issues?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again I must repeat myself. I wasn't aware of any spirit of Camp David. I have heard it quoted a number of times, and I think that it was quoted by -- I mean it was initiated, originated by people other than ourselves.

Now, no one, no one denied that the talks there went on in an atmosphere that was personally friendly. That's all that the spirit of Camp David could be defined. That is the only way it could be defined.

But I think that these difficulties, when in this instance the Soviets tried to put two or three other problems together with the Lend-Lease talks, was a typical maneuver and there was nothing done. But it doesn't mean that sooner or later there won't be something done.

Q. Mr. President, Knighton, Baltimore Sun. Don't you think the country ought to have the benefit of your advice as to who the other Republicans who are, -- you think should be -- could be President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you what -- there's a number of them, and I am not going into the business of nominating people. That's not my job. But I must say -- I want to make this very clear -- I am not dissatisfied with the individual that looks like he will get it, not by any manner or means. And I just simply say there's a number that could perform the duties of the office with distinction.

Q. Mr. President, May Craig, Press Herald, Portland, Maine. There is concern in the Capitol for fear you may feel it necessary to give atomic information, or even actual custody of atomic weapons, to those countries where we're going to have bases for nuclear weapons.

Do you want to do that, and if so, inasmuch as we took our bases out of France on that quarrel with de Gaulle, would that mean you want to put nuclear bases back into France?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you've got about a three-barreled question there. But, Mrs. Craig, the law itself says what information the

Executive can give to particular nations, and it defines rather accurately the nations to whom you can give this information.

As far as giving away the bombs, this cannot be done under existing law.

Now I do believe this, that where we are allied with other nations and we are trying to arm ourselves in such a way as to make certain of our defense, we should try to arm them in such methods and ways as will make that defense more strong and more secure.

I would not ever give any information even if the law permitted -- give away information that was still, in our opinion, withheld from the Soviets themselves. But when the Soviets have the information and know-how to do things, it's pretty hard for me to understand why we don't do something with our allies, as long as they themselves stand with us firmly in defending against the probable aggressive intent of communism.



Q. Charlie Mohr, Time Magazine. Mr. President, you made clear in an earlier answer how strongly you felt that SAC was not vulnerable to being wiped out in an enemy attack. Since this is at the heart of the current argument, I wonder if you could tell us whether you believe that we would get strategic warning of any enemy missile attack, or if you don't believe that, could you give us some of the reasons why you feel that SAC is not vulnerable, in a period of two or three years, to a very crippling blow?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if you will take, probably, the things that the Soviets could probably do three or four years from now, and then we sit like we are now and do nothing, well that's a different story.

But I just say this: I don't believe that anyone today can destroy all of our capabilities for retaliation, and they cannot destroy today enough of them that we couldn't retaliate very effectively to the point of destructiveness to them.

Now as we go ahead, they will go ahead. But I would say that three years from now, if we are working as hard as we do now, we are going to be in the same relative position.

Q2. Mr. President, Roberts, Washington Post. In view of your answer to Mrs. Craig's question, and the fact that the nuclear test negotiations at Geneva seem to be stalled, Mr. President, do you feel that the -- that it's becoming really impossible to stop the spread of nuclear weapons

to the so-called "Fourth" countries, or do you still look upon the test ban negotiations as a way to do this? Are you prepared to keep on with the moratorium?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, if you had real test bans that applied to all nations, then the only way other nations could get weapons would be through sale, transfer or gift.

Now frankly, of course, it concerns any thoughtful individual as to the problem of the spread of these weapons to smaller and other nations, as the process of their manufacture may become more simple and just through, you might say, the method of absorption, and the necessary know-how becomes more widespread.

I am of the belief that if you could have now a ban on all testing that everybody could have confidence in, it would be a very, very fine thing to stop this, for this very reason, if no other: It's a very expensive business, to begin with. The very first bomb we produced I think cost America two billion dollars or more before we ever had the very first one. And since that time I don't believe that our -- although you'd have to look this up -- but I think our appropriations have never been below two billion dollars a year. So it is an expensive business.

Q. (Roberts) Could I ask, sir, are you prepared, in face of the difficulties at Geneva, to keep our negotiator there more or less indefinitely? You put the moratorium on sort of a day-to-day basis a month ago.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to keep him up as long as there is the slightest chance of success. We should get this kind of agreement as soon as we can.

Q. Burd, Chicago Tribune. Mr. President, where do you expect to be and what do you expect to be doing one year from now?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope out on the desert or down shooting quail in Georgia. Or maybe just sitting in a rocking chair.

Q. Felix Belair, New York Times. Have you decided yet, Mr. President, in connection with the Panama Canal, what form of visible evidence of titular sovereignty should be displayed over the Canal?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Belair. Here is a question that, if it had been answered -- or asked to me three years, I'd have known exactly what I would have said. One of the earliest tours I had in