

Briefing Paper for the President's Press Conference

April 27, 1960

GENEVA TEST BAN NEGOTIATIONSQUESTION

Mr. President, at recent Congressional hearings a number of scientists have indicated that an effectively controlled test ban agreement will require supplementing the presently planned net of 180 stations by a considerably greater number. In view of this testimony, are we planning to ask the Soviet Union to consider such a supplement to the existing network?

ANSWER

We have proposed a controlled treaty which would ban all nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, the oceans, at high altitudes and above a seismic magnitude of 4.75 in the underground area. This proposal was made on the basis of a worldwide control system as recommended in 1958 by the Geneva Technical Conference of Experts. We believe that in terms of our present proposal this system will provide for the controls we deem as necessary and adequate.

For small underground disturbances below the seismic threshold of 4.75 there is no question but, that, if tests in this area are to be banned we will need an improved control system. It was precisely for this reason that we suggested that a coordinated research program be carried out to determine just what improvements could be made to permit adequate controls to be established over this area.

QUESTION

Mr. President, have we yet determined a specific time limit that we could accept over a moratorium on small underground disturbances?

ANSWER

A good deal of thought has been given to this matter, but at this time I wish to say nothing more than that we are prepared to accept a short term, voluntary moratorium. Any final decision on

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the length of the moratorium will depend on the arrangements worked out for the coordinated research program and the progress that is made in the resolving in the negotiations of the various important organizational issues that now separate the two sides.

QUESTION

Mr. President, do we want to be able to conduct on-site inspections below the threshold once a moratorium is in effect?

ANSWER

Yes, but just what the requirements would be in terms of numbers, I am not prepared to say.

QUESTION

Mr. President, do you see any possibility of overcoming at the Summit some of the major differences between the two sides at the Geneva test ban negotiations?

ANSWER

As you know, the Geneva test ban negotiations concern only three of the powers that will be taking part in the Summit discussions. It is therefore premature to indicate in what way discussions on this topic might arise. Nevertheless, if it is discussed, I would hope the discussions could lead to finding some common ground which in turn might help to resolve one or some of the major issues now facing the negotiators in Geneva.

