

Briefing Paper for the President's Press Conference

August 17, 1960

DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS

Question

Mr. President, the U.S. Disarmament Commission held its first session yesterday. Could you tell us what we hope to accomplish in this disarmament commission meeting?

Answer

The Four Powers (US, UK, France, USSR), when they established the Ten Nation forum, agreed to keep the Disarmament Commission informed of the progress of their deliberations. This meeting, then, is in keeping with that agreement. However, the principal reason for calling the Commission meeting at this time is in the hope that the Commission will lend its support toward getting general disarmament negotiations back on the track.

Question

Mr. President, Ambassador Lodge's proposal yesterday called for the setting aside on a reciprocal basis of 30,000 kilograms of weapons grade U-235. Can you tell us what proportion of the US and USSR stockpiles this represents?

Answer

I can't, of course, be explicit but it represents a significant proportion as I believe is illustrated by the fact that 30,000 kilograms would represent an explosive force well over 1,000 times greater than all the high explosive bombs used in World War II.

Question

Mr. President, does the alternative proposal set forth by Ambassador Lodge mean that the United States would be prepared to shut down such plants as Oak Ridge and Hanford?

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Answer

Yes - on an equivalent basis of course. I might add, however, that some arrangement would have to be worked out to permit any peaceful uses program to operate effectively.

