

Briefing Paper for the President's Press Conference

August 17, 1960

GENEVA TEST BAN NEGOTIATIONS

Question

Mr. President, Mr. McCone and Mr. Merchant are in London to discuss with the British Government the present status of the Geneva test ban negotiations. Reports from London indicate that there is a difference of views on when an agreement might be reached as well as on nuclear detonations in a research program. Would you comment on this?

Answer

Mr. McCone and Mr. Merchant have gone to London to discuss with the British recent developments in the Geneva conference including such matters as safeguards, on-site inspection quota, the moratorium and phasing.

I am not aware of any significant differences between the British and ourselves on any of the conference's unresolved issues. I am confident, however, that if indeed any differences do exist these will be satisfactorily resolved by the close of this London meeting.

Question

Mr. President, isn't it unusual for the Head of the Atomic Energy Commission to participate in discussions of this nature?

Answer

Since the question of safeguards is one of the key matters under discussion it was felt that Mr. McCone who is thoroughly familiar with U.S. legislation on Atomic Energy matters and other aspects of the safeguarded problem should attend the London meeting.

Question

Mr. President, what do we hope the outcome of this London meeting will be?

Answer

Throughout the course of the test ban negotiations we have worked in close cooperation with the U.K. This meeting is another in a series



REPOSITORY Eisenhower Library
 COLLECTION Ann Whitman Files
 BOX No. 10
 FOLDER Press Conference 8/17/60

of such cooperate efforts which provide an opportunity to exchange views on the negotiations major issues so that we can carry on the work of the conference on general common ground.

Question

Mr. President, the other day Senator Jackson in a statement indicated that the Soviet Union has been secretly carrying out nuclear weapons tests. Do we have any information which would substantiate this?

Answer

We have no information which would indicate that the Soviet Union has conducted clandestine tests. In the current Geneva test ban negotiations we are attempting to establish a control system which would assure that no nuclear weapons tests are carried out clandestinely. However, until such a system is brought into being we have no way of being absolutely certain that the Soviet Union is not testing clandestinely.

