

Apr. 25, 1962. Talk with Dep. Secy. Defense Roswell Gilpatrick,
with Roberts and Marder

G said he has a feeling in his ~~bones~~ bones that this round of testing and the expected Soviet round will be the last. This is a subjective feeling on his part; Kennedy had such a difficult time bringing himself to agree to the series, with a better case than he will ever be able to make again, and the alternative of an endless spiral ~~is~~ is so grim, that G feels this must come to a halt.

Test series will run 2 to 3 months; no hard fixed time. It will take months to extrapolate results, but this does not mean negotiations cannot go on.

G was principal Pentagon figure in working out plans for recent disarmament outline. It was hard for military to swallow. Believes that Disarmament Agency, from what he sees of top ~~ex~~ echelon, is working for a positive disarmament line, contrary to other reports we have heard.

Sees no prospect of patching up differences with de Gaulle, or foreseeable de Gaulle successors, on French nuclear-sharing demand. French general was recently in with a shopping ~~list~~ list, but they want just what we don't want to give them. Doesn't even see anything possible in peripheral hardware that we could give them, for it is all nuclear-linked. Also, Jt. Congressional Cttee is adamantly opposed.

Basic issue from White House standpoint is anti-proliferation of weapons. Our concept runs just counter to what French want. Indicated ~~that~~ that President, McNamara and himself want to pull nuclears out of Europe, rather than put more in. Also thinking in terms of possible quid pro quo arrangement with Russians. As our weaponry develops, that in itself would make SAC bases overseas increasingly unnecessary. In principle we could reach point in next few years when our nuclear capacity could be outside European land mass (at sea, from home bases, etc.) Recognizes this is "heresy" from military standpoint.

Maybe arrangement possible with Russians, not for Rapacki-type disengagement, but limitation of forces in Europe, in effect de-nuclearizing forward forces. In addition to tension-easing argument, Kennedy is not happy about present nuclear-use command structure. Manuals around Pentagon now ~~based~~ based on thesis that "tactical" nuclear weapons just like any other weapon, and can be furnished virtually down to platoon level for some weapons. G disagreed that you can fire off "tactical" nuclears ~~and~~ and avoid escalation into nuclear war.

We do have basic understanding with West Germans that their forces in NATO will ~~be~~ not be left at military disadvantage compared to our forces in weapons equipment. Suggested that way out of this was not to put more nuclear-capable weapons into German hands (with us retaining physical control of ~~war~~ warheads), but to pull our nuclears out of our own forward units. Said not too many there now, but will be in next ~~the~~ few years, so decision should be made in ~~the~~ interim.

G said if deal with Russians was possible, to mutually bar nuclear weapons from ground units, perhaps by 1963-64 we could even pull present ~~the~~ IRBMs out of Italy, Turkey and elsewhere.

G said nothing sensational in sight for NATO's Athens meeting on nuclears. We will talk about providing more information on what we have where in NATO, and information on targeting, and also present guide lines for agreement on use of nuclears. But G said, as he has said before, that none of this is any basic change.

Said McNamara going with Rusk to London, then Athens--and deliberately skipping Paris--then on to Vietnam. G said command structure of Vietnam operation is badly overloaded; implied McN will swing ~~xx~~ axe on it if he can.

G said outlook in Vietnam is wholly uncertain. Said he can find out more about what goes on there by reading press than he can from going through layers and layers of reports from different commands. He can't tell whether we are gaining ground or losing it, assumes truth is that situation is in dangling state. Cannot see what end of the road will be; questions ~~wx~~ whether American public realizes what a long, ~~xx~~ uncertain road it will be.

Marder



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