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S/AE P. Farley:jd

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Memorandum of Conversation

APPROVED BY S
February 20, 1960

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600.0012/2-1860/1972
XR 396.12-GE
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DATE: February 18, 1960
9:15 a.m.

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(5) OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting on Nuclear Cut-Off.

<u>PARTICIPANTS:</u>	<u>The White House</u>	<u>Dept of State</u>	<u>Dept of Defense</u>
	The President	Secretary Herter	Mr. Gates
	Mr. Gordon Gray	Mr. Dillon	Mr. Douglas
	Mr. James Lay	Mr. Eaton	Gen. Twining
	Gen. Persons	Mr. Gerard Smith	Gen. White
	Gen. Goodpaster	Mr. Farley	Gen. Lemnitzer
	Dr. Kistiakowsky		Adm. Burke
			Mr. Irwin
			Gen. Loper
	<u>AEC</u>	<u>CIA</u>	
	Mr. McCone	Mr. Dulles	

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Mr. Herter said that we have urgent preparations underway with our allies looking toward opening of disarmament negotiations about March 15. The most pressing question is whether the cessation of production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes (the cut-off) should be treated as a proposal we are ready to negotiate now or one not to be negotiated until later. He referred to the history of this proposal in the President's atoms-for-peace speech in December 1953, his letter to Bulganin of March 1956, and the 1957 Western disarmament package. Mr. Herter said that he believed the proposal was a sound one particularly in view of present ratios of U.S. and Soviet stock-piles and the prospect that our relative advantage would dwindle in the future. He was not optimistic of Soviet acceptance. This had however been central in our approach to the problem of control of nuclear energy since the Baruch plan just after the war and we should not abandon it. An important consideration was the effect such a measure might have in halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons capabilities, especially to the Communist Chinese. From the long-range point of view this proliferation was dangerous to the United States and the sooner we could get at the problem the better. He would not favor the proposal if it was adverse to fundamental U.S. security but if it could be advanced conditioned on prior effective inspection without hurt to our security, then he strongly recommended that we continue to advance the proposal.

Mr. Gates said that Defense agreed the cut-off should be an ultimate U.S. objective and that the President was closely identified with the proposal. However, to offer this measure now independent of other disarmament steps would perhaps lead to separate negotiation of this matter when the Soviets have

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given as yet no indication that they are ready to accept adequate inspection. A nuclear cut-off would be awkward for the Defense Department in the present transition period to defensive weapons systems requiring large amounts of fissionable material to the full extent of anticipated production schedules. A cut-off would require rescheduling and reprogramming present nuclear warhead plans and would in turn have an impact on planned and programmed weapons systems. Thus Defense urged that this measure be made a long-range objective not to be separately negotiated now. Defense was also concerned that if we entered negotiations on this proposal world opinion would force us into a moratorium of fissionable materials production despite the contrary desires of the President, the State Department, and Defense.

The President said that the Defense analysis appeared to him one-sided and in a vacuum. It stressed the effects of a cut-off on the U.S. without looking at the effects on the Soviet Union. He thought that any equitable arrangement leading to mutual inspection was in our interest. To enforce the cut-off one would have to have broad access all through the Soviet Union. (He expressed some skepticism about McGone's suggestion of a plant by plant shut-down since unknown or replacement plants might exist). This kind of full inspection was an indispensable prerequisite as far as he was concerned. Mr. Herter said that this was his position also.

Mr. McGone said that there had been many studies of the inspection problem for the cut-off and these were continuing. It was a tough problem, perhaps tougher than that for underground test detection. He referred to the complications introduced by recent improvements in the centrifuge production process. He observed also that, while we may have a larger stockpile than the Soviet Union, this is because our defensive needs for nuclear weapons are much greater. He was also wary of separating nuclear disarmament from conventional disarmament; separate nuclear disarmament was what Khrushchev wanted. He recognized the great advantage to us if we were able to open up the Soviet Union to control and inspection. His thought was that we might offer to shut down one plant if the Soviet Union did the same and we would go forward to shut down others if they permitted thorough overflight to assure that all other production installations were located.

Mr. Dulles said that our estimates of Soviet stockpiles are based on a good deal of information. We know pretty well where Soviet plants are and what their raw material and power consumption rates are. What is less clear in making our quantitative estimates is the efficiency of the plants.

Mr. Gates reiterated that the timing of such a proposal at present was poor from the Defense point of view in view of the new weapons systems coming in in the next five years. If the Soviets accepted the cut-off we would have to change our systems. The President observed that we would want to change our weapons systems if the Soviets accepted this kind of measure.

Gen. Twining expressed the strong concern of the Joint Chiefs that we would get into the same kind of fix we are in in the nuclear test negotiations. Once negotiations started on this measure we would find ourselves in a

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moratorium. He also doubted that we would be able to continue to manufacture tritium. Mr. Herter, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. McCone said that we would not under the proposal agree to give up refabrication and maintenance of our stockpile.

The President said that we should not always assume we will lose in the bargaining or that we will not have the determination to do what is necessary such as continuing to make tritium. He reiterated that if we could get a dependable agreement to stop manufacture of U-235 and plutonium under effective inspection it would be to our advantage. He observed that we should not take the kind of negotiating posture the Soviets do on Berlin--"take it or else". We should not be so rigid that we are unwilling to put up something which is to our ultimate advantage. This might not be acceptable to the Soviets any more than "open skies" was but it was sound and a good proposal. He observed that Mr. McCone's idea of a plant by plant shut-down was a possibly useful gimmick for a bilateral U.S.-Soviet arrangement. Mr. Herter agreed that this might be attractive in working out the inspection procedures for a cut-off. Mr. McCone acknowledged the force of these comments and observed that his scheme would get large headlines.

Adm. Burke said that he would not quarrel with the proposal as discussed here but he feared the rules would change on us and world public opinion would force us into an unsound deal. The President said we would have to stick on an agreed installed checked inspection system. If we got a cut-off under these conditions we should not worry too much about conventional attack--we would still have a navy and the protection of the oceans. Furthermore, if anyone could find a way to locate past stockpiles it would be in our interest to get rid of them. Anything that would further mutual inspection should be sought; we ought to put up in the forthcoming negotiations as many proposals as possible which would challenge the Soviets to open up their country.

Mr. Gates urged that we look fully into the military implications of the cut-off before proposing it. The President reiterated that the cut-off would affect the military capabilities of both sides. He referred to his conversations with Khrushchev regarding nuclear strategy and recalled that Khrushchev had said they were shutting down construction of nuclear power plants. He said also that he thought there was some attractiveness to the idea of following up a cut-off with an offer to put thousands of megatons of bang into international custody on a reciprocal basis. Mr. Gates said he preferred this approach to the cut-off. Mr. Herter and Mr. McCone pointed out it only made sense if there was a cut-off so that the transferred materials were not replaced in stockpile.

The President observed that in view of the record we would have a difficult time turning down a cut-off proposal if the Soviets offered it. The only prerequisite as far as he was concerned was an adequate inspection system. Mr. Herter remarked that this matter had been held in abeyance in the current five-power consultations. The President observed that our allies probably knew we were committed to this measure.

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Mr. Gates said that our past cut-off proposal was an integral part of a disarmament package. Mr. Herter explained that we were trying to avoid a comprehensive disarmament plan being pushed by the U.K. We want to distinguish what we can talk about in negotiations now from what we do not want to put in any specific time phase. The President said that he did not agree that the cut-off was part of a package. We have always said it is not technically feasible to ban the bomb now but we have actively urged the cut-off as a first step.

Mr. Gates stressed again the need for refabrication to make smaller defensive warheads. Gen. Twining again expressed fear that we would be pushed into a moratorium. Mr. Herter said there would not be a moratorium. The President said there would not be so long as he was here. He thought the testing situation with the concern about fall-out was very different from this situation and we would not face the same impelling reasons for a moratorium.

The President said he understood and shared some of the apprehensions expressed by the military. However we have to have faith and courage to put forward some positive proposals of our own that are fair. Eaton should say that the thing we consider indispensable and want to get is mutual inspection and he must be able to say one thing we would do under mutual inspection is the cut-off.

Mr. Herter said that that was the State Department approach completely. He read the proposed language regarding agreed control.

Mr. Irwin spoke at some length regarding the tritium proposal and expressed concern that world opinion would be reluctant to distinguish between fissionable material and fusionable material. Since the H-bomb is considered worse than the A-bomb we would be charged with holding on to the worst material. He urged again careful study of the military implications before agreeing to the cut-off.

The President said that perhaps we might be pushed into agreeing to stop tritium production also. In that case the Soviets would have to stop too and that might really lead to inefficiency of the Soviet thermonuclear weapon stock-pile and thus cut down Soviet ability to destroy the United States. Perhaps on the other hand tritium is more important to us than to the Soviets. In either case we have to try to make a start. We can't go on the way we are with the nuclear build-up and spread of capabilities. He reiterated that he did not anticipate the same problem of a moratorium.

Mr. Herter pointed out that the UN has always overwhelmingly endorsed the requirement of reciprocal inspection.

It was agreed that the State Department draft language should be reviewed to make clear that use of fissionable material in submarines and other propulsion systems was not to be barred and that an effectively operating inspection system must come before the actual cut-off.

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