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340. Memorandum of Conference With President Kennedy

Washington, July 22, 1963, 6–6:45 p.m.

Harriman Mission

OTHERS PRESENT

Secretary Rusk
Secretary Ball
Ambassador Thompson
Mr. William Foster
Mr. Smith

The President asked about the details of formalizing the draft test ban treaty. Following a discussion of these formalities, it was decided that Ambassador Harriman would initial the agreement in Moscow, return to Washington, and then go again to Moscow as part of a delegation to be headed by Secretary Rusk and including several Senators. Secretary Rusk would expect to sign the agreement a week after the initialing ceremony. The purpose of the Senate delegation is to interest them as well as to provide additional opportunities to direct public attention to the benefits of a test ban treaty. The week's delay also provides time for consultation with allies. The plan to send a delegation to Moscow is to be put to Prime Minister Macmillan in the hope that he would agree and name a comparable level British delegation. Ambassador Harriman is to be instructed to suggest the procedure to Gromyko.

In response to the President's question, Mr. Ball said that to "initial" an agreement means no more than that the negotiators accept as accurate the text of the agreement.

There followed a discussion as to whether it would be better to initial the agreement before de Gaulle has his press conference next Monday. The President decided that de Gaulle's actions would probably not be influenced by the initialing of the test ban treaty.

Consideration was then given to the draft letter to de Gaulle.¹ The President suggested several revisions. He asked that the sentence deal-

Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda Series, Meetings with the President, Harriman Mission, 7/63. Secret. Drafted by Bromley Smith. The ending time of the meeting is from the President's Appointment Book. (Ibid.)

¹ What is apparently an earlier draft than the one discussed here is in telegram 247 to Moscow, July 19. (Department of State, Central Files, DEF 18-4) This earlier draft was written after consultation between Kennedy and Macmillan in a series of personal messages that began with the President's July 16 letter to the Prime Minister. This correspondence is *ibid.*, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204, Kennedy-Macmillan, 1963, and *ibid.*, Macmillan-Kennedy, 1963; other copies are in the Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies Series, ACDA, JFK-MacM, Test Ban Correspondence 7/63. The draft sent to Harriman also went to Macmillan for comment.

ing with the non-aggression pact² make clear to de Gaulle that we have told the Russians that any non-aggression proposals would require not only consultation but also agreement among the Western allies before any action at all could be taken. In order to avoid appearing to be condescending, the President suggested that the words “protect the interests of our allies”³ be changed to read “to make clear” so that the sentence would read: “We would take pains in any communiqué on the present discussions to make clear the interest which our allies, especially France and the Federal Republic, have in this matter.” (The sentence was later revised to delete reference to France and the Federal Republic.)

There was a discussion of the following sentence: “As we have already indicated through Ambassador Bohlen, the United States Government would be willing to explore alternatives which might make French testing in these three environments unnecessary.”⁴ Ambassador Thompson suggested deleting the reference to Ambassador Bohlen on the grounds that the British Prime Minister, in an earlier letter to the President,⁵ had said he did not know what we had told Ambassador Bohlen to tell the French. Mr. Ball commented that we were not certain whether the conversation between Bohlen and French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville⁶ had actually been reported to de Gaulle. Therefore, we did not know whether the offer Bohlen made to Couve was actually known to de Gaulle. The President agreed to delete the reference to Bohlen.

In this connection, the President [4-1/2 lines of source text not declassified]. Several other anti-U.S. statements by the French to other officials were noted, leading the President to comment on the major campaign which de Gaulle is carrying on against us.

² On this subject the draft cited in footnote 1 above reads: “We of course have made it plain [to the Soviets] that any proposals of this sort would require consultation among the Western allies before any action at all could be taken, and we do not accept the notion of a necessary link between a test ban and this quite separate topic. Only if the Russians drop the notion of a necessary link can the test ban agreement become real. It goes without saying that we recognize your special interest in this aspect of the matter.”

³ Not in the text cited in footnote 1 above.

⁴ The pertinent passage in the draft cited in footnote 1 states that de Gaulle would, in adhering to the treaty, cut himself off from “one means” of acquiring nuclear weapons technology. “As we have also indicated through Ambassador Bohlen, the United States Government would be willing to explore alternative means by which the necessary technical information would be made available for your program. We believe that if our experts can discuss these matters carefully together, means can be found which would meet your requirements and allow France to join in the effort to prevent further contamination of the atmosphere.” In a July 21 letter to Kennedy, Macmillan recommended omission of the last sentence because of the “danger of going too far in the first communication.” (Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies Series, ACDA, Test Ban Correspondence, JFK–MacM, 1963)

⁵ Reference is to Macmillan’s July 21 letter.

⁶ See Document 295.

The President suggested changing the word "believe" to "hope" in the sentence which reads: "While there are both political and technical problems here, we hope they are capable of solution."⁷

There was no discussion of the following sentence which was bracketed in the President's reading copy: "We must not take any course that would dismay our allies since it is the strength and unity of the alliance as a whole that matters most."⁷ (This sentence was later deleted by the President who feels that mention of our allies in the initial communication will only be a red rag to the General. We obviously will have to talk about their views at some stage, but he thinks it is a matter which need not be mentioned explicitly now.)

The discussion turned to the situation which would exist if the French refused to sign the treaty and announced that they would continue testing. The President suggested that instructions to Harriman⁸ prepare the Russians for what de Gaulle might say at his press conference next Monday. Secretary Rusk suggested, and the President agreed, that Harriman make the point to the Russians that we were looking at what the French would do rather than paying too much attention to what they said. Secretary Rusk suggested that the Russians be told that while we did not react sharply to the Chinese statement that they would not sign the treaty, we would reconsider our situation if the Chinese actually tested a nuclear weapon.

A suggestion was made that Harriman ask the Russians whether they had a preference as between French testing and our giving limited nuclear assistance to France. Secretary Rusk, Mr. Ball and Ambassador Thompson all opposed this suggestion as being too dangerous to raise with the USSR.

No one was prepared to say exactly what Gromyko meant when he commented that French refusal to sign the treaty would create a new situation which the Russians would have to examine.⁹ Ambassador Thompson doubted that the Russians would withdraw from the treaty if de Gaulle said flatly he was not going to sign the ban agreement.

The President was concerned about what we would do if, having announced that Secretary Rusk and the Senators would go to Moscow to sign the agreement, de Gaulle, on Monday, flatly refused to associate himself with the treaty and the Russians thereupon said they would reconsider their agreement to the test ban. Later, it was agreed to allow a week to elapse between Harriman's initialling the agreement in Moscow and the signature. This provides an interval after de Gaulle's press con-

⁷ Not in the text cited in footnote 1 above.

⁸ See Document 341.

⁹ See Document 339.

ference during which we would re-examine the situation, if necessary. With the publication of the text of the agreement, we would be in a position to know French reaction.

The President commended Mr. Ball for his memorandum¹⁰ explaining his opposition to offering nuclear weapons assistance to France in return for French cooperation on the test ban treaty. In response to the President's question, Mr. Ball said French insistence on developing its own nuclear capability was not based on its desire to join the nuclear club, but arose out of de Gaulle's aim to make France nothing less than top dog in Europe.

Two letters to the Prime Minister were approved.¹¹ The first transmitted a copy of the letter to de Gaulle. It also covered the point raised by the President, namely, our instruction to Harriman to forewarn the Russians about the possible French attitude toward the test ban agreement, calling special attention to the difference between what the French say they are going to do and any actual French testing, which is some time off in the future.¹²

The second letter to the Prime Minister urged him to accept our proposed language for the communiqué dealing with the Russian proposal for a non-aggression pact. In our view, the language proposed by Hailsham would, in effect, be a non-aggression declaration by the U.S., U.K. and USSR.¹³

In response to Mr. Foster's question, the President said he had talked to each of the Joint Chiefs of Staff individually. He said General LeMay was solidly opposed to the test ban treaty while the Marine Corps Commandant, General Shoup, saw in the test ban treaty a major turning point. General Taylor's view takes into account considerations other than purely military ones.

There followed a discussion as to the prospects of obtaining Senate approval for the treaty. Secretary Rusk and Mr. Foster reported increasing Senate opinion favoring the treaty. Lewis Strauss is now in favor of an

¹⁰ Dated July 22. (Department of State, Central Files, DEF 18–8) See the Supplement.

¹¹ Both dated July 22; transmitted on July 23 through White House channels as CAP 63400. (Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies Series, ACDA, Test Ban Correspondence, JFK–MacM, 1963)

¹² McCone had briefed Kennedy on the French testing program on July 19. (Memorandum for the record by McCone, with briefing memorandum attached, both dated July 19; Central Intelligence Agency, DCI Files, Box 6, DCI Meetings with the President)

¹³ Kennedy stated that the Hailsham language "seems to me to go too far. His formulation would, in effect, constitute a non-aggression declaration by the three principals. It would accordingly be resented by the Germans and the French since it would prejudice their position in any future negotiations." In this letter, Kennedy also outlined the procedures for conclusion of the test ban agreement set forth in the first paragraph of this memorandum. Regarding the Hailsham language, see footnote 9, Document 339.

environmental test ban. Mr. McCone was praised by both Mr. Ball and Mr. Foster for the support which he is developing in favor of the treaty.

There was discussion of the Senators who would be asked to go to Moscow to sign the agreement.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Foster said there was a problem arising out of the scheduled reconvening of the Geneva arms conference this summer. He said that the Moscow negotiations would not be completed in time to convene this conference as scheduled. The Russians had indicated that they would prefer not to reopen the Geneva talks but to discuss disarmament in the fall in connection with the General Assembly meeting. Mr. Foster favored a short session in Geneva during which we could discuss the details of several of the disarmament suggestions made by Khrushchev to Harriman in Moscow.

The President's view was that we should ask Harriman to ask the Russians whether they favored holding the session. If the Russians insisted on postponing the session, the President saw little profit in our trying to force them into a meeting because we would be unable to draw them out if they did not choose to be drawn.

Bromley Smith¹⁴

¹⁴Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

341. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union

Washington, July 22, 1963, 10:27 p.m.

277. Re Embtel 269 July 22 9:00 p.m.¹ Your draft for article I-1-B contained in paragraph 3 Reftel approved.

We cannot accept U.K. communiqué language (Embtel 248)² since that in effect constitutes non-aggression declaration by the three principals and would create resentment on part of Germans and French since it would prejudice their position in any further negotiations and would point the finger at them for failure to enter into a non-aggression pact.

Source: Department of State, Central Files, DEF 18-4. Secret; Operational Immediate; Eyes Only Ban. Drafted by Ball; cleared by the President, S, and Foster in substance and by Bromley Smith in draft; and approved by Read.

¹ Document 339.

² See footnote 9, Document 339.