

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

025648

TO: MR. H. B. ROBINSON,

Security UNCLASSIFIED

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

Date November 4, 1960.

FROM: DEFENCE LIAISON (1) DIVISION

File No.

REFERENCE:

SUBJECT: PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON ACQUISITION AND STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In accordance with your request, I attach two copies of a revised chronology of statements made on the above subject. Our earlier chronology has been expanded so as to bring up to date and to include significant statements made by members of the opposition parties.

2. We intend to reproduce a number of copies of this revision for future reference but, before doing so, would be grateful if you would let us know if you think the format should be changed in any way.

W. B. ...
DEFENCE LIAISON (1) DIVISION.

CIRCULATION

Mr. Ross Campbell,
O/SSEA

CHRONOLOGY OF GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS REGARDING
NEGOTIATIONS ON ACQUISITION AND STORAGE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Prime Minister

025649

February 20, 1959.

- a) "The full potential of these defensive weapons is achieved only when they are armed with nuclear warheads. The government is, therefore, examining with the United States government questions connected with the acquisition of nuclear warheads for Bomarc and other defensive weapons for use by the Canadian forces in Canada, and the storage of warheads in Canada. Problems connected with the arming of the Canadian brigade in Europe with short range nuclear weapons for NATO's defence tasks are also being studied.

"We are confident that we shall be able to reach formal agreement with the United States on appropriate means to serve the common objective. It will of course be some time before these weapons will be available for use by Canadian forces. The government, as soon as it is in a position to do so, will inform the house, within the limits of security, of the general terms of understanding which are reached between the two governments on this subject."

Hansard, p. 1223.

- b) "It is our intention to provide Canadian forces with modern and efficient weapons to enable them to fulfil their respective roles."

Hansard, p. 1223.

- c) "It is the policy of the Canadian Government not to undertake the production of nuclear weapons in Canada."

Hansard, p. 1223.

- d) "We must reluctantly admit the need in present circumstances for nuclear weapons of a defensive character."

Hansard, p. 1223.

The Prime Minister

March 10, 1959.

"The government does not anticipate concluding a formal agreement with the United States government on the acquisition of nuclear warheads in the immediate future. I would draw the attention of the house to the statement I made in this regard on February 20. I indicated then that it would be some time before nuclear weapons would and indeed could be available for use by Canadian forces. At that time I stated that as soon as the government was in a position to do so it would inform the house, within the limits of security, of the general terms of understanding reached between the two governments on this subject. I believe that is about as far as I can go on this occasion."

Hansard, p. 1775.

The Minister of National Defence

July 2, 1959.

"On February 20 of this year, during the debate which took place at that time, the Prime

Minister announced that as far as our troops in Europe were concerned and as far as our air force and troops in Canada were concerned, we were entering into a series of negotiations with the United States in order to arrange the details of the storing of and equipping our forces with nuclear weapons as and when they would be available and as and when we would have the weapons to launch them. By the time we get the Bomarc and by the time we get the Lacrosse over to the brigade and by the time we get the new aircraft to the air division, I am confident that these programs will be completed. Progress is being made with them and as soon as negotiations are completed an announcement will be made and it will be made in this house if the house is sitting at that time."

Hansard, p. 5393.

The Minister of National Defence

July 3, 1959.

- a) "Now, regarding the position of the supply of nuclear weapons, it was stated by the Prime Minister in the house on February 20 that problems connected with arming the Canadian brigade in Europe with short range nuclear weapons for NATO defence tasks are also being studied. These studies are continuing and are fast reaching a stage when there can be an exchange of notes of this matter. The negotiations have not been completed at the present time, and I do not think

it would be helpful to make any firm statement until these negotiations have been completed. When they are completed, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that if the house is in session a statement will be made in this house."

Hansard, p. 5414.

- b) ".... I presume that eventually the Canadian forces will be equipped with atomic weapons under the same terms as the other NATO contingents under SACEUR which may also be equipped with atomic weapons. There may be a difference--I say may be--in connection with nuclear weapons which are stored in the United Kingdom as opposed to those which are readily available in Europe under the control of SACEUR for the troops under their control."

Hansard, p. 5415.

The Prime Minister

January 18, 1960.

- a) "Eventually Canadian forces may require certain nuclear weapons if Canadian forces are to be kept effective. For example, the Bomarc anti-aircraft missile to be effective would require nuclear warheads."

Hansard, p. 73.

- b) "Negotiations are proceeding with the United States in order that the necessary weapons can be made available for Canadian defence units if and when they are required. I cannot comment in

detail on these negotiations but I wish to state that arrangements for the safeguarding and security of all such weapons in Canada will be subject to Canadian approval and consent."

"I want to make it abundantly clear that nuclear weapons will not be used by the Canadian forces except as the Canadian government decides and in the manner approved by the Canadian government. Canada retains its full freedom of choice and decision. Furthermore, in order to ensure that any agreement entered into is kept up to date, it will be made subject to review at any time at the request of either government."

Hansard, p. 73.

The Minister of National Defence

January 20, 1960.

"Nuclear warheads stored in Canada are the property of the United States until they are released for use by the Canadian forces. When they are released to Canada, then Canada has the sole use and direction of use of those weapons. As was explained the day before yesterday by the Prime Minister, that will be a decision for the Canadian Government."

Hansard, p. 133.

The Prime Minister

February 9, 1960.

"If and when Canada does acquire nuclear weapons it will be in accordance with our own

national policies and with our obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty."

Hansard, p. 867.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs

March 10, 1960.

(Before the External Affairs Committee)

a) "Certain negotiations are under way."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 73.

b) "From time to time discussions go on on this question of nuclear weapons."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 75.

The Minister of National Defence

June 17, 1960.

(Before the Special Committee on Defence Expenditures)

"At the present time negotiations are proceeding with the United States for the general use by Canadian forces and the storing of atomic weapons in Canada for the use either by United States or Canadian forces. These negotiations are not complete. When that general agreement is complete then special agreements will have to be arranged with the commanders concerned, such as the supreme allied commander in Europe and the ACLANT commander."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 312.

The Prime Minister

June 22, 1960.

"There have been discussions with the United States government regarding the possible conditions

under which nuclear weapons for jet interceptors might be stored in United States leased bases in Canada. No agreement has been arrived at."

Hansard, p. 5239.

The Minister of National Defence

June 22, 1960.

(Before the Special Committee on Defence Expenditures)

- a) "There are no nuclear warheads stored in Canada initially. There are no nuclear warheads stored in Canada today. There are negotiations going on with the United States regarding the storage of defensive nuclear weapons for their interceptor squadrons which are at Harmon Field and Goose Bay. Those are interceptor squadrons, part of the NORAD command. They are there primarily for the defence of the area immediately adjacent to those two leased bases."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 321.

- b) "... Canada's stand might be summarized in this way. Eventually, Canadian forces may require certain nuclear weapons, if Canadian forces are to be kept effective. For example, the Bomarc anti-aircraft missile, to be effective, would require nuclear warheads."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 323.

The Minister of National Defence

June 30, 1960.

(Before the Special Committee on Defence Expenditures)

- a) "There have been discussions going on in various places regarding the desirability of having

nuclear warheads, regarding the sending of the information which is necessary, and regarding the storage of these warheads at the sites or elsewhere. All that information has been collected. With regard to Harmon Field and Goose Bay, we have now practically reached the final stage of negotiations and the exchange of formal notes. We are almost ready to proceed with this exchange."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 396.

- b) "There are no nuclear warheads at the present time stored at Goose Bay or Harmon Field, or at any other station in Canada. We are in the course of completing negotiations which will finally end with an exchange of a formal note which then will define exactly the conditions under which the nuclear weapons for defensive purposes can be stored--not for transportation by SAC bombers, but purely for the air defence squadrons of the United States Air Force stationed at Goose Bay and Harmon Field."

Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, p. 397.

The Prime Minister

July 4, 1960.

..."On February 20, 1959, as reported on page 1221 of Hansard, I set forth the views of the Canadian government with respect to this matter, and they remain unchanged. At that time I set forth, as I say, that the full potential of these defensive weapons is achieved only when they are armed with nuclear warheads, and that of course

was referring to Bomarc and other defensive weapons.

"I followed that statement by a complete statement on January 18, 1960, in which I used these words, which are to be found on page 73 of Hansard:" (see above)

"Since that time there have been continuing negotiations. By that I mean discussions between the representatives of the two countries. I am in no position to advise that there has been any determination made as a result of these discussions which would permit as yet of any negotiation taking place as between the Department of External Affairs and the department of state of the United States."

"... in so far as general policy is concerned we are always in this position. On the one hand we are desirous of attaining disarmament; on the other hand we have to discharge our responsibility of ensuring to the maximum degree the security of the Canadian people. So far as that is concerned, discussions are taking place with respect to the Goose Bay and Harmon air bases, where an endeavour is being made to arrive at a formula which will ensure that Canadians in those bases shall exercise joint control. ..."

Hansard, p. 5653.

The Prime MinisterJuly 14, 1960.

- a) "... it is a well known fact that United States law requires that the ownership of nuclear weapons must remain with the United States and that the use of such weapons requires presidential authorization. That is the law as it now stands and as it has been in effect since 1945 or 1946.

"At the same time, as I have said before in the house, if and when nuclear weapons are acquired by the Canadian forces, these weapons will not be used except as the Canadian government decides and in the manner approved by the Canadian government. These two elements together constitute joint control, and joint control is consistent with the view I expressed in the house on February 20, 1959, that it is important to limit the spread of nuclear weapons at the independent disposal of national governments.

"I think I should add this, that negotiations and consultations with the United States, have been continuing for a very considerable time, and the reason for the continuance of the negotiations is in order to attain the objectives I pointed out in February, 1959, so that if and when an agreement is arrived at under the terms and on the conditions that I have repeatedly

placed before the house, we shall be in a position finally to determine this matter."

Hansard, p. 6271-2.

- b) "One determines a course by first taking the necessary steps as to the principles on which nuclear weapons would be accepted. Then when we have arrived at that point a determination will be made on the basis of international situations now existing, which are very grave, and in the light of any subsequent circumstances that may develop between now and the time we would be in a position in any event to have atomic weapons."

Hansard, p. 6272.

The Minister of National Defence

August 4, 1960.

"... We are, therefore, going ahead with the procurement of the vehicles which can use these nuclear weapons, but the decision as to the acquisition of the nuclear warheads depends on circumstances which might develop sometime in the future. ..."

Hansard, p. 7557.

The Minister of National Defence

August 5, 1960.

- a) "... We are entering into and have been carrying on discussions at various levels, the official level and between Canadian ministers and United States ministers, as to the sort of arrangement which could be made when nuclear

warheads are made available which, as the Prime Minister said, will be so if and when they are required. We recognize, and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition does also, that by United States law these nuclear warheads whenever they leave the United States must still remain the property of the United States. So whether these warheads are placed in Canada or in the leased bases in Canada or in the United Kingdom, the United States still retain possession of them until such time as the President of the United States releases them for use to the authorities of the country concerned.

"In the United Kingdom where these nuclear weapons are now stored a form of joint control is exercised whereby a United States officer has a key to the receptacle where they are stored and also a British officer has a key, and the door cannot be opened unless both keys are used. So you have a form of joint control not dissimilar to the method which is used by anybody having a safety deposit box in the bank where the banker has one key and the lessee of the box has the other.

"There would seem to be no difficulties in the way of reaching some sort of similar agreement regarding the storage of those nuclear weapons on Canadian soil. Then when the situation becomes

such that these weapons are to be used, the sole authority to authorize the use of those weapons in Canada would be the Prime Minister of Canada who, having had them released by the President of the United States, would then give directions as to when and how they should be actually used."

Hansard, p. 7652.

- b) "... It is my opinion that NATO does not have sufficient strength in personnel and conventional arms to be able to resist an attack by Russian forces which would be supported by their conventional arms and, as we know, the Russian army is equipped with tactical nuclear weapons. If our soldiers are to have a fighting chance should they be attacked I feel it is imperative that they should have the use of nuclear weapons in the same way that the soldiers of the other allied countries will have nuclear weapons released to them through the NATO commander."

Hansard, p. 7654.

- c) "... A question was asked whether our 104 squadrons would use nuclear weapons. All I can say there is that they would have the capability of using these weapons. Whether they would be allowed to operate with them from French bases I do not know. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is aware of all the discussion there has been about that matter. That would have to

be arranged by the NATO supreme allied commander with the French government and, in any event, we have air bases in Germany as well as in France. That is a problem which will have to be faced when the new aircraft become available. . . ."

Hansard, p. 7655.

CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT OPPOSITION STATEMENTS
REGARDING NEGOTIATIONS ON ACQUISITION
AND STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Leader of the Opposition

January 20, 1960.

"... If these weapons are released to Canadian forces, for use by Canadian forces for the defence of Canada, they should be owned by Canada and should be used under Canadian authority exclusively."

Hansard, p. 139.

Mr. Hellyer

August 4, 1960.

"... The Prime Minister has said repeatedly that any atomic warheads stored in Canada would be under Canadian control. Obviously, however, this is not possible under United States law. The most that could be conceivably expected, would be so-called joint control. This is an arrangement under which Canada would have the discretion whether to use atomic warheads but only after they had been released to Canada by the President of the United States. It would be a question of whether to use uncle's car but only after uncle had decided it would be safe to turn over the key."

"... It (the Government) involves us in the acquisition of weapons which only reach their full

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potential when armed with atomic warheads before any decision has been reached whether or not to so equip them. ..."

Hansard, p. 7566.

"... It is our contention, therefore, that the government should discontinue at once its participation in the SAGE-Bomarc system, and not proceed with the installation of radar gap fillers. ... Elimination of the SAGE-Bomarc system in Canada would eliminate the necessity for Canada storing or using atomic warheads on Canadian territory. The supersonic interceptors, which we would be acquiring under this arrangement, could be armed with conventional guided missiles such as the side-winder. There would then be no immediate question of extending control of atomic weapons to another power. ..."

Hansard, p. 7567.

"... We regret the decision of the government to re-equip (the air division) on the basis of the strike attack role. Canada has not in the past contributed to the offensive potential in any way and especially any nuclear potential. ... Re-equipping the air division in this way creates a number of problems ... It creates the problem of the use by Canadian forces in Europe of nuclear weapons under national and not under collective control. By "national" I mean United States control. If such weapons, even tactical

defensive ones, are to be used as part of NATO defence forces, this should only be as a result of a collective NATO decision and if they are brought under NATO's collective control. ..."

Hansard, p. 7568.

"With respect to atomic weapons being used by NATO, as we have stated we urge a complete reevaluation of the NATO policy to determine if it would not be possible to build up conventional forces. We have stated that we would not wish to anticipate the results of such reconsideration. If after this reconsideration it was felt that situations might arise when nuclear defensive weapons have to be used, then we would urge, provided it was a collective agreement, that these weapons be supplied and used or not used in respect to a collective NATO agreement. ..."

Hansard, p. 7572.

Mr. Winch

August 4, 1960.

"... No nuclear weapons should be permitted on or over Canadian soil."

"... Canada must urge on NATO a fundamental revision of its present nuclear strategy coupled with a reorganization of its forces so that any aggression with conventional weapons

can be repulsed with conventional weapons.

..."

Hansard, p. 7577.

The Leader of the Opposition

August 5, 1960.

"... It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that our experience in the last three years has shown that in attempting to participate in continental defence in the way we have, we are becoming, nothing more than just the last two knots on the Bomarc tail of the defence kite. I believe that in getting out of this position, which I consider to be an ineffective one for Canada, we would be rejecting the use by us of any form of nuclear weapons for what is mistakenly called the defence of our territory. ..."

Hansard, p. 7606.

"... I say in any event that Canada should categorically reject the proposition that her NATO forces should be equipped with nuclear weapons of any kind indeed; not only Canadian NATO forces, but all NATO forces should reject this proposition that there should be nuclear weapons of any kind under exclusive national control, whether it is the control of the country using them--which might be France, which has them now or will have them--or the control of another country supplying them. No NATO forces should be equipped with tactical

nuclear weapons at all in those circumstances. I have not come out finally and unconditionally against such prohibition, because this re-examination is going on. But if NATO forces are to be equipped with tactical nuclear weapons at all, until some international agreement is reached outlawing these weapons completely, I suggest that this should be done only as the result of a collective NATO decision taken on the highest political level of the council, a decision which would also provide for collective NATO control and use. ..."

"... Until such a final decision has been made by NATO on the highest political level, in my view Canada should not even consider equipping her European NATO forces with any kind of nuclear weapon."

"... we should not have our air division in Europe equipped with aircraft, the CF-104, carrying, not under collective control but under United States control, what has been referred to as a baby nuclear bomb in a strike attack role. ..."

Hansard, p. 7610.

"... I think this change of direction which I have mentioned should always have in mind the desirability of preparing our forces on land, on sea and in the air for international service,

preferably under the United Nations, and getting out of nuclear armament completely, without getting out of our collective commitments. . . ."

Hansard, p. 7611.