

January 14th, 1960.

DRAFTNUCLEAR WEAPONS FOR CANADIAN FORCES

As I stated at the last session, the Government believes in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons at the independent disposal of national governments. We are planning arrangements now for arming the Canadian forces with defensive weapons using nuclear warheads, such as the BOMARC anti-aircraft missile, which will be consistent with this principle. Our need for such weapons will arise only in defensive operations taken jointly with the forces of the United States. Therefore we propose to obtain from the United States the nuclear warheads required, at the time they are needed.

In order to have these warheads available when and where they are needed, we are asking the United States Government to keep them in storage on the bases, in Canada or in Europe, from which the Canadian units are operating. They will remain in U.S. ownership, in accordance with U.S. law, but subject of course to Canadian law while in Canada until such time as they are transferred to the Canadian forces by decisions and orders of the President of the United States and the Government of Canada. If the bases are in third countries, for example in Europe, the concurrence of a third government may also be required.

One question on which there should be no doubt is that the decision to authorize the Canadian forces to use these weapons will be taken by the Canadian Government. This Canadian decision would be put into effect through the commanders of NORAD, SACLANT or SACEUR under whom the Canadian units concerned will be serving.

In Canada we contemplate arrangements being made to construct the special facilities needed to store these warheads on our bases. In storage the warheads will remain the property of the United States, maintained and safeguarded by the minimum numbers of U.S. personnel required to discharge these duties. These storage and maintenance facilities will be guarded by Canadian forces who will thus be responsible for the external security of the storage site, as well as the base as a whole. Some modification of these arrangements may be necessary at Canadian NATO bases in Europe where it is expected that common NATO storage facilities will be provided.

We hope that before many years have passed there will be a sufficient further relaxation of tensions, and sufficient progress made in disarmament, that it will not be necessary to keep these nuclear weapons on our bases. Until that time they will, when we complete the arrangements with the United States, strengthen our joint defences against aggression.