

19.

DEA/50210-F-40

*Le président du Comité des chefs d'état-major
au sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
et au secrétaire du Cabinet*

*Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee,
to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
and to Secretary to Cabinet*

TOP SECRET. NO CIRCULATION.

Ottawa, March 20, 1956

USE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS OVER CANADA

1. With reference to my letter of 14 March, after giving this matter further consideration I felt it would be easier for us to deal with this subject if we had more information as to where the United States planned to store atomic weapons in Canada. If this storage was limited to areas where they would be of use to the US squadrons already stationed in Canada, this would not give as much concern as if they required storage at places like Edmonton, St. Hubert, etc. I therefore requested the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington to have some informal conversations with the Defense Department on the question of more specific locations required for storage. I have just received the following reply:

"Crowson said this morning that it is the Department of Defense view that it is desirable that the forces of Canada and the U.S. which are employed in the air defence of this continent should be armed to the same standards. Department of Defense has requested the President's authority to discuss the problem with Canada. He had delivered their request to the White House on 15 March.

"Crowson said that without an amendment to the U.S. Atomic Energy Act of 1954 the only way that the Americans can achieve coverage with nuclear air defence weapons of vital approaches to the U.S. is by stationing their units in Canada. In order to achieve an amendment to the Act, Department of Defense wishes to present conclusive reasons to Congress. They are suggesting as a line of approach that Canada should be asked to accept stationing of U.S. units in Canada in order that our anticipated refusal would support their case. They would not refer to precise locations but rather would ask for approval in principle. Their interest is not confined to the Newfoundland-Labrador area.

"Crowson emphasized that this was a line of approach which Department of Defense had suggested and might not necessarily be followed. They feel that the discussions in PJBD will consume six to eight months, and that no time is to be lost if they are to get an amendment to the Atomic Energy Act through this session of Congress. They have therefore asked the White House to treat it as a matter of urgency. Crowson said that the first approach is still likely to come on the State Department-Ambassador channel but there is the possibility that the President will discuss the question with Mr. St. Laurent during his forthcoming visit. He said that he would inform us as soon as he learned anything more on the channel and timing of the approach.

"Crowson said it would be helpful if we could provide him with any other information on timings such as when the Cabinet would resume sitting after 23 April."

2. You will note that it is suggested that the President might raise this question with the Prime Minister during his forthcoming visit. In view of this suggestion, it would perhaps