

**EYES ONLY**

**TOP SECRET**  
 SECURITY INFORMATION

December 4, 1953

R

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 147th Meeting  
 of the National Security Council,  
 Thursday, December 3, 1953

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Present at this meeting were the President of the United States, presiding; the Secretary of State (for Items 1 and 2); the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. The Vice President did not attend because of his absence from the country. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; the Federal Civil Defense Administrator; the Under Secretary of State; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; Robert Taylor, Special Assistant to the President; C. D. Jackson, Special Assistant to the President; the Acting White House Staff Secretary; Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion on the subject and the chief points taken.

1. SIGNIFICANT CHINESE DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING U. S. POLICY

[Redacted content]

Mr. Dulles stated that Ho Chi Minh's alleged offer to negotiate with France had had little or no effect initially in Indochina, but after the friendly reception accorded this overture in Paris, the repercussions in Indochina became serious. Bao Dai had spurned the

DECLASSIFIED

PORTIONS EXEMPTED

EO 12958, SEC. 1.3 (2), (4)(s), (7), (3)(b)

NSC Letters 4/19/83

7/15/85

**TOP SECRET**  
 SECURITY INFORMATION

Authority 22880-170 #5

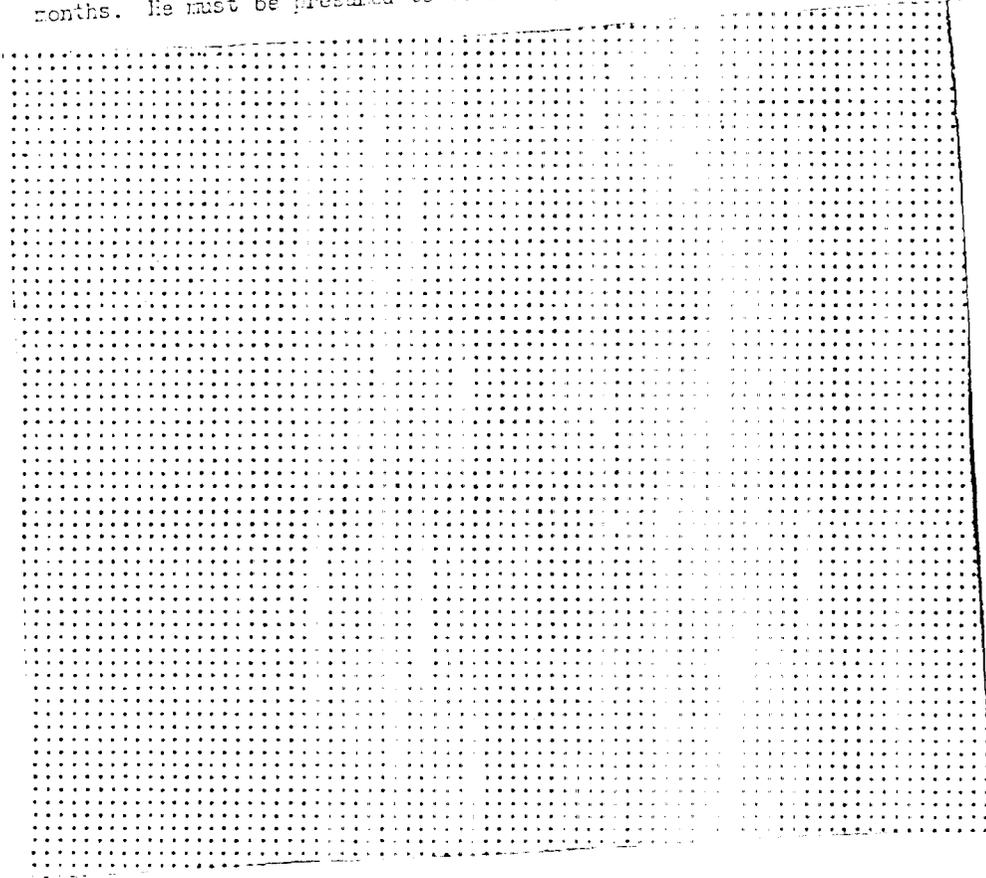
By bc 7/15/85

EISENHOWER LIBRARY

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

proposal, but it had nevertheless had a bad effect on the morale of the Vietnamese troops. Incidentally, Mr. Dulles pointed out, no Westerner really knows whether or not Ho Chi Minh is actually alive. No Westerner has seen him or heard his voice over the radio for many months. He must be presumed to be alive, but there is no proof.



The National Security Council:

a. Noted an oral briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence on the subject, with specific reference to the offer to negotiate in Indochina; and Ho Chi Minh's recent

b. [Redacted]

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

**EYES ONLY**

**TOP SECRET**  
SECURITY INFORMATION

2. ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION IN KOREA  
(NSC Actions Nos. 774 and 949-8; NSC 147; NSC 148 (1))

After briefly sketching the background of this problem, Mr. Cutler invited Admiral Radford to present his reports on (1) objectives and courses of action in Korea in the event of a resumption of hostilities by the Communists and (2) courses of action in the event of a prolonged stalemate in Korea.

At the outset, Admiral Radford stated that he wished to clear up any misunderstanding of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reports on both these subjects. He referred to General Bradley's earlier plan of last spring, and pointed out that this plan was responsive to circumstances which would permit the United States a period of nine to twelve months in which to build up its forces in Korea. The problem the Joint Chiefs of Staff are asked to discuss in the present paper was of quite a different order, namely, what course of action to follow if the Communists suddenly initiated a renewal of hostilities. There would be no time for an advance build-up, and the U. S. and UN forces would be compelled to strike back immediately with whatever forces they had available. The circumstances would thus be not wholly unlike those which existed at the end of June 1950 when North Korea had attacked South Korea.

Admiral Radford then read portions of a written report describing the military objectives and courses of action in this contingency (copy of this report filed in the Minutes of the 173rd NSC Meeting). In the course of reading from his report, Admiral Radford indicated his view that the Chinese Communists were unlikely to resume hostilities in Korea unless they were of the opinion that global war was a very strong possibility. Hence the outbreak of such hostilities would probably dictate to the United States the decision to proceed promptly to full mobilization.

After discussing the concept of operations in more detail, Admiral Radford emphasized that the role of U. S. and UN ground forces would largely be limited to the actual theatre of war in Korea and not spread out to Manchuria or China proper. In essence, therefore, the concept of operations called initially for a massive atomic air strike which would defeat the Chinese Communists in Korea and make them incapable of aggression there or elsewhere in the near East for a very considerable time.

The President asked whether, in the course of considering this course of action, the Joint Chiefs had held out their target system. Admiral Radford replied that they had not.

The President then inquired whether the course of action outlined by Admiral Radford contemplated going further into China than the course outlined by General Bradley last spring. Admiral Radford replied

**TOP SECRET**  
SECURITY INFORMATION

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

there had been misinterpretation on the point of extending operations into China, but before he could elaborate on this point, the President expressed with great emphasis the opinion that if the Chinese Communists attacked us a minute should certainly respond by hitting them hard and wherever it would hurt most, including Peking itself. This, said the President, would mean all-out war against Communist China.

When the Press got had finished speaking, Admiral Radford returned to the President's unanswered question and observed that the Joint Chiefs had made available in the circumstances to work up a military plan of operations in the usual form, comparable to the plan presented earlier to General Bradley. Unlike the circumstances of General Bradley's case, the Joint Chiefs could not, in the contingency of a future Communist penetration of territories, when such hostilities were to be expected, what forces the Communists would have in Korea, or what forces the U.S. would have available to oppose such a Communist attack. At the present time, in any case, operations would be essentially restricted to Korea, Manchuria and North China.

The President said he had been told by Admiral Radford to a similar effect, and he said he would believe that we would be able to deal with any such attack if they came within attack range.

Admiral Radford replied in the affirmative and stated that he had no objection to the attack in any case, and would have to decide if such a situation had arisen, and would be changed all the way north.

The President said that he was not sure in his thinking, and he said he would have to be sure of Communist attack. Admiral Radford said that he would not think that we had been at war with the Communists even in the event of the "Hyakumiso".

The President then raised the question of how long a time it would take to get from Congress a declaration of war against China. He referred to the situation in Korea, and said that the latter had fought an unconstitutional war because of his failure to secure such a declaration from Congress. The President expressed a desire to avoid a repetition of this difficulty, since he would need the support of Congress and the people in presenting the kind of war envisaged in Admiral Radford's report. He finally, concluded the President, the first move in such a war would be a rapid and strong attack on the enemy's airfields.

Mr. C. D. ... the Federal Reserve ... of action ... trained no number of ... blockade ... the ... such ... blockade ...

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

Admiral Radford said that this was the main indication of the difficulties which the Joint Chiefs encountered in trying to plan for this contingency. Whether we blockaded or not would simply have to depend on what kind of forces were available at the time of the attack. Certainly, however, we would blockade the Chinese coast as soon as we could to cut off supplies in a possible emergency.

Secretary Dulles then asked if he might be heard on this subject. He said it was not for him to question the military implications of the courses of action recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but he felt that he could be useful in discussing the political implications of these courses of action. It was plain to him, continued Secretary Dulles, that Admiral Radford's course of action contemplated general war with China and probably also with the Soviet Union because of the Sino-Soviet alliance. He felt that there were grave disadvantages to a course of action such as this, and the State Department believed that other steps could be taken by the UN and U. S. forces which would be less likely to involve the Soviet Union in the war. The State Department felt that the first of such courses of action amounted to a full atomic strike in Korea itself. The second involved the landing of troop concentrations in and near the area of Korea. In addition to these two steps, Secretary Dulles said that there were two others which he himself believed could likewise be taken with a high risk of bringing in the UN. These were (1) a blockade of the Chinese coast and (2) the capture of various offshore islands and reefs in the East China Sea.

The President then asked the Secretary of State whether he would support the course of action which the President had outlined and even so, would he support, generally, that the U. S. and UN should have the right to take such action against any attacking power in the area, whether it was or was not blocked.

Secretary Dulles replied affirmatively to the President's query, and then went on to discuss the political disadvantages which he perceived in the course of action outlined by Admiral Radford. Over and above the principal point that the Soviets are almost certain to enter the war, Secretary Dulles predicted that there would be virtually no UN coalitions with the United States in any general war against China. Thus he isolated the United States. Furthermore, Admiral Radford's proposed course of action would raise serious problems for us in the Far East. He said that as grave a question that Japan would invade the United States as the Japanese have if they could get such permission. It would be more than to direct Soviet attack. In addition, he would have a terrible problem in dealing with Chiang Kai-shek, who, of course, would consider a war between the U. S. and Communist China as his long-sought-for golden opportunity to invade China. Meanwhile, he would consider it as a virtual certainty that the result of Admiral Radford's course of action against China would be to drive the Chinese to enter a

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

large force, of a size 30,000 troops, into Ind China. This would certainly result in the defeat of the French forces there.

Lastly, said Secretary Dulles, it was necessary to give very careful consideration to our position in Europe as it would relate to our position in the Far East. He followed Admiral Radford's suggestions. The USSR was not likely to engage itself heavily against the United States in Asia if to do so meant pulling its forces, especially its air forces, out of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, if the United States embraced a course of action which amounted to initiating general war in Asia, most of the West European countries would immediately seek to do so by seeking a neutrality pact with the USSR. This would be something like the agreement in the spring of 1941, when, in order to save its forces in the Far East for use against the Germans in the western front, the USSR had concluded a neutrality pact with Japan.

In support of these views, Secretary Dulles pointed out the very considerable opposition which Prime Minister Churchill had evidenced when we sought his adherence to the so-called "greater sanctions" commitment. Churchill had obviously attempted to wriggle out of the commitment at this point by the cautious Labor Government, and was only obliged to support the greater sanctions statement on the assumption that the action to be taken by the UN in the event of renewed Chinese aggression would be limited to operations in areas adjacent to Korea. He was plainly unwilling to stretch the meaning of the statement beyond that support in a general war with China which would have involved the United States and the USSR.

In view of what had been discovered, Secretary Dulles said that, at the very least, the problem did not go away.

Upon completion of Secretary Dulles' comments, the President asked him whether he was in effect advocating a course of action which would be similar to that of our troops as they prosecuted in Korea since 1950. Secretary Dulles replied that this was not his recommendation, and that this would be regarded as the prosecution of a war which would produce a wider influence. This, of course, was quite a different thing than Admiral Radford's report had suggested, which was the prosecution of a war to achieve a total victory over China. To that, said Secretary Dulles, the State Department was opposed.

Admiral Radford said that he felt that in the discussion had gotten a good bit off the track. He pointed out that it had been virtually impossible to make any long-range strategic plans for dealing with a set Communist attack because of our inability to envisage the precise position which would be in when the attack occurred. What his own report had attempted to do was to set forth a U. S. course of action in immediate response to a Communist attack. What steps we should take thereafter would still subject to our own reaction and decision.

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

REPRODUCED AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

The President commented that he was at least clear on one point. In any case, there was to be no military for Communist aircraft in the sky. However he was going to fight the war, he was not going to fight the kind of war.

Secretary Dulles observed that after listening to all this discussion he didn't really believe that there was any serious difference of opinion between the Secretary of State and Admiral Radford. The President agreed with Secretary Dulles and did Admiral Radford himself.

When the Joint Chiefs had got off the track, continued Admiral Radford was in making certain assumptions as to the objectives to be sought by the United States in the event of renewed Communist aggression, the objectives should really have been sought by the military from the National Security Council. Obviously we would strike back against such an attack in the first instance with all the forces at our disposal, but the definition of subsequent objectives should be determined by others than the military planners. Specifically, however, Admiral Radford said that he must take issue with Secretary Dulles' contention that initiation of the Joint Chiefs' course of action would result in an invasion of Indochina by 300,000 Chinese Communist troops. This was one more example of our continuing tendency to ascribe undue capabilities to the Chinese Communist forces. Admiral Radford was confident that in the event of a Chinese invasion of Indochina, the French and British could be able to hold at Hanoi.

Secretary Dulles said that he could perhaps have been wrong in this position, but the Director of Central Intelligence interrupted to state that the Secretary's views were in general supported by the intelligence community.

Secretary Dulles then summed up his views on this problem by stating that he was quite sure that any provocation by the Communists of hostilities in Korea could eventually lead to general war. Nevertheless, we should not have such a recurrence of capabilities as general war from the very beginning. It was necessary to have an interval in order to bring our allies along to share our point of view. It was for this reason that Secretary Dulles felt it dangerous to provide the military with a mission, nor which might tempt them to make a general war automatically in response to a Communist attack.

While Admiral Radford concurred in general with this general conclusion, he warned that tying down the Communists in the field with too many strings could be dangerous, since it was their first duty to protect the security of their forces in the area.

The President stated that he felt there was no real difference between the two positions, and it would be in the best that the Joint Chiefs get together with the Secretary of State and revise their

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

**EYES ONLY**

**TOP SECRET**  
SECURITY INFORMATION

views in the light of a discussion. He felt that out of this Admiral Radford would have indicated that it was necessary for us to have to meet a Communist attack in the future.

Governor stated, inquired whether the manner in which the Communists actually started the war would make a great deal of difference in the character of our own and allied reactions to it.

Admiral Radford replied by stating he believed that if the Chinese Communists started hostilities again we would probably be able to detect their preliminary build-up and thus have some advance warning. Nevertheless, he pointed out they have even now, in violation of the armistice terms, succeeded in building up what is a better air capability in North Korea.

In conclusion of this report the President said that he must admit the necessity of distinguishing between what was adjacent to the Yalu River as opposed to fighting in the south. There was certainly a difference.

Mr. Cauter then asked Admiral Radford if he was ready to speak in the second paper, setting out a recommended level of action in the event of a prolonged war in North Korea.

Admiral Radford reported this course of action and stated the agreement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that in the contingency it would be advisable to maintain a substantial number of U.S. forces from "there" as soon as the level of North Korean army approached the level of 25 combat-effective divisions.

The Secretary of State said that he was all in favor of this recommendation, and Secretary of Defense also endorsed it.

Admiral Radford went on to indicate that the Joint Chiefs proposed to leave behind in Korea, after this phased redeployment, one army corps to consist of two U.S. divisions and one composite UN division, together with a strong military assistance and advisory group. Furthermore, it was thought inadvisable to weaken notably the air and naval forces already stationed in Korea. In this connection Admiral Radford pointed out that the goal of the 10th Air Division (OK) was not very distant. If equipment were available the level could be reached in two or three months, and if our current divisions were not withdrawn behind, that problem would be solved.

The President, the Secretary of State, and Admiral Radford all agreed on the excellent value of giving effect to what we will obtain if we could quickly redeploy two U.S. divisions to Korea. Such redeployment would indicate to our enemies and our allies our confidence in being able to maintain our objectives in Korea; it would indicate that we had no intention of getting war on Communist China, and the withdrawal of the divisions would also have a strong effect in deterring President Khrushchev from making any resounding declaration.

**TOP SECRET**  
SECURITY INFORMATION

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

Secretary McNamara expressed optimism for a prompt redeployment of two divisions. General Secretary Eisenhower noted that such a move would fit in very well with a time schedule which he was now engaged in developing for the Department.

Secretary McNamara then inquired if we could not start the redeployment of the divisions immediately, or at least we waiting for?

Admiral Feltz suggested Secretary McNamara that, after all, the Council had approved a decision on the part of action in the event of a general attack, and that we must not be caught in a position which would be such as the Communists attacked.

Secretary McNamara, however, replied that Secretary McNamara's call for immediate action, certainly would like to be able to count on having the divisions in the position of the Defense Department.

The President suggested that we should go ahead and start action in this regard, even if we received a reversion of the command and control of the divisions in the event of a general attack.

Secretary McNamara replied that we should withdraw the divisions for immediate action, but that we should be able to count on having the divisions in the position of the Defense Department.

Secretary McNamara suggested that we should not be concerned with the possibility of a general attack, but that we should be concerned with the possibility of a general attack.

Secretary McNamara suggested that we should not be concerned with the possibility of a general attack, but that we should be concerned with the possibility of a general attack.

Secretary McNamara suggested that we should not be concerned with the possibility of a general attack, but that we should be concerned with the possibility of a general attack.

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

REPRODUCED AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY



EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

... in Korea and  
... one army  
... consisting of two  
... division, supported  
... appropriate tactical  
... command. Involvement  
... and

... any further reduction  
... obtaining  
... the

... submitted to the  
... implementation.  
... to the  
... the

... ALL INFORMATION  
... IS UNCLASSIFIED  
... DATE 10/15/2010 BY 60322 UCBAW/STP

... of the

... of the  
... of the  
... of the  
... of the  
... of the

... of the

... of the

... of the  
... of the  
... of the  
... of the  
... of the

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

REPRODUCED AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

he was in enthusiastic agreement with the original language. He also suggested a modification in paragraph 4-2 which made more stringent the rules governing the disclosure of information relating to nuclear weapons in the past and present.

The President in a recent speech had said that a further restriction in this category was necessary and that some felt that he and others around the table had had a great deal of experience in dealing with allies, and that they had to be very careful that as though they were allies. In fact, the President said he did not mean that we were obliged to reveal everything we know about the number of weapons which would be made available for the defense of our allies in a general war, but, since we were shipping our allies the more pretty terrible risks in the atomic war, if we were to be prudent on you to give them some part of the wealth of information which would be available for their defense. In fact, he said he was not going to reveal to them the nature and amount of the atomic weapons which our atomic weapons would have against their allies.

Mr. Custer stated that he did not want to reveal this category of information that had just now been drafted. But the President said that he did not like the language in paragraph 3 suggested by the Joint Chiefs, which said that the information was to be given to NATO command rather than to the Government. This type of information should be given to the NATO governments. It is not credible that they have them with the idea of the help of our allies and the help of our allies in their giving them any part of it.

The President stated that the attached to the release of this information to the public regarding atomic weapons and new strategic concepts and for our own reduplication of the many substantial numbers of our forces and troops overseas. In fact, the President believed that this subject at high-level governmental conferences in which he or the Secretary of State participated with the heads of allied states, it would be necessary to disclose to them the disclosure of atomic information in general.

.....

Mr. Custer stated that, of course, the President was, after all, only general guidance with regard to the disclosure of such information, and that it was understood that the President would make such exceptions to this guideline as he saw fit.

TOP SECRET  
SECURITY INFORMATION

REPRODUCED AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY





