

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT  
August 8, 1945 at 10:45 AM

I did not get in until about quarter past eleven and I stayed until about twelve. The President had in all the photographers and they photographed him and me reporting.

1. I showed the President the teletype report from Guam showing the extent of the damage; also the Wire Service bulletin showing the damage as reported by Tokyo at nine A.M. August 8th. I showed him the photograph showing the total destruction and also the radius of damage which Mr. Lovett had brought me from the Air Corps just before I went. He mentioned the terrible responsibility that such destruction placed upon us here and himself.

2. I told him that brought up my second point -- that I felt that we ought to proceed with Japan in a way which would produce as quickly as possible her surrender and that would largely depend upon the way in which we did it. I said I had three papers which indicated, one of them what I didn't think ought to be done, and the other two the line which I thought ought to be followed out. The first was the memorandum sent me by Chanler with his letter of August 6th entitled "Annex, Initial Summary of United States Post Defeat Policy Relating to Japan. General Provisions". I told him that was coming up to him through channels. I told him that didn't recognize the difference between the Japanese and the Germans and was attempting to treat them in the way some people were trying to treat the Germans.

The second paper was a memorandum by deForest Van Slyck, Colonel in the Air Corps, which had been brought me by Eddie Crossman and Willie Chanler. He read it through and said it was a good paper.

The third paper was a letter which I had received from Stanley Washburn and a copy of a letter which he had printed in the STAR.

The President read both.

I said the Van Slyck and the Washburn papers differed a little in the method but they showed the importance of kindness or tact in handling this matter. I said, "When you punish your dog you don't keep scolding on him all day after the punishment is over; if you want to keep his affection, punishment takes care of itself. In the same way with Japan. They naturally are a smiling people and we have to get on those terms with them, and these two papers, Washburn's and Van Slyck's, show different methods by which the same result can be achieved."

Note: After I got back and told Marshall of the interview he told me that the method of Van Slyck which I had already shown him was the method which MacArthur proposed to use. This I had not known before. I told him that I was very much relieved at that.

3. I then took up with him the question of the scientists' report on the atomic bomb and told him the process we had gone through in regard to that paper; that I had originally favored it because I was impressed by Groves' attitude, he being a very conservative man. I told him that since the bomb had been used and we had experienced and sensed the attitude of the public towards it, people had changed a little and they no longer felt that it was important to put out the scientists' papers so quickly. I told him that I felt particularly that he ought to decide it himself with the full knowledge of both sides because he would have to bear the brunt of the disapproval of Congress for giving away such a valuable secret. I explained to him that the attitude of those who wanted to make the publication was that the making of it would prevent worse damage through unauthorized publications, while this

might act as a backfire to it. He then said, "I want to see those men", and asked me if they could be brought to him tomorrow morning. Later when I got back to the Pentagon, I got word from his Secretary making an appointment for ten A.M. for the four men - Bush, Conant, Groves and Harrison.

4. I told him that the report on the legislation necessary for control within the United States for the use of the bomb had already been prepared and the draft had been approved by the Attorney General and the Judge Advocate General, and that when the time came, if he wanted to call Congress together, Secretary Byrnes and George Harrison would know all about it and could confer with him.

5. I told him the problem of the effect of the atomic bomb on the necessary size of the Army would come up at once and was beginning to come up now. He said he had some views on that and wanted to talk with me about them. I told him then of the press release which I gave out last week, Thursday, on the subject. He had not heard it and said he would like to read it.