

100-130-2038

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

See Law 365 HLP  
WCO  
Date: JAN 17 1957  
see memo by Mr. Murphy

To : The Secretary  
Through: S/S  
From : FE - Mr. Robertson HSR

Subject: Introduction of Atomic Weapons into Korea.

I understand that in your meeting with Secretary Wilson on Friday, January 18, 1957, the question of providing our forces in Korea with atomic weapons may be raised. This issue will also come before the National Security Council in the near future in connection with its consideration of a Planning Board paper posing various alternative force levels for the ROK army which are tied to the introduction of nuclear weapons into Korea.

Defense has long pressed for the introduction of modern weapons into Korea, and a list of proposed new equipment submitted to us in August included the Honest John and 280 mm. gun. Although approving all other items, we have consistently opposed the introduction into Korea of the two weapons named or of any other weapons whose atomic capability is their primary feature for the following reasons:

(1) Their introduction would constitute a violation of the Armistice Agreement.

(2) Introduction into Korea of those weapons considered by the layman as strictly atomic in type would stimulate serious controversy, in which the United States would be censured for violating the Armistice Agreement not only by the Communists and neutralists but also by the Swiss and Swedes on the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission and by many of our Allies.

(3) We do not have convincing evidence that the Communists have introduced atomic weapons into Korea.

In my opinion the introduction of atomic weapons into Korea, whether accompanied by nuclear components or not, in this time of world tension would have serious adverse repercussions throughout the Far East, particularly in Japan, where possible "fall out" is always viewed with a certain amount of hysteria. Such action might

also

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3  
NW52569  
By MB/DM, NARA, Date 12-6-77

STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW  
 Retain class'n  
 Declassify  
Change/classify to \_\_\_\_\_  
with concurrence of \_\_\_\_\_  
after \_\_\_\_\_

EO 12958, 25X  
IP/CR/IR by W YOUNG Date: 11/22/99

also increase the likelihood of the Soviets providing their Chinese Communist allies with similar weapons, resulting in a general diffusion in the Far East of potentials for atomic warfare.

Of course, if it is determined that the security of the United States is imperiled by a failure to introduce these items, that is another matter, to be reviewed in the light of whether we believe it is in our interest to terminate the Armistice Agreement because of breach by the Communists or risk its termination by the Communists on the ground of its breach by the United States on the introduction of these weapons. This decision, too, would have to be considered in the light of the political implications both with respect to Asian and world opinion on the use of atomic weapons and that of our Allies.

Recommendation:

That you strongly oppose the introduction into Korea of weapons such as the Honest John and the 280 mm. gun and any other weapons whose atomic capability is their primary feature.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

*Defense so far has not demonstrated  
a need to introduce these weapons  
now.* 157

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Clearances:

- SEE MEMO*  
L - Mr. Phleger *ATTACHED* EUR - *MANUNLEY*
- G - Mr. Murphy *D.M.*

*HTP*  
FE:NA:DCNes:mml 1/17/57

*IO [signature]*  
FE - Miss Bacon *RB*  
Mr. Sebald *WMS*  
S/AE - Mr. Smith *g/b.*

REF ID: A660130-2067

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**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**  
**THE LEGAL ADVISER**

January 17, 1957

To: The Secretary  
Through: S/S  
From: L - Mr. Phleger *HP*  
Subject: Introduction of Atomic Weapons into Korea.

In my opinion the introduction of "Honest John" and the 280 millimeter gun, both of which are widely known as atomic weapons, could not be successfully supported as a matter of liberal interpretation of the Armistice Agreement in the absence of proof that the Communists were bringing in comparable weapons, since this would upset the balance established under the Agreement, and would be regarded as a violation of the Agreement. However, I do not maintain that we are forever bound by an armistice agreement when its terms become outmoded and impossible to live with, and where the other side has already breached it. But we must be prepared to take the consequences if because of necessity we do breach it. The Communists have already breached the agreement and therefore we may terminate or suspend it, but if we do so, of course the Communists would not be bound by it.

Enclosure:  
File.

L:JMP *JMP* /dw

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