

~~TOP SECRET~~

The Honorable

The Secretary of State [James Byrnes]

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am enclosing herewith the original and a copy for your files of a memorandum to the President relating to the conduct of the war with Japan. It relates to a subject which I think is of supreme importance at the moment, and I would very much like to see the President with you about it at your earliest convenience.

On another matter in which the War Department is greatly interested, namely the administration of Germany, I also have some thoughts which I should like to submit to you and the President. They will be in written form the first thing in the morning.

Faithfully yours,

/s/ Henry L. Stimson

Secretary of War

16 July 1945

Potsdam, Germany

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16 July 1945

Memorandum for the President

The Conduct of the War with Japan

With the great needs of rehabilitation both domestically and abroad facing us, we still find ourselves engaged in war with a major Pacific power. The length and limitation upon our lines of communications to the Pacific combat areas aggravate the strains upon our resources which the wastes of war always impose. The Japanese soldier has proved himself capable of a suicidal, last ditch defense, and will no doubt continue to display such a defense on his homeland. Yet we have enormous factors in our favor and any step which can be taken to translate those advantages into a prompt and successful conclusion of the war should be taken. I have already indicated in my memorandum to you of 2 July 1945, the reasons which impel me to urge that warnings be delivered to Japan, designed to bring about her capitulation as quickly as possible. While that war is going on, it will be most difficult politically and economically to make substantial contributions to the reestablishment of stable conditions abroad. The longer that war progresses, the smaller will our surpluses become, and the more our over-all resources will be strained.

Warning to Japan

It seems to me that we are at the psychological moment to commence our warnings to Japan. The great marshalling of our new air and land forces in the combat area in the midst of the ever greater blows she is receiving from the naval and already established Army forces, is bound to provoke thought even among their military

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leaders. Added to this is the effect induced by this Conference and the impending threat of Russia's participation, which it accentuates.

Moreover, the recent news of attempted approaches on the part of Japan to Russia, impels me to urge prompt delivery of our warning. I would therefore urge that we formulate a warning to Japan to be delivered during the course of this Conference, and rather earlier than later, along the lines of the draft prepared by the War Department and now approved, I understand, by both the State and Navy Departments. In the meantime our tactical plans should continue to operate without let up, and if the Japanese persist, the full force of our newer weapons should be brought to bear in the course of which a renewed and even heavier warning, backed by the power of the new forces and possibly the actual entrance of the Russians in the war, should be delivered.

Whether the Russians are to be notified of our intentions in advance in this regard, would depend upon whether an agreement satisfactory to us had been reached with the Russians on the terms of their entry into the Japanese war.

The Yalta Agreements

As for the Russian participation and the so-called Yalta Agreements, I believe that these agreements, so long as they are interpreted consistently with our traditional policy toward China, should not cause us any concern from a security point of view, assuming always we keep clear our control over the Pacific Islands. By our traditional policy toward China I refer, of course, to the Open Door and the recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria.

Manchuria

We can afford to permit Russia to have access to ports in

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Manchuria, and I interpret the Yalta Agreements as giving her full commercial access to Dairen, with the necessary facilities. Likewise I understand the late President Roosevelt's willingness to permit the Russians to have what in effect is the lease of a naval base at Port Arthur on the peninsula for a limited time. However no concessions should be made which would permit Russia to control or prohibit trade through Dairen or any other commercial port in Manchuria. In other words I would insist that Manchuria be treated precisely as China proper in this regard, except that Russia be permitted to acquire the facilities necessary to develop and support her trade from and to Russia through the port by her joint-control with China of the railway and the normal acquisition of the necessary port facilities. The operation of the railway must be conducted on the usual public carrier basis without discrimination against the trade in Manchuria of any power. I understand Dr. Soong to take this view and I would not hesitate to support China on this, as any other course could constitute an abandonment of one of our longest established and most highly respected American policies. It would also be antagonistic to our clear and growing interests in the orient.

Except for the lease of a naval base at Port Arthur, which in itself is a trend in the wrong direction, no further military rights or control should be granted in the Dairen peninsula or elsewhere in Manchuria.

Trusteeship for Korea

I understand this matter was not the subject of a formal agreement at Yalta although the matter was discussed orally.

It was the late President's view, I am informed, that there should be an international trusteeship of Korea, pending such time as the Koreans are prepared to govern themselves.

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The Russians, I am told, have agreed to a four-way trusteeship but no further details have been agreed upon. I understand that Stalin has urged that no foreign troops be stationed in Korea.

The Russians, I am also informed, have already trained one or two divisions of Koreans and, I assume, intend to use them in Korea. If an international trusteeship is not set up in Korea, and perhaps even if it is, these Korean divisions will probably gain control, and influence the setting up of a Soviet dominated local government, rather than an independent one. This is the Polish question transplanted to the Far East.

My suggestion is that the trusteeship be pressed. I suggest also that at least a token force of American soldiers or marines be stationed in Korea during the trusteeship.

Allied Occupation of the Main Japanese Islands

I would hope that our occupation of the Japanese islands would not involve the government of the country as a whole in any such manner as we are committed in Germany. I am afraid we would make a hash of it if we tried. The Japanese are an oriental people with an oriental mind and religion. Our occupation should be limited to that necessary to (a) impress the Japanese, and the orient as a whole, with the fact of Japanese defeat, (b) demilitarize the country, and (c) punish war criminals, including those responsible for the perfidy of Pearl Harbor.

If the Russians seek joint occupation after a creditable participation in the conquest of Japan, I do not see how we could refuse at least a token occupation. I feel, however, that no prolonged occupation by the Soviet should be approved and, indeed, any

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occupation by any major ally which exceeds our own, either in the strength of forces employed or in duration. I would approve their occupation of the Kuriles or indeed their cession to Russia, but I do not relish Russian occupation further south. If there is to be occupation of the main islands, the conditions and terms must certainly be determined by us. If the Kuriles are to be ceded to Russia, we should retain permanent landing rights therein, as the islands are located in a great circle route to Japan from the United States, and would substantially shorten our mileage on air voyages following this route.

/s/ Henry L. Stimson

The Secretary of War

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