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D. of State Int. 10-21-77  
PROTECT ALT 77-14  
By NLT: HC NARS Date: 12-4-77

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November 6, 1950

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MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE  
BETWEEN Secretary Acheson  
Under Secretary of Defense  
Lovett and Mr. Dean Rusk.

Shortly after ten o'clock this morning Mr. Robert Lovett came over from the Pentagon with an urgent message from General Stratemeyer. This message reported that the Air Forces had been ordered to take off at one o'clock p.m. EST today on a bombing mission to take out the bridge across the Yalu River from Sinuiju (Korea) to Antung (Manchuria). They were to use radio controlled bombs and would attempt to bomb on the Korean side of the bridge.

Mr. Lovett expressed his view that from an operational standpoint he doubted whether the results to be achieved would importantly interrupt traffic and that the danger of bombing the city of Antung and other points on the Manchurian side of the River were very great.

Mr. Rusk explained that we had a commitment with the British not to take action which might involve attacks on the Manchurian side of the River without consultation with them. He also said that the British Cabinet was meeting this morning to reconsider their whole attitude toward the Chinese Communist Government and that ill-considered action on our part might have grave consequences. He also told Mr. Lovett that we had filed General MacArthur's report concerning Chinese intervention with the United Nations Security Council and had asked for an urgent meeting tomorrow or Wednesday at which we were going to present a resolution calling on the Chinese to cease activities in Korea, thus attempting to get UN support for any action which might be necessary in the event of their refusal to accept the UN action. He also mentioned the possibility of Russian involvement under the Sino-Russian Treaty.

After some discussion we all thoroughly agreed that this action should be postponed until the reasons for it were more clearly known.

Mr. Lovett telephoned General Marshall, who agreed that the action was unwise unless there was some mass movement across the River, which threatened the security of our troops. Mr. Lovett called Mr. Finletter and instructed him to tell the Joint Chiefs the facts which Mr. Rusk had stated, as set forth above, and to add that he had talked with the Secretary of State, who believed

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that the situation was so grave that the action should be postponed until the matter had been laid before the President and his instructions had been received. He was to add that this was to be done as soon as possible and that another message would be sent.

I then telephoned the President in Kansas City and laid the matter before him, as outlined above. The President said that he would approve the action if it was necessary because of an immediate and serious threat to the security of our own troops. I pointed out that we had no information on this matter beyond General MacArthur's report of yesterday, which contained no statement of any further movements across the river, but only of reserves on the Chinese side. The President suggested that I call General MacArthur and ascertain what the facts were. I thought, and he agreed, that communications on military subjects should be through the Military Establishment. The President told me to handle the matter until his return in the way Mr. Lovett and I thought best, adding that he would be available on the telephone if necessary and that the security of our troops should not be jeopardized. He agreed on the importance of postponing the action if that could be done consistently with the requirement above. I gave Mr. Lovett the attached summary of the President's position, and he left immediately to read it to the JCS.

Our conference terminated at 11:15 a.m., one and three-quarters hours before the planes were to take off for Korea. Mr. Lovett will inform me of the action taken by the JCS.

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Mr. Rusk later called Mr. Lovett to inquire whether we had been discussing the bridge only or whether the rest of the mission in the Sinuiju area would be flown. Mr. Lovett said that the entire mission was being postponed and that a message went to Tokyo at 11:40 ordering General MacArthur not to attack targets within five miles of the Manchurian border and asking his estimate of the situation and reasons for the mission against Sinuiju and the Yalu Bridge in that area. The message also referred to our commitment to consult with the British in regard to operations affecting Manchuria.



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SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT  
AT KANSAS CITY

The President recognizes the great international complications which may follow the proposed bombing of the Yalu River bridge. He is willing to face these complications if the step is immediately necessary to protect our forces.

He believes under the circumstances that the Joint Chiefs should know from General MacArthur what the pressing reasons are for the operation. If the operation can wait until our international commitments are fulfilled, that would put us in the best position.

Dean Acheson



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