

2 October 1950

Late Saturday afternoon (26 August) Webb called me to suggest that the President send some kind of a message to Warren Austin reaffirming our Formosa position. Webb suggested that the President might consider receiving Austin in Washington on Sunday the 27th.

I checked with Charlie Ross about this, and he suggested that we let State carry the ball and that we make no recommendation to the President other than that he talk with Webb on the subject. Accordingly, I arranged for Webb to call on the President at the Blair House about 6:30 P.M., Saturday, 26 August. Webb recommended that the President call Austin to Washington for a conference on Sunday, and issue a statement following the meeting reaffirming the Formosa position which Austin had stated in the United Nations Security Council on Friday the 25th.

The President decided against this on the grounds that he was not going to engage in dramatics. He said he would not see Austin; but he would, however, answer a letter from Austin if Austin wrote to him.

On Sunday morning, 27 August, a message from MacArthur was received to the effect that it would be impossible for him to withdraw his message to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, because it had already been distributed to the press. The President sent word back to Secretary Johnson that his previous order stood and that MacArthur must make every effort to "withdraw" his statement on Formosa.

Meanwhile the State Department was concerned over the situation in the United Nations, and the State Department drafted a letter for the President to send to Warren Austin, and did persuade the President to speak to Austin by phone. The text of the letter to Austin was released on Monday, 28 August at 10 A.M.

My own concern over the situation continued and I spent most of Monday trying to persuade Ross and Averell Harriman that it would be advisable for the President to communicate personally with General MacArthur in order to remove as much of the sting as possible from the



sharp rebuke which the President had been forced to give MacArthur. I was also concerned by the fact that, unless the President sent an official statement of our Formosa policy to MacArthur, we might not have MacArthur nailed down, and he might later wiggle out of this spot by saying nobody in Washington ever had informed him of the Government's policy on Formosa. Accordingly, I drafted a couple of proposed messages to MacArthur, and at 9:15 on Tuesday, 29 August, the President agreed to send a message to MacArthur. After the President had okayed it, I shot it by special messenger to Steve Early for rapid transmission to MacArthur, and Mr. Ross released the text of the President's telegram at the White House about 11 A.M.



G.M.E.