FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF THE MacARTHUR STATEMENT

August 26, 1950

If General MacArthur's message to the Veterans of Foreign Wars stands as an authoritative US statement it would have the following serious impact on our foreign relations:

1. **Formosa question in the United Nations.**

The statement would greatly complicate the handling of the Formosa question in the United Nations, especially the difficult problem of getting friendly support for a favorable Formosa solution from such governments as the United Kingdom, the British Commonwealth and especially India. It would be almost impossible to steer the views of others toward a solution favorable to us because any argument we use other than strategic would be suspect.

2. **Handle for Communist propaganda.**

The statement would give the Soviet Union a convenient and persuasive basis for raising the cry of United States imperialism in Asia and the Pacific; propaganda of this nature would have a devastating effect among the Asians who are particularly sensitive to the ambitions of the white races in Asia.

3. **Conflict**
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The statement would have the effect of undermining the reasons which have been given thus far by the President for United States action regarding Formosa. The argumentation of the President's June 27 statement, his July 19 message to Congress, and Senator Austin's letter to the Security Council does not rest upon United States national strategic interest.

4. **UN-US Command Problems.**

Since many governments draw a sharp distinction between Korea and Formosa and have already raised the desirability of separating the UN command in Korea from the US command in any Formosa operation, MacArthur's statement would almost certainly cause friendly governments to insist upon a sharp separation of these command functions. The MacArthur statement would directly affect international unity on the Korean issue itself.

5. **Asian reaction.**

General MacArthur's attempt to speak for Asia on this issue will be sharply rejected by Asian leaders whose opinions on the matter are already known to us. It would become necessary for Mr. Nehru to disclaim MacArthur's views in order to keep his own position clear. Such a disclaimer on his part
part under present circumstances would seriously impair our diplomacy which is now seeking to obtain Nehru's support for what we are doing in Formosa and elsewhere in Asia.

6. President's Authority on Foreign Relations

A serious problem in the conduct of our foreign relations will arise if our friends abroad are left with the impression that we have an uncontrollable military commander in such a key position as that occupied by SCAP and the United Nations Unified Commander. MacArthur's statement would thus greatly exaggerate the difficulties we have had throughout the Japanese occupation with the governments of the Far Eastern Commission. Although it must be assumed that the text of MacArthur's statement will now become known, it is essential from the point of view of our foreign relations that there be no diminution of the position of the President as the authoritative spokesman for the United States on foreign relations matters.


General MacArthur's statement will tend to deliver US-China policy over to the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek will take
will take both his own position and United States policy increasingly for granted and will assume that he will be supported in whatever he chooses to do on Formosa and in whatever provocation he directs against the mainland.

8. **Effect on Chinese Communists.**

MacArthur's statement will greatly strengthen the hand of the Soviet Union in putting pressure upon the Chinese Communists to attack Formosa at a time when it is believed that the Chinese Communists are resisting such pressure. The statement would tip off Red China that our long-range purpose is to deny Formosa to them, will confront them with the fact that they can never expect to get it except by military seizure, and may lead them to erroneous conclusion that we look upon Formosa as a convenient springboard for an American or an American-backed attack against the mainland itself.

9. **US Military Commitment.**

If MacArthur's statement goes unchallenged, the effect would be greatly to increase the nature of US military commitments concerning Formosa, both as to scale and as to timing. It would involve an unlimited commitment toward Formosa.
Formosa itself, with whatever ground or other troops would be required, and would mean a United States involvement with Red China on issues and in areas which are not of vital strategic concern.

10. **Effect on Free World Solidarity.**

The exasperation of our friends in the free world with a statement of this sort could easily lead to breaches in the solid front on other matters such as European defense, and could create such an impression of irresponsibility and volatility on our part as to affect seriously our ability to maintain solidarity in the face of the Soviet threat.

11. **Effect of Statement if Clearly Unofficial and Unauthorized.**

Most of the above results would be greatly diminished if the President should order General MacArthur to withdraw his statement, even though the statement should subsequently leak. The mere fact that the President had asserted his authority and that the President saw good reason not to accept the MacArthur statement as a valid statement of US policy would greatly reduce its unfortunate effects.