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166 Return to S. M. Battle

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
THE SECRETARY

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only copy

October 12, 1950

275

NOTES OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN  
SECRETARY ACHESON AND SECRETARY FINLETTER,  
OCTOBER 12, 1950

After explaining the location of the recent bombings which had taken place on Russian territory and territory close to Russia's frontier, and the location of the shelling which was taking place from the Battleship Missouri, Mr. Acheson said that left the question of whether the shelling should be taking place. He pointed out a memorandum on the blockade had said that operations should not take place north of the 41st parallel. The present location was nearly to the 42nd. The Secretary said he thought the whole question of the usefulness of such shelling should be raised with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the statement that we are deeply concerned about the possibilities of such action. The Secretary said he did not see the logic of preventing ground action above the 41st and then allowing operations from the sea. He mentioned that on September 11 he had taken over to the President a memorandum on the bombing of Rashin, and that previously General Bradely and the Secretary had had a talk, in which the Secretary thought General Bradley decided that it was not a sensible thing to do, since the oil tanks located at Rashin were not very many compared with those at Vladivostok, which could not, of course, be bombed, but ~~which could not, of course, be bombed, but~~ which could be used to make up the damage that would be caused by the UN Air Force bombing those at Rashin.

Mr. Finletter said that his recollection was that there would be nothing but visual bombing.

The Secretary said that it was not only a question of the danger of violating the frontier, but was the main point that we were getting into a very sensitive area, and the Russian reaction might be very serious.

Mr. Finletter said he had thought the general philosophy was that we should not get into the narrow neck of Korea near the Chinese and Russian frontiers. He said MacArthur had agreed on a line, north of which he would have nothing but South Korean

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troops. The line goes on a slant from northwest to northeast (sic). The closest point to the Chinese Manchurian border is fifty miles, and is farther away than that from the Russian border. This agreement had been read by General Marshall (MacArthur) to the President, Mr. Harriman and Mr. Finletter, all of whom agreed that this was correct procedure. If it included naval operations (about which Mr. Finletter was not clear), then the Navy had violated it in this instance. So far as the Air Force was concerned, Mr. Finletter's understanding was that the Air Force was not to go up just to look for targets in this area. If it were necessary to give close support for ground action, that would be done. But Mr. Finletter agreed with the Secretary that it was foolish to blow up a city, which next month we will have to rebuild.

The Secretary said he wished that Mr. Finletter would raise the matter with the JCS. Mr. Finletter agreed that he would talk about doing so the first thing in the morning with Mr. Lovett.



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