TOP SECRET

WAR DEPARTMENT

Office of the Under Secretary

Washington, D.C.

3 May 1948

Honorable Robert A. Lovett
Under Secretary of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lovett:

Recent developments regarding the implementation of the United Nations resolution on Korea are of some concern to the Department of the Army in anticipating developments during the coming months.

In the first place, I am sure you have also noted the marked inclination of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTOK) to misjudge the realities of the situation in Korea in considering an idealistic application of the UN resolutions. This inclination evidently stems as much from an utter lack of understanding of Soviet motives and intentions as from an unsound appreciation of the difficulties faced by American occupation authorities in maintaining law and order during this critical time. In addition, most members of the Commission are obviously anxious to divert themselves of any further responsibility after supervising the elections. In addition, the Australian and Canadian members have made continuing attempts to impede the progress of the Commission, including covert interference with scheduled elections. I understand you propose to again raise this question with their respective governments, with which we fully concur. A final complication has been the obstructionism of a Soviet in the UN General Secretariat, Sobelev by name, who, as the Assistant Secretary for Security and Political Affairs, normally clears all instructions to the UNTOK.

The Department of the Army believes that despite these complications, the maximum benefit to US interests is being achieved by UN participation in the Korean problem, both through the UN Resolution on Korea, and through the proposed observance of the forthcoming elections by the Temporary Commission. It is believed that this participation has materially assisted in furthering the US policy, recently approved by the President, that every effort should be made to create conditions for the withdrawal of US occupation forces from Korea by 31 December 1948. It would therefore be contrary to US interests if the US were to maneuver itself into such a position in the UN
that our government would have difficulty in refusing to accede to a request to prolong its occupation on technical grounds. In the light of the circumstances mentioned in the preceding paragraph, I am somewhat concerned lest such an embarrassing request might materialize as a result of US efforts to continue active UN interest and active participation in the Korean problem after the forthcoming elections.

I strongly recommend therefore that in our continuing communications with the UN and with our representatives in Korea, nothing should be suggested or pressed which would require specific action by the UN or its Commission since the specific actions necessary after the elections will undoubtedly have to be carried out by American representatives in Korea. Any other course might well result in complications which could jeopardize the contemplated withdrawal of US forces.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) William H. Draper, Jr.

William H. Draper, Jr.
Under Secretary of the Army