

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Washington

May 1, 1951.

Mr. Elvey

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My dear Mr. Chairman:

I refer to your letters of April 25 and April 28 covering requests for certain documents in connection with the hearings scheduled to commence on May 3.

Two of the major documents referred to in your letter and in Senator Bridges' letter -- the report submitted by General Wedemeyer and the notes of the Wake Island Conference -- were both submitted to the combined Committees yesterday. Both documents, virtually in their entirety, have been completely declassified. The portions of the two documents which should not be published under any circumstances were shown in red on the copies of the documents themselves, as outlined to the Committees yesterday.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have given careful consideration to the questions asked by Senator Bridges and to the request in your letter for "a rounded picture of the pertinent factual and documentary data which exists in this field." In endeavoring to meet this request, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been guided by the principle of furnishing as much information as possible without endangering our national security.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have prepared a chronological record of the actions taken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff relative to the United Nations' operations in Korea. This record, which is attached, should provide a general background for the hearings which you have scheduled.

The following types of documents cannot be made available under any circumstances without grave danger to our national security, or without endangering the lives of our troops and the troops of our Allies.

- (a) War plans and documents pertaining thereto.
- (b) Operational plans or directives pertaining thereto.
- (c) Minutes of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The decision to exclude the above types of documents also took into account the ability of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to continue as the effective instrument which Congress had in mind when it defined the duties of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the National Security Act of 1947, and in the 1949 Amendments to that Act.

In addition, in accordance with the oral discussions of this subject that you have had with members of the staff of this office, if such a step should become necessary the Department of Defense will, within the framework outlined above, make the basic documents available for inspection by a subcommittee to be named by you. The members of the combined Committees will realize, I feel sure, that virtually all of the basic documents were transmitted in code between Washington and Tokyo, so that, in addition to the Top Secret nature of the basic documents themselves, there is present in this situation the vitally important consideration of handling the matter in a way that will not violate cryptographic security.

In order to facilitate the consideration of this entire subject by your Committees, I am enclosing five copies of the attached material. This letter, when separated from the attached material, is unclassified.

Faithfully yours,

/s/ George C. Marshall

Honorable Richard B. Russell,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
United States Senate.