DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE:
3 p.m. Sunday
December 3, 1950

SUBJECT:
Report of the Secretary's meeting at the White House with the President, General Marshall and General Bradley

PARTICIPANTS:
The Secretary
Mr. Webb
Mr. Matthews
Mr. Hickerson
Mr. Niles
Mr. Busk
Mr. Lemass
Mr. Jessup

COPIES TO:

The meeting was called so that the Secretary could report the discussion which he had had with the President, General Marshall and General Bradley at the White House late last evening.

The Secretary said that he had raised in the meeting with the President the question whether our position in the world required us to continue hostilities with the Chinese Communists. He had said he had advanced the viewpoint that if that were the case, it would mean that we would have to examine the policies governing our other actions to conform to that situation. He had further stated that if our world position did not require us to continue hostilities with the Chinese Communists, then it would be necessary to try to stop the fighting in Korea before the disintegration moved too far in order to save our forces.

The Secretary said that he went on to say that so far as the evacuation was concerned, it seemed to him to break down into three parts—the East Coast, Inchon and Pusan.

With respect to the East Coast the Secretary said he indicated that, so far as he was concerned, this operation is solely concerned with saving troops. He told the President that there was nothing to be gained politically by taking a stand there. The problem was simply to do what you could to get them out. The Secretary told the President that he didn't wish this to appear as if it were a strictly military matter. However, if the military did not see some kind of political action, such as a cease fire, in order to carry out the evacuation on the East Coast, then the military should let us know.

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E.O. 10508, 11950, 11951, 11952, 11953, 11954

By: ACL
Date: 12-1-65

[Signature]
With respect to Inchon, the Secretary said he had advanced his opinion that for a couple of days, there were no decisions which had to be made. He contended that General Marshall will probably have his hands full getting the troops to Inchon during this period. After that, it would seem that a normal operation to remove wounded troops and desig...
urged that we await Mr. Atlee's arrival and give Mr. Younger an opportunity to talk to Mr. Atlee about it first. Mr. Hickerson said that if he had the Secretary's approval he would move right away and talk with the British on going ahead with steps 1, 2 and possibly 3 (in the telegram to ENSA).

Mr. Hickerson said that this brought us to face with the question whether we go ahead with steps 1 and 2 alone if the British disagree with us. The Secretary remarked that it is imperative that we not get separated from the British on the eve of Mr. Atlee's arrival. Mr. Jessup asked whether we would in fact become separated from them if they don't agree. Mr. Jessup said perhaps it would be possible to go ahead alone on steps 1 and 2, assuring the British that we won't do anything toward introducing a resolution until we consult further with them.

The Secretary summed this up by saying the question was "If the British and the other sponsors of the old resolution disagree with putting this item on the agenda, do we want to put it on alone with Mr. Atlee arriving the next day?" The Secretary said he was inclined to think we shouldn't go ahead alone, and it was left that way.
The following items appear in my notes and are therefore included in this supplementary memorandum.

At the outset of the conversation, General Marshall said the situation looked very bad indeed. General Bradley also took an extremely pessimistic view of the military situation and thought that not more than 48 to 72 hours would elapse before it reached a crisis state.

General Bradley thought that the troops of the Tenth Corps could be evacuated in five days at least but wondered about the manner of the evacuation unless the cease-fire were secured. He thought the 7th Division might be saved and that the 3rd Division was nearer the ports and could get out. He thought we might lose Wonan but might hold Hungnam. He said we could not take our troops out and leave the ROK Capital and other divisions behind.

General Marshall said that even a Dunkirk type of evacuation might be prejudiced if the Chinese brought in their air.

The President raised the question of General MacArthur’s view about the need of operations across the frontier.

The Secretary repeated what he had previously said to General Marshall, namely, that the decision should be based solely on whether it would help or hurt our troops. We need a very good military judgment as to whether knocking out the Chinese airfields would bring in the Russians. The decision should not be made by MacArthur but by General Marshall on the advice of General Collins, who should stay in Tokyo. We should not take this action for the purpose of holding Korea or merely for the purpose of retaliating against the Chinese but only for the purpose of permitting the evacuation of our troops, if necessary.

The Secretary stressed the importance of having at least the appearance of consultation as to the time at which action was taken.

General Marshall indicated that we might have only 48 hours in which to reach a decision and we could not wait for the first meeting scheduled for Tuesday afternoon. General Marshall suggested it would be better to have Mr. Atlee suggest a settlement rather than having us bear the burden of making the suggestion.