DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 14, 1946

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Proposed Statement on Korea

Upon the occupation of the capital of Korea on September 9, 1945, by the American Forces, the American Commander stated that Japanese officials would be temporarily retained at their posts, but subsequently it was announced that they would be removed as rapidly as possible. In the meantime a directive has been dispatched by the Joint Chiefs of Staff looking to the immediate removal of the Japanese Governor-General and other high officials. A report of the action taken pursuant to the directive is expected at any time.

There has been a very unfavorable reaction both in Korea and in the United States to the original announcement by the American Commander regarding the temporary retention of Japanese officials.

In view of the misunderstandings and unfavorable publicity which have arisen, it is believed that it would be desirable that you issue a public statement reiterating and clarifying the intentions of the American Government in regard to the policies of this Government toward Korea. A draft of a statement, which you may wish to consider for issuance at your early convenience, is attached.

Enclosure:

Draft statement.
STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Draft

The surrender of the Japanese forces in Seoul, ancient Korean capital, heralds the liberation of a freedom-loving and heroic people. Despite their long and cruel subjection under the warlords of Japan, the Koreans have kept alive their devotion to national liberty and to their proud cultural heritage. This subjection has now ended. The Japanese warlords are being removed. Such Japanese as may be temporarily retained are being utilized as servants of the Korean people and of our occupying forces only because they are deemed essential by reason of their technical qualifications.

In this moment of liberation we are mindful of the difficult tasks which lie ahead. The building of a great nation has now begun with the assistance of the United States, China, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, who are agreed that Korea shall become free and independent.

The assumption by the Koreans themselves of the responsibilities and functions of a free and independent nation and the elimination of all vestiges of Japanese control over Korean economic and political life will of necessity require time and patience. The goal is in view but its speedy attainment will require the joint efforts of the Korean people and of the allies.

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The American people rejoice in the liberation of Korea as the Tae-guk-bi, the ancient flag of Korea, waves again in the Land of the Morning Calm.