

(State Draft. Not cleared with any of participants.)

SUBSTANCE OF DISCUSSIONS

OF

STATE-JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF MEETING

HELD IN ROOM 2C-923, THE PENTAGON BUILDING

ON FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 1953 at 11 AM

PRESENT

General Collins
General Vandenberg
Admiral Fechteler
General Ruffner
General White
Admiral Fife
Colonel Carns
Admiral Duncan

Mr. Paul H. Nitze
Mr. Walter Robertson
Mr. U. A. Johnson
Mr. Frederick E. Nolting
Mr. J. Chase
Mr. Charles C. Stelle

CIA

Mr. Allen Dulles
General Cabell

NSC

Mr. S. Everett Gleason
General Gerhard

For the Indochina discussion:

Mr. Heath
Mr. Bonsal
Mr. Gullion

Citation:

Substance of Discussions of State-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting Held in Room 2C-923, the Pentagon Building, on Friday, April 24, 1953 at 11 a.m.

Top Secret, Minutes, c. April 24, 1953, 6 pp.

U.S. Intelligence and China: Collection, Analysis, and Covert Action, CI00987

Digital National Security Archive

GENERAL VANDENBERG: As you know we received a request from CINCFE that he be provided a store of chemical weapons for possible use in Korea in the event the enemy should use such weapons. We realize that from a political point of view there may be difficulties and so we have asked your opinion as to what we should recommend the Secretary of Defense. From the purely military point of view we believe it would be advisable for Clark to have stores of these weapons right at hand in case of an emergency.

MR. NITZE: In our previous discussion the question arose as to whether or not secrecy could be maintained if weapons or munitions of this type were to be moved to Japan.

GENERAL VANDENBERG: We have come to the conclusion that it would be practically impossible to maintain secrecy if chemical warfare material were shipped to and stored in Japan. It would only be safe to go on the assumption that probably the affair would become public knowledge.

GENERAL COLLINS: The difficulty of maintaining secrecy would probably also apply to Okinawa.

MR. NITZE: For our part we accept the military desirability of having chemical warfare supplies in the Far East. There are supplies of them in the U.K. and it would undoubtedly be desirable from ^{the} military point of view to have supplies at hand in the Far East. But the shipment of weapons to Japan and storage there does ^{present} real hazards from a political point of view. The Communists have been conducting a strenuous psychological warfare campaign against our alleged use of bacteriological warfare and they have added charges of use of chemical warfare to this campaign. Mr. Dulles is in a better position than I am to speak about ^{what} the significance of such a move might be

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might be from the overall political point of view.

MR. DULLES: If the Communists should be in a position of having one really hard bit of evidence to tack on to their other charges, it would undoubtedly materially assist their psychological warfare.

MR. NITZE: From the overall ^{political} point of view, we would be very leery about shipping stuff of this character to Japan now.

GENERAL VANDENBERG: Are you leery about it now because of the present stage of the Korean armistice negotiations or are you leery about it for all time?

MR. NITZE: It would present particular problems at the present juncture of the Korean negotiations. This is not to say that it wouldn't present some problem at any time. We had wondered whether sending them to Okinawa instead of Japan would make any difference.

MR. JOHNSON: Could security be maintained on Okinawa.

GENERAL COLLINS: No, it couldn't. The main difficulty is that when we ship the stuff here in this country we have to have special guards on the railroads so that if anything should happen there will be people who know what it is and can deal with any emergency situation. The real difficulty would be in keeping American press reporters from finding out about sizable shipments of chemical warfare material. We would really have much more trouble with our own reporters in this country than we would have with Japanese or Okinawan depot hands in Japan or Okinawa, so that as long as we have to move the stuff in the United States we will have to recognize the real possibility that security cannot be maintained.

MR. NITZE:

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MR. NITZE: Don't you normally make shipment of this material to Honolulu?

GENERAL COLLINS: No, I don't think we have been shipping any to Honolulu. I would like to talk about this question a little more generally. It seems to me that from a military point of view the desirability of having chemical warfare materials for use in Korea would go up tremendously if present armistice negotiations should flop. If a settlement should be worked out in present negotiations, then we won't have any need for gas, but if the armistice negotiations don't work out and if there should be a national decision made to resume offensive operations, I am convinced that mustard gas would be very effective against the Communists.

MR. ROBERTSON: How long would it take to get the chemical warfare material that you would need out to Japan or Korea?

GENERAL COLLINS: It would probably take about 60 days to move what we would require and get it to the front lines. I think that probably there would be time enough to get it out before we use it if the armistice negotiations break down.

GENERAL VANDENBERG: Perhaps the thing to do is for the Chiefs to recommend to the Secretary of Defense that although we believe that from a military point of view it would be desirable to have chemical warfare materials in Japan, we recognize the political difficulties which States finds in the project and that for the present we think CINCFE's proposal should be held in abeyance.

GENERAL COLLINS: I think we should also at the same time instruct CINCFE to make such quiet preparations as he

as he can for eventual handling and storage of CW material in the event it should eventually be decided to send it out.

GENERAL VANDENBERG: If that is satisfactory with the other Chiefs, why don't we go ahead that way.

MR. NITZE: There is the one point that use of chemical warfare in the absence of enemy use of chemical warfare would require a change of present national policy which calls for use only in retaliation.

GENERAL COLLINS: Do you think it would be advisable to raise the question now with the NSC? I feel that we are in a box about using gas. My personal judgment is that gas would be far more effective in Korea than Atom weapons. The enemy is dug into positions which might make use of Atom weapons relatively ineffective. Moreover we ourselves would be vulnerable to Atom weapons in Korea, particularly in Pusan, but we would not be vulnerable to gas attack. Our troops have gas masks whereas the Commies by and large don't. I think they would have real difficulty in keeping their forces equipped with gas masks. In addition mustard gas is heavy and would be particularly useful against the enemy in their dug-in positions. My understanding is that we are not bound by the Geneva Convention since we haven't ratified it.

MR. NITZE: There is, however, unified command in Korea and some of our Allies have ratified the Geneva Convention--France, for example. It might be advisable instead of immediately raising the question in the NSC to have State do some preliminary work to find out just what the situation of our Allies is in connection with the Geneva Convention

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and for you on your side to lay out the military aspects of the question.

GENERAL VANDENBERG: I think it would be very difficult to use gas in the U.N. Command. Should we query Clark as to whether he had offensive or defensive use in mind?

GENERAL COLLINS: He was thinking, according to his message, purely in terms of retaliation. I personally am thinking in terms of offensive use if we get into all-out fighting.

INDOCHINA

MR. NITZE: On Indochina we thought that it would be helpful if we could get clear on how the comments you have already made on the LaTourneau Plan stand up in the light of the recent developments in Laos.

GENERAL VANDENBERG: I think that the situation in Laos serves to emphasize our comments. The JCS have the feeling on the LaTourneau Plan and on the situation in Indochina that the French have not really been taking the native people into their confidence. They don't seem to trust the native forces enough to want to use them in large units and they only plan on using the native forces in very small units. Their strategy has been completely defensive and called for merely local actions by small units. The French have known about the possibility of this Laos attack for a long time and they have done and are doing nothing to stop it. In the plan they have presented they want to start where it is easy, in the South, and they don't seem to want to go after main enemy supply lines and main concentration of enemy forces, which are in the North.

The whole