

March 20, 1957.

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Dear Cabot:

As you know, we have been seeking ways in which we could meet the serious situation created by persistent Communist violations of the Armistice Agreement in Korea. The specific provisions of the Armistice Agreement (Paragraph 13d) with respect to the introduction and replacement of weapons have to be taken into account in this connection. So far the Department has been able to agree to the replacement of certain types of weapons in Korea with their current modern counterparts on the grounds that a fair interpretation of the Armistice Agreement would not require us to manufacture obsolete parts and equipment, and that evidence of Communist violations of these provisions legally entitled us to this remedy. However, the Defense Department has not as yet taken such action because it is also seeking agreement on its proposal to introduce certain types of dual capability (nuclear) weapons into Korea. The Department has not agreed to this proposal because of its far-reaching implications not only for the Armistice Agreement but also for our relations with our allies in the UN and our general position both in the UN and the Far East.

Late in January, the national Security Council instructed its Planning Board to revise the over-all policy paper on Korea to include the effect and consequences of introducing dual capability weapons. The Department of State has been virtually isolated in its position that nuclear weapons should be introduced into Korea only after taking full account of its effect upon our position in the UN and in the Far East, of the implications for the Armistice Agreement, and upon demonstrated evidence of comparable Communist violations. We did not believe that we could afford to ignore the explicit provisions of the Armistice Agreement unless we were prepared publicly to defend our action and to accept its other consequences. Both Defense and Treasury, strongly supported by the Bureau of the Budget, have pressed strongly for a prompt favorable decision on the ground that early introduction of nuclear weapons will enable us to make substantial economies in our financial commitments in Korea.

The Planning

The Honorable
Henry Cabot Lodge,
United States Representative
to the United Nations,
Two Park Avenue,
New York 16, New York.

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The Planning Board has now completed its work. The resulting paper includes as the position of the State Department certain stipulations and safeguards with respect to the introduction of nuclear weapons, to all of which the representatives of the other departments on the Planning Board take exception. This means that the matter will be presented to the National Security Council with several key provisions bracketed as representing solely the position of the Department of State. Other agencies contend that we place undue importance upon the effect such a step would have upon our position in the United Nations, upon our allies, and upon the legal obligations of the armistice. When the paper is presented to the NSC, we plan to provide the Secretary with a comprehensive statement of the reasons why we believe it essential to determine the timing of the introduction of nuclear weapons in the light of various conditions, particularly the development of evidence of Communist violations comparable in nature and extent. The NSC meeting is scheduled for April 4.

In these circumstances it would be helpful for us to have the Mission's appraisal of this problem in terms of its effect upon our position in the United Nations. For example, we would like your best judgment as to the effect of such a departure from the Armistice Agreement, assuming no conditions whatsoever are imposed, upon our ability to maintain our present position on Korean unification. We would also like to know your views on the effect of such action upon other armistice agreements (e.g., in the Middle East, and the Kashmir cease-fire).

I would appreciate receiving your views as soon as possible so that they may be reflected in the briefing memorandum our Bureau will be preparing for the Secretary's use at the April 4 NSC meeting.

With kind personal regards, I am,

Cordially yours,

Francis O. Wilcox

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