

November 10, 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

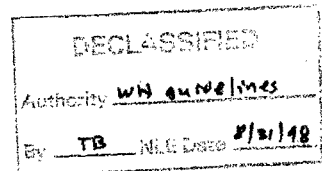
SUBJECT: United States Courses of Action With Respect to Korea

REFERENCE: NSC Action No. 378

The enclosed statements of the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and of the Central Intelligence Agency, respectively, concerning the current situation in Korea, as read at the 71st Council meeting in connection with discussion of the subject, are circulated herewith for the information and record of the National Security Council and the Secretary of the Treasury.

JAMES S. LAY, JR.
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury

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November 9, 1950

Views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that the following implications of military significance with respect to the Chinese Communist intervention in North Korea may be drawn:

a. The Chinese Communists are presently in Korea in such strength and in a sufficiently organized manner as to indicate that unless withdrawn they can be defeated only by a determined military operation.

b. The military objectives of the Chinese Communist intervention in Korea are not yet clear.

c. A sustained military campaign in Korea would serve as a heavy drain on our military potentialities.

d. From the military standpoint, the continued commitment of U. S. forces in Korea is at the expense of the more useful strategic deployment of those forces elsewhere.

e. It is not envisaged that the Chinese Communists and the North Koreans could drive presently committed United Nations forces from Korea unless materially assisted by Soviet naval and air power. In the event of the commitment of the latter, U. S. forces should be withdrawn from Korea as it would then be evident that World War III is imminent.

f. Under present restrictions the Chinese Communists are permitted to use Manchuria as a hostile sanctuary for aircraft directed against the United Nations forces.

g. There appear to be three general courses of action open to United Nations forces:

(1) Force the action to a successful conclusion in Korea.

(2) Establish and maintain a defensive position on a line short of the Korean border.

(3) Withdrawal.

h. The present conditions do not indicate conclusive evidence that global war is imminent but rather that the risk of

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2. Therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff conclude that:

a. Every effort should be expended as a matter of urgency to settle the problem of Chinese Communist intervention in Korea by political means, preferably through the United Nations, to include reassurances to the Chinese Communists with respect to our intent, direct negotiations through our Allies and the Interim Committee with the Chinese Communist Government, and by any other available means.

b. Pending further clarification as to the military objectives of the Chinese Communists and the extent of their intended commitments, the missions assigned to the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, should be kept under review, but should not be changed.

c. The United States should develop its plans and make its preparations on the basis that the risk of global war is increased.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Washington 25, D. C.

9 November 1950

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In the present situation, the Central Intelligence Agency, with concurrence of the Intelligence Advisory Committee, would restate previously agreed estimates (J.I.C. 531/10 and N.I.E. 2) in the following terms:

1. To date there is insufficient evidence to indicate that the USSR intends to commit Soviet forces overtly in Korea. However, the commitment of Chinese Communist forces, with Soviet material aid, indicates that the USSR considers the Korean situation of sufficient importance to warrant the risk of general war.

2. The probability is that the Soviet Union considers that the U. S. will not launch a general war over Chinese Communist intervention in North Korea and the reaction thereto. The principal risk of general war is through the exercise of Soviet initiative which the Kremlin continues to hold. The probability is that the Soviet Government has not yet made a decision directly to launch a general war over the Korean-Chinese situation. There is a good chance that they will not in the immediate future take such a decision. At what point will take a decision to launch a general war is not now determinable by Intelligence.

It is our opinion that action by U. N. forces to attack troop concentrations or air fields north of the Yalu River, or to pursue Chinese aircraft into Chinese territory would not increase the already substantial risk that the situation may degenerate into a general war involving Russia. In other words, the Kremlin's basic decision for or against war would hardly be influenced by this local provocation in this area. However, such provocation would probably materially increase the extent of Chinese Communist reaction in Korea proper. (par. 7, National Intelligence Estimate No. 2.)

/s/ WALTER B. SMITH

WALTER B. SMITH
Director