

November 26, 1952

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. LAY

SUBJECT: Military Policy in the National Security Council



This is the second of a series of memos concerning the Council in connection with your "Suggestions for Further Strengthening of the National Security Council". Although we are both aware of the context in which the following critical observations are made, I would like to state one over-riding caution. I feel, as you do, that the NSC has made great contributions to the national security over the past few years and has accomplished a tremendous integration within the government. All this is still little appreciated, even within the government itself. These beginnings of our real maturity as a nation in facing the critical world problems of post World War II can probably assume their proper significance in perspective only after the present world conflict has been resolved. It is against this background that I would like to have the following remarks taken.

1. Military Policy. Your "Suggestions" give little hint of what has seemed to me to be a second major hole in the operation of the NSC to date. (The first hole, domestic policy representation, was covered in my first memo of November 20, 1952.) Our statute directs us to integrate "military policy" with foreign and domestic policies in relation to the national security, and later refers to "actual and potential military power". It seems to me that our military policy coverage to date has been superficial. We have been concerned with and gotten information on secondary stuff: personnel figures, draft figures, end-products, equipment, production, budget data, force strengths, new models in research and development, and all the rest. Never have we really hit the basic policies and plans upon which all of these derivatives depend. (The "we" in this case includes not only the NSC, but the Bureau of the Budget and the President himself.) It is a little like the concern over the size of the national budget and attempts to cut it by stewing over the 20% or so that goes to all activities other than international-military programs. Unless you dig at the military program, any significant reduction in the national budget and taxes is obviously impossible. So it is with the military program itself. You can't get at the real heart of it by playing with end-products, mobilization, production, size of the armed forces, procurement, administration. You can only get at it by the ideas, concepts, plans and policies which are the very basis upon which these secondary factors are determined. The size of the military program and its impact require a deeper analysis and understanding in order that it may be given proper direction by civilian authority, with the advice of professional military personnel.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

2. War Plans. What the above means must be stated plainly: our military war plans must become national war plans, not professional or institutional or departmental war plans. This is the real heart of military policy. The NSC cannot properly be said to be performing its role for the President unless and until it recognizes and hits at this problem in every possible direct and indirect way. The inviolability of the JCS must be cracked for the NSC and the President and the Secretary of State, as well as for the Secretary of Defense and the civilian secretaries of the three services. Only thus can a really significant civilian policy control be established, both for a continuation of the present cold war and in the event of a general war. The military are at present making assumptions about where, how and when and with what weapons a future war will be fought. These assumptions form the basis for the requests in the military program for personnel, materiel and money. Such assumptions should be tabled for consideration and formulation as national policy determined by the President on the basis of advice by the NSC. There is no justification for them to be left to the military until the time of a Pearl Harbor attack, because by such a time there could be no choice but to follow the course that had already been set by military policy. One needs to dig behind the sanctified wall of war plans and face realistically the fact that these plans in their broad phases must be national plans. (This is not to say that the details of operations and tactics should be included, although the exclusion of any such data should be at the discretion of the NSC on the grounds of operating detail - not by the JCS on the grounds of their statutory rights. What I mean by "war plans" are the basic strategic decisions that we will fight here or there, strike certain targets with our retaliatory power, use our forces and weapons at certain places and at certain times, all in a time and priority scheme.)

For example, if the military are planning to hold in Western Europe, this is of the utmost political significance and should be recognized and formulated as a national war objective. Whether or not we are going to hold oil fields in the Middle East should be determined, not on the basis of a "military point of view", but on the basis of a national policy decision. The same thing is true of Formosa, Korea, Iran and any other major area or country.

(In fairness to the military, it should be said that they have constantly sought policy guidance in this respect from the Council and the President since the establishment of the NSC in 1947. They have never got it. The Council's failure in this respect is demonstrated by the continuance of the two "war objectives" projects in our current "Status of NSC Projects" - incomplete for 2 years now. Naturally, in the absence of any policy direction, the military have had to make assumptions and go ahead on their own. The relationship between national war objectives and military war plans is extremely close and reciprocal. One can not be done without the other. This area of thinking is, furthermore, beclouded by semantics, by words loaded with tradition on the side of the military. Before 1947 the only policy planning of any sort on a global, strategic scale for U.S. national interests, was done by the military: war plans. Until 1940 I understand even such military war planning was officially

~~TOP SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION



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SECURITY INFORMATION

denied and rather desultory in time of peace. Now we have a different situation, in which the NSC is charged with "national war planning" in the highest strategic sense, including the use of military force as an instrument of national policy. That responsibility changes the nature of JCS planning, although the JCS still use the same words. The difficulty in this situation is obvious from even this brief attempt to state the issue in words that are slippery. A separate memo is contemplated on the language of NSC papers.)

3. Politico-Military Dichotomy. In effect, we are preserving the whole politico-military fallacy of World War II and before, by kidding ourselves that we have achieved coordination between military and foreign policy in the NSC. Actually, although we speak to the contrary, our actions and policies reveal that war plans and military activities are still being considered as the prerogative of the military, with the assumption that they will take over if and when we get into a World War III, or even if we get into more extensive limited engagements and use of force in the cold war. Yet, the peculiar kind of limited war we are now engaged in is recognized by all, including the military, as requiring a close integration of military force with every other instrument of national policy. In one sense it might be said that the only way in which the situation is changed from what it was before Pearl Harbor is that all information and policy with respect to the State Department is now made available to the Defense Department. But there is no comparable reciprocation from the military. This one-way flow of cables, papers, position papers, policies, etc., is much more significant than one might think at first blush. Looking back over the NSC policies themselves, for example, it becomes apparent at once that every significant policy or action by the Department of State has been subjected to scrutiny by the military and integration through the NSC. This has obviously not been the case with the military. 45/2

4. Security. The primary case, the last resort of the military in withholding their policies and plans, is always made on the grounds of security. (I do not recognize their references to statutory authority for strategic planning, since that is subject to the authority and direction of the President and the Secretary of Defense.) There is no more security significance in a military plan for war than many other current U.S. policies or plans. From a technical security point of view, in terms of simple numbers of possessors of information, there is no justification for the present maldistribution of NSC papers, whereby two-thirds of them are held within the military establishment, and only one-third for the rest of the government. The security issue is a tough one, however, and will also be treated in a separate memo.

5. Military forces in cold war. The recent Progress Report by the PSB to the National Security Council on the national psychological effort contains the following statement in a summary of its attached Defense Department report (p. 19):

"However, one of the considerable difficulties noted within the Department of Defense in engaging in cold war activities (except in a supporting role) continues to be the fact that the Department's role in such acti-

~~TOP SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION



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SECURITY INFORMATION

vities is principally implied. There exists no specific delineation of authority and responsibility upon which military psychological operations in peacetime may be based. Some such specification for the Department of Defense would contribute to more effective participation of the military services in the national psychological effort. This observation applies both to operations designed to attain an independent psychological effort, and to operations in which, although their primary purpose is military, political or economic, psychological factors must be considered."

The significance of this statement is clear to one who has watched the role of the military in PW both during and since World War II. In effect, it says that the military are still thinking of PW as an adjunct to military operations in the event of all-out war. They still do not consider the use of military force appropriate for implementation of national policy in time of peace, or under present conditions. In other words, they are still suffering in this field from the same old black and white separation of all-out war and peace.

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It seems to me that this same blindness is evident, not only in the limited field of PW operations, but in all aspects of the use of military force under present conditions, short of a global World War III. What this requires for correction in terms of practical mechanics is a restatement of the military missions in such unmistakable language as to make misinterpretation impossible. The military must be brought to a recognition that this government requires and expects the use of military force in support of national objectives in limited action or assignments short of global war, that such policy has been repeatedly stated in any number of country and area papers, and that military plans should be revised accordingly.

6. Examples. The following are a few specific cases to illustrate the general theme of this discussion of military policy:

a. The Middle East. I cannot at the moment put my finger on the NSC memorandum in question, but I am sure you will recall the one in connection with the disposition of the Italian colonies in North Africa, or with the NSC 97 petroleum papers. In any case, the JCS views stated that the area in question would be lost initially in the event of general hostilities and recovered only after a year or two. Here is positive evidence that the military have formulated a grand strategy as to where, when, how and under what priority areas of the world are to be held, fought for, or given up from a so-called "military point of view". Any decision by the U.S. Government today, however, that this or that area is to be held or surrendered, can not and should not be made upon a narrow "military" strategic analysis. Rather, it should be the other way around. A national strategy should be the determinant of military planning for implementation of that strategy.

~~TOP SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION



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b. Korea. The most flagrant example of error in this matter of national strategy is in the NSC 135 comments of the military with respect to Korea. Here, military policy is revealed as being above national strategy, as still untouched by actual declared national policy. You will recall that the military were asked to report in NSC 135 on the effects of the Korean conflict on the military program during FY 1951 and FY 1952. They concluded with the following statement: "Korean hostilities have imposed a degree of strategic maldeployment on the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps with respect to current war plans." In the summer of 1950, after the attack on Korea, the United States Government, at the initiative of the President, with the full participation of all concerned executive departments and agencies, decided to undertake the police action in Korea. This, in effect, was going to war in a limited engagement. Here was the Government dictating a national objective which should be the basis upon which military plans, among others, are formulated for implementation. Yet, 2 years after the fact, the JCS still have the presumption to state that implementation of national policy in Korea requires "maldeployment". I wonder who they think they are working for. To be sure, we have encouraged them in their identification of the Korean action as a maldeployment by permitting them to continue every 6 months in the planning assumption, for budget purposes, that the Korean police action would end the following year. We still permit them to separate off from their normal commitments and operations whatever is involved in Korean action, as "supplemental" to their main objective, whatever "their" main objective is.

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c. Iran. The military have written in a qualification to paragraph 5 of this recently approved policy, concerning the use of military force in Iran, to the effect that any use of military force in this area will require "either a substantial augmentation of over-all United States forces or a reduction of present United States military commitments elsewhere". Our basic NSC 68, 114, and 135 policy papers direct the military to develop military forces of such a character as to support limited use of military forces around the world for local actions. In this quoted qualification to a national policy, the military have indicated their failure to support previously approved national policy. They have again acquired the power of decision with respect to any U.S. action in Iran. The President and the NSC have in effect abdicated control by accepting this qualification. Nobody knows how much a "substantial augmentation" would be. Nobody knows what our present "military commitments elsewhere" are. With respect to the latter, the military could make a long list of military commitments in terms of our treaty and other international obligations, or in terms of our present actual deployment and reserve strength. I think this is not what they are referring to in the circumstances, however. What they mean is undoubtedly again the requirements of "their" current war plans - not national policy - under

which all available forces are earmarked for military operations that do not permit action in the area of Iran. If our government is determined that "it is of critical importance...that Iran remain an independent and sovereign nation...", as indicated by Presidential approval of NSC 136/1, then our present war plans should be modified to reflect such a policy. Such a modification should be considered and recommended by the NSC on the basis of a scrutiny of our present military commitments under current war plans.

d. Military Missions. The objectives of the military program have been stated as two:

- (1) Protection against disaster.
- (2) Support of our foreign policy.



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The first is obviously preparation for global war. In my view, in the light of current NSC policy papers and intelligence estimates, in which the military themselves have participated and concurred, the order of these two objectives should be reversed, with a clear priority given to the present second one. The second one should further be clarified to read "support of our national security policies, including the Korean action". In any event, these and the other objectives, tasks and missions of the military program listed in NSC 114, and cited again in subsequent NSC national objectives and papers, should be studied carefully by the Council and made the primary policy concern of the Council. Our present focus upon machines, men, equipment and dollars is more properly the business of the implementors of policy - the individual secretaries and the Bureau of the Budget.

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e. The Foreign Aid Programs. The mutual security program in NSC 135 demonstrates clearly that the only ultimate objectives which provide any concrete measurement of progress toward goals in the mutual security programs are constituted in the various JCS force goals for each country which receives military or defense support aid. I have seen no evidence that these force goals have been established on any other than a purely military formulation, in spite of the "Three Wise Men" operation. The people in DMS and MSA apparently are simply given figures concocted by the military as to the force goals. They subsequently work out whatever it may take to meet these objectives. Furthermore, as a result of this military predominance in planning the nature of military assistance around the world, I believe long-range factors have been neglected in favor of short-run considerations. The risks of full-blown military establishments again in Japan and Germany, for instance, have not been weighed explicitly against the risks of no military establishments there. Or again, with 7 years now since World War II without the direct use of Soviet military forces, even in Korea, the risks of assuming they will continue not to use them have not been worked into plans for free world forces. This goes for both the nature and the size of such allied forces.

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The establishment of these military force goals in a collective security undertaking such as we are now in constitutes one of the most significant areas of national security policy that the U.S. Government should now be studying. How do we decide what kind of an army, navy, or air force should be maintained by Indochina, Burma, Turkey or Greece? Such a decision should be based upon careful analysis of the country's strategic position on the periphery, its vulnerability to attack, military potential, personnel potential, productive capacity, political stability, industrial capacity, readiness to engage in collective security measures, financial history, and a string of other comparable elements. To date, it appears that these considerations have been weighed by the military alone, if at all, with an estimate resulting that a country should have X divisions, Y airplanes and Z ships. The relation of these force goals to our over-all collective security policy requires broad government consideration, by those points of view represented in the NSC.



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f. Military Carte Blanche. There are a number of instances where NSC policy has in effect told the military to go ahead and run their own show. "U.S. Policy on Atomic Warfare" (NSC 30), in effect tells the military to construct two parallel military establishments; one designed to use atomic weapons, and the other not. This decision in effect leaves to military discretion the shape and manner of building our military forces, with the result that if a free decision is expected at a given time, there will only be one decision possible, on the basis of whatever the military have done in the meantime. Furthermore, the straddling of the issue permits each service to argue either way, depending upon whether the argument supports a build-up of its own conventional forces. Are the military to assume that the A-bomb will be used only in retaliation? Only in retaliation for an A-bomb attack? Only on such and such targets? Not in a Korea-type action? The policy was written before the H-bomb hove on the scene, before the Russians exploded their first bomb, and before the development of means for tactical uses of the A-bomb. These three major new factors would appear to me to require a revision of the policy, and thus a rationalization and nationalization of how our armed forces will use such weapons.

Another instance is that the military commanders in Berlin and Austria have been authorized to implement their "emergency plans" for certain circumstances. The NSC is not aware of what these emergency plans are. Consequently, the NSC has put into the hands of the military the basic initial actions in the event of a war which would probably decide the course and fate of the war itself.

40

The same thing has been done in the field of port security - in this instance, in such a fuzzy manner that nobody can be quite sure where the responsibility lies at the moment (except, of course, on the President, who may, in fact, be unaware of action taken by the Coast Guard until after that action has been taken and uncontrollable events set in course).



7. Priorities. NSC policies tend to identify all countries and areas as being of "security importance". Sometimes they are identified as of "critical" importance. In military planning parlance, it may well be that there is a clearly understood distinction between such ambiguous terms as "critical", "vital", and "important". Be that as it may, there has never been any agreed and accepted NSC definition of these terms. The consequence is that NSC policies in general have tended to classify all security problems in the same priority group -- which, again, leaves the important decision, of relative priorities, in the hands of the implementing agent, usually the military. There is a parallel here with what has happened in the mobilization area, where the military asked for all their production items on the same priority basis, until they were forced finally by ODM to designate priorities among them. The NSC must assume responsibility for distinguishing priorities from country-to-country and area-to-area, and not leave this vital problem in the hands of the military.

8. Major Principles. From all the above it may be that certain basic principles emerge:

a. Every major military movement or activity or plan is of importance to national policy and must be considered accordingly, with the full participation of the Department of State and the other active members of the NSC.

b. Every war plan, which would commit the military forces of this government to action in particular areas at particular times in the event of war must rest upon a basic national decision. Accordingly, it must have NSC consideration. The Department of State, in particular, must be a party to all such plans.

c. The President must have a broader basis for advice and decision on war plans than just the direct military chain of command.

If civilian control is to be established and maintained over the military, the civilian heads in the Pentagon and in the NSC cannot abdicate their responsibility for studying and deciding military policy, and for leaving the administration of military affairs to the professionals. At present, the situation is the reverse of proper executive control and administrative operation. The professional experts are deciding policy, and the civilian political administrators are limited to carrying out that policy. We should strive to attain a reversal of this situation, whereby the civilian authorities would make the policy, and leave it to the professional military experts to worry about production, mobilization, etc.

9. Implementation of these Observations. It may well be in your "Suggestions" that you were striking in this direction in your recommendations regarding the evaluation staff, with its references to meshing "operational in-



~~TOP SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

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formation and intelligence" and its requirement that the staff to do this job must have full access to "communications, plans, intelligence and other information available in the departments and agencies". If so, it would be my judgment that the underlying problem should be clearly identified, or else the whole proposition will fail. One does not lead the JCS blindly or unconsciously into an abandonment of their present position and established doctrine. They can only be brought to lay bare their plans if they are directly and explicitly instructed to do so. I think this has been borne out in the past and it might as well be faced right off the bat. Furthermore, if the problem is met head on I am sure that any responsible military officer would respect a civilian for getting really to the heart of the problem, unless such a military professional is himself confused about what the real issues are.

Specifically, the Council and its staff should hit at this problem in every respect, with the explicit authority of the President when necessary. The basic NSC 68, 135 series provide an excellent take-off. One should consider the statements of military missions in these papers and attempt to see how they can be and are related to the national objectives stated in those papers. Korea should be explicitly added to the current statement of military missions. The question should be asked and answered as to how the military program is designed specifically to accomplish these objectives. We should get away from the budget, administrative and end-products stuff, except in so far as that is necessary to support judgments, - and get into the real functional material, like air defense, the capability for retaliation, mobility, mobilization capacity, etc.

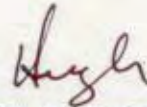
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We should require a restatement of military commitments in support of national policy, taking our cues from the old NSC 35 and its related memorandum, dated November 17, 1948, "Existing International Commitments Invoking the Possible Use of Armed Forces". We will have to accept a listing of international commitments as an initial step, but these are obviously so extensive that we can not and are not meeting them all. We should, therefore, probe behind these to the present commitments made by war plans as to the uses of our armed forces. The Council should never accept a bald statement about additional commitments like that appended to the recent Iran policy, without specific review of all commitments at the time. In any restudy of the military missions, which should be made by the NSC, there should be clear and definite assignments made with respect to the role of the military in periods of cold war, taking a cue from the recent Department of Defense comments with respect to psychological warfare. The first step toward an over-all formulation of our national war objectives should be the submission by the military of their current grand strategy, their basic war plans.

The President, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State should be alerted to these problems, particularly in the sense that if they are really interested in military policy, apart from administration, then they have got to face something along these lines and be prepared to take immediate action.

~~TOP SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

From an extremely superficial analysis of the character and background of the President-elect and his recently announced appointments for Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, the following, perhaps premature, observations are made. It might appear that the President-Elect feels that he can handle basic military policy himself, in the sense of grand strategy. It would also appear that the Secretary of Defense was selected primarily for his capability in administering a big machine with tremendous domestic, industrial impact - not particularly for any background in the special field of military policy or grand strategy. Personally, I think it would be a mistake if the President were to operate under such an assumption, because he will be himself unable to exert the necessary kind of day-to-day study, interest and control. I believe that the new Secretary of Defense would soon find that he could exert much better control over the size, character, procurement, etc., of the military program through a concentration on military policy than by concentrating on end-products, manpower and economy in a piece-meal basis. As for the Secretary of State, it seems to me we have here a man who is able, willing and ready to be interested in such matters as the use of military force, and one with the stature to ask the necessary questions of the military on occasion.

Respectfully,



HUGH D. FARLEY

