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At the Bipartisan Conference on January 5, 1954, the President made a clear statement of American policy toward Korea, which amounted to a complete backing of the policies announced in recent weeks by himself and Sec. Dulles. He pointed out that the recent announcement in regard to inability to confine hostilities to Korea should the fighting be renewed, was in no sense a criticism of past Administrations but rather a recognition of the new situation which now obtains. He said that the Administration believed, speaking generally, in the doctrine of hot pursuit -- that is, of using our full strength to destroy bases used against us. He commented that we cannot allow Communist intransigence to keep us deployed too widely.

He indicated that the decision to withdraw divisions from Korea was based on a unanimous JCS decision, and he pointed out that the accomplishment of training of Koreans will result in maintenance of total ground strength at the maximum levels specified by the armistice.

Later in the meeting, he replied to a question by Rep. Vinson by saying that the withdrawal of divisions would have the effect of showing the Communists that we are confident in the strength of our naval and air arms, and that this will have greater impact than any reliance on ground forces of which they are not afraid. Sec. Dulles reinforced this with comment on the possible Communist desire to pull our troops into Asia where they could not be effective in the face of surplus Chinese manpower. Sec. Dulles also commented that President Rhee will be less apt to break the truce if the possibility of embroiling the United States is eliminated by the withdrawal of troops.

Still later in the discussion the President expressed his feeling that the withdrawal of troops would not have adverse effect on our Allies since we are making clear that we will fight offensively should a new outbreak occur. He concluded by saying that in the long run it might develop, of course, that Rep. Vinson's approach was right and his own was wrong, but that all the indications are that a new approach has to be tried and he stands ready to modify policy should it become necessary to do so.

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