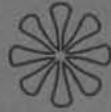
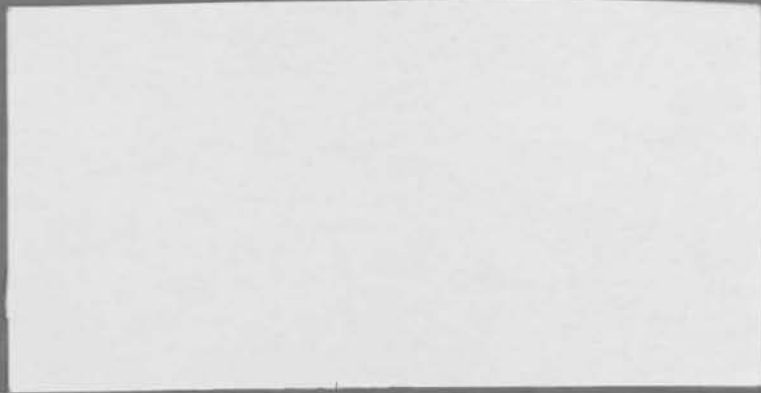


V.B Justification of the War (11 Vols.)
Internal Documents (9 Vols.)
1. The Roosevelt Administration

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UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS
1945 - 1967



VIETNAM TASK FORCE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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V.B.1.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR
- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS -

The Roosevelt Administration, 1940-1945

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V.B.1.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS

THE ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION, 1940 - 1945

Foreword

This portion of the study consists of a collection of U.S. Government documents which set forth the rationale of U.S. policy toward Vietnam. The collection represents the internal commitment of the U.S. as expressed in classified documents circulated at the highest levels in the government. The documents are organized chronologically within each Presidential administration. This volume covers the Roosevelt years, 1940-1945.

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

V.B.1

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS

The Roosevelt Administration, 1940 - 1945

Contents and

Chronological List of Documents

	<u>1940</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. U.S. views on Japan's demands concerning French Indochina are given to the French Embassy. Memorandum by Mr. Dunn (Political Adviser) to Under Secretary Welles, 6 August 1940.....		1
2. Welles instructs Ambassador Grew to convey to the Japanese that the U.S. was "seriously perturbed" over Japanese demands concerning Indochina. Welles 293 to Tokyo, 6 August 1940.....		3
	<u>1941</u>	
3. Mr. Cecil Gray, Assistant to the Secretary of State, reports on Secretary Hull's view of the Japanese occupation of Indochina. The occupation was seen as a threat to trade routes of "supreme importance to the United States." Secretary Hull also remarks to Sumner Welles that "the Japanese are seeking to dominate militarily practically one-half the world...." and will continue "unless something happens to stop her." Two memoranda by Mr. Cecil Gray, 24 and 25 July 1941.....		4
4. President Roosevelt proposes to the Japanese Ambassador to neutralize Indochina, creating in effect an Asian "Switzerland." Memorandum by Sumner Welles of conversation between Roosevelt and the Japanese Ambassador, 24 July 1941.....		8
5. U.S. publicly declares that the agreement between France and Japan regarding Indochina was unjustified. State Department press release, 2 August 1941.....		11
6. U.S. proposes to Japan that the two countries endeavor to conclude a multilateral non-aggression pact among Britain, China, Japan, Netherlands, Russia, Thailand, and the United States which would respect the territorial integrity of Indochina. Cordell Hull to Ambassador Nomura (Japan), 26 November 1941.....		13
7. President Roosevelt expresses to Emperor Hirohito that continuance of the Japanese troop movements into Indochina is "unthinkable." Message from Roosevelt to Hirohito, 6 December 1941.....		14

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

	<u>1942</u>	<u>Page</u>
8. U.S. assures France that she will be restored to full independence "in all the greatness and vastness" which she possessed before the war in Europe and in her colonies overseas. Letter from Mr. Murphy to General Giraud, 2 November 1942. (Other U.S. policy statements for 1942 are quoted in Document No. 11, page iv, following).....		16

1943

9. There follows a series of communications concerning the use of Chinese troops in Indochina. The U.S. rejected the French protestations and contended that the problem was primarily military. (President Roosevelt's decision was influential in the eventual Chinese occupation of Tonkin and their subsequent replacement by the French.).....		17
a. Expressions of concern over Chinese participation in the liberation of Indochina by the French Committee of National Liberation. M. Henri Hoppenot memorandum to Mr. Adolph Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, 20 October 1943.....		18
b. Mr. Berle expresses to the French that it is a military problem but privately expresses the fact that Chinese intervention forces the issue of Western colonialism versus Eastern liberation as a policy. Memorandum of Conversation by Mr. Berle, 21 October 1943.....		18
c. Berle writes to Edward Stettinius, Under Secretary of State, that military matters must predominate because if the Chinese do not intervene, then the U.S. must reconquer Indochina single-handed and later police and protect it against the Chinese. Memorandum by Berle to Stettinius, 22 October 1943.....		19
d. Mr. John Carter Vincent, Assistant Chief of Far Eastern Affairs, views the post-war status of Indochina as a matter of speculation but does not rule out the influence of the Chinese. Memorandum by Vincent to Berle, 2 November 1943...		20
e. Stettinius recommends to the President that the problem is primarily military. Memorandum by Stettinius to President Roosevelt, 8 November 1943.....		21
f. President Roosevelt defers judgment on Chinese involvement and leaves the whole matter to the "discretion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" as essentially a military problem. Memorandum by President Roosevelt to Stettinius, 9 November 1943.....		21

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

1943 (Contd)

Page

- g. The French offer a renewed expression of concern over the apparent intent to use Chinese troops in Indochina and a last minute warning of dire consequences to the Allied cause if the Chinese were used. Letter from M. Hoppenot to Berle, 13 December 1943..... 22
10. President Roosevelt conversation with Marshal Stalin on the possibility of a trusteeship for Indochina which he had discussed with Chiang Kai-shek. Extract from Tehran Conference, 28 November 1943..... 24

1944

11. Secretary Hull conveys British interest in U.S. policy on French Indochina to Roosevelt with summaries of stated U.S. and British positions. The U.S. had continuously promised to restore to France its independence and sovereignty over its territorial possessions. The British, on the other hand, avoided guarantees of "French Empire" integrity but alluded to the "greatness of France" and the lack of British designs on French territory, 14 January 1944..... 26
12. Roosevelt reiterates his opinion to the British that Indochina should not go back to France and that he was supported by Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek in this view. Memorandum by Roosevelt to Secretary of State, 24 January 1944..... 30
13. Stettinius seeks approval from Roosevelt to assume that French armed forces or French nationals would be used in the liberation of Indochina without prejudicing the question of ultimate status. Memorandum by Stettinius to Roosevelt, 17 February 1944..... 31
14. Views of President Roosevelt with respect to setting up a trusteeship for Indochina and expressions of these views to the British are summarized. Memorandum by Mr. Grew, Far East Affairs, 10 July 1944..... 32
15. Cordell Hull seeks a decision from Roosevelt on the French role in the Far East military operations. The British had requested of Hull affirmative answers on the attachment of a French Mission to Mountbatten and the establishment of a Corps in India. Memorandum by Hull to Roosevelt, 26 August 1944..... 34
16. Roosevelt defers decision on French role in the Far East until after the Second Quebec Conference, 11-16 September 1944. Memorandum by Roosevelt to Hull, 28 August 1944..... 35

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

1944 (Contd)

Page

17. Hull follows-up with a new request to Roosevelt for decision with the information that the British were going ahead with bringing a French Mission into South East Asia Command (SEAC) and other activities to get them installed. Memorandum by Hull to Roosevelt, 10 October 1944..... 35
18. Secretary Hull requests Roosevelt's decision on rendering support to resistance groups, both French and native, in Indochina. Memorandum by Hull to Roosevelt, 13 October 1944... 36
19. Roosevelt decides that the U.S. "should do nothing in regard to resistance groups or in any other way in relation to Indochina." Memorandum by Roosevelt to Hull, 16 October 1944..... 37
20. Anthony Eden's views on the question of trusteeship for Indochina. Memorandum by H. F. Mathews, Office of European Affairs, 2 November 1944..... 37
21. Stettinius summarizes recent developments in relation to Indochina for President Roosevelt. Among the points covered was that the O.S.S. representative in SEAC reported that British, French, and Dutch strategy appeared to be to win back control of Southeast Asia with U.S. resources but "foreclosing the Americans from any voice in policy matters." Memorandum by Hull to Roosevelt, 2 November 1944..... 38
22. Roosevelt appears adamant in a four point reply to Secretary of State; it was to be made clear that the U.S. had made no final decisions on, and expected to be consulted by the British, Dutch and French with regard to any future of Southeast Asia. Memorandum by Roosevelt to Stettinius, 3 November 1944..... 40
23. France expresses strong interest in participating in recovery of Indochina. Caffrey 316 to Hull, 4 November 1944..... 40
24. British aide-memoire covers proposals for the use of French forces in pre-operational activities in Indochina. Halifax letter to Stettinius, 23 November 1944..... 41
25. Stettinius informs Roosevelt of British impatience over lack of U.S. reply to aide-memoire; the British were concerned that the U.S. had not determined an Indochina policy and could hardly keep the French out in light of their increasing strength. Memorandum by Stettinius to Roosevelt, 27 December 1944..... 43

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

	<u>1945</u>	<u>Page</u>
26.	Stettinius notes Roosevelt's refusal to get "mixed up in any military effort" in Indochina -- with the rejoinder that action at this time was premature. Extract from Stettinius diary, 1 January 1945.....	45
27.	Stettinius informs Halifax that Roosevelt did not agree with sending French agents to Indochina. Memorandum of Conversation, Stettinius-Halifax, 2 January 1945.....	46
28.	Secretary of War Stimson replies to State Department query whether U.S. actions in Indochina were consistent with Roosevelt's instructions. Stimson letter to Stettinius, 2 January 1945.....	47
29.	Harriman reviews Soviet attitudes ("hostility to colonial exploitation and domination of native peoples by foreign imperialism") and assesses intentions in Russian relations ("not to consent cheerfully to any further establishment of Western military and naval power in that area") regarding French colonialism and the future of Indochina. Harriman (Moscow) 118 to Stettinius, 13 January 1945.....	48
30.	Patrick J. Hurley reports on Indochina situation; General Wedemeyer has maintained a "non-committal policy vis-à-vis Indochina." Hurley 177 to Stettinius, 6 February 1945.....	58
31.	Roosevelt discusses Indochina trusteeship with Stalin at Yalta. Extract of Roosevelt-Stalin Yalta Conversations, 8 February 1945.....	59
32.	Hurley forwards a "note" from the French Provisional Government concerning de Gaulle's position on Indochina. Hurley despatch 111 to Stettinius, 31 January 1945 (State Department 14 February 1945).	60
33.	Caffrey reports General de Gaulle's distress over the lack of U.S. support to French resistance in Indochina. "What are you driving at?....We do not want to become Communist.... I hope that you do not push us into it." Caffrey 1196 to Stettinius, 13 March 1945.....	65
34.	Stettinius seeks Roosevelt's approval of a proposed statement to the effect that the U.S. "Will do all it can to support resistance groups." Memorandum by Stettinius for Roosevelt, 16 March 1945.....	66
35.	Roosevelt declines to issue the statement proposed by Stettinius (on U.S. support of resistance groups) as "inadvisable." Memorandum by Leahy to Hull, 17 March 1945.....	68

TOP SECRET - Sensitive

1945 (Contd)

Page

36. Admiral Leahy authorizes the War Department to give General Wedemeyer approval to send whatever assistance "can be spared without interfering with the war effort" to the French resistance forces in Indochina. Memorandum of Conversation, Assistant Secretary Dunn, 19 March 1945..... 69
37. U.S. assistance through 14th Air Force to French resistance in Indochina is approved provided such assistance does not interfere with planned operations. Paraphrase of Wedemeyer to Chennault message, 19 March 1945..... 71
38. Stettinius relates U.S. policy to the French Ambassador on furnishing assistance to resistance groups in Indochina. Stettinius to Bonnet, 4 April 1945..... 72

1940

751G.94/81

THE ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS (DUNN) TO THE
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (WELLES)¹

Washington, August 6, 1940.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Acting upon your instructions, I called on the French Ambassador this morning and gave him the oral reply which you have formulated to the Ambassador's aide-mémoire of August 6th, on the subject of the demands made by the Japanese Government upon the French Government with regard to authorization to send troops across Indochina, to use the local air fields in Indochina, to station forces at the air fields for the purpose of assuring their security, and to send planes, munitions, and all necessary material through Indochina destined to the Japanese Army.

I told the French Ambassador that we have been doing and are doing everything possible within the framework of our established policies to keep the situation in the Far East stabilized; that we have been progressively taking various steps, the effect of which has been to exert economic pressure on Japan; that our Fleet is now based on Hawaii, and that the course which we have been following, as indicated above, gives a clear indication of our intentions and activities for the future. I also raised with the French Ambassador the question whether it would be practicable for the French to delay discussions with the Japanese with respect to Indochina for a period. I furthermore told the Ambassador that the British Ambassador had been informed of this matter by you in a most strictly confidential manner and that if the British had any observations or comments to make we would transmit them immediately to the French Ambassador.

Count de Saint-Quentin stated that he felt that this reply to the French request for assistance and support in her negotiations with Japan would very

¹ Taken from MSS. for Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940; not yet cleared for publication.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

probably not be considered by his Government as sufficient prospect for support to enable them to withstand the pressing demands made by the Japanese Government for the establishment of certain rights in Indochina in addition to the economic demands accompanying the former. He said that he did not think it would be practicable for the French Government to delay the negotiations because the Japanese had themselves stated at the time of making the demands that if the French Government did not acquiesce in the granting of these rights, the Japanese Government had every intention of taking the necessary action to acquire them. He went on to say that in his opinion the phrase "within the framework of our established policies", when associated with the apparent reluctance of the American Government to consider the use of military force in the Far East at this particular time, to mean that the United States would not use military or naval force in support of any position which might be taken to resist the Japanese attempted aggression on Indochina. The Ambassador asked me to convey to you thus his construction of your oral reply conveyed to him through me this morning and his fear that the French Government would, under the indicated pressure of the Japanese Government, be forced to accede to the demands set forth in his aide-memoire.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

751G.94/14a: Telegram

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE AMBASSADOR
IN JAPAN (GREW)¹

[Paraphrase]

Washington, August 6, 1940
1 p.m.

293. News agencies have carried reports that Japan has made secret demands on France regarding French Indochina. As reported, these demands include right on part of Japan to move armed forces of Japan through that French possession, the right of armed forces of Japan to use air bases at certain points there, etc.

The statements given by the Secretary of State to the press on April 17 and May 11, 1940, set forth this Government's belief that (1) intervention in the domestic affairs of the Netherlands East Indies, or (2) any alteration, by other than peaceful processes, in their status quo would be prejudicial to the cause of security, stability, and peace in the entire Pacific area, not just in the region in question. Also, there was set forth the observation of the Government of the United States that the belief restated in the preceding sentence was based on a doctrine of universal application and that it is a doctrine unequivocally supported by this Government. The same belief and the same observation naturally apply to French Indochina likewise. This Government is seriously perturbed, therefore, over the démarche which it is reported that the Government of Japan has made to the French authorities.

If no objection is perceived, it is my desire that at your early convenience you call upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs and that you express to him, as under instruction from your Government and along the lines above indicated, the concern felt by the Government of the United States regarding the reported developments.

W. WELLES

¹As printed in Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, pp. 289-290.

1941

EFFORTS FOR AGREEMENT WITH JAPAN

In a telephone conversation this afternoon with the First Secretary of the Chinese Embassy on a routine matter, Mr. Tsui repeated substantially the same question asked by Mr. Liu. My reply was the same as given to Mr. Liu. After some hesitation and speaking in Chinese, Mr. Tsui said that the Embassy was very much concerned over these reports. He said that the Central Government felt that . . . Lung Yun (Chairman of Yunnan Province) . . . might be expected to be subjected to great Japanese pressure. . . .

The foregoing situation would seem to be an additional reason for the taking of strong action in the event of the Japanese occupation of the French colony.

4429911 P. W./420

Memorandum by Mr. Cecil W. Gray, Assistant to the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] July 24, 1941.

In a telephone conversation with Acting Secretary Welles at 12:30 p. m. on July 23, there was considerable discussion about the Far Eastern situation. The Secretary spoke of the latest venture of Japan toward acquiring bases in Indochina in the face of the fact that Japan was not threatened by any nation on the globe. This southward movement, he said, stemmed from a policy of force and conquest. He referred to the friendship of Darlan⁵¹ and Hitler and of the elements in the French Government who were in favor of turning all France over to Hitler.

The Secretary said that, of course, our own Government would do its utmost to carry out any understanding that might be arrived at with Japan, and that Japan was not in danger in the South Sea area. Hence that country must be bent on conquest, in which case some future Japanese Government would take the final steps toward domination of that entire region.

There followed an exchange of views as to what Mr. Welles should say to the Japanese Ambassador later in the afternoon when he kept an appointment with Mr. Welles.⁵²

The Secretary's general idea was that if the Japanese Ambassador attempted to explain away the Indochina move by saying that it had been brought about by peaceful means, then such "peaceful means" were completely contrary to the spirit of the discussions between the United States and Japanese Governments looking toward a friendly

⁵¹ Adm. François Darlan, French Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice President of the Council of Ministers (Vice Premier).

⁵² See memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State, July 23, 1941, *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 522.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1941, VOLUME IV

settlement in the Pacific. The United States Government, Mr. Hull said, could only be driven to the conclusion that our discussions for a friendly settlement had been wiped out by the Indochina development. The Secretary said that if we waited until he came home to tell Ambassador Nomura the foregoing, then it would come too late as a warning to Japan. We must let them see the seriousness of the step they have taken and let them know that such constitutes an unfriendly act because it helps Hitler to conquer Britain. The Secretary said that if we did not tell the Ambassador all this, he would not sit down with Admiral Nomura when he came back to Washington. It would be a farce to do so.

There followed quite a bit of discussion about counter measures on the part of the United States, with Mr. Welles explaining what the British proposed to do, what our Army and Navy boards favored, what the President favored, et cetera, and, as I understood it, the Secretary left the decision on these questions to the judgment of those on the ground.

Secretary Hull then came back to the subject of Mr. Welles' forthcoming talk with Admiral Nomura, and he said that Mr. Welles might begin the conversation by speaking to Admiral Nomura concerning a readjustment of the United States position vis-à-vis Japan somewhat as follows: There is a profound belief everywhere, in view of many reports from many sources, that the Japanese movement into Indochina has two probable purposes, or at least two possibilities this Government cannot ignore: (1) if this Government is to be safe, it is bound to assume that this act constitutes definite notice of the launching of a policy of force and conquest on the part of the Japanese Government; (2) this Government, in the interest of its own safety and in the light of all Japanese utterances and acts, must assume that by its actions and preparations Japan may be taking one more vital and next to the final step in occupying all the South Sea area. Such a statement to the Ambassador would lay the basis for our own future acts and would let the Japanese understand fully our position.

It was agreed between the Secretary and Mr. Welles that there was no use to pursue our discussions for a friendly settlement with the Japanese unless the Japanese policies are to coincide with their professions. We could get any kind of an agreement from the British and other governments looking to the safeguarding of Japanese legitimate interests so that there is no real basis for Japanese claims of being threatened or in danger.

It was agreed between the Secretary and Mr. Welles that something must be said to the press along the lines of the foregoing para-

EFFORTS FOR AGREEMENT WITH JAPAN

graphs.⁶⁴ This would be for the purpose of making a record about the real significance of the Japanese movement and likewise to acquaint the public with the fact that we knew what was going on. Mr. Welles then read to the Secretary a draft of a statement prepared by the Far Eastern Division. The Secretary made specific comment as follows: make clear the fact that the occupation of Indochina by Japan possibly means one further important step to seizing control of the South Sea area, including trade routes of supreme importance to the United States controlling such products as rubber, tin and other commodities. This was of vital concern to the United States. The Secretary said that if we did not bring out this point our people will not understand the significance of this movement into Indochina. The Secretary mentioned another point to be stressed: there is no theory on which Indochina could be flooded with armed forces, aircraft, et cetera, for the defense of Japan. The only alternative is that this venture into Indochina has a close relation to the South Sea area and its value for offense against that area.

The Secretary closed by suggesting that Mr. Welles make clear to Admiral Nomura that we are ready and desirous of going forward with our discussions should circumstances permit, and that if an agreement were reached between our two countries, it would safeguard Japan far more securely than taking over Indochina. He said for Mr. Welles to ask the Ambassador to send this to his Government.

C. W. GRAY

740.0011 P. W./421

Memorandum by Mr. Cecil W. Gray, Assistant to the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON, July 25, 1941.]

EXCERPTS FROM SECRETARY HULL'S REMARKS IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH ACTING SECRETARY WELLES ON JULY 25, 1941

We have had conversations for several months with the Ambassador and his associates covering this matter completely and we couldn't have offered more assurance to Japan for her entire satisfaction from every standpoint than we did in those discussions. I told him (the Ambassador) repeatedly that if this matter progressed I expected to get a similar agreement with the British, the Dutch, et cetera. We have followed that up as the Indochina phase developed. You will remember we first considered sending a cable of inquiry to Japan about the Indochina matter. Then we sent Hamilton to see the Am-

⁶⁴ For press release issued by the Department of State on July 24, 1941, see *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 315.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1941, VOLUME IV

bassador when I didn't see him here to go over the whole situation. Then we sent Hamilton again to see his two associates for the purpose of keeping alive the whole situation that we had under discussion. Then finally, before they got to a face-saving stage, after it was apparent that they were preparing the Indochina move, this was followed up by a final step of summing up for the record the pros and cons and making a final appeal to the Japs before it was too late. That is the record we made. I think it ought all to be kept in mind. It is a fact that, in justice to the Administration, the Government and the State Department, as the Chinese-Japanese difficulties developed, we not only expressed opposition and condemnation at appropriate times, but we gradually took steps of retaliation. I need not mention all the steps. When the question of oil became most seriously considered for the first time, there was not a long period between that point and the point when Japan and the Netherlands proceeded with their trade negotiations, which involved oil and raised the whole oil question. Now, in those circumstances, not with the idea of appeasing Japan ourselves, but merely to deal practically with an international situation that had become acute, so far as oil was concerned, in connection with those negotiations, and which was clearly to remain acute until those negotiations were concluded, we rested our position before those negotiations had ended. The Japanese Government through its Ambassador came to us with a proposal for a peaceful settlement covering the entire Pacific area, including the question of oil and everything else, and I have had, as you know, seventeen conferences with him. There is a strong so-called peace group in Japan back of him (the Ambassador). Naturally, it would have been utterly impractical for us to have followed a purely appeasement policy when every consideration would prevent us from putting on embargoes and penalties and retaliation during these negotiations. My judgment is that the State Department and the Government should not say too much on this Japanese question. The first thing we know we will run into a storm. It is so delicate and there are so many angles to it. I am sure Japan is going on unless something happens to stop her. This is a world movement. The Japanese are seeking to dominate militarily practically one-half the world and apply the barbarous methods that they are applying to China and that Hitler is applying in Europe, and if they have their way, they will carry out what they are saying of their right to be supreme in that half of the world, by which they mean military supremacy with methods of arbitrary, selfish domination and the Hitler method of piracy and naval control of the seas and commerce. At any rate, I just want you to keep that in mind.

C[ECL] W. G[RAY]

711.94/2177

MEMORANDUM BY THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE¹

[WASHINGTON,] July 24, 1941.

At the request of the Japanese Ambassador, the President received the Ambassador for an off-the-record conference in the Oval Room at the White House at five o'clock this afternoon. At the President's request, Admiral Stark and I were present.

.

The President then went on to say that this new move by Japan in Indochina created an exceedingly serious problem for the United States. He said that, as I had stated to the Ambassador yesterday, insofar as assuring itself that it could obtain foodstuffs and raw materials from Indochina, Japan, of course, had it reached an agreement with the United States along the terms of the discussions between Secretary Hull and the Ambassador, would have been afforded far greater assurances of obtaining such supplies than any other nation. More than that, the President said, the cost of any military occupation is tremendous and the occupation itself is not conducive to the production by civilians in occupied countries of food supplies and raw materials of the character required by Japan. Had Japan undertaken to obtain the supplies she required from Indochina in a peaceful way, she not only would have obtained larger quantities of such supplies, but would have obtained them with complete security and without the draining expense of a military occupation. Furthermore, from the military standpoint, the President said, surely the Japanese Government could not have in reality the slightest belief that China, Great Britain, the Netherlands or the United States had any territorial designs on Indochina nor were in the slightest degree providing any real threats of aggression against Japan. This Government, consequently, could only assume that the occupation of Indochina was being undertaken by Japan for the purpose of further offense and this created a situation which necessarily must give the United States the most serious disquiet.

The President said that he had been following in complete detail the conversations which had been progressing between Secretary Hull and the Ambassador and that he was confident that the Ambassador would agree that the policies not undertaken in Indochina by the Japanese Government were completely opposed to the principles and the letter of the proposed agreement which had been under discussion.

¹As printed in Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, pp. 527-530.

711.94/2177 Con't. 1

At this point the Ambassador took out of his pocket two sheets of notes which he had prepared and asked the President's permission to refer to them in order to make a statement of his Government's position.

In this exposition the Ambassador covered exactly the same ground which he had covered in his conversation with me last night.

The only points of difference were that at the outset of the conversation, the Ambassador very clearly and emphatically stated that the move by Japan into Indochina was something which he personally deplored and with which he personally was not in agreement.

.

The President then said that he had a proposal to make to the Ambassador which had occurred to him just before the Ambassador had come in and which he had not had time to talk over with me before making his proposal to the Ambassador.

The President said that it might be too late for him to make this proposal but he felt that no matter how late the hour might be, he still wished to seize every possible opportunity of preventing the creation of a situation between Japan and the United States which could only give rise to serious misunderstandings between the two peoples. The President stated that if the Japanese Government would refrain from occupying Indochina with its military and naval forces, or, had such steps actually been commenced, if the Japanese Government would withdraw such forces, the President could assure the Japanese Government that he would do everything within his power to obtain from the Governments of China, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and of course the United States itself a binding and solemn declaration, provided Japan would undertake the same commitment, to regard Indochina as a neutralized country in the same way in which Switzerland had up to now been regarded by the powers as a neutralized country. He stated that this would imply that none of the powers concerned would undertake any military act of aggression against Indochina and would remain in control of the territory and would not be confronted with attempts to dislodge them on the part of de Gaullist or Free French agents or forces.

711.94/2177 Con't.¹

If these steps were taken, the President said, Japan would be given solemn and binding proof that no other power had any hostile designs upon Indochina and that Japan would be afforded the fullest and freest opportunity of assuring herself of the source of food supplies and other raw materials in Indochina which she was seeking to secure.

The Ambassador then reiterated concisely and quite clearly what the President had suggested. He then made some statement which was not quite clear to the effect that such a step would be very difficult at this time on account of the face-saving element involved on the part of Japan and that only a very great statesman would reverse a policy at this time.

.

The Ambassador said that he would immediately report his conversation to his Government in Tokyo. He seemed to be very much impressed with what the President had said but I did not gather from his reactions that he was in any sense optimistic as to the result.¹

S/ummer/ W/elles/

¹A formal document setting forth the President's proposal was presented to the Japanese Ambassador on August 8.

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ON AUGUST 2,
1941¹

The Acting Secretary of State, Mr. Sumner Welles, issued the following statement on August 2 in reply to inquiries from the press concerning the agreement entered into between the French and Japanese Governments regarding French Indochina:

"The French Government at Vichy has given repeated assurances to the Government of the United States that it would not cooperate with the Axis powers beyond the obligations imposed on it by the armistice, and that it would defend the territory under its control against any aggressive action on the part of third powers.

"This Government has now received information of the terms of the agreement between the French and Japanese Governments covering the so-called 'common defense' of French Indochina. In effect, this agreement virtually turns over to Japan an important part of the French Empire.

"Effort has been made to justify this agreement on the ground that Japanese 'assistance' is needed because of some menace to the territorial integrity of French Indochina by other powers. The Government of the United States is unable to accept this explanation. As I stated on July 24, there is no question of any threat to French Indochina, unless it lies in the expansionist aims of the Japanese Government.

"The turning over of bases for military operations and of territorial rights under pretext of 'common defense' to a power whose territorial aspirations are apparent, here presents a situation which has a direct bearing upon the vital problem of American security. For reasons which are beyond the scope of any known agreement, France has now decided to permit foreign troops to enter an integral part of its Empire, to occupy bases therein, and to prepare operations within French territory which may be directed against other peoples friendly to the people of France.

"The French

¹As printed in Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan 1931-1941, vol. II, pp. 320-321. For earlier statements on this subject, see Department's Press Releases of Sept. 4 and 23, 1940, and tel. 440 to Vichy of Sept 9, 1940. (Not included here).

"The French Government at Vichy has repeatedly declared its determination to resist all encroachments upon the sovereignty of its territories. However, the German and Italian forces availed themselves of certain facilities in Syria to carry on operations directed against the British, the French Government, although this was a plain encroachment on territory under French control, did not resist. But when the British undertook defense operations in the territory of Syria, the French Government did resist.

"Under these circumstances, this Government is impelled to question whether the French Government at Vichy in fact proposes to maintain its declared policy to preserve for the French people the territories both at home and abroad which have long been under French sovereignty.

"This Government, mindful of its traditional friendship for France, has deeply sympathized with the desire of the French people to maintain their territories and to preserve them intact. In its relations with the French Government at Vichy and with the local French authorities in French territories, the United States will be governed by the manifest effectiveness with which those authorities endeavor to protect these territories from domination and control by those powers which are seeking to extend their rule by force and conquest, or by the threat thereof."

711.94/2504

DOCUMENT HANDED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE JAPANESE
AMBASSADOR (NOMURA) ON NOVEMBER 26, 1941¹

Strictly Confidential,
Tentative and Without
Commitment.

WASHINGTON, November 26, 1941.

Outline of Proposed Basis For Agreement Between The United States
And Japan

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SECTION II

STEPS TO BE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN.

The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan
propose to take steps as follows:

1. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will endeavor to conclude a multilateral non-aggression pact among the British Empire, China, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Thailand and the United States.
2. Both Governments will endeavor to conclude among the American, British, Chinese, Japanese, the Netherland and Thai Governments an agreement whereunder each of the Governments would pledge itself to respect the territorial integrity of French Indochina and, in the event that there should develop a threat to the territorial integrity of Indochina, to enter into immediate consultation with a view to taking such measures as may be deemed necessary and advisable to meet the threat in question. Such agreement would provide also that each of the Governments party to the agreement would not seek or accept preferential treatment in its trade or economic relations with Indochina and would use its influence to obtain for each of the signatories equality of treatment in trade and commerce with French Indochina.
3. The Government of Japan will withdraw all military, naval, air and police forces from China and from Indochina.

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¹
As printed in Foreign Relations of the United States:
Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, pp. 768-770.

740.0011 Pacific War/856

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO EMPEROR HIROHITO OF JAPAN¹

[WASHINGTON] December 6, 1941.

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More than a year ago Your Majesty's Government concluded an agreement with the Vichy Government by which five or six thousand Japanese troops were permitted to enter into Northern French Indo-China for the protection of Japanese troops which were operating against China further north. And this Spring and Summer the Vichy Government permitted further Japanese military forces to enter into Southern French Indo-China for the common defense of French Indo-China. I think I am correct in saying that no attack has been made upon Indo-China, nor that any has been contemplated.

During the past few weeks it has become clear to the world that Japanese military, naval and air forces have been sent to Southern Indo-China in such large numbers as to create a reasonable doubt on the part of other nations that this continuing concentration in Indo-China is not defensive in its character.

Because these continuing concentrations in Indo-China have reached such large proportions and because they extend now to the southeast and the southwest corners of that Peninsula, it is only reasonable that the people of the Philippines, of the hundreds of Islands of the East Indies, of Malaya and of Thailand itself are asking themselves whether these forces of Japan are preparing or intending to make attack in one or more of these many directions.

I am sure that Your Majesty will understand that the fear of all these peoples is a legitimate fear in as much as it involves their peace and their national existence. I am sure that Your Majesty will understand why the people of the United States in such large numbers look askance at the establishment of military, naval and air bases manned and equipped so greatly as to constitute armed forces capable of measures of offense.

¹As printed in Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II. pp. 784-786.

It is clear that a continuance of such a situation is unthinkable.

None of the peoples whom I have spoken of above can sit either indefinitely or permanently on a keg of dynamite.

There is absolutely no thought on the part of the United States of invading Indo-China if every Japanese soldier or sailor were to be withdrawn therefrom.

I think that we can obtain the same assurance from the Governments of the East Indies, the Governments of Malaya and the Government of Thailand. I would even undertake to ask for the same assurance on the part of the Government of China. Thus a withdrawal of the Japanese forces from Indo-China would result in the assurance of peace throughout the whole of the South Pacific area.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

740.0011 European War 1939/29461

Confidential File

Extract from Letter of Robert D. Murphy
to General Henri Giraud

November 2, 1942

The General:

Referring to the declaration made on several occasions by President Roosevelt; and the obligations already undertaken by the American Government as well as by the British Government, I am able to assure you that the restoration of France to full independence, in all the greatness and vastness which it possessed before the war in Europe as well as overseas, is one of the war aims of the United Nations.

It is thoroughly understood that French sovereignty will be re-established as soon as possible throughout all the territory, metropolitan and colonial, over which flew the French flag in 1939.

The Government of the United States considers the French nation as an ally and will treat it as such.

May I add further that in case of military operations in French territory (whether in Metropolitan France or in the Colonies) in all instances where French collaboration may be found, the American authorities will not intervene in any way in those affairs which are solely within the province of the national administration or which have to do with the exercise of French sovereignty.

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CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED ENTRY OF CHINESE
TROOPS INTO INDOCHINA TO COMBAT JAPANESE
FORCES IN THAT COLONY¹

740.0011 Pacific War/3531

*The Washington Delegation of the French Committee of National
Liberation to the Department of State*²

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, October 20, 1943.

MEMORANDUM

According to certain information which has come to the knowledge of the Committee of National Liberation, Allied plans of operation in the Far East would, in the near future, include the start of operations against the frontiers of Indo-China, operations entrusted to Chinese troops.

The Washington Delegation of the Committee has already had occasion to call the Department of State's attention to the absolute importance to the Allied cause of associating the competent French authorities with the detailing of Allied war plans in the Far East, especially when their execution involves French Indo-China. The aforementioned authorities possess, in this field, documentation and experience which can be of the greatest use to the Allied High Command. The role which France has traditionally played in the Far East, the important interests which she has there, the dispositions already taken by the Algiers Committee to participate when the time comes in the struggle for the liberation of Indo-China, are all, as many more, reasons for an effective French participation in Inter-Allied Councils where the general strategy of the United Nations in the Far East is determined.

As concerns the project of a Chinese offensive against Indo-China, the Algiers Committee—if the information which has reached it on this subject is correct—must very seriously draw the attention of the American Government to the great danger which its realization would present.

¹Continued from *Foreign Relations, 1942, China*, pp. 749-760.

²Handed on October 21 to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) by Henri Hoppenot, Delegate of the French Committee of National Liberation.

PROPOSED CAMPAIGN IN INDOCHINA

A Chinese attack against Tonkin would have the immediate effect of causing the whole Indo-Chinese population to rise against the Allies.

For the Annamites, the Chinese, who have so frequently in the past invaded and ravaged their frontier regions, represent the hereditary enemy. Far from greeting them as liberators, the local population would impede their advance by every means in their power. Moreover, the population and the French troops, who would take the side of the Allies if it were French, American and British forces which were coming to their help, might very well react against an attack by the Chinese, whose true intentions could easily be confused by enemy propaganda. The position which a Chinese attack apparently will cause civilian and military French Indo-Chinese to take will in the future be difficult to modify and the consequences of such a mistake run the risk of weighing heavily upon the development of the campaign.

The French Committee of National Liberation believes, therefore, that it is of the highest importance to set aside a project which, far from serving Allied interests, runs the risk of causing the greatest harm. The Committee, likewise, equally believes that, as concerns military operations whose theatre would be French territory, it is imperative to ask the Allies that no decision should be taken without our previous agreement.

740.0011 Pacific War/3531

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] October 21, 1943.

M. Hoppenot came in to see me at his request. He handed me the attached memorandum,³ which states that the French National Committee understands that Chinese operations will presently open against the Japanese within the frontiers of Indochina. This gave great concern to the Committee of National Liberation. If Chinese troops attacked there, plainly there would not be any support from the French, since the Chinese had always claimed interest there, and it was not unlikely that the French troops would defend against a Chinese attack.

I asked whether this matter had already been brought to the attention of the Chiefs of Staff. M. Hoppenot said it had, through General

³ *Supra.*

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1943, CHINA

Bethouart. I thanked him for the information and said that the matter presented was primarily for military consideration.

A[DOLF] A. B[ERLE], JR.

NOTE: But it is not only for military consideration. This brings us squarely up to the problem of whether, in the Far East, we are re-establishing the western colonial empires or whether we are letting the East liberate itself if it can do so. I feel that the matter should be discussed on a high level with the President for his decision. I do not know that we need to settle matters with the French Committee in Algiers. If the Chinese can do anything against the Japanese in French Indochina to the general advantage of the war, I have difficulty in seeing why we should stop them.

A[DOLF] A. B[ERLE], JR.

740.0011 Pacific War/3531

Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) to the Under Secretary of State (Stettinius)

[WASHINGTON,] October 22, 1943.

MR. STETTINIUS: In connection with the application of the French Committee of National Liberation for membership on the Pacific War Council, it is of interest that the representative of the Committee yesterday presented us with a request that we do not permit the Chinese to take part in operations against the Japanese troops which are presently occupying Indo-China. The Committee observed that if British and American troops accomplished the reconquest this would be quite all right; but the French, and particularly those in Indo-China, considered the Chinese as their hereditary enemies (*erbfeinde*); if they took part in the liberation of Indo-China, probably they would claim new territory.

The French would push this view in the Pacific War Council. This would probably be supported by the British and the Dutch. This would present us, for all practical purposes, with the task of reconquering Indo-China almost single-handed (since the British interest stops with Burma) for the sole purpose of returning Indo-China to France. France is unlikely to be able to maintain herself in control of, or protect, that province for a good while; so that we should have the added job of policing and protecting it against the Chinese as well as the Japanese in the interest of the French Colonial Empire.

It strikes me that this fact should be called to the attention of the President and also of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.* I think we should

*On October 29 Mr. Stettinius replied to Mr. Berle: "I agree with you that the matter of French representation on the Pacific War Council and also their

PROPOSED CAMPAIGN IN INDOCHINA

answer the French Committee that their representation will receive consideration, but that military factors must predominate in the decision.

Frankly, I doubt if we could defend before the Congress a very considerable expenditure of American lives for the sole purpose of keeping Indo-China in French, as against Chinese or Indo-Chinese, hands. . . .

A[DOLF] A. B[ERLE], JR.

740.0011 Pacific War/3531

*Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*⁵

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1943.

MR. BERLE: We have read with keen interest your memorandum of conversation with Mr. Hoppenot and his *aide-mémoire*, and concur in the opinion expressed in your note.

There is at the bottom of page 1 of the *aide-mémoire* the following statement which we feel should not pass without comment: "Pour l'Annamite, les Chinois, qui ont si fréquemment dans le passé envahi et ravagé leurs régions frontières, représentent l'ennemi héréditaire." This statement is grossly misleading, if not actually false. In 1879 the Annamites sought military aid from China to drive out the French. It was China's weakness, not Annamite dislike or fear of China, that permitted the French to remain. Recurrent waves of Annamite nationalism have looked to Chinese nationalism for inspiration and guidance, particularly since 1920. Today there is understood to be in southern China a group of Annamites which advocates independence for Indochina and seeks Chinese support. It is our belief that the Annamites, by and large, have for the Chinese a feeling of friendliness and cultural affinity.

The Chinese Government's attitude regarding the post-war status of Indochina has been cautious. Officials of the Government have disclaimed territorial ambitions but they have at times intimated that China would desire an arrangement which assured access to the sea from Yunnan Province through Tonkin to Haiphong. Independence for Indochina is included in the Chinese Government's general advocacy of self-government for eastern peoples.

request that the Chinese be asked not to conduct military operations within Indo-China should be referred both to the President and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

⁵ Initialed by the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Ballantine).

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1943, CHINA

The post-war status of French Indochina is a matter of speculation: return to France; international control; and even British control. It is our belief that the Annamites are fundamentally capable of self-government and that it should be the objective of any post-war administration to train Annamites to resume the responsibilities of self-government. This objective might be achieved by a continuation of French administration for a definitely limited period or by international administration. There would seem to be no reasonable basis for British administration. In any event, the Chinese Government should be consulted and its views given full consideration in regard to plans for the future of Indochina.

740.0011 Pacific War/3531

Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

WASHINGTON, November 8, 1943.

M. Henri Hoppenot, the Delegate of the French Committee of National Liberation, has left with the State Department a communication, a copy of which in translation is attached hereto,¹ giving the reasons why, in the opinion of the Committee, it would be a mistake to entrust to Chinese troops the launching of military operations against Indo-China. The main reason advanced is that the Chinese are the hereditary enemies of the Annamites and that an attack by the Chinese would therefore be resisted by the local population as well as by French troops. It is our belief that this presentation of the case involves allegations not in accord with the facts, and that the Annamites, by and large, have for the Chinese a feeling of friendliness and cultural affinity.

The problem to which these representations relates seems primarily to be a military problem for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We understand that it has already been brought to the attention of that body by General Bethouart, Chief of the French Military Mission.

EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, JR.

740.0011 Pacific War/3567

Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Acting Secretary of State

WASHINGTON, November 9, 1943.

In regard to the use of Chinese troops against Annam, I agree with the State Department that the French presentation of the case is not sufficiently valid to take any action.

¹ *Ante*, p. 882.

PROPOSED CAMPAIGN IN INDOCHINA

The whole matter should be left to the discretion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the Commanding Officers in the area. This is essentially a military problem.

F[RANKLIN] D. R[OOSEVELT]

740.0011 Pacific War/3630

*The Delegate of the French Committee of National Liberation
(Hoppenot) to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[Translation]

No. 759

WASHINGTON, December 13, 1943.

DEAR MR. BERLE: I have already had occasion to speak to you of the interest which the French Committee of National Liberation would attach to being associated in the inter-Allied deliberations concerning the conduct of the war in the Far East, particularly when it is a matter of operations which may involve Indochina. I refer particularly to the *aide-mémoire* which I transmitted to you on this subject October 21, and which contemplated on the one hand the entrance of a representative of the Committee into the Pacific Council, and on the other hand the apprehensions caused at Algiers by a proposed Chinese offensive against the frontier of Indochina.

M. Massigli has just requested me to recall this question again to your high attention.

The cooperation of the French staff with the Allied staffs in the Far East has as a matter of fact entered into a new phase following the sending to Delhi, with the accord of the British War Office, of a French military mission commanded by General Blaizot. This new fact seems to make it more desirable that a parallel collaboration should be established at Washington, by the association of a French representative in the deliberations of the Pacific Council of which delegates of all the Powers participating in the war effort against Japan are members.

We have learned, moreover, that the proposed Chinese operations on the frontier of Indochina have not been abandoned and that irregular Chinese troops, staffed by American officers, are said to be trained at the present time for this purpose near the said frontier. The Chinese elements in question are precisely the ones whose incursions and pillaging have frequently created, in the course of recent decades, a state of insecurity and trouble in that region, and their reappearance on Indochinese territory, even with the corrective of a staff of American officers, would aggravate further the repercussions of any Chinese action on those frontiers. Knowing personally the mentality both of the French of Indochina and of the native populations of the Union,

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1943, CHINA

I am convinced that nothing could more seriously hinder their cooperation with the Allies than for the liberation of Indochina to appear to be entrusted, even provisionally, to Chinese formations which, in the present case, would appear to them not only as the advance guard of the hereditary enemy of Annam and Tonkin, but as the direct descendants of the bands of pirates and Jolly Rogers who have so long caused the threat of their exactions to weigh upon those regions. Just as American or English troops would be welcomed as allies and liberators, so we run the risk of seeing French and natives react strongly against the use of these Chinese elements. I do not believe that a more serious political and psychological fault could be committed and I take the liberty to beg you to call this point again to the very serious attention of the competent authorities.⁵

Please accept [etc.]

HENRI HOPPENOT

⁵On January 5, 1944, Mr. Berle wrote M. Hoppenot that the contents of his letter had been transmitted to appropriate authorities of the Government.

SECRET

TEHRAN CONFERENCE

Extract from Memorandum of Conversation
between President Roosevelt and Marshal Stalin,
November 28, 1943, 3 p.m.¹

MARSHAL STALIN expatiated at length on the French ruling classes and he said, in his opinion, they should not be entitled to share in any of the benefits of the peace, in view of their past record of collaboration with Germany.

THE PRESIDENT said that Mr. Churchill was of the opinion that France would be very quickly reconstructed as a strong nation, but he did not personally share this view since he felt that many years of honest labor would be necessary before France would be re-established. He said the first necessity for the French, not only for the Government but the people as well, was to become honest citizens.

MARSHAL STALIN agreed and went on to say that he did not propose to have the Allies shed blood to restore Indo-China, for example, to the old French colonial rule. He said that the recent events in the Lebanon made public service the first step toward the independence of people who had formerly been colonial subjects. He said that in the war against Japan, in his opinion, that in addition to military missions, it was necessary to fight the Japanese in the political sphere as well, particularly in view of the fact that the Japanese had granted the least nominal independence to certain colonial areas. He repeated that France should not get back Indo-China and that the French must pay for their criminal collaboration with Germany.

¹ Handbook of Far Eastern Conference Discussions (Historical Division Research Project No. 62, November 1949), pp. D16-D17, Top Secret.

SECRET

THE PRESIDENT said he was 100% in agreement with Marshal Stalin and remarked that after 100 years of French rule in Indo-China, the inhabitants were worse off than they had been before. He said that Chiang Kai Shek had told him China had no designs on Indo-China but the people of Indo-China were not yet ready for independence, to which he had replied that when the United States acquired the Philippines, the inhabitants were not ready for independence which would be granted without qualification upon the end of the war against Japan. He added that he had discussed with Chiang Kai Shek the possibility of a system of trusteeship for Indo-China which would have the task of preparing the people for independence within a definite period of time, perhaps 20 to 30 years.

MARSHAL STALIN completely agreed with this view.

SECRET

DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE STATUS OF FRENCH INDO-
CHINA AND FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN ITS LIBERATION FROM
JAPANESE OCCUPATION

*Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt*²⁰

WASHINGTON, January 14, 1944.

Last week in a conversation²¹ which I had with the British Ambassador he stated that, according to information from his Foreign Office, you had spoken rather definitely during your recent trip of your views concerning the future of French Indo-China. According to Lord Halifax' information you had expressed the opinion that Indo-China should be taken away from the French and administered by an international trusteeship.²² He wondered whether this represented your final conclusions and attached importance to the matter in view of the fact that reports of your alleged conversations would undoubtedly get back to the French. I informed the Ambassador that I did not know whether you had come to any final conclusions on the subject and added that, in my judgment, you and Mr. Churchill would find it desirable to talk this matter over fully, deliberately, and perhaps finally at some future stage.

²⁰ Copy of memorandum obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

²¹ For extract of memorandum of this conversation, dated January 3, 1944, see *Foreign Relations, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, p. 864.

²² A memorandum of July 21, 1943, obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, N.Y., records a statement by President Roosevelt in the thirty-third meeting of the Pacific War Council that Indochina should be placed under a trusteeship until it was ready for independence.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

As of possible interest to you I am enclosing two brief memoranda citing the more important public statements or commitments by ourselves and the British with regard to the future of French territory after the war.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

[Enclosure 1]

JANUARY 7, 1944.

UNITED STATES POSITION WITH RESPECT TO FRENCH TERRITORY AFTER
THE WAR

During the past three years there have been a number of public pronouncements, as well as unpublished statements, by the President, the Secretary of State, and other high ranking officials of this Government regarding the future of French territory after the war. The most important of these pronouncements and statements are set forth below.

1. In a statement issued on August 2, 1941, concerning the agreement entered into between the French and Japanese Governments regarding French Indochina, the Secretary of State said:²³

"This Government, mindful of its traditional friendship for France, has deeply sympathized with the desire of the French people to maintain their territories and to preserve them intact. In its relations with the French Government at Vichy and with the local French authorities in French territories, the United States will be governed by the manifest effectiveness with which those authorities endeavor to protect these territories from domination and control by those powers which are seeking to extend their rule by force and conquest, or by the threat thereof." (Department of State Press Release No. 374)

2. In a letter to Marshal Pétain in December, 1941,²⁴ President Roosevelt stated that so long as "French sovereign control remains in reality purely French" the American Government has no desire to see existing French sovereignty over French North Africa or any of the French colonies "pass to the control of any other nation".

3. A State Department press release of March 2, 1942²⁵ (No. 85) relative to the situation in New Caledonia, included the following words:

"The policy of the Government of the United States as regards France and French territory has been based upon the maintenance of

²³ For complete text of statement, see Department of State *Bulletin*, August 2, 1941, p. 87.

²⁴ For text of letter of December 27, 1941, see *Foreign Relations*, 1941, vol. II, p. 205.

²⁵ Department of State *Bulletin*, March 7, 1942, p. 208.

FRANCE

the integrity of France and of the French empire and of the eventual restoration of the complete independence of all French territories.”

The above statement was qualified by the following words:

“In its relations with the local French authorities in French territories the United States has been and will continue to be governed by the manifest effectiveness with which those authorities endeavor to protect their territories from domination and control by the common enemy.”

4. In a note of April 13, 1942,²⁶ to the French Ambassador at Washington, relative to the establishing of an American consular establishment at Brazzaville, the Acting Secretary of State said:

“The Government of the United States recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of the people of France over the territory of France and over French possessions overseas. The Government of the United States fervently hopes that it may see the reestablishment of the independence of France and of the integrity of French territory.”

5. At his press conference on May 21, 1942, in reply to an inquiry as to whether the United States considered itself bound to the restoration of the whole French Empire after the war, the Secretary of State said that this question had not arisen.

6. In an unpublished letter of November 2, 1942, to General Giraud, the President's Personal Representative, Mr. Murphy, wrote:

“It is thoroughly understood that French sovereignty will be re-established as soon as possible throughout all the territory, metropolitan and colonial, over which flew the French flag in 1939.”

7. The landing of American forces in North Africa on November 8, 1942,²⁷ was the occasion for a number of assurances to the French people regarding American motives. Among them were the following:

In his message to Marshal Pétain²⁸ the President said:

“I need not tell you that the ultimate and greater aim is the liberation of France and its empire from the Axis yoke.”

The President's message²⁹ to Admiral Esteva, Resident General at Tunis, concluded with these words:

“I know that I may count on your understanding of American friendship for France and American determination to liberate the French empire from the domination of its oppressors.”

²⁶ *Foreign Relations*, 1942, vol. II, p. 561.

²⁷ For correspondence concerning the landings of November 8, 1942, see *ibid.*, pp. 429-432.

²⁸ Department of State *Bulletin*, November 14, 1942, pp. 904, 905.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 908.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

In his broadcast to the French people on November 8³⁰ the President said:

"We assure you that once the menace of Germany and Italy is removed from you, we shall quit your territory at once."

8. The preamble of the unpublished Clark-Darlan Agreement of November 22, 1942,³¹ contains the following words:

"It has been agreed by all French elements concerned and United States military authorities that French forces will aid and support the forces of the United States and their allies to expel from the soil of Africa the common enemy, to liberate France and restore integrally the French Empire."

[Enclosure 2]

JANUARY 7, 1944.

BRITISH POSITION WITH RESPECT TO FRENCH TERRITORY AFTER
THE WAR

Prime Minister Churchill has more than once expressed the desire to see France, including Alsace-Lorraine, restored, and both Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden³² have repeatedly denied any territorial ambitions on the part of Great Britain with respect to the French Empire.

1. On June 10, 1941, the Prime Minister assured the House of Commons³³ that

"We have no territorial designs in Syria or anywhere else in French territory";

and subsequently, on November 10, 1942, he said:³⁴

"For ourselves we have no wish but to see France free and strong, with her empire gathered round her and with Alsace-Lorraine restored. We covet no French territory. We have no acquisitive designs or ambitions in North Africa or any other part of the world."

These commitments, however, are not interpreted by the British Government as including any guarantee of particular frontiers or of the integrity of the French Empire. The British Foreign Secretary, in a letter to the American Ambassador on November 16, 1942,³⁵ stated:

"You will see that we have taken care to avoid guaranteeing the integrity of the French Empire and have concentrated upon asserting our intention to restore 'the independence and greatness of France' and denying any desire to annex French territory".

³⁰ Department of State *Bulletin*, November 14, 1942, p. 892.

³¹ *Foreign Relations*, 1942, vol. II, p. 453.

³² Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

³³ *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 5th series, vol. 372, col. 157.

³⁴ For entire text of speech, see the *London Times*, November 11, 1942, p. 8.

³⁵ Not printed.

FRANCE

Much earlier, in connection with his note of August 7, 1940, to General de Gaulle, Mr. Churchill, in an unpublished letter of the same date, had said:

"I think it necessary to put on record that the expression 'full restoration of the independence and greatness of France' has no precise relation to territorial frontiers. We have not been able to guarantee such frontiers in respect of any nation now acting with us, but, of course, we shall do our best."

2. Like the United States, the British Government has made a number of commitments relative to the maintenance of French sovereignty in North Africa, and on March 17, 1943, the Lord Privy Seal stated in the House of Lords³⁶ that

"North Africa is French territory";

and

"The relationship of the British and United States Commanders is not that of an occupying power toward the local authority of an occupied region".

*Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Secretary of State*³⁷

[WASHINGTON,] January 24, 1944.

I saw Halifax last week and told him quite frankly that it was perfectly true that I had, for over a year, expressed the opinion that Indo-China should not go back to France but that it should be administered by an international trusteeship. France has had the country—thirty million inhabitants for nearly one hundred years, and the people are worse off than they were at the beginning.

As a matter of interest, I am wholeheartedly supported in this view by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek³⁸ and by Marshal Stalin.³⁹ I see no reason to play in with the British Foreign Office in this matter. The only reason they seem to oppose it is that they fear the effect it would have on their own possessions and those of the Dutch. They have never liked the idea of trusteeship because it is, in some instances, aimed at future independence. This is true in the case of Indo-China.

Each case must, of course, stand on its own feet, but the case of Indo-China is perfectly clear. France has milked it for one hundred years. The people of Indo-China are entitled to something better than that.

F[RANKLIN] D. R[OOSEVELT]

³⁶ See *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Lords, 5th series, vol. 126, col. 737.

³⁷ Copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

³⁸ President of the National Government of China and Supreme Allied Commander of the China Theater.

³⁹ Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

851G.01/48

*Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Stettinius) to
President Roosevelt*

[WASHINGTON,] February 17, 1944.

The Civil Affairs Division of the War Department has indicated its desire to proceed at once with civil affairs planning for Indo-China and before doing so has requested political guidance from the State Department.

A number of important decisions depend upon whether French troops are to be used in the military operations to regain control of Indo-China, and whether French nationals are to be used in civil administration and planning. There is ample evidence that the French hope to be consulted and to play a part in driving the Japanese from that area.

Subject to your approval, the State Department will proceed on the assumption that French armed forces will be employed to at least some extent in the military operations, and that in the administration of Indo-China it will be desirable to employ French nationals who have an intimate knowledge of the country and its problems. We would assume further that the use of French forces or civilians would be without prejudice to the question of the ultimate status of French Indo-China and would be related solely to problems directly connected with and flowing from possible military operations.

EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, JR.

851G.01/7-1044

S E C R E T

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

July 10, 1944

FE
Mr. Grew

Subject: Views of the President with
respect to Indochina

On March 27, 1943 President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, the Right Honorable Anthony Eden, British Ambassador Lord Halifax, Mr. Strang of the British Foreign Office, Ambassador Winant, Under Secretary Welles, and Mr. Harry Hopkins held a general conference at the White House. In the course of the discussion the President suggested that trusteeship be set up for Indochina. Mr. Eden indicated that he was favorably impressed with this proposal.

On January 3, 1944 Secretary of State Hull and the British Ambassador Lord Halifax held a conversation at the Department in which the British Ambassador remarked that information had come to him from his Foreign Office that in a conversation with the Turks, Egyptians and perhaps others during his recent trip to the Near East, the President spoke rather definitely about what purported to be his views to the effect that Indochina should be taken away from the French and put under an international trusteeship, etc. The Ambassador said that of course he had heard the President make remarks like this during the past year or more but that the question of whether the President's utterances represent final conclusions

becomes

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

becomes important in view of the fact that it would soon get back to the French, etc. Mr. Hull said that he knew no more about the matter than the Ambassador and had only heard the President make these remarks occasionally just about as the Ambassador had heard him make them. He added that in his judgment, "the President and Mr. Churchill would find it desirable to talk this matter over fully, deliberately and perhaps finally at some future stage."

In a memorandum for the President of January 14 Mr. Hull reported his conversation with the British Ambassador and asked if the President's opinion, previously expressed, that Indochina should be taken away from the French and administered by an international trusteeship, represented his final conclusions on the matter. The Secretary stated that he had informed the British Ambassador that he did not know whether the President had come to any final conclusion on the subject.

On February 17, 1944, in a memorandum for the President from the Under Secretary, on the subject of Civil Affairs problems in Indochina, the statement was made that "Subject to your approval, the State Department will proceed on the assumption that French armed forces will be employed to at least some extent in the military operations, and that in the administration of Indochina it will be desirable to employ French nationals who have an intimate knowledge of the country and its problems." Across the face of the document the President, in reaffirmation of his previously expressed opinion, wrote: "No French help in Indochina ___ country on trusteeship."

On February 25, 1944, in a memorandum to Mr. Dunn, the Under Secretary mentioned the President's reception of the memorandum of February 17 above referred to and stated that the "President expressed the view that no French troops whatever should be used in operations there [Indochina]. He feels the operations should be Anglo-American with international trusteeship following."

[Drafted by K. P. Landon;
initialed by J. W. B.]

S E C R E T

851G.00/8-2644

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

[WASHINGTON,] August 26, 1944.

There is attached herewith a copy of an *aide-mémoire*⁴⁰ left with the Department of State this morning by Lord Halifax in which the latter raises certain questions with regard to the French role in military operations in the Far East, with particular reference to French Indo-China.

The Ambassador stated that the question is of considerable urgency owing to Mr. Eden's desire to give an answer on two definite points before the latter leaves London on Tuesday, August 29. The two specific questions on which Mr. Eden desires to give an affirmative answer are:

(1) The attachment to the South East Asia Command Headquarters of a French Military Mission under General Blaizot, and

⁴⁰Not printed, but for substance, see Secretary Hull's memorandum of October 10, p. 775.

FRANCE

(2) The establishment in India of a "Corps Léger d'Intervention" which apparently has already been established at Algiers.

Although these suggestions are ostensibly military in character, they have wide political implications and for this reason they are being referred to you for decision. If more time is needed for decision we can so inform Lord Halifax.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

851G.014/8-2344

Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Secretary of State

WASHINGTON, August 28, 1944.

In regard to your memorandum of August 26th on the subject of questions raised by Lord Halifax in reference to French Indo-China, I suggest this matter be deferred until after my meeting with the Prime Minister in Quebec.⁴¹

The same thing applies to the *Aide-Mémoire* covering the French Committee's proposals.⁴² It should be remembered that in relation to (IV) participation in the planning of political warfare in the Far East involves one of the principal partners i.e. China.

F[RANKLIN] D. R[OOSEVELT]

851G.00/8-2644

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

[WASHINGTON,] October 10, 1944.

FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN LIBERATION OF INDOCHINA

On August 26, 1944 I sent you a memorandum with a copy of a British *aide-mémoire* dated August 25 stating that the French had requested British approval of:

- (a) Sending a French Military Mission under General Blaizot to be attached to SEAC⁴³ headquarters;
- (b) Sending to India a light intervention force for later use in Indochina;
- (c) Sending, later on, a French expeditionary force to participate in the liberation of Indochina;
- (d) Participation by the French in planning the war against Japan;
- (e) Participation by the French in planning political warfare in the Far East.

⁴¹ Documentation on the Second Quebec Conference, September 11-16, 1944, is scheduled for publication in a subsequent volume of *Foreign Relations*.

⁴² For substance of French proposals, see Secretary Hull's memorandum of October 10, *infra*.

⁴³ South East Asia Cominand.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

The British requested American concurrence on the first two points by August 29. You informed me orally that you planned to discuss the French proposals with the British Prime Minister at Quebec; accordingly no reply has been made to the British *aide-mémoire*.

The Consul at Colombo has reported that on October 4 it was learned from an unimpeachable source that the British plan to bring a French Mission under General Blaizot to SEAC headquarters in the immediate future; that full collaboration is to be given the French Mission which will participate officially in activities of the SEAC; that as American agreement has not been obtained, the Mission will be ostensibly unofficial and will be housed at first in a hotel; that as soon as the concurrence of the Allies is forthcoming it is planned to move the Mission into permanent quarters; and that French parachutists are continuing to be trained by the British in groups of four or five for clandestine activities in Indochina.

As you will recall, the British proposed in their *aide-mémoire* that all details of French political warfare relating to Indochina should be a matter for arrangement between SEAC and the French Military Mission, although, according to the latest information in the Department, Indochina is in the China theater and not in the SEAC theater.

Will you inform me whether the reported sending of this Mission is in accordance with any understanding which may have been reached with Mr. Churchill on the French requests together with an indication of whether you desire the Department to take any action?

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

851G.4S/10-1044

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

[WASHINGTON,] October 13, 1944.

A letter has been received from General Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services, asking the views of the State Department on the following contemplated operations:

"The staff of the Theater Commander for the CBI⁴⁴ theater has under consideration operational plans involving the furnishing of supplies and equipment to resistance groups. It is contemplated that these operations will be under American command although there will be collaboration with the French."

In amplification of the foregoing, it was explained orally that the proposed assistance would be to resistance groups within Indochina; that the proposed collaboration would be with the French Military Mission at Chungking; that such collaboration would not prevent

⁴⁴China, Burma, India.

FRANCE

assistance to all resistance groups whether French or native, but that without such collaboration, it would not be possible effectively to assist resistance groups among the French military forces in Indochina, and that this would result in retarding resistance efforts.

Subject to your approval, the Department will reply to General Donovan that it has no objection to furnishing supplies and equipment to resistance groups, both French and native, actually within Indochina, nor to American collaboration with the French Military Mission at Chungking or other French officers or officials in furtherance of the contemplated operations or any other military operations in Indochina for the defeat of Japan.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

851G.00/10-1644

Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Secretary of State

WASHINGTON, October 16, 1944.

In regard to this Indochina matter, it is my judgment on this date that we should do nothing in regard to resistance groups or in any other way in relation to Indochina. You might bring it up to me a little later when things are a little clearer.

F[RANKLIN] D. R[OSEVELT]

851G.01/11-244

*Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs (Matthews)*⁴⁵

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1944.

According to Ambassador Winant's⁴⁶ recollection, Indochina was dealt with only briefly at the White House conversation on March 27, 1943 and in other conversations with Mr. Eden.⁴⁷ In the March 27 conversation the question of trusteeship was discussed at some length, Mr. Eden advocating the advantages of national rather than international administration. There was considerable inconclusive discussion as to the degree to which governments other than the one having sovereignty or administrative responsibility for a particular area might properly intervene in matters involving the administration of the area or its relations with other areas. Mr. Eden emphasized

⁴⁵ Addressed to the Deputy Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Ballantine) and to the Chief of the Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs (Moffat).

⁴⁶ American Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

⁴⁷ For correspondence regarding the visit of Mr. Eden to Washington, March 12-30, 1943, see *Foreign Relations*, 1943, vol. III, pp. 1 ff.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

the belief that the goal for small colonial areas should be economic, social, and political advancement and an autonomous status rather than independence, which would subject them to both economic and military dangers.

The Ambassador does not recall that the question of restoring Indochina in full sovereignty in France was discussed at the time but expressed the opinion that the French will be highly sensitive about the restoration of all parts of their colonial empire to the *status quo ante* and that the British Government will firmly support the French position in view of its desire for the closest possible relations with France.

H. FREEMAN MATTHEWS

740.0011 P.W./11-244

Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Stettinius) to President Roosevelt

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1944.

INDOCHINA

In order that you may be kept fully informed on developments in relation to Indochina, there has been prepared the memorandum attached hereto.

EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, JR.

[Annex]

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1944.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RELATION TO INDOCHINA

The following are recent developments in relation to Indochina: Colombo⁴⁸ has reported that:

The British staff at headquarters of SEAC has protested to the British Chiefs of Staff in London against the inclusion of Indochina in the theatre under the new United States Army Commanding General in China, urging that Indochina be included in the SEAC theatre.

The French Military Mission, which is large, has arrived in Ceylon and has received American approval and is now recognized openly and officially. Apparently, General Blaizot has not yet arrived. Baron de Langlade who parachuted into Indochina some weeks ago with a letter of introduction from de Gaulle is also in Ceylon. He spent twenty-four hours with French Army officers in Indochina, and stated, upon his return that a basis for a French resistance movement exists

⁴⁸ Seat of the American Consulate in Ceylon.

FRANCE

there, but reportedly declined to say more until Blaizot's arrival. Blaizot, a Lieutenant General, was formerly Chief of Staff in Indochina. He is a "colonial" general.

Although SEAC was advised specifically that only military, and not political, questions might be discussed with the French Mission, political questions are in fact under discussion.

The British SOE⁴⁹ which is actively engaged in undercover operations in Indochina has recently received orders from the Foreign Office that they should have nothing to do with any Annamite or other native organizations in Indochina, but are to devote their efforts to the French.

The OWI⁵⁰ representative at New Delhi has received indication that the British wish OWI activities directed at the native populations in Thailand and Indochina be eliminated so as not to stir up native resistance to the Japanese and so incite the Japanese to send more troops into those areas. Colombo states that it is apparent SOE desires severely to restrict OSS⁵¹ operations in the SEAC theatre and to give SOE preeminence or, failing that, to establish combined SOE-OSS operations.

British propaganda agencies are emphasizing the recent appeal by the French War Ministry for recruits to participate in the campaign for liberation of Indochina on the ground that news of any French military efforts to recover Indochina would encourage the French in Indochina. OWI has so far refrained from mentioning the French appeal or other phases of French preparations for military participation fearing the adverse effect on the native populations in Indochina and elsewhere in the Far East on the restoration of the *status quo ante* which such preparations would appear to imply. OWI has specifically requested State Department guidance on United States policy in this regard, and have been advised to be silent on the subject despite the anticipated British broadcasts.

General Donovan has submitted to the Secretary of State a report from the OSS representative in SEAC reading in part:

"There can be little doubt that the British and Dutch have arrived at an agreement with regard to the future of Southeast Asia, and now it would appear that the French are being brought into the picture. . . .⁵² It would appear that the strategy of the British, Dutch and French is to win back and control Southeast Asia, making the fullest use possible of American resources, but foreclosing the Americans from any voice in policy matters."

⁴⁹ Secret Operations Executive.

⁵⁰ Office of War Information.

⁵¹ Office of Strategic Services.

⁵² Omission indicated in the original memorandum.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

740.0011 P.W./11-344

*Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Under Secretary of State
(Stettinius)*

WASHINGTON, November 3, 1944.

I have yours of November second, enclosing memorandum on recent developments in relation to Indo-China. I wish you would make it clear that:

1. We must not give American approval to any French military mission, as it appears we have done in the first sentence of the first paragraph.

2. Referring to the third paragraph, it must be made clear to all our people in the Far East that they can make no decisions on political questions with the French mission or anyone else.

3. We have made no final decisions on the future of Indo-China. This should be made clear.

4. In the final paragraph it is stated the British and Dutch have arrived at an agreement in regard to the future of Southeast Asia and are about to bring the French into the picture. It should be made clear to all our people that the United States expects to be consulted with regard to any future of Southeast Asia. I have no objection to this being made clear to the British, the Dutch or the French.

F[RANKLIN] D. R[OOSEVELT]

851G.01/11-444 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 4, 1944—1 p. m.

[Received 2:37 p. m.]

316. ReEmbs 279, November 1, 4 [8] p. m.⁵³ Chauvel⁵⁴ remarked yesterday that France is most desirous of participating to the greatest possible extent its capacity permits in the recovery of Indochina (he recalled that little less than a division has been training at two points in North Africa for service in the Pacific). He added that there is a token detachment of a couple of thousand men already in India. Moreover, he said recruiting has been active and training has already commenced in metropolitan France for a French expeditionary force to the Pacific. It is hoped that these forces may eventually amount to two normal divisions. Personnel is to be drawn from the regular army and the FFI;⁵⁵ the whole force is to be under the command of General Blaizot (Corps d'Armée) who recently arrived in India.

⁵³ Not printed.

⁵⁴ Jean Chauvel, of the French Foreign Office.

⁵⁵ Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur.

FRANCE

781

General Blaizot has been instructed to report to Lord Louis Mountbatten.⁵⁹

Adverting to France's primary interest in Indochina, Chauvel made the point that the French Government is interested not only in a French force in India but also would be interested in French units to be included in forces which might strike from the Philippines toward Indochina if such plans were on foot.

CAFFERY

740.0011 P.W./11-2344

The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Under Secretary of State (Stettinius)

WASHINGTON, November 23, 1944.

MY DEAR ED: I send you herewith an *Aide-Mémoire* concerning proposals for the use of the French in pre-operational activities in Indo-China.

This is a matter which Mountbatten and all of us have very much at heart. Until we have the all-clear from your side he cannot effectively carry out sabotage etc. activities which he is satisfied should contribute very considerably to his task.

You will see that the matter is urgent and I would be grateful if you could let us have a very early reply.

V. sin[cerely,]

HALIFAX

[Annex]

The British Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

1. In August last His Majesty's Government invited the concurrence of the United States Government in the following proposals:

(1) The establishment of a French military mission with the South East Asia Command. This would facilitate the work of the Secret Operations Executive and of the Office of Strategic Services and would serve as the nucleus of the operational headquarters which may be required later. The function of the mission would be primarily to deal with matters concerning French Indo China and it would not participate in questions of general strategy. It would, therefore, be much on the same basis as the Dutch and Chinese missions attached to the South East Asia Command.

(2) The establishment in India of a "Corps Léger d'Intervention" composed at the start of 500 men and designed to operate exclusively in Indo China on Japanese lines of communication. The activities of

⁵⁹ Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia Command.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

this body would correspond to those of the American and British Secret Operational organizations and its establishment could be without prejudice to the wider question of from what sources French forces participating in the Far East should be equipped.

(3) French participation in the planning of political warfare in the Far East. This would be a matter for arrangement between the South East Asia Command and the French Military Mission.

2. The United States Chiefs of Staff, from a military point of view concurred with these proposals except that they believe that French participation in the planning of political warfare should be restricted to the area of the South East Asia Command. No further action could be taken by them in this matter as it was understood that the President had expressed the desire first to discuss the question of French Indo China orally with the Prime Minister.

3. The United States Chiefs of Staff took occasion to point out that in their view, French Indo China was part, not of South East Asia Command, but of the China Theatre and was an American sphere of strategic responsibility. They recognised that an oral understanding had been come to between Admiral Mountbatten and the Generalissimo by which both Commanders would be free to attack Thailand and French Indo China, and boundaries between the two Theatres would be decided at an appropriate time in the light of progress made by the two forces.

4. This agreement was recognised by the Generalissimo after *SEXTANT*⁵⁷ as applying to preoperational activities. It has however never been formally confirmed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

5. No further steps could be taken in obtaining the necessary approval by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the proposals outlined in paragraph 1 of this *aide-mémoire* until the President and the Prime Minister had had an opportunity to discuss them. It was anticipated that this discussion would take place at the Quebec Conference, but in fact the subject was never raised. Consequently no further progress has been made in this matter which is becoming increasingly urgent.

6. Admiral Mountbatten is strongly of the opinion that useful and important work on irregular lines could immediately be done in French Indo China. The French Army and Civil Service are unquestionably anxious to take part in the liberation of the country from the Japanese and constitute virtually a well-organised and ready-made *Maquis*.⁵⁸ The secret organisations operating from South East Asia Command have made contact with these elements

⁵⁷ Code word for the Cairo Conference of December, 1943; for correspondence on this Conference, see *Foreign Relations, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*.

⁵⁸ French underground force.

FRANCE

70

and are now in regular communication with them. All that is necessary to exploit the situation is the presence in South East Asia Command of the necessary French personnel from whom alone the French in French Indo China will take the direction necessary to produce the action required.

7. Admiral Mountbatten has pointed out that French Indo China constitutes an area of vital importance to the operation of his Command since it lies on the Japanese land and air reinforcement route to Burma and Malaya. Irregular activities therefore on the lines envisaged in the proposals which are the subject of this *aide-mémoire* are for him a matter of urgency.

8. His Majesty's Government, therefore, earnestly hope that the United States Government will concur as to the desirability and urgency of pushing on with the irregular operations outlined above and will take such action as will make possible the issue of a directive by the Combined Chiefs of Staff (a) confirming the oral understanding already existing between the Generalissimo and Admiral Mountbatten, and (b) approving the program set out in the opening paragraph of this *aide-mémoire*. Such action would in no way prejudice the question of the ultimate settlement of the boundary between the China Theatre and the South East Asia Command, which, by the agreement between Admiral Mountbatten and the Generalissimo, is at present left open, nor the wider question of the participation of regular French armed forces in the Far Eastern War.

WASHINGTON, 22 November, 1944.

851G.01/12-2744

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

[WASHINGTON,] December 27, 1944.

With reference to the British *aide-mémoire* of November 22, requesting approval of the French Military Mission to the Southeast Asia Command and French military participation in the liberation of Indochina, a proposed reply to which was sent to you with a memorandum on December 11,⁵⁹ the British are obviously perturbed about the situation.

On December 8 Lord Halifax called at his request and stressed to me the importance of a prompt reply.⁶⁰

Ambassador Winant has now reported that Mr. Bennett, head of the Far Eastern Department in the British Foreign Office, has expressed his concern that the United States apparently has not yet de-

⁵⁹ Memorandum not printed; proposed reply not found in Department files.

⁶⁰ Memorandum by the Secretary of State of this conversation not printed.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1944, VOLUME III

terminated upon its policy towards Indochina. Mr. Bennett stated that it would be difficult to deny French participation in the liberation of Indochina in light of the increasing strength of the French Government in world affairs, and that unless a policy to be followed toward Indochina is mutually agreed between our two Governments, circumstances may arise at any moment which will place our two Governments in a very awkward situation. Although Mr. Bennett was expressing his personal views only, Mr. Winant stated his belief that the Foreign Office generally shares these views.

In a conversation yesterday Lord Halifax again referred to the importance which his Government attaches to a prompt decision on the questions raised in his *aide-mémoire*.

EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, JR.

EXTRACT FROM STETTINIUS DIARY ¹

Regarding the French saboteurs for Indo-China, to serve under Mourebatten, the President replied to Secretary Stettinius on January 1 (1945):

I still do not want to get mixed up in any Indo-China decision. It is a matter for postwar.--- ... I do not want to get mixed up in any military effort toward the liberation of Indo-China from the Japanese.--- You can tell Halifax that I made this very clear to Mr. Churchill. From both the military and civil point of view, action at this time is premature.

¹Copy in HD.

TOP SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: January 2, 1945

JAN 2 2 1945

SUBJECT: French Indo-China

OFFICE OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JAN 8 1945
DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary
Lord Halifax

OFFICE OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR
JAN 5 1945
MR. GUNN
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

COPIES TO: A-D U Eur, WE & SP

OFFICE OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR
JAN 8 1945
MR. MATTHEWS

*** 1-263

Lord Halifax called upon me today at his request. He inquired if I had anything to tell him relative to the request for French agents to be sent to Indo-China, which Lord Mountbatten had requested. I replied that I had just received a note from the President saying that he could not agree to this step at the present time. The Ambassador expressed his disappointment and said he would report this decision to London immediately.

TOP SECRET

JAN 22 1945

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TOP SECRET

A-D-Dunn

WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

RECEIVED
JAN 9 1945
W. H. DUNN
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

#5905

[Handwritten initials and marks]

DIVISION OF SOUTH AND
PACIFIC AFFAIRS
JAN 13 1945
OFFICE OF FAR
EASTERN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED
JAN 9 1945
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

JAN 2 1945

OFFICE OF
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
JAN 17 1945
DIRECTOR
Department of State

file

The Honorable,
The Secretary of State.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Reference is made to your letter of December 22, 1944, in which you suggest that I may wish to consider whether American participation in certain actions regarding a French Expeditionary Force to participate in the liberation of Indochina and a light intervention force for clandestine operations in Indochina is consistent with the instructions from the President.

note 8519.01

The French have communicated their plans to form two divisions for Far Eastern service to the Combined Chiefs of Staff who are now considering the matter. The U.S. Chiefs of Staff are aware of the President's instructions.

With regard to the report that weekly conversations are being held between representatives of SHAEF's Intelligence Section and representatives of the French General Staff, British SOE and OSS, to discuss Far Eastern affairs, General Eisenhower has been furnished the President's instructions for his guidance in the matter of American participation.

Sincerely yours,

Henry H. Stimson

Secretary of War.

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JAN 11 8 1945
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TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET
Confidential File

140.0011 P.W. 1-243

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

SECRET
INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

GEK-845

Moscow via Army

This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (SECRET)

Dated January 13, 1945

Rec'd 3:30 a.m., 14th

Secretary of State
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
JAN 20 1945
MR. HICKERSON

JAN 6 1945
MMS
W. H. ...

[Handwritten notes and signatures on the right margin]

118, January 13, 4 p.m.

The Russian press has published the information

of any kind on southeast Asia in general and none
specifically since the fall of France. After the
Soviet Japanese non-aggression pact that part of Asia
which fell within the Japanese strategic area was
treated gingerly or was ignored with the obvious
intention of avoiding any possible slight to Japanese
sensibilities. In recent months comment on the Pacific
war has become fuller and has more openly expressed
displeasure with Japanese Pacific ambitions. This
expression is increasingly taking the form of censure
Japanese aggression and expression of the conviction that
Japan is ultimately doomed to failure. (REDEPTEL 290
??? 4, 5 p.m.)

Such material as has appeared since 1934 concernin
southeast Asia and Indo-China has rather consistently
reflected hostility to colonial exploitation and
domination of native peoples by foreign imperialism.

The general

DIVISION OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
SECRET 48
FEB 3 1945

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
FEB 6 1945

CONFIDENTIAL
1-1-1945

851G.01/1-1345

International Information
FEB 1 1945

DIVISION OF JAPANESE AFFAIRS
JAN 30 1945
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF PACIFIC AFFAIRS
JAN 20 1945
OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

APR 1 1945
Re: ...
Dist. ...

SECRET

#118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army

The general line has been that the future of colonial peoples lies in throwing off the yoke of foreign domination and achieving independence within the general framework of Soviet ideas on problems of backward peoples.

An article published in 1936 in a publication called "material on the national colonial problem" states that economic recuperation in Indo-China in the period from 1933 to 1936 was largely illusory and that French imperialism remained weak.

Of more significance was the article written in 1937 in the "large Soviet encyclopedia" which accused French imperialists of seizing communal lands in areas where there had been rebellion and of buying up other land from the peasants for nominal sums thus acquiring ownership of about one quarter of the arable land. The same article characterized the situation of workers as severe and the economic life of the country as being completely under the control of a group of oligarchs tied in with the Indo-China Bank. French imperialism was labelled as being concerned solely with deriving maximum profits and of being active in opposition to the local Communist Party which was responsible for the organization and direction of the anti-Imperialist

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#118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army
movement.

In 1937 an article in "Pacific Ocean" strongly protested against the pro-Fascist administration of Indo-China for its anti-Communist activities and alleged that this activity was designed to assist in the destruction of the Popular Front in France. In 1938 an article in the Communist International entitled "the battle of the Indo-Chinese people for unity and Trotskyist provocation" again alleged that the Popular Front in France was serving the interests of the Indo-Chinese workers as well as the workers of France. The article admitted that the workers of Indo-China were not exactly free but stated that an improvement had taken place under the Popular Front.

In 1939 the emphasis was changed somewhat. Article of February 22 in the Leningrad PRAVDA and one of April 6, 1939 in PRAVDA called attention to the dangers of Japanese aggression. A book called "The Pacific Ocean Nerve Center of the Second Imperialist War" by V. Motylev published in 1940 devoted a chapter to southeast Asia. The material was largely factual but accused the French of appeasement in the face of growing Japanese ambition and asserted that this policy could end only in defeat

SECRET

SECRET

#118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army
for the French. TEUD on March 16, 1940 published a
strong attack on French imperialism picturing the French
Empire as an undeveloped area in which all the profits
were taken by speculators and administrators and where
the native populations were seething with resentment
and rebellion. Because of these conditions the native
troops could hardly be of any real value to France and
hope placed in colored armies was just one more self
illusion in the plan of the French bourgeoisie. An
article in PRAVDA September 24, 1940 interpreted the
Japanese invasion of Indo-China as another step in the
Japanese offensive which could only lead to armed
conflict with the United States and Great Britain.
Two or three other articles in Moscow papers at the
same time followed a similar argument and warned the
British, Americans and Dutch that Indo-China would be
used by the Japanese as a springboard for further
expansion.

A half dozen other articles during the course of
1940 were extremely critical of French colonial policy
pointing out that this policy made the dependant areas
bear a disproportionately large share of the cost of
the war and that general policy had so completely

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#118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army

alienated sympathies of the native populations that the only outcome could be a growth of revolutionary sentiment and a willingness to be at least passive in the face of Japanese aggression.

A monograph by A. A. Guber called "Indonesia, Indo-China" published in 1942 gave the same economic interpretation of southeast Asia as had been followed in earlier material. It was stated that the betrayal of the interest of the French people in the war against Fascism was to some extent due to the personal interest of such individuals as Laval, these same people being responsible for the quick agreement with Japan when Japanese demands were presented. In contrast to the Vichy attitude the underground Communist Party had done its best to arouse the resistance of the masses and explain to them the consequences which would follow from Japanese occupation. One interesting section of this monograph contrasted French rule in Indo-China with that of the United States in the Philippine Islands. It was stated that the enlightened and liberal policy of the United States had resulted in a vast improvement in the economic, social and cultural conditions of the Filipinos to a point where their standard of living was higher than that of any other part of the entire area. Filipinos with

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-6- #118, January 13, 4 p.m.; from Moscow via Army
reason, had faith in American promises for their
eventual independence. That this policy was the correct
one was demonstrated by the heroic resistance of Filipinos
to the Japanese aggression.

Since that time the only reference to southeast
Asia noted has been in an article in the publication
World Economy and World Politics written in the fall
of 1944 by Eidus, a Soviet publicist who frequently
writes and lectures on Japan. He states that Japanese
success in the area has been at least partially due
to dissatisfaction of the native peoples with the colonial
system. He adds, however, that the natives are now
becoming aware that Japanese exploitation has been shown
to be the worst of all.

About a year and a half ago the Free French representa-
tion in Moscow, on its weekly radio broadcast from
Moscow was permitted to report a press release from
Algiers concerning the future of France in Indo-China.
This broadcast stated categorically that Indo-China
would be reintegrated into the French Empire and that
the French Committee of National Liberation realizing
the earlier mistakes of French colonial policy was
working on plans for the rejuvenation and liberalization
of the native economy and future political education

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#118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army
of the Indo-Chinese so that they could eventually play
an autonomous role within a broader and more general
French imperial framework to arise out of the war.

The above exhausts the direct indications of Soviet
thinking on this topic available to the Embassy and it
is obvious that they are decidedly scanty. Further
deductions can be drawn only from our general knowledge
of Soviet policies and methods in the field of foreign
affairs. Combining these deductions with the indications
contained in the material above I consider that the
following general conclusions may be put forward with
a reasonable measure of assurance:

(A) It has been made evident in recent expressions
of Soviet opinion on questions of international security
that the Soviet Government considers itself, in its
capacity as one of the great powers of the Asiatic
Continent interested from the standpoint of security
in every country on the Asiatic mainland. This interest naturally
varies in intensity according to the proximity of the
country concerned to Russia and it is clear that for
the war period at least the Russians are willing to
restrict their interest in India and southeastern Asia
to a minimum.

(B) In line with the above it will be.

SECRET

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118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army

Soviet long term policy to endeavor to exert the maximum degree of influence with the minimum degree of responsibility in every area of the Asiatic Continent. This indicates extensive use of the technique of penetration in all its shades and variations but the farther the respective area lies from Russian borders the less will the Soviet Government be inclined to sacrifice for these purposes. This policy should not be confused with the conception of "communizing" or forcing Soviet forms on persons in that area. There is no indication that the Soviets would have any particular interest in anything of that sort at the present juncture.

(C) For the duration of the war in the Pacific and unless other foreign influences intervene Soviet influence in Indo-China will probably be directed toward the undermining and elimination of Japanese power. The question of French imperialism will probably be soft-pedalled since an overemphasis along that line might tend to confuse and obstruct the immediate objective which is the disruption of Japanese power.

(D) The character of Soviet policy toward French Indo-China will probably always be strongly affected

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#118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army
by the strength of the Russian position in China. To
the extent that Russia is successful in bringing about
the establishment ??? southern China, of political
authority subservient to Soviet influence she will be
active and insistent in her efforts to discredit and
eliminate any internal elements in French Indo-China
not amenable to Russian influence and any unwelcome
foreign penetration in that area. If she encounters
heavy sladding in China a different policy may be
indicated. The Kremlin always charges what the traffic
will bear.

(E) The Soviet attitude toward the maintenance
of the French position in Indo-China after the war
may be influenced by a General Soviet tendency to
discourage further expansion of western military, naval
and air power on the Asiatic mainland. If it appears
that the disruption of French power would create a
vacuum which could be filled by a western power stronger
than France the Soviets might be inclined to support
the maintenance of French administration, provisionally
and temporarily as the less dangerous alternative. In
any case, Russia should not be expected to consent
cheerfully and without compensation to any further
establishment of western military and naval power in

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... 118, January 13, 4 p.m., from Moscow via Army
that area. If Russia accepts such a development she
will do so only grudgingly, in return for a handsome
quid pro quo, or in deference to unanswerable force.

HARRISMAN

LB

NFL

Garbled portions serviced:

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

740.0011 P.W./2-645: Telegram

The Ambassador in China (Hurley) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, February 6, 1945—2 p. m.

[Received 2: 25 p. m.]

177. ReEmbs 116, January 26, 3 p. m.⁸ (1) Following is substance of

⁸Not printed.

interview of February 2 between French Military Attaché and General Wedemeyer,⁹ which latter has authorized me to report to State

⁹Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Commanding General of United States Forces, China Theater.

Department: Japanese are now assuming a more exacting and arrogant role in Indochina where they are concentrating stronger forces. Should they demand that French troops disarm and disband, those who can will disperse into hills where they will continue to conduct underground and guerilla activities, but some units may be compelled to retire to Yunnan. In such event, they would urgently require medical and communications equipment. He expressed special concern over the attitude of the Chinese toward those troops who might be forced over the frontier into China and suggested that a competent member of the French mission now with General Ulatratten be despatched to Chungking as liaison officer at American headquarters here.

(2) Consonant with standing instructions from War and State Departments, General Wedemeyer reports he has maintained non-committal policy vis-à-vis Indochina. In this particular instance he states he informed French Military Attaché that situation latter described was probably well known to leaders of French and American Governments and that it would have to be dealt with by competent higher authorities. This Embassy has consistently advised the French here that policy on Indochina must originate in Washington and Paris, not in Chungking. Wedemeyer states that French are voluntarily furnishing valuable information to his headquarters and 14th Air Force and would like this to be continued.

CONFIDENTIAL HURLEY

TOP SECRET

YALTA CONFERENCE

Extract from Memorandum of Conversation
between President Roosevelt and
Marshal Stalin, Livadia Palace,
February 8, 1945, 3:45 p.m.¹

THE PRESIDENT then said he also had in mind a trusteeship for Indochina. He added that the British did not approve of this idea as they wished to give it back to the French since they feared the implications of a trusteeship as it might affect Burma.

MARSHAL STALIN remarked that the British had lost Burma once through reliance on Indochina, and it was not his opinion that Britain was a sure country to protect this area. He added that he thought Indochina was a very important area.

THE PRESIDENT said that the Indochinese were people of small stature, like the Javanese and Burmese, and were not warlike. He added that France had done nothing to improve the natives since she had the colony. He said that General de Gaulle had asked for ships to transport French forces to Indochina.

MARSHAL STALIN inquired where de Gaulle was going to get the troops.

THE PRESIDENT replied that de Gaulle said he was going to find the troops when the President could find the ships, but the President added that up to the present he had been unable to find the ships.

¹"Handbook of Far Eastern Conference Discussions" (Historical Division Research Project No. 62, November 1949), pp. E24-E25, top secret.

TOP SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

February 14, 1945

Mr. Culbertson
Mr. Hickerson
Mr. Dunn

MR. HICKERSON
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

With reference to the attached despatch from Chungking, I fear that there is a lump in the General's mashed potatoes. I gather that he speaks his mind to the representatives of the "imperialistic powers" and then announces that he is not responsible for our policy. All in all it strikes me as a rather extraordinary performance.

The attached note from the French is also an extraordinary document for one Embassy to deliver to another.

ROUTING SLIP
A-D
MAR 8 1945
MR. DUNN
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF SOUTHWEST
PACIFIC AFFAIRS
FEB 28 1945
OFFICE OF FAR
EASTERN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JWS

WE: JCHBonbright:BS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Chungking, China
January 31, 1945

CONFIDENTIAL
TOP SECRET

DIVISION OF CHINESE AFFAIRS
FEB 29 1945
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

No. 111

Subject: Position of French Provisional Government
in regard to Indochina.

CONFIDENTIAL
TO
BY memo from
H.D. Muenchinger
RM 18
BY
see FW-711.00/3-1545

6/19/53
FEB 14 1945
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RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
5

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Mr. Achilles Clarac, Counselor of the French Embassy, called on Counselor Acheson on January 26, 1945 and handed him the enclosed "note" in French with English translation which he requested be forwarded to the American Government. The note appears to be self-explanatory. Mr. Acheson made no comment to Mr. Clarac in regard to its contents.

I am forwarding the note without taking any other action pending instructions from the Department in regard to policy toward Indochina. So far as I am personally concerned, I have let the diplomatic representatives of the so-called imperialistic governments with interests in southeast Asia know that I am personally opposed to imperialism but that I am not making the policy of the United States on that subject. I have remarked to them that the United States is committed to the proposition that governments should derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. I have said that I personally adhere to the principles of the Atlantic Charter which provides that we shall "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live". I have commented that French imperialism and French monopolies in Indochina seem to me to be in conflict with these principles. However, I have emphasized, as indicated above, that I am personally not making the policy of my Government. I have accordingly suggested to the French that they should look to Washington and Paris and not to us here for clarification of America's policy in regard to Indochina.

In connection with my opinion on this subject I refer also to the speeches made early in the war by Prime Minister Churchill, Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt which indicate clearly the principles of liberty for which we are fighting. These principles are also set out definitely in the Atlantic Charter.

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CONFIDENTIAL

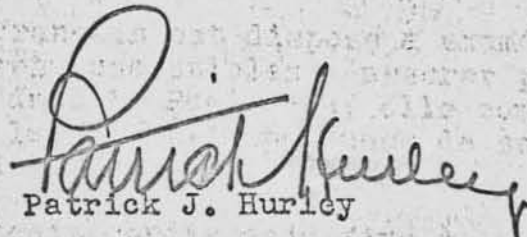
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AIR MAIL

CONFIDENTIAL

One aspect of the maneuvers in China of the imperialistic powers which has struck me since the beginning of my sojourn here is the assistance rendered to them (especially to the British) by American lend lease. The British intelligence and other agencies in China are supplied by air in lend lease planes. General A. Carton de Wiart, Personal Representative of Mr. Churchill and head of most of the widespread British intelligence system in China, has a personal American lend lease plane. It has been my observation that British agents here are opposed--some of them frankly so--to our policy of working for a strong, united and democratic China. China is not, of course, the only part of the world in which American lend lease has been used, is being used and will be used for the purpose of defeating the principles for which we profess to be fighting this war. I do not blame the British or other lend lease beneficiary governments for employing lend lease or other aid to attain their ends. I feel that it is at least in part our fault that they are able so to do. From my observations in China I am of the opinion that responsibility for this situation rests in considerable measure upon ourselves for failure to implement concretely the policy to which we are committed. The apparent continuing lack of affirmative American policy on the question of the future status of Indochina will eventually result in a vitiation of what I understand to be among the fundamentals of our war aims insofar as that country is concerned.

Respectfully yours,


Patrick J. Hurley

Enclosure:
As stated.

att. given

Original to the Department

PJH:rcb

(Enclosure to Despatch No. 111, dated January 31, 1945,
from the American Embassy, Chungking, China.)

GOVERNEMENT PROVISOIRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE
AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN CHINE

No.

Tchongking, le 20th January 1945

Confidential

N O T E

The political position taken by the Provisional Government of the French Republic regarding Indochina is plain. A few sentences will be sufficient to make it clear.

First, France cannot admit any discussion about the principle of her establishment in Indochina. Her presence founded on agreements consistent with international law and established on the immense task carried out by her for the sake of the Indochinese population has never been disputed by any Power. The occupation of Indochina by the Japanese has not changed anything in that state of things. This occupation is nothing but a war incident similar to the invasion by the Japanese forces of Malaya, of the Netherlands East Indies and Burma. The activity of the underground movement, the formation of the expeditionary forces that we are ready to send to the Far East, are a clear proof of the energy with which France intends to take part in the liberation of those of her territories that have been momentarily torn away from her by the enemy.

This being clear, the French Government are prepared to consider with its allies all the measures that may be taken to insure security and peace for the future in the Pacific area; it expects that its participation in those measures will be the one it is entitled to get owing to the importance of French interests in the Far East.

Furthermore, the French Government has already fixed at the Brazzaville conference the principles of the policy it means to follow in its overseas possessions. Accordingly it will set up together with the populations concerned the status of Indochina on a basis that will secure for the Union a satisfactory autonomy within the frame of the French Empire. Besides, Indochina will be granted an economic regime that will enable her to profit widely by the advantages of international competition. Such decisions, having no international character, come within the competence of the French Government only. Thoroughly aware of the importance of the principles at stake in the present war, France will not shrink from her responsibilities.

For the time being, however, France's concern in the Far East is mainly military. As early as June 1943, the French Committee of National Liberation made it known to its allies that it considered that zone as one where it would be extremely desirable for all the interested parties to set up a thorough military collaboration. On the 4th of October 1943, it decided to form an Expeditionary Force that would take part in western Pacific operations and in the liberation of Indochina. In the meanwhile the French Government has established in Indochina itself a network of connections with the French and Indochinese underground. By this action, the efficacy of which has been proved by the French Forces of the Interior in France, it will support the assault of the forces attacking from without and help them in their task in a way that can be decisive.

The French Government has informed Washington and London of all the measures it has taken in that respect. It asked several times that the Expeditionary Forces should be sent on the spot and used to the best; but the answer was that the decision belonged to President Roosevelt and the Combined Chiefs of Staff. This agreement has not yet been given. Yet, the French Government is prepared to have its expeditionary forces used on the American as well as on the British theatre of operations. Considering therefore the part France is entitled to ask and ready to take in the military operations in the Pacific, it would be advisable that she should be admitted to the Pacific War Council and particularly to the Sub-Committee responsible for the operations involving French Indochina./.

740.0011 PW/3-1345: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 13, 1945—7 p. m.
[Received March 14—1:23 p. m.]

1196. General de Gaulle¹² asked me to come to see him at 6. He

¹² Gen. Charles de Gaulle, Head of the Provisional French Government.

spoke in very quiet, affable, friendly fashion, but this is what he said: "We have received word that our troops still fighting in Indochina have appealed for aid to your military authorities in China and the British military authorities in Burma. We have received word that they replied that under instructions no aid could be sent.["] They were given to understand that the British simply followed our lead.

He said also that several expeditionary forces for Indochina had been prepared: Some troops were in North Africa, some in southern France and some in Madagascar, and the British had promised to transport them but at the last minute they were given to understand that owing to American insistence they could not transport them. He observed: "This worries me a great deal for obvious reasons and it comes at a particularly inopportune time. As I told Mr. Hopkins¹³

¹³ Harry L. Hopkins, Special Assistant to President Roosevelt.

when he was here, we do not understand your policy. What are you driving at? Do you want us to become, for example, one of the federated states under the Russian aegis? The Russians are advancing apace as you well know. When Germany falls they will be upon us. If the public here comes to realize that you are against us in Indochina there will be terrific disappointment and nobody knows to what that will lead. We do not want to become Communist; we do not want to fall into the Russian orbit, but I hope that you do not push us into it."

He then went on to say that difficulties were being created too in regard to the promised armament—difficulties he could not understand unless that were part of our policy too. I told him I had been given to understand that the armament was arriving here as promised.

In any event, I said, I would telegraph at once to Washington all that he had said.

CAFFERY

S E C R E T

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington

March 16, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Indo-China.

Communications have been received from the Provisional Government of the French Republic asking for:

- (1) Assistance for the resistance groups now fighting the Japanese in Indo-China.
- (2) Conclusion of a civil affairs agreement covering possible future operations in Indo-China.

These memoranda have been referred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in order to obtain their views concerning the military aspects of the problems, and I shall communicate with you further on the subject upon receipt of the Joint Chiefs' reply.

Attached herewith is the text of a recent telegram from Ambassador Caffery describing his conversation with General de Gaulle on the subject of Indo-China. From this telegram and de Gaulle's speech of March 14, it appears that this Government may be made to appear responsible for the weakness of the resistance to Japan in Indo-China. The British may likewise be expected to encourage this view. It seems to me that without prejudicing in any way our position regarding the future of Indo-China we can combat this trend by making public our desire to render such assistance as may be warranted by the circumstances and by the plans to which we are already committed in the Pacific area. To this end I attach a draft of a suggested statement for publication, subject to your approval, by the State Department.

/s/ E. R. Stettinius, Jr.

Enclosures:

1. Proposed Statement.
2. Copy of telegram
from Ambassador Caffery, [not included here].

S E C R E T

PROPOSED STATEMENT

The action of the Japanese Government in tearing away the veil with which it for so long attempted to cloak its domination of Indo-China is a direct consequence of the ever-mounting pressure which our arms are applying to the Japanese Empire. It is a link in the chain of events which began so disastrously in the summer of 1941 with the Franco-Japanese agreement for the "common defense" of Indo-China. It is clear that this latest step in the Japanese program will in the long run prove to be of no avail.

The Provisional Government of the French Republic has requested armed assistance for those who are resisting the Japanese forces in Indo-China. In accordance with its constant desire to aid all those who are willing to take up arms against our common enemies, this Government will do all it can to be of assistance in the present situation, consistent with plans to which it is already committed and with the operations now taking place in the Pacific. It goes without saying that all this country's available resources are being devoted to the defeat of our enemies and they will continue to be employed in the manner best calculated to hasten their downfall.

851G.00/3-1745

S E C R E T

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

March 17, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR

The Secretary of State

By direction of the President, there is returned herewith Secretary of State Memorandum of 16 March, subject Indo-China, which includes a proposed statement on the Japanese action in Indo-China.

The President is of the opinion that it is inadvisable at the present time to issue the proposed statement.

/s/ William D. Leahy

S E C R E T

740.0011 P.W./3-1945

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State
(Dunn)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 19, 1945.

Yesterday afternoon (Sunday) about six o'clock the French Ambassador called me by telephone and asked whether he could come to see me. I immediately offered to go to the Embassy, which he accepted. When I arrived there he informed me that under instructions from his Government, Admiral Fenard was taking up with Admiral Leahy¹⁶ the following matter.

¹⁶ Adm. William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy.

He said the Fourteenth Air Force of the United States forces in China had planes loaded and all ready to transport supplies and munitions to units of the French forces in Indo-China which were resisting the imposition of total control over Indo-China by the Japanese, this imposition having been recently inaugurated by the Japanese forces in Indo-China. He said the French Government had direct reports from the resistance forces in Indo-China to the effect that if they were granted assistance they would be able to make a very good showing against the Japanese effort to take over the whole country. He said that his Government requested that authorization be given by the United States Chiefs of Staff to send these supplies forward to the French; that Admiral Fenard was making this request of Admiral Leahy and he asked the State Department to make a similar request of the President for authorization for United States assistance to these resistance forces.

Mr. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, telephoned me this morning to say that Admiral Fenard had made the above request to Admiral Leahy and that Admiral Leahy had authorized the War Department to send a message to General Wedemeyer giving him authority to send whatever assistance could be spared without interfering with the war effort of the American and Chinese forces. Mr. McCloy said he would send me a copy of the authorization which was being sent to General Wedemeyer, for our information. I am asking Mr. Bohlen¹⁷ to discuss this matter a little further with Ad-

¹⁷ Charles E. Bohlen, Assistant to the Secretary of State.

miral Leahy as it has occurred to me that it might be well for this Department to be in a position to inform the French Ambassador here of the action which has been taken in response to his request and also to inform Ambassador Caffery in Paris in order that he may know the latest developments in this situation.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN



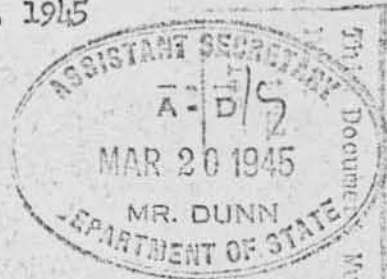
TOP SECRET

THE STATE-WAR-NAVY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

WE
Mr Bonbright

March 20, 1945

A-D
Mr. Dunn,



The attached memorandum and enclosure,
dated March 19, regarding Indo-China is
transmitted for your information.

R.E.C.
R.E.C.

851G.00/3-2045

DO'R
App'd <u>4</u>
Rev _____
Cat _____

cc: Mr. Dooman
Mr. Bonbright

A-D-SWNC:RECOx:djf

JUN 29 1954

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By Authority of A.C. of S. CPD
3/19/45 (RRS)

PARAPHRASE MESSAGE TO CHENNAULT FROM WEDEMEYER
(19 March 1945)

Fourteenth Air Force is reported by Admiral Fenard to be ready to aid French resistance, but must first receive permission from Washington. The U. S. Government's present attitude, according to informal statement, is to aid French, providing such assistance does not interfere with operations now planned. Further details will follow, but for the present, within the limitations imposed by above policy, operations against the Japanese in Indo-China to aid the French may be undertaken by the Fourteenth Air Force.

Cleared by Col. McCormack (MIS)

TOP SECRET

740.0071 PW/3-1245

The Secretary of State to the French Ambassador (Bonnet)

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the French Republic and acknowledges the receipt of the Embassy's note No. 303 of March 12, 1945 on the matter of the Japanese occupation of French Indo-China.

The Government of the United States has given most careful and sympathetic consideration to the subject matter of the communication of the Provisional Government of the French Republic. It has also given consideration to all available information in regard to recent events in Indo-China. The deep concern of the Provisional Government in regard to the situation is fully appreciated.

With regard to the request that the Government of the United States intervene with the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the end that Allied Forces in the Far East will furnish immediate assistance to the French resistance in Indo-China, it is noted that this subject is already before the Combined Chiefs of Staff in the form of a letter from General de St. Didier and there accordingly appears to be no reason for further presentation of the matter to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Government of the United States at this time.

With regard to the suggestion that the American Air Forces and troops based in China intervene in favor of the French Forces in Indo-China, the Secretary of State is glad to confirm the information given the Ambassador orally some days ago that the American Air Forces in China have already assisted the French Forces in Indo-China and have been authorized for the present, in aid of the French, to undertake operations against the Japanese in Indo-China, provided such action does not interfere with operations planned elsewhere. The resources of the Allied Forces in the Far East in men, munitions, and transportation must be concentrated on and employed in attaining our main objectives, and the Ambassador will therefore readily appreciate that no commitment can be given with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which may be provided. However, in appreciation of the importance and urgency which the French Provisional Government attaches to this question, immediate steps are being taken to ascertain whether any further assistance can be given from the China Theater to the resistance groups in Indo-China without jeopardizing the over-all war effort in other areas. The Secretary of State will be happy to keep the Ambassador informed of any further developments in that regard.

WASHINGTON, April 4, 1945.