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Authority

NND 959000

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
March 4, 1965

THE SECRETARY

APB

~~I believe~~ You have
expressed interest in the
subject of the attached
memorandum.

BHR (AR)
Benjamin H. Read

Attachment.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

CATEGORY "A"

Completely de-sensitized March 4, 1965
Transferred to O/FADRC
by S/S-I date 2/12/74 (references attached)

Subject: Threat of the Use of Nuclear Weapons
Against China in Korean War

We can find no documentary support in such specific terms of President Eisenhower's statement to the President that he had sent a message to Nehru in 1953 warning that we would use nuclear weapons against China if the Korean war continued, and that he believed this warning played a decisive part in terminating the Korean war. (attached) We have, however, found messages which indicate that certain signals were passed both to Nehru and to Molotov which could conceivably have been so interpreted.

On May 21, 1953, Secretary Dulles, then in New Delhi, told Nehru that if the Korean armistice negotiations collapsed "US would probably make stronger, rather than lesser, military exertion and that this might well extend area conflict (I [Secretary Dulles] assumed this would be relayed to Chinese)." (New Delhi 4237, 5/22/53).

In reporting a conversation with Nehru on the following day, May 22, Secretary Dulles said Nehru raised the Korean armistice question "referring particularly to my statement of the preceding day, that if no armistice occurred hostilities might become more intense. He said if this happened it is difficult to know what end might be." Later in the conversation, Secretary Dulles reported, "He (Nehru) brought up again my reference to intensified operations, but I made no comment and allowed the topic to drop." (Karachi 1772, 5/22/53)

On May 27, 1953, Ambassador Bohlen was instructed to discuss the Korean armistice proposals with Molotov (Deptel 860 to Moscow): "While avoiding indication of threat, point

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out to Molotov that rejection these proposals and consequent failure reach agreement in armistice talks would create a situation which US Government seeking most earnestly to avoid." Bohlen met with Molotov on May 28 for this discussion (Moscow 1650, 5/28/53). Bohlen reported that he told Molotov that rejection by the North Koreans and Chinese of our armistice proposals "would extinguish hopes for an armistice and a failure of the present armistice talks would lead to the creation of a situation which the US Government was most sincerely and earnestly attempting to avoid." Bohlen reported that Molotov listened with great attention and seriousness and refrained from any sort of propaganda statement or any attempt to defend or support the Communist position.

On June 3, 1953, Molotov asked Bohlen to call and made the following obviously memorized oral statement:

"The Soviet Government has taken note of the information you gave to me on May 28, concerning the armistice talks at Panmunjom; as you know the outcome of these talks does not depend on us but it has been noted with satisfaction that the path to the successful conclusion of these armistice talks has been mapped out."

Bohlen expressed appreciation for the statement, saying that if it meant an armistice in Korea it was good news, to which Molotov made no comment. (Moscow 1668, 6/3/53)

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