

SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED REGARDING POSSIBLE  
U.S. USE OF THE ATOMIC BOMB TO COUNTER CHINESE  
COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN KOREA

An NSC paper on the use of the atomic bomb (NSC 30) contains the following conclusions which were approved on September 16, 1948:

"12. It is recognized that, in the event of hostilities, the National Military Establishment must be ready to utilize promptly and effectively all appropriate means available, including atomic weapons, in the interest of national security and must therefore plan accordingly.

"13. The decision as to the employment of atomic weapons in the event of war is to be made by the Chief Executive when he considers such decision to be required."

Questions relating to the possible use of the atomic bomb to counter Chinese communist aggression in Korea divide themselves into two categories: use for tactical purposes in Korea, and use for strategic purposes in Manchuria. These questions are set forth below:

Use for tactical purposes in Korea

1. Would use of the A-bomb for tactical purposes in Korea cause further Chinese Communist participation in the conflict, diminish participation, or end participation?

2. Would

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2. Would its use increase or decrease the possibility of U.S.S.R. entrance into the conflict?
3. What are appropriate tactical targets in Korea? Are there any strategic targets there?
4. Could many A-bombs be profitably used?
5. Would targets have to be created by U.N. maneuvers?
6. Would our troops suffer A-bomb effects?
7. Can we be reasonably certain the A-bomb would prove effective?
8. Could it be militarily decisive?
9. Would it cause extensive destruction of civilian life?
10. What would be the effect of its use on public opinion in the United States, in allied countries, in Asia?
11. Should we obtain U.N. concurrence before using it?

Use for strategic purposes in Manchuria

1. Would use of the A-bomb for these purposes cause further Chinese Communist participation in the conflict, diminish participation, or end participation?
2. Would its use increase or decrease the possibility of U.S.S.R. entrance into the conflict?
3. What are appropriate targets there?
4. Could many bombs be profitably used?
5. In view of our limited supply, could we afford its use in Manchuria? Should it be used initially or only after conventional bomb attacks have proved ineffective?

6. Can we

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6. Can we be reasonably certain it would prove effective?
7. Could it be militarily decisive?
8. Would there be extensive destruction of civilian life?
9. Would it be possible to warn civilians by announcing that during a certain period of time certain unnamed cities in an announced list would be bombed?
10. Would the A-bombs be dropped by day or by night?
11. What would be the effect of its use on public opinion in the United States, in allied countries, in Asia?
12. Should we obtain U.N. concurrence before using it?

*If the USSR reacts, are we ready and what more would we want to do before acting?*

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