

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

October 13, 1958

*President has noted B.*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: New York Times Article of October 7, 1958 (Jack Raymond Interview with General Partridge) (Tab A)

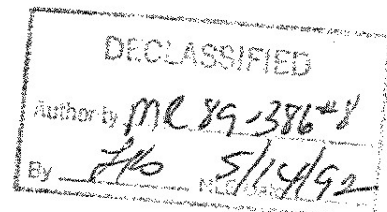
At my request, General White and General Partridge called on me this morning to discuss the above subject. In brief, the facts appear to be:

(1) Insofar as the Raymond article quoted General Partridge, the quotation was substantially correct. The portion of the article which "noted" that General Partridge was the only commander to whom authority to expend had been delegated was a Raymond interpolation.

(2) In the issue of U.S. News & World Report of September 6, 1957, there was an interview with General Partridge which was cleared by Defense and the three Services, by the Atomic Energy Commission and by the State Department on the strength of Canada's approval. The pertinent portion is extracted as Tab B.

(3) In briefing visitors, personnel at CONAD Headquarters have used substantially the U.S. News & World Report quotation. In addition, press visitors have been handed an information sheet which provided much of the background for the Raymond article. The information sheet deals briefly with the responsibilities of division commanders if the continent is attacked but contains no reference to the authority of CINCONAD or any other commander to fire atomic weapons.

(4) On September 8, 1958, a joint State-USIA-Defense circular message relating to the Far East situation was sent out over Secretary Dulles' name (Tab C) to all interested agencies. Paragraph 7 of this circular is pertinent and contains the sentence: "No questions, hypothetical or otherwise, will be answered regarding use nuclear weapons or authority use them, in view fact that Afro-Asian opinion is particularly



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sensitive on question nuclear weapons." This message was repeated to CINCONAD for information. Because it was in the context of overseas deployments and sensitivities, it was not interpreted by CINCONAD as applicable to the Continental Defense situation and, therefore, as countermanding the previously approved U.S. News & World Report material.



(5) General Partridge expressed sincere regret about the incident and a desire to follow instructions as received.

My conclusions and proposed actions are as follows:

(1) The instructions as issued were not made clearly applicable to the continental defense situation and, after consideration, CINCONAD did not interpret them as withdrawing the permission to use material already cleared.

(2) The Defense Department must tighten up its command channels in matters of this kind. In the future such instructions will be issued in the name of the Secretary of Defense, (rather than relying, for example, on a circular signed by the Secretary of State), and will be issued through the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Military Department Secretaries, as appropriate. (The new command structure through JCS rather than executive agency is effective for CINCONAD January 1, 1959.)

(3) CINCONAD will forward through channels for review the fact sheet currently in use as a press handout.

(4) Under date of October 7, 1958, JCS sent to all Unified and Specified Commanders Message No. 949237 (Tab D) calling attention to paragraph 7 of the September 8 circular.

In addition to the discussion of this matter with General White and General Partridge, I have discussed it with Mr. Douglas, General Twining, General Counsel Dechert, and Assistant Secretary Snyder in emphasis of the above.

For answer to inquiry, the Department of Defense position, which was cleared with State, has been transmitted to CINCINORAD, as follows:

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As is well known, NORAD is equipped with atomic capable weapons for use in the defense of this country and Canada against bomber attack. The law vests the control of these weapons in the President. Obviously, for security reasons, we do not discuss in what manner the President may exercise this control.

We are expediting preparation of more detailed guidance for Defense Department personnel to cover a variety of specific questions that may be received on various aspects of this matter.

Attachments

Donald A. Quarles





ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

October 10, 1958

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR BRIG. GEN. A. J. GOODPASTER  
The White House

SUBJECT: General Partridge interview in U. S. News  
& World Report

In its issue of September 6, 1957, the above mentioned publication contained an interview with General Partridge, in the course of which the following questions and answers appeared:

Q. As things stand now, do you have to get the President's permission before using one of these atomic rockets?

A. Yes. However, the President has given his approval to use, without reference to anybody, any weapon at our disposal if there is a hostile aircraft in the system.

Q. You don't have to wire Washington?

A. No. We probably would be on the phone talking to people when the thing went off.

Q. It would be too late --

A. That's right. Colonel Shoup sits there and he has full authority to run the system. It is a tremendous responsibility. I am on call all the time, regardless of whether I am in the air or on the ground - they know where to find me.

The above interview was cleared not only by the Office of Security Review, OSD, and by the three Services but also by the Atomic Energy Commission (which made deletions elsewhere in the text), and the Government of Canada. The State Department agreed to it on the strength of Canada's approval.

*Chauncey Robbins*  
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Deputy Assistant Secretary

