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36. The JCS learn that Secretary of Defense plans to forward their 11 August memorandum to Secretary of State so a new memorandum is drafted which makes changes to certain "overly optimistic" statements with respect to "promises of success offered by the Navarre Concept." See documents numbered 13, 35, and 37 also. JCS Memorandum for Secretary of Defense, 28 August 1953..... 138



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

28 August 1953

13 AUG 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: The Navarre Concept for Operations
in Indochina.

1. In a memorandum for you, dated 11 August 1953, subject: "The Navarre Concept for Operations in Indochina," the Joint Chiefs of Staff commented on the Navarre concept and its "promise of success". It is understood that the Secretary of Defense contemplates sending a copy of the reference memorandum to the Secretary of State in the immediate future under cover of a memorandum (Enclosure) which was passed informally to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, for comment by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. Though the Joint Chiefs of Staff remain in general agreement with the memorandum of 11 August, it is believed that certain changes therein are appropriate prior to forwarding it to the Secretary of State. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider the second sentence of paragraph 3 to be overly optimistic with respect to the "promise of success" offered by the Navarre concept. Though vigorous military prosecution in Indochina and political support of the Navarre concept in France are fundamental, it is believed a basic requirement for military success in Indochina is one of creating a political climate in that country which will provide the incentive for natives to wholeheartedly support the French and supply them with adequate intelligence vital to the successful conduct of military operations in that country.

3. In furtherance of the O'Daniel Mission the Joint Chiefs of Staff are receiving Progress Reports from Indochina. A report dated 24 August 1953 states that the French are not in fact pursuing agreements reached between General O'Daniel and General Navarre (including the Navarre concept) as vigorously as expected by General O'Daniel and contemplated by him in his report. Specifically, General Trapnell, in his 24 August Progress Report, states that (a) the French have "no plans for a general fall offensive beyond limited objective

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operations designed to keep the enemy off balance", (b) re-organization into regiments and division-size units "is still in the planning stages", (c) there is "no sense of urgency in the training of senior Vietnamese commanders and staff officers", (d) the organization of a training command is awaiting the solution of "political problems" and (e) the "organization of the amphibious command has not gone beyond the planning stages".

4. In order to accurately present current views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of State, it is suggested that a new memorandum dated 26 August 1953, which is being forwarded separately and which reflects the views expressed in the above paragraphs, be substituted for the memorandum of 11 August as an enclosure to your proposed memorandum to the Secretary of State. In addition, in order to point out more clearly that military success in Indochina is dependent upon the manner in which operations are conducted, it is recommended that the last paragraph of the draft letter to the Secretary of State (Enclosure) be changed as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"There is attached for your information a memorandum to me from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dated ~~11-August-1953~~ 26 August 1953, which ~~stated~~ states that the present Navarre concept appears to correct the previously indicated weaknesses and from their viewpoint presents a marked improvement in French military thinking concerning operations in Indochina. Of course, the actual success of the operations in Indochina will be dependent upon the aggressiveness and skill with which the French and Vietnamese forces conduct their future operations. ~~Nevertheless,~~ Nevertheless, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe, as do I, that the necessary support should be provided to permit full and vigorous implementation of the Navarre concept, conditioned upon continued implementation of French support, demonstration of French intent by actual performance in Indochina, and continued French willingness to receive and act upon U.S. military advice. Further, the French should be urged at all levels to support and vigorously prosecute the Navarre concept to the maximum extent of their capabilities."

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



ARTHUR RADFORD,
Chairman,
Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Enclosure