

June 25, 1953

**Summary of Discussion at the 151st Meeting of the
National Security Council**

Citation:

"Summary of Discussion at the 151st Meeting of the National Security Council", June 25, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers as President, 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box 4. Excised version printed in Department of State, FRUS 1952-54, VIII (Washington, DC: GPO, 1988)
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111924>

Summary:

American response to East German protests, plans of action toward the Soviet Union, question of defectors from socialist countries, implementation of passive and active resistance in socialist countries.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 151st Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, June 25, 1953

The following were present at the 151st meeting of the Council: The President of the United States, Presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; the Director for Mutual Security; the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; Admiral Fechteler for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; Lewis L. Strauss, Special Assistant to the President; C. D. Jackson, Special Assistant to the President; the Military Liaison Officer; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

[. . .]

6. SIGNIFICANT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING U. S. SECURITY

The Director of Intelligence [Allen Dulles] said he had a number of brief comments on a variety of areas and events:

[. . .]

Germany. Mr. Dulles then briefed the Council on the latest information with regard to the outbreaks in East Berlin and in fifteen other places in the Soviet Zone. His conclusions were that events had demonstrated the total failure of the East German government and its tactics. This government, he thought, might well be tossed out presently by the Russians and a more conservative regime installed in its place. Mr. Dulles also stressed the dilemma which confronted the Soviet Government, which, after announcing a soft policy, had encountered so serious an uprising. In any event, said Mr. Dulles, the Soviets had solved the problem of the free elections issue. The Soviets were clearly not in a position to advocate such free elections now, and we were.

Czechoslovakia. Mr. Dulles announced that the uprising in the ?koda plant had been put down, but that feeling in Czechoslovakia was still very intense. [1 3/4 Lines Excised]

The President's comment was an expression of regret that the rioters had not succeeded in burning down the great ?koda munitions plant.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral briefing on the subject by the Director of Central Intelligence with particular reference to the situation in Egypt, Libya, France, Korea, Germany, and Czechoslovakia.

7. UNITED STATES POLICIES AND ACTIONS TO EXPLOIT THE UNREST IN THE SATELLITE STATES

(NSC Action No. 817; Memo from NSC Executive Secretary, same subject dated June

24, 1953)

Referring to the draft in the hands of the members of the Council, Mr. [C. D.] Jackson stated that the PSB had since the last meeting accomplished two tasks: The first was a summary listing of possible actions to exploit unrest in the satellites, which had been sent to the members of the Council. In addition, they had elaborated a more detailed plan which had not been circulated. The PSB had approved the summary except that the Deputy Secretary of Defense had been absent. Mr. Jackson also stressed the efforts of the PSB to avoid approaching their task in a starry-eyed and unrealistic fashion. Accordingly, they had divided their proposed actions into two phases: One covered actions which could be taken with [tk: within?] the next 60 days. The other comprised actions thereafter if the situation developed favorably. Mr. Jackson then began to read the list of actions in the first phase.

When he had concluded, Secretary [John Foster] Dulles stated that he did not feel that the summary contained sufficient emphasis on passive, as opposed to active, resistance. The President expressed agreement with the views of Secretary Dulles.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that there was much more attention paid to passive resistance in the more detailed plan which the PSB was working on. He also expressed the opinion that a great opportunity was being presented to work on the Czech army, the Czech police, and various paramilitary groups.

The Vice President inquired whether, in regard to the suggestion of trade union denunciation of Soviet repression, our own trade union leaders in Europe, such as Victor Reuther, had proved useful.

Mr. Jackson replied that we were working with these people and that we had also received the cooperation of the Secretary of Labor.

Mr. Jackson then went on to point out the great importance of the free elections slogan which the German workers had now handed to us on a silver platter. He asked whether it would not be useful for the President or the Secretary of State to issue a statement on this point prior to their departure for Bermuda.

Secretary Dulles expressed interest in this proposal, but warned that it needed to be carefully calculated from the standpoint of Chancellor Adenauer. We don't want to issue any statement in favor of free elections in Germany which Chancellor Adenauer's opposition could use to slow up the ratification of EDC, to which Chancellor Adenauer was so thoroughly committed.

As a solution to this problem, the President suggested that it might be possible to quote from Chancellor Adenauer's own speech in Berlin on the subject, on June 17.

Secretary Dulles then spoke of the proposal to bring up in the UN the brutal Russian repression of the uprisings in East Germany. He pointed out the very great danger involved in the attempt to make the UN a propaganda forum when we could not hope for any concrete results. We castigate the Russians for this kind of behavior in the UN, and we must be careful not to open ourselves to the same charge by raising the repression issue.

While agreeing with the Secretary's point, the President insisted that careful consideration be given to the question of raising the issue in the UN. Was it a "good issue" in itself, quite apart from the propaganda value which it offered? If it was a good substantive issue, we should certainly not hesitate to raise it.

On the point of using the black radio to increase defection [tk: defections?] in the satellites, as proposed in the PSB report, the President expressed the opinion that more was to be gained by factual radio accounts of defection than by mere pleas over the radio for defection. It seemed important to the President to stress the spontaneity of these defections.

The President then inquired as to what the United States was able to do to assist defectors from the satellites once they had found asylum with us.

Mr. Allen Dulles quickly stated that whatever they were doing it was certainly not enough. The treatment of defectors was a major problem, which Mr. Jackson interposed to describe as a "shocking picture."

The President was obviously concerned by these statements, and inquired whether the Administration ought not to take the problem up both with Congressional leaders and with our allies. Steps should be taken, said the President, to see to it that these defectors found asylum and jobs in various free world countries. Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay were all countries which needed people. Would it not be possible to make some deal or treaty with them by which we paid for the transportation of these people from Europe and maintained them in their new homes until such time as they had found jobs and security?

There was then further comment on the inadequacy of provisions, either by the UN or the U. S., of support for defectors, it being noted that there were so many different agencies involved in this attempt that no one of them, governmental or private, really felt responsibility for carrying through a reasonable program.

Mr. Stassen, however, pointed out that the Mutual Security Agency was already far advanced on plans for an integrated approach to solving the problem, and awaited only Congressional acceptance of the President's reorganization plan to put its program into effect.

The National Security Council:

Approved the recommendations of the Psychological Strategy Board contained in the enclosure to the reference memorandum, subject to:

- a. More emphasis being placed upon passive resistance in implementing paragraph 2-(a).
- b. Revision of paragraph 3-(b) to read: "Consider U. S. advocacy of (1) free elections in the satellites and association with the Western European community, with emphasis on economic cooperation and rehabilitation, and (2) subsequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, Austria and the satellites."

NOTE: The report of the Psychological Strategy Board, as amended, subsequently approved by the President and circulated as NSC 158.

[. . .]

[Signed S. Everett Gleason]