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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR

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FROM: ROBERT P. PATTERSON

TO: The Secretary of War,
3E880 Pentagon Building.

This is the revised draft of the memorandum on military occupation in Germany that I sent you under date of October 17th.

This revised draft omits the sentences wherein particular persons were named. In all other respects it is identical with the first draft.

R.P.P.
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Enclosure

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October 17th, 1944.

Memorandum for the Secretary of War:

Military occupation in Germany.

The discussion in this paper follows the lines of the talk we had last Friday. It seemed to me that it might be well if our conclusions were put down on paper.

I.

It is safe to predict that during military occupation of Germany internal conditions in that country will be chaotic. It is certain that destitution, unemployment and general misery will be the common lot, perhaps with famine and pestilence also making their appearance. Government of the area under our control will present us with as hard a set of problems as we have ever faced.

There will also be the matter of dealing with war criminals. And if guerrilla fighting develops, strong measures may be required to put it down.

There is also the state of public opinion in this country to consider. It is inevitable that conditions that will come about in Germany will give rise to agitation in this country concerning our conduct of affairs within Germany. Some will say that we are not drastic enough. Others will say that we are too drastic and will insist that something more be done in behalf of women and children.

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October 17th 1944

II.

If this is a correct appraisal of what will happen in Germany and of reactions within our own country, it is of the highest importance that the organization of our governmental structure in Germany be thoroughly sound. It is agreed in all quarters that for the first phase, military government is the only answer and that General Eisenhower should be in command.

With this principle settled, two conclusions would seem to follow: first, that other agencies of our government should not set up branches in Germany; second, that a system of appointing civilian advisers to General Eisenhower or civilian high commissioners should not be adopted, however plausible some of the reasons for such appointments might appear at first sight. I am of course speaking only of the first phase.

1. If other governmental agencies set up branches in Germany, carrying out instructions from Washington and reporting to their superiors in Washington, confused and conflicting administration in the occupied area is certain to ensue. General Eisenhower's authority will be fatally weakened. The Germans would quickly become aware of the weakness in our control and would take advantage of the resulting division of responsibility.

2. A system of appointing civilian advisers for General Eisenhower or of appointing high commissioners would be almost as unfortunate. Here again the tendency would be to weaken the authority of General Eisenhower.

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October 17th, 1944.

The civilians so appointed from Washington would not owe direct allegiance to their immediate superior and would certainly become critical if their recommended policies were not adopted by General Eisenhower. Discipline is indispensable in military government, and a set of civilian advisers owing their positions to others would not feel constrained by the discipline that is habitual in the Army.

Another weakness in such a system is that these civilians would by no means command the respect of the Germans that military men would command.

The effect here at home would also be adverse. The civilians selected as commissioners or advisers would be controversial figures and would not receive the united support of our people when the going gets rough.

There is no need to run these risks. The Army has plenty of officers, of the Regular Army or of the Army of the United States, who are thoroughly qualified to deal with the difficulties to be encountered in governing the occupied area in Germany.

It would seem better to draw on talent already in the Army than to select a civilian for the task and suddenly give him military rank.

It is also to be borne in mind that General Eisenhower himself will probably devote the greater part of his time to civilian affairs in the occupied area.

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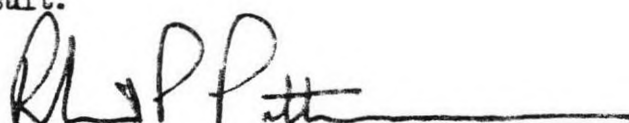
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III.

We should urge that General Eisenhower be given the undivided responsibility of governing the part of Germany to be occupied by us; that no other government agencies be set up in Germany; and that no civilians in the role of commissioners or advisers be appointed or selected here in Washington. General Eisenhower can be trusted to select his own staff.

The time may come when it will be necessary to have a high commissioner. But the appointment should be made when the need arises, not at the present time.

The fact that the British may wish to have a high commissioner does not require us to follow suit.



Robert P. Patterson,
Under Secretary of War.

rpp:lm
CC:Mr. McCloy

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