

SWNCC 250.1 - MISTREATMENT OF PRISONERS
OF WAR (MISC.)

Q. M. C. Form 353 (Old No. 490)
Revised July 26, 1918

LIST OF PAPERS

File under No. 250.1 Mistreatment of Prisoners of War

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 3-0788

SERIAL NUMBER	FROM—	DATE	TO—	SYNOPSIS
1		1/8/45	For Mr. McCloy	Memo on publication of Japanese atrocities as approved by Sect. of War. Memo suggesting official publicity campaign against Japan and Germany as result of their treatment of American prisoners of war. Memo for Mr. McCloy re publication of Japanese and German atrocity stories. Minutes 5th Meeting SWNCC, action taken re official publicity campaign against Japan and Germany concerning their treatment of American prisoners of war. Minutes 4th Meeting SWNCC, Publicity to be given to German and Japanese atrocity stories.
2	Col. Cutter	4/24/45	Col. McCarthy	Correspondence re Japanese Atrocity stories.
3	Sec. of State	3/31/45	Sec of War	Letter re publicity to horror stories, and enclosed letter from Sec of War to Sec of State re massacre of prisoners on Palawan Islands

INSTRUCTIONS.—When papers on a subject become numerous they will be numbered serially and brief entries made on this form.

25

March 31, 1945

Change to
Mr. Masley
SWNCC
Room 178

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Power

In reply refer to
SWP 711.94114A/3-1345

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I refer to your letter of March 13, 1945,
with respect to the policy agreed upon among the
War, Navy, and State Departments regarding offi-
cial publication of acts of enemy atrocities, and
enclose for your information, in this connection,
a copy of a letter addressed by me under today's
date to the Secretary of the Navy.

Sincerely yours,

Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.

Enclosure:

To Secretary of the
Navy, of even date.

A true copy of
the enclosed copy

The Honorable

Henry L. Stimson,

Secretary of War.

SWP:BGufler:DF

3/24/45

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3

25

March 31, 1945

Charge to
Mr. Masley
SWNCC
Person 178

In reply refer to
SWP 711.941144/3-246

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I refer to Mr. Hard's letter of March 2, 1945, and confirm my understanding that the Interdepartmental Board on Prisoners of War is the forum for discussion of questions on publicity concerning enemy atrocities and that any publicity campaign proposed by the State, War, or Navy Departments is to be brought there for discussion.

Representatives of the armed forces make up two-thirds of the representation on the Board. It has always been understood by the Board that in matters of direct interest to military operations final decision would rest with the War and Navy Departments. It was, I understand, not the intention of the Board in its consensus of December 14, 1944, to make any alteration in this policy and it is understood that after discussion of questions raised before it on publicity concerning atrocities final decision as to publication rests with the War and Navy Departments.

The agreement of the Board that there should be coordination among the three Departments prior to the beginning of any publicity campaign on enemy atrocities, was entered into in order that the timing of any such campaign by any of the three Departments could be coordinated with operations of the other Departments, whether in the diplomatic or military field, for the protection of American nationals in enemy custody.

I have

The Honorable

James V. Forrestal,

Secretary of the Navy.

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I have made copies of your letter available to the Secretary of the Board who has circulated it to the members in order that they may be appropriately informed.

Sincerely yours,

Edward K. Stebbins, Jr.

A true copy of
the signed origi-

SWP:BGufler:DF

3/26/45

SECRET

Handwritten initials/signature

MAR 14 1945

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Navy

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I inclose herewith a copy of a letter of even date transmitted to the Secretary of State requesting that a vigorous protest be transmitted to the Japanese Government regarding the massacre on December 14, 1944 of about 140 officers and men of our respective services who had been held as prisoners of war on Palawan Island. The views of the State Department were also requested with respect to the desirability of an official publicity release by the Services with respect to this incident.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON

Secretary of War

Inclosure

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INFORMATION COPY FOR SWNCC

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MAR 14 1945

The Honorable

The Secretary of State

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have just learned of the massacre by the Japanese, on December 14, 1944, on Palawan Island in the Philippines, of all but 10 of 150 American soldiers, sailors and marines who were prisoners of war.

Contrary to Article 31 of the Geneva Convention, these men were used by the Japanese in building and repairing a military airfield. The sighting of an American convoy and the appearance of two American planes caused the Japanese to believe an attack was imminent. All working details were called in, and the prisoners compelled to enter the underground air raid shelters in the prison compound. When all prisoners were inside, the Japanese threw buckets of gasoline into the opening, followed by burning torches. Prisoners who tried to escape were bayoneted, clubbed to death or shot down by rifle and machine gun fire. About 40 who succeeded in reaching the beach below the camp were hunted down and shot. An eye witness states that one man so caught was first deliberately tortured by burning his hands and feet with gasoline. Only the 10 survivors are known to have escaped, all others being either killed in the air raid shelters or in an attempt to escape.

The fiendish and unprovoked slaughter of these unarmed Americans warrants a vigorous protest on the part of the United States. Names of victims and particulars other than given by the attached statements may be procured from the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Brig. Gen. Weir, Ext. 79867).

In connection with this matter, an expression of your views is requested as to the desirability of an official publicity release by the Service Departments with respect to the foregoing incident. A copy of this letter is also being furnished to the Secretary of the Navy.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON

Secretary of War

Inclosures

Stat of Douglas W. Bogue
Stat of Glen W. McDoie

INFORMATION COPY FOR SWNCC

SECRET

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STATE-WAR-NAVY COORDINATING
COMMITTEE

STATE

W.C. ✓
Mr. Cox
Mr. Moseley
Mr. Gardiner

WAR

W.C.
Colonel McCarthy
Lt. Colonel Pennoyer
Major Field
Major Gunther
Lt. Spittall

NAVY

W.C.
Commander Richardson
Lt. Comdr. Rockefeller
Lieutenant Geilfuss
Ensign Whiteside

____ Note
____ Circulate
____ File

REMARKS:

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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON



24 April 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL McCARTHY:

I have been furnished today by OPD with a copy of a memorandum by Judge Patterson dated 23 April 1945 which the Secretariat should have for its information. I do not see any reason for circulating it.

R. Ammi Cutter

R. AMMI CUTTER
Colonel, General Staff Corps
Assistant Executive

Enc.

Cy memo 23 Apr 45 Mr. Patterson to Mr. Stimson
Re: Release of accounts of atrocities.

Note: A copy of a note from Mr. Forrestal on the same subject, received subsequently, is also enclosed.

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COPY

April 23rd, 1945

Memorandum for the Secretary of War,
3E880 Pentagon Bldg.

Atrocity Stories.

Secretary Forrestal told me Saturday that it was agreeable to Stettinius and to him that theatre commanders release accounts of enemy atrocities, without prior consultation with the State Department.

This will stand as a modification of the Stettinius-Stimson-Bard arrangement referred to in my memorandum of April 7th.

/s/ Robert P. Patterson

Robert P. Patterson
Under Secretary of War

rpp:lm

(Note by Gen Hodes)

"S/W thru Kyle requested U S/W to handle this matter, 21 April 45."

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21 April 1945

JAPANESE ATROCITY RELEASES

I talked over the telephone today with Secretary of State Stettinius who confirmed my interpretation of our agreement as to such releases -- stated in my diary aide-memoire of 9 January 1945.

The State Department is to be kept informed and consulted as to our general policy on atrocity releases. But the decision as to whether they are to be released rests with the Army and Navy.

In particular I told Mr. Stettinius that it would not be practical for each theater commander to give us in advance each atrocity for clearance here in Washington; that we would have to give discretion for such releases to the theater commanders with the understanding that if such stories were of a political character such as to affect the State Department they were entitled to request a reconsideration and modification of our policy.

I informed Judge Patterson of my conversation with the Secretary of State and he undertook to transmit the information to the Secretary of War and to the Chief of Staff of the Army.

JF:HCO
4-21-45

CC: Hon. John J. McCloy
Hon. Robert P. Patterson
Fleet Admiral King

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Assistant Executive

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11 January 1945

File 250.1
X 091 Germany
X 091 Japan

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCLOY:

Publication of Japanese and German Atrocity Stories.

Extract from the Minutes of the Committee of Three:

"The general feeling was that from time to time stories should be released."

The machinery for coordinating the three departments on the release of atrocity stories, which might effect our diplomatic dealings in an effort to aid prisoners of war, exists in the Interdepartmental Board on Prisoners of War (composed of representatives of State, War and Navy Departments). It appears desirable to have the activities of this board conducted under the general supervision of the SWNCC. If this is done, the committee can from time to time direct the Interdepartmental Board to release or withhold information as the situation requires. If this is the consensus of opinion at the committee meeting on Friday, the Secretary should be directed to take the necessary steps to have the Interdepartmental Board on Prisoners of War placed under the general guidance and supervision of the SWNCC. Such action is indicated by the joint letter from the Secretaries of War and Navy to the Secretary of State which established the Committee in which they said "all liaison activities between the State Department, on the one hand, and the War and Navy Departments, on the other, are brought to the attention of the committee for its exercise of general guidance and supervision of such activities."

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1. Minutes of Fourth Meeting

The minutes of the fourth meeting were accepted without amendment.

2. Official Publicity Campaign with Reference to Japanese and German Treatment of American Prisoners of War (Agenda Item #1)

It was noted that the Secretaries of State, War and Navy had recently determined that the final decision as to matters of publicity with respect to treatment of prisoners rests with the War and Navy Departments but that the advice of the State Department is to be sought before any publicity campaign is undertaken. Mr. Gufler stated that there is presently in existence an Interdepartmental Board on Prisoners of War and that this principle is already followed by that committee except that it is an accepted rule to permit individuals to release their own stories subject only to security controls. At Mr. McCloy's suggestion, it was agreed that this Interdepartmental Board be the forum for discussion of the matter, inasmuch as all interested departments are represented on it, and that any publicity campaigns proposed by Army or Navy should be brought there for discussion. It was further agreed that the Board should operate subject to the general supervision of the SWNCC to which it should be prepared to report on request. The Secretariat was directed to initiate action to have the Interdepartmental Board function in the manner outlined.

3. Lend-Lease to Latin American Countries (Agenda Item #2)

On motion of Mr. McCloy and Mr. Gates, it was agreed to defer discussion of this item to the next meeting.

4. War and Navy Department Representatives on the Combined Liberated Areas Committee (CLAC) (Agenda Item #3)

Mr. McCloy and General Hilldring reiterated the War Department position that no military members should be formally designated for this committee in view of the fact that the problems to be considered are primarily of interest to the civilian agencies and cover the period following military responsibility. It was agreed that the proposal contained in the Secretary of War's letter

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this committee. A copy in which the specific changes from JCS 1067 are shown would also be available for submission to Ambassador Winant. It was agreed further that when the paper is sent to Ambassador Winant, a copy will be sent simultaneously to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for information. It was agreed that after an agreed recommendation had been returned from European Advisory Commission it would be submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff before final action.

11. INSTRUCTIONS TO AMBASSADOR MURPHY CONCERNING JCS 1067.

Mr. Dunn read a proposed reply to a telegram from Ambassador Murphy with respect to control of Germany. Mr. McCloy noted that this proposed reply basically instructs him to follow JCS 1067 and, in so doing is contrary to the British view that the machinery followed in Italy should be adapted to Germany. After further discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would recommend the reply should be sent as submitted, with a minor revision in the first paragraph suggested by Mr. Dunn, and that a copy of Ambassador Murphy's telegram and the reply should be then furnished to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for information.

12. TURKISH STRAITS.

It was noted by Mr. Dunn that the proposed paper on this subject had been cleared informally with War and Navy Departments for submission to the President. Mr. Gates stated that this was correct, subject to the Navy's attitude already expressed by memorandum to the State Department that the United States should definitely participate, if revision of the existing situation is to be discussed.

13. PUBLICITY TO BE GIVEN JAPANESE AND GERMAN ATROCITIES.

Mr. McCloy stated that he understood Secretary Forrestal wished to raise the question of giving publicity to atrocities against United States military men captured by our enemies. Messrs. Riddleberger, Dooman and Gufler of the State Department were called in to discuss the matter and, after discussion, it was agreed that the State Department would prepare

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an analysis of the problem by 9 January so that the matter could be discussed by the Secretaries of State, War and Navy at that time.

14. AID TO SWITZERLAND.

Mr. Dunn stated that the Germans were preparing to discuss trade agreements with the Swiss on 9 January 1945. The agreement of this government expired on 1 January 1945. He pointed out that it was the view of the State Department that more could be accomplished through negotiations than through threats and that we would, no doubt, have to offer some inducement in the way of trade goods in order to secure a diminution in the Swiss trade with Germany. Mr. McCloy asked if the State Department objected to the bombing of the railway approaches to Switzerland in Italian territory. Mr. Dunn stated that quite to the contrary he thought it was a good idea. Admiral Willson said that SACMED (General Alexander) had all the authority necessary and it was up to him to bomb these approaches when, in his opinion, they offered a profitable target. Mr. McCloy asked Mr. Dunn to make available to the War and Navy Departments a statement of State Department policy on this question for study prior to presentation to and consideration by the Committee of Three. Mr. Dunn agreed and stated that departmental concurrence would be sought at that time. He further stated that it was the intention of the State Department to proceed with trade negotiations with Switzerland.

15. COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONTROL OF PACIFIC AND FAR EASTERN AREAS.

Mr. Gates proposed that a subcommittee be appointed to consider matters which arise in connection with the control of Pacific and Far Eastern Areas. This was agreed. Mr. Dunn designated Mr. Eugene H. Dooman as the State Department representative. Mr. McCloy and Mr. Gates stated that they would designate representatives after consultation with their departments.

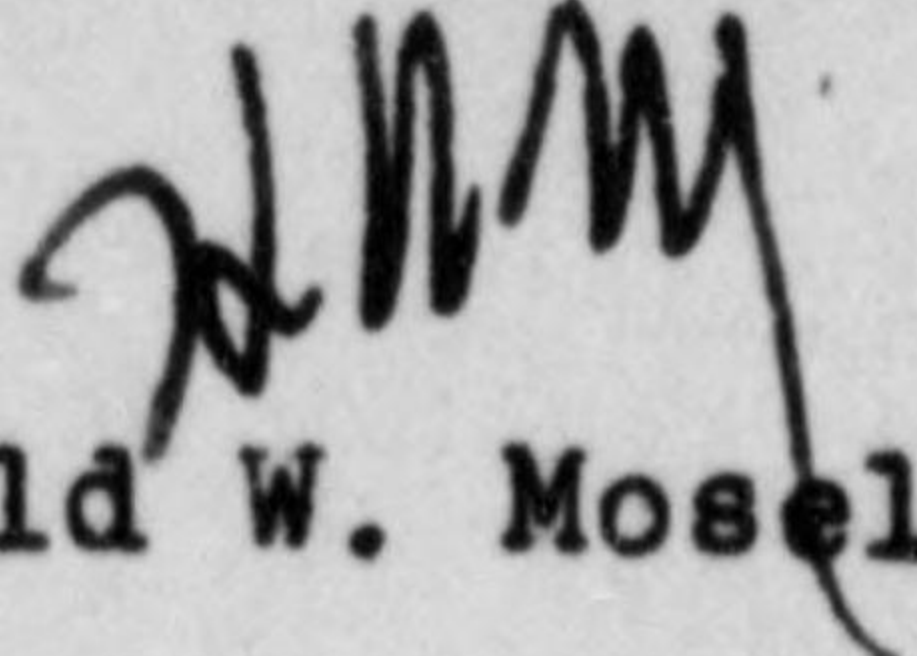
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

January 9, 1945

Colonel McCarthy: 4E-886

It is suggested that the attached memorandum be made the first subject of our agenda for Friday's meeting. This memorandum is referred for information and comment.

In view of Mr. McCloy's interest in this matter you may wish to invite his attention to this memorandum at an early date.


Harold W. Moseley

File 2501
X 091 Germany
X 091 Japan

War Problems

CONFIDENTIAL

January 8, 1945

Suggestion that an Official Publicity Campaign
be Directed Against Japan and Germany Based on
Their Treatment of American Prisoners of War.

It is recommended for the reasons set forth below that no official publicity campaign based on German and Japanese treatment of American prisoners of war be undertaken at present:

JAPAN

A. The Relief and Protection of Americans in Japanese Hands.

This Government issued through the War and State Departments on January 30, 1944, lengthy statements regarding Japanese mistreatment of American prisoners of war. It has never been shown whether there was any improvement in the treatment by the Japanese of Americans in their hands as a result of this publicity. On the other hand, the Japanese characterized this publicity as an "atrocities story campaign" and for six months held up all negotiations for the delivery of relief supplies to Americans in their hands. They also made great difficulties about visits by representatives of the protecting Power and the International Red Cross Committee to camps where Americans are held.

The following projects are at present under negotiation or underway for the relief or repatriation of Americans in Japanese custody:

1. Relief supplies transhipped via Siberia are at present being distributed in camps in Manchuria and Japan proper and are being moved to overseas territories under Japanese occupation on Japanese vessels under

American

- 2 -

American Naval safe conduct. The Department is pressing for future transshipments of relief supplies over Soviet-Siberian ports and has hopes that such shipments can be arranged on a regular basis.

2. Mail communications have been opened up with the Far East via Siberia and supplies of vitamins and drugs are going forward in the mail pouches.

3. Efforts are being made with some hope of success for future civilian exchange and sick and wounded repatriation operations.

4. Negotiations are underway for a reciprocal extension of increased facilities for camp inspections by International Red Cross representatives.

B. Persons of Japanese Race Evacuated
From the West Coast.

Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of the Interior Ickes have announced a new policy toward persons of Japanese race evacuated from the West Coast. These persons have been confined in centers that are in effect a cross between Indian reservations and concentration camps. Efforts to arrange for the voluntary relocation of the evacuees into normal American life produced only limited success. Nearly 80,000 of the total of over 100,000 evacuees remain in the centers. There is basis for a fear that these people are becoming pauperized and that this country might be faced with the permanent continuation of "Japanese reservations".

With the reopening of the west coast to persons of Japanese race it was decided to transfer to the Department of Justice the 3000 to 4000 persons whom the War Department considers as possibly dangerous to public safety and to relocate the remainder of the Japanese into the American community. To the end of speeding this relocation, measures are being taken to close all of the centers within the next six months.

It is to be hoped that the new policy can be presented through the protecting Power in such a way as to cause a favorable reaction by Japan. If at the crucial stage in the solution of our domestic Japanese problem

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problem this Government embarks on a publicity campaign on Japanese atrocities, we are likely to be accused of trying to cover up some unfavorable action toward our Japanese population.

There has been surprisingly little opposition to the new policy from the press and from interested organizations. Large sectors of the west coast press have been favorable and even the Hearst press is at least quiescent. However, strong opposition on the Pacific coast does exist. This opposition has indulged in dire predictions of rioting, civic disorder, assassinations, et cetera, should any Japanese be permitted to return to the west coast states. An official campaign of the sort suggested would likely be seized upon by irreconcilable elements as a basis for agitation against the Administration's new policy.

Having regard to the foregoing considerations and circumstance, the Department of State does not favor the inauguration at this time of a campaign of the kind suggested. The notorious unpredictability of Japanese behavior, especially in regard to their treatment of prisoners under conditions of successively severe military reverses, naturally causes the Department to feel increasing concern over American nationals in Japanese hands. It therefore sees all the more reason to recommend that our policy concerning the release of stories of atrocities committed by the Japanese shall be in accordance with the decisions of the Interdepartmental Board on Prisoners of War (composed of representatives of War, State, and Navy) at its meeting on December 14, 1944, as follows:

1. Atrocity stories may be released on a personal basis by individuals subject only to the necessary clearance for security purposes.

2. Official releases of atrocity accounts shall not be issued or cleared by the War Department, the Navy Department, or the Department of State without coordination among them. This coordination may be conducted informally through the appropriate agencies in each of the aforesaid departments. If matters of high policy are involved, a meeting of the Interdepartmental Board may be called.

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- 4 -

3. An official release is defined as a statement or a Release issued by the State, War or Navy Departments, or any other authorized agency of the Government, or a statement by an agent speaking for any of the foregoing; also a statement by a theater commander or an authorized statement in his behalf.

(These decisions have received the formal approval of War and State. This approval has been made known to the Navy Department by both of the other Departments.)

GERMANY

The Germans have shown themselves much less sensitive to publicity regarding atrocities. It has been the custom of this Government to issue stories on specific instances, such as the recent shooting of 150 Americans, as they occurred. It is recommended for the following reasons that this policy be continued and that no general publicity campaign against Germany be embarked on at the present time:

A. Protection, Relief, and Repatriation of American Nationals.

1. There is at present underway an operation for the repatriation of over 400 American seriously sick and wounded prisoners of war and for the exchange of about 800 civilian internees. This operation, which will take about six weeks to complete, is one of a series that have been successfully completed. It is hoped, and there is ample precedent for the hope, that such operations may continue indefinitely in the future.

2. Although conditions in German prisoner of war and internment camps are deteriorating with the deterioration of the general supply situation in Germany and with the increase in the number of German-held American prisoners (now estimated at over 80,000) conditions are not intolerable. Representatives of the protecting Power, the International Red Cross Committee, and the War Prisoners' Aid of the Y.M.C.A. are still allowed free access to the camps and report fully on conditions. The German Government still delivers free of shipping

charges

- 5 -

charges through its railroad and communications system, the Red Cross relief parcels sent in abundant measure to our prisoners. The parcels contain supplies of food, clothing, and medicines that are vitally indispensable to our people.

B. situation of the 350,000 to 400,000
German Prisoners of War Held by us
in France and Great Britain.

As a result of the stop order against shipment of American-held prisoners of war to the United States, thousands of German prisoners of war have piled up in our enclosures in France and Great Britain. Major General Barker (General Eisenhower's G-1) on a recent visit to Washington recommended the resumption of shipments of prisoners of war to the United States. He reported that the prisoners are a burden on the theater and thousands of them are without blankets or beds, bedding, overcoats, or housing. Many of them had no shelter whatsoever and nothing to lie upon until recently. Recently they have been provided with straw and although material for tent housing is not available, they have been placed under canvass roofs without side walls. The General expressed great disquiet over what might happen if and when the German Government became aware of these conditions. He added that so far the military authorities had been successful in preventing visits to the camps by representatives of the protecting Power.

Within the last three days, the Department received a formal request from the Government of Switzerland, as protecting Power for the German Government, for permission for Swiss representatives to visit our prisoner of war enclosures in France and Great Britain. It will be necessary for us to accede to this request and to do something about straightening out the conditions under which we hold German prisoners in the European Theater (either by a resumption of shipments to the United States or otherwise) or be in serious danger of being charged with a failure to fulfill the Geneva Convention.

In view of the situation outlined we are at present vulnerable to retort should we base an atrocity publicity campaign on German treatment of American prisoners of war.

SWP:BGufler:DF

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File 250.1
X 091 Japan
8 January 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCLOY:

A policy with reference to the publication of Japanese atrocities was approved by the Secretary of War on 28 December 1944. This policy was written in a meeting of the Interdepartmental Board of Prisoners of War on which the War Department is represented by Major General Sarles (Bureau of Public Relations), Brig. General Berry (G-1), Brig. General Bryan (Assistant Provost Marshal General), and others. Policy is as follows:

1. Atrocity stories may be released on a personal basis by individuals subject only to the necessary clearance for security purposes.
2. Official releases of atrocity accounts shall not be issued or cleared by the War Department, the Navy Department, or the Department of State without coordination among them. This coordination may be conducted informally through the appropriate agencies in each of the aforesaid departments. If matters of high policy are involved, a meeting of the Interdepartmental Board may be called.
3. An official release is defined as a statement or a release issued by the State, War or Navy Departments, or any other authorized agency of the Government, or a statement by an agent speaking for any of the foregoing; also a statement by a theater commander or an authorized statement in his behalf.
4. It was agreed that the Department of State should make this policy known to the Office of War Information, the War Shipping Board, the Director of Censorship, and any other agencies of the Government which may be concerned and request their cooperation.

On January 6 the Bureau of Public Relations notified Army commanders in the Pacific of this established War Department policy.

Joint Chiefs of Staff have indicated (JCS 794) that in their opinion final decisions is one to be made by the War and Navy Departments. They perceive no objection to coordinating the timing of releases along lines recommended by the Department of State.

With reference to the release of German atrocities stories, the only War Department policy in effect at the present is one that restricts the release of stories from repatriated individuals for fear that the publication of such stories might endanger future repatriations.

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8 January 1945

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File 250.1
X 091 Germany
X 091 Japan

3 Jan 45

Colonel Whitsen and
Colonel McCarthy:

Would one of you be sure to include on the agenda for next Tuesday's meeting of the Committee of Three the item of the desirability of publishing Japanese atrocities and could you find out what the last thinking is in the War Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on this subject. The Secretary of the Navy is going to bring the matter up for discussion and I would like to have whatever material and thoughts we have on the matter ready for such discussion.

/s/

J.J.McC.