

~~SECRET~~
OTR VAULT COPY NO. 340

OFFICE OF TRAINING

DIRECTIVE

March 1954

COURSE: BIC(I)

SUBJECT: U. S. Security Commitments HOURS: 1

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: Lecture & discussion INSTRUCTOR: Guest speaker

OBJECTIVES OF INSTRUCTION: To give students an appreciation of the nature and extent of U. S. security commitments.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION: The security commitments of the United States are discussed under two headings: (1) those embodied in formal agreements, and (2) those recognized by the United States, from time to time, as representing the country's real security interests. Under the first, such formal commitments as the United Nations Charter, the Rio Pact, and the North Atlantic Treaty are analyzed. Under the second heading, the U. S. security interest in the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, the Far East and other areas is explained and various contingencies affecting it discussed.

SUBJECTS WITH WHICH COORDINATION IS REQUIRED:

REFERENCES:

REMARKS: Transcription of lecture by Mr. Richard Scammon, Department of State.

TAB

SECURITY COMMITMENTS OF U.S. AND ITS ALLIES

By - Richard M. Scammon

In discussing this general subject of the security commitments of the United States I am going to try and put those commitments in two general groupings. The first group will be the kind that we normally speak of, that we normally write about and that we normally discuss under this general heading Security Commitments of the U.S., and this first group will include the formal and written and treatyized security commitments which this country has entered into. These as you will find from my remarks this afternoon I regard as rather less important than the second group of security commitments which are essentially in my view the commitments we make to ourselves for our own protection and in our own self-interest. But this first group of security commitments are those which normally would be discussed in any academic class on international relations, they are those which you would list if you were required by a congressional committee to place down your listing of security commitments, they are the ones that are subjects of editorials in the New York Times and they are in general that group of security commitments which we include as the formalized, written treaty, televisioned type of security commitments. These number five, six I think perhaps we better say, six in all for this country at the present time. These six are as follows:

First, under the Charter of the United Nations this country, as are all the signatories of the United Nations, is pledged "to maintain international peace and security, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of the threats to the peace and to suppress active aggression or other breaches of the peace." There is no enforcing machinery

- 2 -

established in the United Nations organization for the active implementation of these particular ends save to work in the Security Council by unanimous agreement there, unless one of the members happens to be absent happily at the moment. There is no supra national institution to force from the various united nations an especial observance of this particular clause. This clause, in fact, represents, as does much of the charter and the organization itself, a rather strong hope that many of these things can be accomplished and a rather strong suggestion to the members that they so conduct themselves as to carry out these various proposals; but really I would suggest to you no specific commitment of the United States was subject to any specific course of action. The theory I suppose is that we are always concerned to maintain international peace and security and to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace. But this does not mean that in any given circumstance our attitude, say with respect to the natives in North Africa or the admission of the question of internal legislation of the Union of South Africa or the Korean question or any other in any sense of the word can be used as a specific commitment on our part to do any specific concrete, or identifiable thing. As this general charter is a commitment of the United States only insofar as it is a general commitment to do good.

In terms of more specific and detailed regional agreements, we deal of three in the Far East, one in Latin America, and one in Europe. Let me take them, if I may, in reverse order from that which I have listed them.

- 3 -

First, and perhaps most important, in terms of its general understanding, is that which we call the North Atlantic Treaty. And in that North Atlantic Treaty the signatories to that document undertake to agree that an armed attack against any one or more of them, that means the signatories, in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. And they agree they shall take such action as they deem necessary including the use of armed force to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic Area. Now what action is deemed necessary, is not established in the treaty; this is left up to the individual decision of the individual powers concerned. I would emphasize to you that from the North Atlantic Treaty this country has no security commitment whatsoever, to any other state which signed that treaty except that the United States is committed to take such action as the United States deems necessary in the fulfillment of this general treaty. Now that the United States might feel it necessary to take some very specific and very strong action in the event of an attack against one of the signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty might or might not be the case depending upon the allocation of our own national resources and the contemporary political picture of the moment.

The commitment that is involved in the sense of the promise, in the sense of the blank check with respect to the North Atlantic Treaty is only if we or if any of our allies are attacked shall take such action as we deem necessary to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic Area.

- 4 -

The Rio Pact operates in the Latin American Area and is the third of these six pacts of which I will speak. The Rio Pact agrees amongst the signatories, who are the Latin American States, of course, that an armed attack by any state against an American state should be considered an attack against all the American states, and consequently each one of the contracting parties undertakes to assist in meeting the attack in the exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by the charter of the United Nations.

This would appear on the surface of it to be rather more specific than the North Atlantic Treaty language and certainly not to include within it that small escape clause "as it deems necessary," but I would call your attention to the exact language that is used in the Rio Pact; "an armed attack by any state against an American state should be considered as an attack against all the American states and the contracting parties undertake to assist in meeting the attack." As you may know of some of the military thinking of this country, it does not envisage the defense of the further reaches of Alaska if they should be attacked. This, of course, is United States territory. It's quite possible that equally the military thinking would feel that the further reaches of Latin America, particularly South America, would not be defensible in terms of this pact. I do not know, but I would suggest that the phrase "assist" in the language of this pact indicates that this country is committed to assistance. Now whether this assistance means the kind of assistance the South Korean Republic received in warding

- 5 -

off the North Korean attack or whether it means the ambulance the Swedes gave the U.N. command, I don't know. But the extent of the assistance which was included under the terms of the Rio Pact, I suggest, might vary in that immensity between the single ambulance and the rather colorful crew that goes with it and the more material and specific assistance involved in what would amount to a state of co-belligerency with the South Koreans in resisting North Korean and Communist aggression.

There is no instrumentality in the Rio Pact for formally bringing this assistance about. There is, of course, the Organization of American States, but there is no supra national authority, there is no international body which could compel any state to give any specified or particular kind of assistance to any state which was attacked by any other state under the terms of the Rio Pact.

We also have made in this written category, the first group of which I speak, we also have made three general agreements in the Far East.

One with our colleagues in Australia and in New Zealand which has led to the setting up of what is called Anzus-Australia, New Zealand, United States; one with the Philippines, and one with Japan. Now the first two of these deal rather more specifically and equally with the relationships between sovereign states. In the Philippines, and again in the case of Australia and New Zealand, we pledged that if there are hostilities, if attacks are made on them, we shall do whatever is needed, whatever is required within our constitutional processes, to provide assistance to the attacked party. What this means I do not know. In terms of Japan we have, of course, made a rather generalized treaty with the Japanese, primarily

- 6 -

because of our particular security position in Japan, and because of the necessity which we feel of maintaining armed forces in that country. Therefore, the terms of that treaty and the commitments that that treaty involves are not a very comparable one in terms of those negotiated with sovereign powers. That treaty and the security arrangements connected with it give us the right to dispose United States troops in and about Japan to maintain international peace and security in the Far East. They also contain about the only really specific promise that we make in any of these treaties, which is that if the Japanese Government makes a request upon us for the supplying of troops to put down insurrection and riot within the islands, we shall supply those troops.

Now these are six security commitments, the kind that would usually be listed in any official formalized list of such commitments.

As you may imagine from the remarks I have made in introducing this subject, my own view would be that the actual commitment involved in any of these, with the possible exception of suppressing a riot in Tokyo, is very limited. That the treaties and agreements which I have alluded to here may represent a reflection of the other group of commitments of which I will speak in the second part is, of course, quite possible. That, in fact, the written word in the North Atlantic Treaty, while it doesn't promise anything, is but a recognition of larger commitments which we have, in fact, undertaken because of our national self-interest may be true. But that these security commitments of ours to other powers had any force, any validity or any reality simply because they are promises to other people to do something

- 7 -

gratuitously for them and on their behalf I think is simply incorrect, and I think for an intelligence officer especially it must be put out of your mind.

These commitments so called, are not commitments in any sense of the word in which you or I would understand it in a contractual relationship. They are not a commitment, for example, for me to sell you my car for a thousand dollars. They are not a commitment for you to rent my house for a year. They are not a commitment for you even to look after my dog while I take a two-week vacation. All of these things involve a specific promise, a specific obligation, if only moral, to do something. None of the obligations involved in these security commitments has any particular weight upon us and are primarily commitments to examine the situation; and presumptively, if war and attacks should break out, we would be examining it anyway, both in this Agency and in the Department of State, and I think we would find that any commitment to examine the situation would simply be a needless one in terms of what we actually were doing at the time.

Now let me move from what I obviously consider the less important commitments, if indeed they are commitments at all, to what I think are the more important commitments - what I called the second group of commitments. And let me emphasize that I think these are important commitments because they are commitments to ourselves. Some of you may not remember Mr. Roosevelt's famous statement about the national debt, that it really wasn't important because we owed it to ourselves and we could collect it from ourselves at anytime we wished. Now whether this

- 8 -

is good or bad economics, or good or bad politics, I don't know, but certainly in international affairs the only commitments on a security stand that have any meaning are those commitments that you make to yourself, because in the making of those commitments you are convinced that you are advancing your national interest and protecting your national state.

Now the first of these commitments has really nothing to do with international relations as such. It is a simple commitment to defend the area, the territory which you inhabit as a state, to defend if you will your own country. Now there may be many arguments about just how you do this. As you know there are many arguments today as to how far we go in defending America, whether you defend it in the Air or on the water or on the ground, whether you defend it with X billion or 2X billion or Y billions of dollars, or whether you defend it with alliances, with foreign aid, with assistance programs, with GCA, with TCA with OSB, whatever the outfit at the moment may be; but the basic commitment that you make, indeed the whole meaning of the word security commitment, is the commitment to defend the state. If you do not make that commitment, then really you have put yourself outside the scope of what I am talking about here - Security Commitments of the United States. If you do not make the basic commitment to defend the state, then the concept of commitment has no meaning because you are relating other commitments not to the state but to something outside or above or below or alongside the concept of the national state. So that I would suggest to you that the first commitment that we make in international relations is the general commitment to defend the state.

- 9 -

The second general commitment I would suggest that we make is a general observation, perhaps, a general motif of foreign policy in which we seek some kind of system of international relations in which the appeal to violence becomes less a characteristic of society than it has been in the past.

It is a commitment in which our general foreign policy in the furtherance of commitment number one, for the security and for the defense of the state, seeks as a general commitment, agreement among states to sort of live the good life internationally. Specifically, for example, with respect to the Soviet Union, I think that our present commitment on the Soviet Union, even despite the change of political administration, the present commitment with respect to the Soviet Union, is not to overthrow the Soviet State but to try to get the Soviet State, if we can, to live a normal and tolerable political life, in which the exchange of individuals and the exchange of ideas and the opening up of frontiers and the limitation of armament, etc., form a pattern of what you might call tolerant and tolerable international life. Now whether this is correct or not, I don't know, but I would certainly suggest to you that the whole history of the Republic has been one involving these two basic security commitments. The first to defend the Republic and the second to try to, as much as we feel wise and prudent at the time, to try to build an international system in which there is a measure of toleration and tolerability between the member states so that they are not at one another's throats every generation or every half generation or quarter generation.

- 10 -

Now, while these two security commitments are obviously and equally the general basis of foreign policy, what then are the specific security commitments in the terms in which you would be normally asked to list them from an area basis.

First, of course, and most important is the security commitment to Canada. Now it's not a commitment to Canada. It's a commitment to the United States in re Canada, and I think this is a most important one for us to bear in mind. It's true we have with our Canadian friends a number of interlocking organizations, boards, committees, commissions, defense apparatus, etc.; we have also particularly in the far northern regions entered upon defense arrangements, radar screens, training arrangements, and so on which are, I am sure, very useful. But basically the security commitment we make to ourselves in re Canada, is simply that the occupation of Canada by a foreign state, or an attack upon Canada by a foreign state, would be so contrary to national self-interest that we are committed to ourselves to defend Canada.

Now to a somewhat lesser extent, but still to a very substantial one, this applies to Latin America. Whether it would apply to the extreme southern tip of Chile or Argentina I do not know. Whether it would apply to claimed Argentinian positions in the Antarctic, I am sure I do know it would not. Whether it would apply to the Falkland Islands if the Argentinians succeeded in maintaining a claim to the Falkland Islands, I just don't know. But basically, Latin America and Canada together form the security commitment that America makes to itself with respect to the New World - a commitment which the Monroe Doctrine recognized more completely than any later document can underline for you, the basic character of the New World as a part of

- 11 -

The American security sphere. What we would do in any given circumstance if the Communists should attack any part of this area we cannot now say. What we would do if the Communists succeeded in achieving power in any part of this area we cannot now say. What we can, I think, establish pretty firmly, however, is that any external attack upon any part of this area, from Alaska down to the further reaches of South America, would very probably involve virtually immediate mobilization and war on the part of this country. And it would so involve that mobilization and that war because the basic security commitment that we have made to ourselves is that it is intolerable, and I use the word literally, it is intolerable to our national security and our national self-interest that any part of this New World territory should come under Soviet rule.

This is probably more intolerable today than that this should happen than it was at the time of the original issuance of the Monroe Doctrine, if there be any degrees of comparability in such a way. But certainly today, the prospect of the Red Army establishing bases, to use a specific case, in any part of this territory would, I suggest, well we can't say one hundred per cent for sure, would almost certainly lead us, if I may use the language of the NIE, would almost certainly lead us into a situation of mobilization and war with the Soviet Union.

- 12 -

Whether this would operate in the same way if a Communist Government, as in Guatemala, should achieve a measure of domestic power by other than actual armed force, in the sense of external armed force, I don't know. I think you would find a measure of confusion on this issue which it would be difficult to relate to the immediate problem which would have to be solved. But if there were external attacks as used in the security commitments I have outlined to you in part one, there is no question but that that attack, I think, would be met by mobilization and war on the part of this country.

As you go around the rest of the hemisphere - the rest of the globe - to complete this picture of security commitments, however, your picture, I think, gets less and less clear until, if you go completely around to a country like Afghanistan or Iran, you get into a picture in which you can say the probability is that we would not, as a matter of national self-interest and national security, view the invasion and seizure of these countries as one which would involve mobilization and war. Certainly this is true of Afghanistan as it was of Tibet, and partially I suppose it's true of Iran, though whether the immediate needs of the moment in Iran would lead to this particular decision or not I don't know.

In Western Europe you have got a pretty good picture, I think, today of the line which we have prepared to defend as essential to our national self-interest. That line certainly includes the NATO states,

- 13 -

and it certainly includes Austria and Germany, and it certainly includes those states outside NATO, but states lying to the west of its easterly boundaries, specifically Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Ireland. It would probably exclude Finland. Whether it would include Sweden I am rather doubtful, but I would presume that if an attack were made on Sweden it would be likely, if again I may use the scale of words of an NIE, it would be likely to lead to mobilization and war on the part of this country.

In the southern area of Europe outside the NATO boundary, by this, of course, we mean specifically Yugoslavia, I think we can say that a satellite and/or Soviet attacks on Yugoslavia would similarly be met by extensive United States assistance, including manpower, which might or might not actually involve a declaration of war against the Soviet Union.

But, what I most of all would like to leave with you is the thought about this area and the area of the New World. It's not the precise frontier on which this line is to be drawn, but rather the concept that the commitment which is involved, the security commitment which is involved in this whole system of thinking, is not something that you negotiate and sign and publish and collect at the end of the year in a volume of documents relating to foreign affairs. The commitment which is involved is an unwritten guess as to where your immediate national security and your immediate national self-interest may lie with respect to this particular situation. That the Yugoslavian situation, picture, region,

- 14 -

whatever you wish to call it might at one time be and at the other time be outside this particular kind of delimitation is perfectly possible. You cannot sit down with parchment and pen and write out in detail what the security commitments of the United States are, because those commitments are a mirror of the wealth of our resources and the international situation. And at one time they may be one thing and a minute later they may be something entirely different.

Now, elsewhere, in the Middle East for example, we've spoken of Iran, we've spoken of Afghanistan, whether we would be prepared in the case of a Chinese Communist invasion of India, to move to the assistance and aid of India, in the extent involved in mobilization and war, I'm rather doubtful; we might - we might not, certainly we would move to the extent of a very substantial aid program. Whether we would do more than that I am rather doubtful. What we would do in Malaya, or Indochina if either of those areas became completely overrun by Communist troops, again I am not sure in terms of our political policy, because, of course as you know, most of these questions are outside the jurisdiction of my department and lie in the hands of higher and wiser men in the political policy side of this government.

What we would do in the matter of Indochina and in Malaya would be a problem in which they would be unhappily confronted if this situation should come to pass.

- 15 -

As far as the Far East generally is concerned, I think we can assume that only in Japan and in those parts of the off-sea area, particularly Okinawa and the Philippines where we have a special strategic interest, perhaps Formosa we should include in this, would we make any firm commitment to ourselves as of the present writing, as of 2:30 on this afternoon, to make a mobilization cum war stand with respect to a given area. And even that might change, from this might be subtracted, to this might be added, new areas as the nature of our security situation and the nature of our self-interest developed over a period of time.

Certainly, I think, we would not be likely to subtract Japan from that particular area. The basic reason, of course, is that really only in Japan do you have today the combination of resources and manpower and skill necessary to make a first-rate military power. In China you may very well have the beginnings of it, but only in Japan do you have it right now - a power able to maintain itself and able to help very substantially any external force which has possession of the Japanese Islands.

So that going around the globe, I think that you can see that we can have areas which we will regard ourselves as territorial security commitments. But we will regard them as territorial security commitments not because of these treaties, not because of the United Nations, only and simply because at the moment at which decision is made these areas lie within the broader area in which we make a generalized security commitment to ourselves, because it is in that broader area that we

- 16 -

have decided that we cannot, that it becomes intolerable to us to permit an enemy to seize control. Because if he seizes that control our position becomes then so difficult it's not so impossible that we feel that the balance of power is substantially changed to our disadvantage. So that basically this whole concept of security commitments I would sum to you as being as I suggest, commitments to ourselves in the protection of our national security and our national self-interest.

And I would suggest that as intelligence officers, it is important for all of you to remember that the formalized sort of commitment, the thing that we have put in little charts like this which appear very prettily in the New York Times on Sunday, you know, and are very well drawn with numbers, but these are really not important. These may very well represent a sort of psychological cream on the top of the pie, but they are not the reason the pie is put in the oven in the first place, and they are not the reason the pie is eaten. They may represent a sort of acknowledgement of a fact situation which exists, and they may very well represent in their various terminologies, and in the ceremonies surrounding their signing, etc., they may represent an acknowledgement of our own national security. But the basic commitment that we make is not to any foreign state, it's to ourselves and the basic commitment is that of our own security and our own national self-interest.