

BOX 164.

2. A-16 ALASKA and ALEUTIANS: October 9 - 13, 1942.

A16/Alaska Alerts
Copy for the President's files

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October 13, 1942

The Honorable
Albert B. Chandler
Chairman, Congressional Subcommittee
Investigating Military Establishments
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Senator Chandler:

I have referred the report of your committee with reference to Alaska to the Joint United States Chiefs of Staff. They have given it careful consideration, and their comments on each of the recommendations are submitted below. These comments are concurred in by me.

"UNITY OF COMMAND IN ALASKA"

"Recommendation of the Committee:

"The report recommends that unity of command be established in Alaska so as to make one man solely responsible for results in the planning and execution of the necessary offensive and defensive actions within the area.

"Comments by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

"The system of command now in effect in Alaska is one phase of the general system which has been established not only for the Alaskan Area but also for the entire Continental United States. The present situation in Alaska is representative of operations in which a Task Force of the Fleet is available for operations against an invasion attempt by the enemy. Under these conditions, the Commander of the Naval Task Force has command of all naval units and of all air units in Alaska and the Aleutians. Both the Army and Navy air units, exclusive of ship-borne aircraft, are under the immediate command of the senior Army Air Force Officer, but he is under the direct orders of the Naval Task Force Commander. The relationship between the remainder of the Army Forces and the Naval Task Force is one of mutual cooperation, including an exchange of liaison officers.

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"Should operations conducted under this command set-up (which is designated 'Fleet Opposed Invasion') prove inadequate to prevent an invasion of Continental Alaska or of vitally important territory occupied by United States Forces, then the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff will declare a state of 'Army Opposed Invasion' in which case command is vested in the Army over all Army forces, Sea Frontier forces, and Naval local defense forces.

"The system of command now established for Alaska and the Continental United States has been decided upon by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff after careful weighing of all the factors involved, and with full realization of the necessity for achieving the maximum practicable unity of command, with due regard to the realities of the existing situation and the complications introduced by geographical, weather, and communication considerations.

"ADDITIONAL MEANS FOR ALASKA

"Recommendation of the Committee:

"The second and third recommendations of the Committee are to the effect that additional planes, men, and equipment should be provided in the Alaskan area at once in order to take offensive action against the Japanese, that also construction materiel and equipment should be rushed to Alaska for the purpose of expanding base facilities, air-fields, roads, and so on.

"Comments by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

"The Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff concur with the Chandler Committee that a rapid build-up of our forces in Alaska would be desirable. It is their duty, however, to distribute and allocate the forces and equipment available in the manner best calculated to carry out our strategic aims. We are now engaged in theaters of operations all over the world. Each of these theaters offers opportunities for profitable action in the war effort, and each presents a persistent demand for the necessary means to take advantage of such opportunities. Obviously, the means are not available to fulfill these demands, nor would it be desirable to

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fulfill all of them, as this would result in an unwarranted dispersal of forces. We must, therefore, weigh these demands one against the other and determine which will contribute most to the speedy accomplishment of our basic strategy. In making such determinations, logistical considerations such as shipping and questions of supply are often the deciding factors.

"In so far as Alaska is concerned, the allocation of means receives the same careful consideration as is given any other theater of operations in the world. The Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff can state positively that at any given time the military and naval forces, aircraft and other equipment in the Alaska area will be the maximum consistent with the over-all strategy in the conduct of the war.

"SUPPLY CONSIDERATIONS

"Recommendation of the Committee:

"The method of unloading supply ships in the Alaska area and the method of letting hauling contracts in the San Francisco Bay area be reviewed with the view to making the most efficient use of the limited shipping capacity to maintain the required number of troops in the Alaska area.

"Comments by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

"The correction of apparent inequalities in working conditions and pay is a matter which is affected by the economic and labor policies of the nation. It is out of the question to regulate the pay and working hours of military personnel in such manner as to put them on an equal economic and labor footing with civilian labor. The scope of this recommendation is such as to place the permanent remedy within the sole purview of the Congress.

"Meanwhile the use of troops as stevedores and the use of military motor transportation in the San Francisco Bay area, where because of labor difficulties and other reasons

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drayage facilities of civilian agencies are inadequate, must be continued in order to accomplish expeditious loading and unloading of military cargoes. Only by utilizing such means are we able to deploy rapidly the forces available for the Alaskan area."

Sincerely yours,

/s/

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

October 9, 1942.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: Report of Chandler Committee

The Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff have given careful consideration to the report submitted to you by the Congressional Subcommittee Investigating Military Establishments through its Chairman, Senator Albert B. Chandler. The report contains four recommendations, each of which is summarized below together with the comments of the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff.

UNITY OF COMMAND IN ALASKA

Recommendation of Chandler Committee:

The report recommends that unity of command be established in Alaska so as to make one man solely responsible for results in the planning and execution of the necessary offensive and defensive actions within the area.

Comments by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

The system of command now in effect in Alaska is one phase of the general system which has been established not only for the Alaskan Area but also for the entire Continental United States. The present situation in Alaska is representative of operations in which a Task Force of the Fleet is available for operations against an invasion attempt by the enemy. Under these conditions, the Commander of the Naval Task Force has command of all naval units and of all air units in Alaska and the Aleutians. Both the Army and Navy air units, exclusive of ship-borne aircraft, are under the immediate command of the senior Army Air Force Officer, but he is under the direct orders of the Naval Task Force Commander. The relationship between the remainder of the Army Forces and the Naval Task Force is one of mutual cooperation, including an exchange of liaison officers.



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The system of command now established for Alaska and the Continental United States has been decided upon by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff after careful weighing of all the factors involved, and with full realization of the necessity for achieving the maximum practicable unity of command, with due regard to the realities of the existing situation and the complications introduced by geographical, weather and communication considerations.

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Comments by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

The Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff concur with the Chandler Committee that a rapid build-up of our forces in Alaska would be desirable. It is their duty, however, to distribute and allocate the forces and equipment available in the manner best calculated to carry out our strategic aims. We are now engaged in theaters of operations all over the world. Each of these theaters offers opportunities for profitable action in the war effort, and each presents a persistent demand for the necessary means to take advantage of such opportunities. Obviously, the means are not available to fulfill these demands nor would it be desirable to

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In so far as Alaska is concerned, the allocation of means receives the same careful consideration as is given any other theater of operations in the world. The Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff can state positively that at any given time the military and naval forces, aircraft and other equipment in the Alaska area will be the maximum consistent with the over-all strategy in the conduct of the war.

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The method of unloading supply ships in the Alaska area and the method of letting hauling contracts in the San Francisco Bay area be reviewed with the view to making the most efficient use of the limited shipping capacity to maintain the required number of troops in the Alaska area.

Comments by the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

The correction of apparent inequalities in working conditions and pay is a matter which is affected by the economic and labor policies of the nation. It is out of the question to regulate the pay and working hours of military personnel in such manner as to put them on an equal economic and labor footing with civilian labor. The scope of this recommendation is such as to place the permanent remedy within the sole purview of the Congress.

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area, where because of labor difficulties and other reasons drayage facilities of civilian agencies are inadequate, must be continued in order to accomplish expeditious loading and unloading of military cargoes. Only by utilizing such means are we able to deploy rapidly the forces available for the Alaskan area.

For the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff:

William D. Leahy

WILLIAM D. LEAHY,
Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Chief of Staff to the
Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy.

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