

# Eisenhower's Instructions To U.S. Envoy at Geneva Talks

*Cablegram from Secretary of State Dulles to Under Secretary Walter Bedell Smith, May 12, 1954.*

The following basic instructions, which have been approved by the President, and which are in confirmation of those already given you orally, will guide you, as head of the United States Delegation, in your participation in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference.

1. The presence of a United States representative during the discussion at the Geneva Conference of "the problem of restoring peace in Indochina" rests on the Berlin Agreement of February 18, 1954. Under that agreement the US, UK, France, and USSR agreed that the four of them plus other interested states should be invited to a conference at Geneva on April 26 "for the purpose of reaching a peaceful settlement of the Korean question" and agreed further, that "the problem of restoring peace in Indochina" would also be discussed at Geneva by the four powers represented at Berlin, and Communist China and other interested states.

2. You will not deal with the delegates of the Chinese Communist regime, or any other regime not now diplomatically recognized by the United States, on any terms which imply political recognition or which concede to that regime any status other than that of a regime with which it is necessary to deal on a de facto basis in order to end aggression or the threat of aggression, and to obtain peace.

3. The position of the United States in the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference is that of an interested nation which, however, is neither a belligerent nor a principal in the negotiation.

4. The United States is participating in the Indochina phase of the Conference in order thereby to assist in arriving at decisions which will help the nations of

that area peacefully to enjoy territorial integrity and political independence under stable and free governments with the opportunity to expand their economies, to realize their legitimate national aspirations, and to develop security through individual and collective defense against aggression, from within or without. This implies that these people should not be amalgamated into the Communist bloc of imperialistic dictatorship.

5. The United States is not prepared to give its express or implied approval to any cease-fire, armistice, or other settlement which would have the effect of subverting the existing lawful governments of the three aforementioned states or of permanently impairing their territorial integrity or of placing in jeopardy the forces of the French Union in Indochina, or which otherwise contravened the principles stated in (4) above.

6. You should, insofar as is compatible with these instructions, cooperate with the Delegation of France and with the Delegations of other friendly participants in this phase of the Conference.

7. If in your judgment continued participation in the Indochina phase of the Conference appears likely to involve the United States in a result inconsistent with its policy, as stated above, you should immediately so inform your Government, recommending either withdrawal or the limitation of the US role to that of an observer. If the situation develops such that, in your opinion, either of such actions is essential under the circumstances and time is lacking for consultation with Washington, you may act in your discretion.

8. You are authorized to inform other delegations at Geneva of these instructions.