

48. PCO

*Procès-verbal de la réunion du Comité du Cabinet sur la défense*  
*Minutes of Meeting of Cabinet Defence Committee*

TOP SECRET

[Ottawa], July 19, 1950

*Present:*

The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), in the Chair,  
 The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe),  
 The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton),  
 The Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott),  
 The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson).  
 The Secretary (Mr. Wright)  
 The Acting Military Secretary (W/C Newsome)  
 The Chief of the General Staff (Lieutenant General Foulkes),  
 The Chief of the Air Staff (Air Marshal Curtis),  
 The Acting Chief of the Naval Staff (Rear Admiral Houghton),  
 The Chairman, Defence Research Board (Dr. Solandt).  
 The Secretary to the Cabinet (Mr. Robertson),  
 The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Heeney),  
 The Deputy Minister of National Defence (Mr. Drury),  
 The Associate Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pierce),  
 The Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance (Mr. Bryce).

## I. GENERAL APPRECIATION ON THE IMMINENCE OF WAR

1. *The Minister of National Defence* reported that the Chiefs of Staff Committee had examined the imminence of a major war arising out of the situation in Korea and elsewhere, and had concluded that:

(a) the risk of a major war being precipitated by the Soviet Union as a direct result of the Korean situation was slight;

(b) the United States' guarantee of the defence of Formosa, together with the Korean situation, created a risk of war between the United States and Communist China, though this in itself need not result in a major war involving the Soviet Union;

(c) the Soviet Union could be expected to continue to exploit and possibly to intensify the exploitation of favourable situations elsewhere. The most probable trouble spots were Hong Kong, Indo-China, Siam, Burma, Malaya, Iran, Greek Macedonia, Yugoslavia, and Berlin. With the possible exception of Yugoslavia, however, it did not seem likely that these situations would lead to direct Soviet intervention and a major war;

(d) although such incidents, together with extensive U.S. involvement in the Far East, would lend weight to the opinions of those who favoured preventive war, no democratic government would be likely to take such a course;

(e) the likelihood that the Soviet Union would precipitate a major war was not considered to be significantly changed by the Korean war. This risk would increase when the Soviet Union:

(i) had what it considered to be an adequate stock-pile of atomic bombs; and,