

## WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#1 list	list of meetings <i>open 9-25-97 NLS 93-382</i>	undated	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.			
<del>not yet open</del> #2 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 1/4/64 <i>sanitized 9-25-97 NLS 93-382</i>	1/5/64	A
<del>S</del> 4 pp.	<i>OPEN 3-4-98 JFK 177-10001-10442</i>		
#3 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 3/13/64	3/13/64	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.	<i>open 8-9-95 NLS 93-394</i>		
#4 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 3/17/64 "	3/18/64	A
<del>S</del> 3 pp.			
#5 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 4/22/64 "	4/27/64	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.			
#6 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 4/29/64 <i>sanitized 9-14-99 30 NLS 93-395</i>	4/28/64 <i>open 2-11-10</i>	A
<del>S</del> 3 pp.	<i>dup of #6, McCone - 4/3/64-5/20/64</i>		
#7 memo	re Presidential Meeting/Meeting on 5/6/64 <i>open 8-9-95 NLS 93-394</i>	5/6/64	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.			
#8 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 5/15/64 "	5/16/64	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.			
#9 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 5/16/64	5/16/64	A
<del>S</del> 3 pp.	<i>open 8-21-96 NLS 93-395</i>		
#10 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 5/20/64 <i>sanitized NLS 9-14-99 30 93-395</i>	5/20/64	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.	<i>dup of #12, McCone - 4/3/64-5/20/64</i>		
<i>more info released 7-15-05 NLS 93-216</i> #11 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 5/24/64	5/25/64	A
<del>S</del> 3 pp.	<i>open 8-21-96 NLS 93-395</i>		
#12 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 6/6/64 "	6/6/64	A
<del>S</del> 3 pp.			
#13 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 6/25/64	6/26/64	A
<del>S</del> 2 pp.	<i>sanitized 8-21-96 NLS 93-395; same sanit per RAC 8/05</i>		
#14 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 7/28/64	7/29/64	A
<del>S</del> 3 pp.	<i>open 8-21-96 NLS 93-395</i>		
#15 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 8/14/64	8/14/64	A
<del>S</del> "C" 3 pp.	<i>sanitized 8-21-96 NLS 93-395; same sanit per RAC 8/05</i>		

FILE LOCATION

John McCone Memoranda, Meetings with the President, "4 January 1964 - 28 April 1965," Box 1

## RESTRICTION CODES

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WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
<del>#16 memo</del>	<del>Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 9/9/64</del> <i>open 8-21-96 NLS 93-395</i> <del>S 3 pp.</del>	<del>9/9/64</del>	<del>A</del>
#17 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 10/22/64 S 2 pp. <i>same as 12/97 NLS 93-282; same same per RAC 8/05</i>	10/24/64	A
<del>#17a memo</del>	<del>Addendum</del> <del>S 1 p.</del> <i>open 8-21-96 NLS 93-395</i>	<del>10/26/64</del>	<del>A</del>
<del>#18 memo</del>	<del>Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 12/1/64</del> " <del>S 2 pp.</del>	<del>12/4/64</del>	<del>A</del>
<del>#19 memo</del>	<del>Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 12/28/64</del> " <del>S 3 pp.</del>	<del>1/4/65</del>	<del>A</del>
#20 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 2/3/65 S 2 pp. <i>open 8-26-96 NLS 93-396</i>	2/3/65	A
#21 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 2/6/65 " S 3 pp.	2/7/65	A
#22 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 2/7/65 " S 4 pp.	2/7/65	A
#23 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 2/10/65 " S 5 pp.	2/10/65	A
#24 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 2/25/65 " S 2 pp.	2/25/65	A
#25 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 4/2/65 " S 3 pp.	4/2/65	A
#26 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 4/21/65 " S 4 pp.	4/21/65	A
#27 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 4/22/65 " S 3 pp.	4/24/65	A
#28 memo	Memorandum for the Record/Meeting on 4/28/65 " S 2 pp.	4/28/65	A

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1. 4 January 1964 - Review of DCI's briefings of General Eisenhower on 31 December and 2 January; review of current intelligence and other items.
2. 13 March 1964 - Meeting with President, Rusk, McNamara, Bundy, DCI. Discussion of McNamara's recommendations on Vietnam. DCI says "too little, too late."
3. 17 March 1964 - NSC meeting. Approval of McNamara's recommendations on Vietnam. More support to Khanh; no action against North.
4. 22 April 1964 - Breakfast meeting with President, Rusk, McNamara, DCI, Bundy, Mansfield, Humphrey, Dirksen, Kuchel, McCormack, Boggs, Halleck, Arends. Discussion of Vietnam, SEATO, cutback in production of nuclear material, and DCI briefings of President.
5. 29 April 1964 - Meeting with President to review DCI briefing of General Eisenhower on 27 April. Subjects included: White House organization, intelligence briefings, U-2's over Cuba, Vietnam.
6. 6 May 1964 - Meeting to review guidelines for McNamara visit to Saigon.
7. 15 May 1964 - NSC meeting with House and Senate leadership. NATO, Cyprus, Cuba, Germany, and Vietnam.
8. 16 May 1964 - DCI with President; then with NSC. Vietnam and budget.
9. 20 May 1964 - DCI with President. Senator Russell and committee on Vietnam. Israeli missile program. Soviet penetration of US embassy in Moscow. "The Invisible Government."
10. 24 May 1964 - Dinner with President, Rusk, McNamara, Taylor, Bundy, Mahon, and DCI. Discussion of future course of action in Vietnam. Prepare for action against North.
11. 6 June 1964 - Executive Committee meeting to discuss shootdown of reconnaissance plane over Laos. "What comes next?"
12. 25 June 1964 - Discussion of Ambassador Taylor's instructions, need for action to strengthen South Vietnam; contributions by other countries; propaganda.
13. 28 July 1964 - NSC meeting. OAS conference, Cyprus, Laos, and Vietnam. JCS planning for expanded US role.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

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14. 14 August 1964 - NSC meeting on Southeast Asia. Gulf of Tonkin incident. Top Nor readiness. Question - are actions in South sufficient or is major US action against North required? Dependents.
15. 9 September 1964 - Meeting with leadership. Review of Vietnam. US strength (16,000) questioned. Would troops be committed to combat? Indonesia/Malaysia.
16. 22 October 1964 - Discussions during travel to and from President Hoover's funeral. CIA organization, size, role, polygraph, etc. Vietnam.
17. 1 December 1964 - Discussion on Vietnam. First phase to strengthen South. Second phase - action against North.
18. 28 December 1964 - Intelligence briefing at ranch. Soviet military posture, Vietnam, Philippines, Congo, Laos.
19. 3 February 1965 - Discussion on Vietnam, test ban treaty.
20. 6 February 1965 - General Carter (as acting DCI) in meeting which approved US-SVN air strikes and removal of US dependents.
21. 7 February 1965 - Acting DCI in review of previous day's air actions.
22. 10 February 1965 - Meeting to approve further actions against North. "Turned the corner" on to a track of continuing and sustained operations, not just specific retaliations.
23. 25 February 1965 - Briefed President on attitudes toward negotiations, indicators to cut off northern provinces, and Vietnamese personalities.
24. 2 April 1965 - Meeting to review Vietnam. Discussion of changed mission of US ground forces.
25. 21 April 1965 - Discussion of commitment of US ground forces and level of action against North.
26. 22 April 1965 - Executive Committee meeting on proposed US courses of action in Vietnam. Need for popular support.
27. 28 April 1965 - Final meeting as DCI with President. Role of DCI. DCI position on Vietnam.

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5 January 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with President Johnson at the LBJ Ranch on January 4th.

Mrs. McCone and I arrived by Gulfstream from Palm Springs at 2:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. We lunched with the President and Mrs. Johnson, Salinger, Sorenson, Mr. and Mrs. James Reston, Mr. Reston's son, and several of the President's staff. Later we were joined by Mr. Halaby and his son.

1. I reviewed in detail my discussion with General Eisenhower as outlined in my memorandum of discussion of December 31st. Also I discussed the schedule of new obligational authority, expenditures, receipts and deficits or surplus, copy of which is attached to the memorandum. Also I reviewed the schedule of the increased military manpower as per the attached.

President Johnson reaffirmed his concern over the rising cost of government, his determination to keep costs of government down, however he did not feel reprogramming the space effort was feasible or proper despite the fact that General Eisenhower has strongly urged a space program not to exceed \$2 billion or \$2-1/2 billion a year.

President Johnson did agree that the military uniformed manpower should be reviewed as it had been built up substantially following the Kennedy/Khrushchev meeting in Vienna and the Berlin crisis that followed. Johnson made no firm statements concerning a course of action but merely noted the buildup as evidenced by the schedule.

2. President Johnson agreed with Item #5 in my memorandum on the reduction of a U.S. military presence in Europe. He stated that he intended to pursue actions which could bring this reduction about but he did not think anything could be done until after the end of 1964. I suggested we give encouragement to de Gaulle's effort to develop an integrated economy and political system in Western Europe and that if this was done then we could bring about a mutually satisfactory arrangement which would accomplish the object of reducing U.S. military manpower in Europe. Johnson made no comment as to the feasibility of discussing this subject with de Gaulle at this time. He did suggest that at a later date he and I exchange views on this subject which he felt was one which should be approached on a "new look" basis.

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3. The President agreed with Item #6 in the December 31 memorandum on the organization of his own staff and the reinstitution of some type of a Planning Board. He said that he had discussed this subject in some detail with Eisenhower and was convinced Eisenhower was right. He indicated an intention to discuss this subject with Mr. Gordon Gray.

NOTE: I should talk with Gray at the first opportunity regarding this subject.

4. I then reviewed the content of my memorandum of my meeting with General Eisenhower on January 2nd, specifically pointing out:

(1) General Eisenhower favored dynamic, imaginative actions against Cuba which would damage Castro's economy and his political standing. Eisenhower also proposed propaganda efforts designed to discredit Castro in the eyes of world opinion. I stated that Eisenhower was not at this time advocating acts of war such as an all-out blockade or an invasion of the Island.

(2) I called Johnson's attention to my briefing of Eisenhower of the "special project".

(3) Reviewed in some detail Eisenhower's views on the situation in South Vietnam as outlined in Item #3 of the January 2nd memorandum. I emphasized Eisenhower's very positive position that we must not fail in South Vietnam and his implied indication that actions proposed after McNamara's and my visit were, if anything, inadequate. President Johnson agreed completely with Eisenhower's views but stated that he did not see exactly what we could do to better our efforts which he felt were very considerable and he hoped would be effective.

(4) Reviewed the Cyprus situation.

(5) Reviewed the Israeli/Jordan water problem as outlined in numbered paragraph 5 of the memorandum.



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(6) Reviewed the fact that I had discussed the Soviet and Chinese economy with Eisenhower and the latter's reaction and his expressed desire for a ~~brief~~ briefing in depth on the subject.

(7) Returned to a brief discussion of the budget as outlined in numbered paragraph 8. The President stated that the NOA for Fiscal '65 would exceed \$102 billion and that he therefore felt that if the memorandum was to be given to Eisenhower, the figures that appear in paragraph 8 should be deleted.

(8) Accepted General Eisenhower's advice that he take care of his health, indicating he would like to have more people to delegate authority to but felt an absence of people around him upon whom he could depend.

President Johnson finally stated that he saw no important difference between himself and General Eisenhower. He felt that his problems with the Republican Party were not with Eisenhower but with other leaders of the party. He mentioned particularly Goldwater.

5. I then reviewed most recent Intelligence Reports as outlined in the attached summary made up from communications received by me on January 4th (except for numbered item 6, which was not covered because of lack of time).

(1) President Johnson wishes to consider dispatch of an emissary to talk to Macapagal in advance of his meeting with Sukarno. He asked who it should be; I suggested Richardson, although other names might be developed. The President asked that I discuss this matter with him after his return to Washington.

(2) The President disagrees completely with the views of Secretary Martin on the integrity of indigenous private capital and foreign private capital in Latin American countries and he asked that I discuss this matter with Ambassador Mann (Secretary Mann) immediately. This I agreed to do.

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(3) The President wished to have the summary of the Latin American countries delivered to him for reading upon his return to Washington. He did not retain the copy of the Telex.

NOTE: We should deliver this but it is possible that the staff may wish to expand upon it somewhat if it is to be used as a reading paper by the President, rather than a briefing paper for which it was written.

6. In noting the Checklist of 4 January, the President urged that we contact Westinghouse immediately to head off quotations of material requested by Cuba, as governed by Item 2b of the List. Also that we arrange for appropriate State Department officials to contact Seamans in Germany and any other possible suppliers of the particular equipment the Cubans are seeking.

ACTION: This matter should be turned over to DDP with instructions to report back to me as early as possible so that I in turn can report to the President.

7. The President noted the article by Eugene McCarthy in the Saturday Evening Post. He deplored the article, and thought it was unfair, and asked that I personally see McCarthy to discuss the article with him and try to put an end to the type of criticism that he has been directing towards the Agency. He also felt that we should keep in close contact with Truman, that General Carter had done an excellent job with President Truman and also expressed very great pleasure with General Carter's report to him.

8. He noted Walter Coombs' letter of December 27th and stated that he had assumed some non-political civic functions would have to be arranged and asked that I take the matter up with the appropriate people in State Department.

ACTION: I presume it best to talk with Secretary Rusk, Tom Mann and Angie Duke.

NOTE: Also I think we should give some thought as to whether Winn Scott should accompany Mateos or be in President Johnson's party when he meets Mateos in Los Angeles and Palm Springs.

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JAM/mfb (tape)



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13 March 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President, attended by Secretaries Rusk, and McNamara, Mr. Bundy and Mr. McCone -- To discuss South Vietnam report.

1. McNamara reviewed his report orally going over it page by page and ending up with the several recommendations, and explaining reasons why he had concluded against cross border operations, retaliatory operations or operations of a military nature to bring pressure on North Vietnam.

2. At McNamara's suggestion I stated my agreement with all that he proposed, but that I felt it was "too little too late" and then reviewed my reasoning and the additional proposals outlined in the footnotes to the report.

3. General Taylor endorsed McNamara's proposals and expressed disapproval of mine, most particularly the use of Chinese Nationalist Divisions in the Delta and stated if this matter was put to the Chiefs they would unanimously oppose it.

4. McNamara then pointed out that the retaliatory and cross border operations were in effect proposed by him on the basis of taking all preparatory steps so that execution could be accomplished within 72 hours but he was not asking approval at this time. He said under no circumstances would he recommend the use of ChiNat Divisions.

5. The President asked that I prepare a very brief statement of my position and such recommendations as were additive to those of the McNamara report.

6. There was considerable discussion of Lodge's views and ideas of an approach to de Gaulle as contained in recent telegrams and it was left that McNamara and Rusk would discuss this matter with Ambassador Bohlen and agree upon a course of action.

7. The President then expressed the hope that McNamara and I would get together and settle our differences so we could have a common policy in which we all were in agreement. McNamara stated this was

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By inp, NARA, Date 7-27-95

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impossible because he could not agree with the courses of action proposed by me which were in addition to those contained in his paper. The President deplored the fact that if such a split came before an NSC meeting with 30 or 40 people present, it would immediately become known to the press that the Government was divided between "hawks and doves" and there would be great press speculation and many other disadvantages. I then stated that as far as I was concerned, I would not advance my views at an NSC meeting unless specifically requested by the President for the simple reason that such matters as military and foreign policy were beyond my competence as Director of Central Intelligence; my views had been set forth in the McNamara paper because McNamara requested them, and I was expressing my views to the President because he had requested them. However, I had a statutory responsibility to advise the NSC on intelligence matters and unless specifically requested by the President, I would not go past my statutory prerogatives. Doing so, I said, would impair the value of my intelligence analyses and presentation.

*241 dissents recorded in paper to JCS*

8. McNamara then decided to transmit his report to the Chiefs without my footnotes.

9. The President then asked that I present my views to him in a brief paper so that he could give consideration to them in addition to the recommendations of McNamara.

The meeting adjourned after an hour and a half and after press and TV pictures of the group were taken.

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NEJ 93-394

By sig, NARA, Date 7-27-95

13 MAR 1964

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: National Security Council Meeting,  
17 March 1964

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
The Speaker  
The Attorney General

White House: Mr. Bundy, Mr. Forrestal, Mr. Smith,  
General Clifton, Mr. Salinger, Mr. Valenti

State: Secretary Rusk, Under Secretary Ball,  
Assistant Secretary Bundy, Mr. Sullivan

Defense: Secretary McNamara, Assistant Secretary  
McNaughton, General Taylor

Treasury: Secretary Dillon

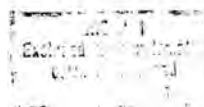
AID: Mr. Bell, Mr. Poats

USIA: Mr. Rowen

CIA: Mr. McCone, Mr. Colby

1. The President asked whether Mr. McCone had an intelligence summary. Mr. McCone said there was nothing particularly new beyond the fact that General Khanh was about to take advantage of an apparent reversal of Sihanouk's intention to deal with the North Vietnamese. Mr. Rusk commented that we will encourage the GVN to take full advantage as this might be a most important development.

2. Mr. Rusk then referred to Mr. McNamara's report on his visit to Vietnam and stated that this report contained the recommendations of the President's cabinet advisors. It was along the general



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lines of helping South Vietnam, not withdrawing and for the present not engaging in efforts against North Vietnam. He believed that if we pushed on this line vigorously, we should show improvement in several months. While he was encouraged by General Khanh's ability, he commented that the recommendations carried no guarantee of success. He recommended that the President approve them.

3. Mr. McNamara had nothing to add to these comments but invited General Taylor to comment on the JCS consideration of possible military courses of action against North Vietnam. General Taylor commented that these would be prepared although they would not be undertaken at present. He then summarized the program under the categories of reconnaissance, border control, retaliatory action and graduated overt military pressure. He commented that there would be varying degrees of U. S. participation in each activity and that there would be problems of reactions to be dealt with. JCS had only two recommended changes to Mr. McNamara's recommendations and these were that the preparation for border control and retaliatory action be accelerated to a twenty-four hour and seventy-two hour readiness rather than a seventy-two hour and one month readiness as stated in this plan. Mr. McNamara said that he would agree to reducing this readiness posture if it were not too costly in terms of tying down assets. JCS also suggested hot pursuit operations into Cambodia which Mr. McNamara said raised substantial political problems and which consequently were excluded.

4. The President inquired as to Ambassador Lodge's position and was informed that he approved all of the above actions but had added recommendations for action against Cambodia, Laos and low level reconnaissance overflights of North Vietnam. With respect to Cambodia, Secretary Rusk commented that the recent turn of Sihanouk's position made this recommendation somewhat outdated so that Ambassador Lodge had only two additional recommendations.


5. Mr. McNamara then summarized the recommendations. On No. 4 the President asked how much funds would be involved and was advised that it would come down to about thirty million dollars, which would not require a supplemental appropriation. On No. 12 Mr. McNamara stated he would lower the lead times for readiness if possible. He commented that the recommendations were supported by all action agencies of the government.



6. The President then ran over a few of the points such as "making clear", "assisting", "reorganizing", etc., and asked Mr. McNamara whether we were doing all we should to reverse the trend in Vietnam. Mr. McNamara stated his belief that if we did all the actions called for by the recommendations, then in four to six months signs of reversal should appear.

7. The President then commented that there were four possibilities, "more war" against the DRV which is undesirable; pulling out, which is undesirable; neutralization, which is impractical and consequently undesirable; and the course outlined which is the only real alternative. He asked whether this list included every possible step we could take which would give a maximum effect with a minimum involvement. Mr. McNamara stated that he believed it did. The President asked General Taylor if he agreed. General Taylor replied in the affirmative adding that even those who believed it desirable to move toward actions against North Vietnam believed that these would be fruitful only if strengthening of South Vietnam could be accomplished. Mr. McNamara then repeated General Khanh's reaction that he must establish his base in South Vietnam first and consider actions against North Vietnam later. The President then pointed out that these recommendations do not foreclose later actions against North Vietnam.

8. The President then asked whether there were any questions or any objections to the report and upon hearing none he declared it approved.

  
William E. Colby  
Chief, Far East Division

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 93-394

By ing, NARA, Date 7-27-95

27 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Breakfast Meeting at the White House - 22 April 1964

ATTENDED BY: The President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, Mr. McCone, Mr. Bundy, Senators Mansfield, Humphrey, Dirksen, Kuchel, Speaker McCormack, Boggs, Halleck, Arends, and one or two others

1. The President spoke at some length on the South Vietnamese policies, reading a letter of President Eisenhower to presumably Diem in October, 1954, indicating present policy was identical with that outlined by Eisenhower. There was some criticism on the part of Halleck, Dirksen and several other Senators because of complaints received from their constituents and American guests. The President then spoke of the proposed cutback in the special nuclear materials and turned the meeting over to Rusk who then reported on his trip as follows:

2. Rusk summarized the SEATO meeting, emphasizing unanimity with the exception of France's dissention and the communique which condemned North Vietnam for their aggression. He felt the SEATO meeting had gone very well, that France would not withdraw from SEATO. Rusk then described in detail his impressions of South Vietnam, his confidence in Khanh, his feeling that the tide had turned, and that he was confident that actions taken by Khanh since the McNamara visit are now being felt and we could expect better news in the future. He spoke briefly of the Laotian situation. He did not touch on his talks with Chiang Kai-shek.

3. McNamara then described in detail the cutback in special nuclear materials, referring to the charts which he has used right along, pointing out that even with the cutbacks we still had a very substantial quantity in excess of all requirements, including requirements for weapons yet to be developed or in fact yet to be programmed.

4. I was asked by the President to discuss Khrushchev's announcement of his cutback. I started out by saying that the Soviets' nuclear program was now in the same condition ours was in the first half of the 50's when we were substantially expanding our facilities. I said that facilities under construction, both reactors and U-235 plants, would increase the productive capacity between 60% and 70% and that these facilities would all be operational by mid-1968. When they are operational, the Soviet production of U-235 and plutonium would be about 75% of the maximum U.S. capacity. (I did not mention the present U.S. operating rates).

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I then said that we believe the plutonium reactors that Khrushchev is going to stop construction of were being built at Tomsk; we know a good deal about them, and that that would reduce their potential plutonium production so that their maximum capacity would be about 80% or 85% of the capacity expected if the two reactors were completed. Said it was difficult to understand exactly what Khrushchev meant by the cutback of U-235. It would be highly desirable if he would stop construction of some of the new plants or plant expansions; however, this was not indicated. I said that once the plants were built, it was impossible for us to determine except in rare instances whether they are operating at total capacity, partial capacity, or shut down. We can, however, determine the progress of construction. I indicated that if the Soviets completed their plants and operated them at expected capacity their production would be substantially greater than U.S. production under our program of curtailment. There was no comment on my remarks.

After the meeting I explained to Bundy and McNamara the dilemma I was in in attempting to say with any assurance what Khrushchev meant by his April 21st statement. I pointed out from the production schedules where he would be as compared with our program. McNamara dismissed the argument on the basis that our stockpile or inventory would be far greater than the Soviets'; therefore the fact that they were producing more each year than we were was unimportant. I told McNamara and Bundy that while this was all true, and I did not disagree with it, I felt we would face some pretty severe questioning from the Joint Committee. Bundy retorted that the Chairman of the Joint Committee was in agreement and that Anderson had likewise indicated his agreement.

Bundy, McNamara and I then turned to the question of briefing of Presidential candidates, the subject covered in a separate memorandum.

I then told Bundy that I was highly dissatisfied over the fact that President Johnson did not get direct intelligence briefings from me as was the custom with President Kennedy and had been the Eisenhower custom in the prior Administration. Bundy recognized this and thought that I should discuss it directly with the President upon my return and use my report on my discussion with General Eisenhower as an excuse and a good opportunity to bring up the subject.

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30 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with President Johnson - Wednesday afternoon - 29 Apr.  
4:45 in his office

PRESENT: The President and Mr. McCone

1. I reviewed in detail, and item by item, my memorandum of my discussion with General Eisenhower (memorandum dated April 27th).

President Johnson made the following comments:

a. With respect to the organization of the Executive Office, the holding of frequent NSC meetings, the supporting of NSC with an Operations Coordinating Board and Planning Board, President Johnson said he had never heard of the idea before. He said that Eisenhower had never mentioned it to him nor did he recall that I had ever spoken about it. He said he thought the NSC was functioning satisfactorily, that it met when important or critical issues required a meeting, that the staff work was adequate and he was satisfied. He said the only thing that Eisenhower proposed to him was the replacement of McGeorge Bundy with Gordon Gray.

I said that I did not wish to belabor the point; I thought he had probably forgotten the discussion that Eisenhower told me that he had suggested that Johnson talk with Gordon Gray and General Goodpaster concerning the Eisenhower concept of a proper organization, but did not think that he had advocated placing Gordon Gray in the Executive Office nor had he advocated the removal of McGeorge Bundy. President Johnson said he did not recall any of this and therefore I dropped the matter.

b. I told President Johnson that Eisenhower felt the de Gaulle problem must be solved, and if it is not solved NATO is of very questionable value. However, Eisenhower had no specific suggestions but he did feel that we had to recognize that de Gaulle held himself as a "Grand Charlie" and work around the vanity and not be concerned with it. Specifically, Eisenhower was very positive that if NATO was to be a dependable instrument, de Gaulle's <sup>problem</sup> must be resolved. President Johnson had no particular comment.

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Authority PLJ-045-001.004/1

By jc NARA. Date 2-10-10

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c. President Johnson resented the Eisenhower criticism of the wheat deal although he said that he had no responsibility for that transaction as it was an accomplished fact prior to his taking office. He defended the nuclear material cut-back stating, as he had before, that there was no deal and that he had no idea that Khrushchev was going to announce a cut-back until he was actually seated at the table at a luncheon in New York and a note was handed to him that the Khrushchev announcement had been made. He said there was no prohibition and no reason why the United States could not resume production at any level at any time if security requirements demanded. He therefore felt that Eisenhower was wrong in his criticism. I recounted the Eisenhower statement of the voluntary test moratorium in which he agreed with Foster Dulles to suspend for 60 days, only to find himself in a straightjacket from which he could never extract himself, and the United States was never able to resume testing until the Soviets had themselves broken the moratorium.

d. I then said that I was concerned that the President was not getting sufficient and adequate intelligence briefings; that I was not seeing very much of him, and this disturbed me. He said he was available any time that I wanted to see him. All I had to do was call up. I said this had not been the case on several "attempts". He mentioned that he had been very busy the last two weeks but he did not think this would be a recurring situation, therefore he invited me to bring to his attention any matters of special and particular interest; however he did not wish to be briefed just for the purpose of being briefed. He said that the Checklist summary was perfectly adequate, that he went over it carefully, and that it gave him a satisfactory feeling of the world situation.

e. I then pointed out the plan to append the list of CIA publications to the Checklist once a week. The President said this would be of interest to them, though his time did not permit extensive reading.

NOTE: I have suggested to Mr. Cline that he personally supervise the particular publications which will be listed in the President's Checklist each week.

2. At the NSC meeting the President opened by stating he had just been given a thorough briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence and turned to me and asked if there were any matters of an intelligence nature which should be brought to the attention of the NSC. It is to be noted that my discussion with President Johnson did not involve an intelligence briefing but merely a review of my discussion with General Eisenhower.

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3. I stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Laos, that I had no other current intelligence of interest to report which had not been covered in the daily bulletins of the last several days. (Cline and Colby will develop a memorandum on the NSC discussion, a copy for my files.)

4. I mentioned to President Johnson that I had discussed with Eisenhower the possibility of a Cuban shooting down a U-2. That Eisenhower first responded by indicating that he thought, under such circumstances, the offending SAM sites should be "taken out." However, after considering the problem and reviewing a map, he expressed the opinion that perhaps it would be best to take out all the SAM sites, although Eisenhower did not go so far as to firmly recommend this action. President Johnson then asked my opinion. I stated I most certainly would take out several SAM sites in the vicinity and possibly all of them. President Johnson retorted he agreed and in fact, he favored taking them all out, indicating that the public opinion, UN discussion, etc. would be just as valid on one as on all and therefore we might as well dispose of the problem in its totality.

I then told President Johnson it was unnecessary to have a U-2 shot down, that we would operate the ECM equipment, but this had been steadfastly opposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President asked that I discuss this matter with McNamara and General Taylor.

NOTE: Subsequently I reviewed this question with McNamara and Taylor and McNamara was of the opinion that JCS was incorrect for technical reasons and the use of the ECM on the U-2 would not compromise the plan to use the ECM on the B-52.

McNamara stated that the subject was very technical and therefore it was agreed to convene a technical group from Defense (headed by Fubini) and CIA (headed by Wheelon) who could examine all facets of the problem and hence McNamara and I would be in a position to make a firm recommendation to the President and the Executive Committee at a meeting scheduled for 12:00 noon on Saturday, May 2nd.

5. With regard to North Vietnam, President Johnson asked if President Eisenhower supported Nixon's recommendation to go into North Vietnam. I said that Eisenhower did not favor this. He favored the maximum effort in South Vietnam and of course would be in favor of covert and semi-covert harassment against North Vietnam, but was opposed to the Nixon-Goldwater line in this regard.

(tape and dictation)  
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SUBJECT: Presidential Meeting On Vietnam - 6 May 1964

The President

Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Mr. Forrestal, Mr. Valenti

Secretary Rusk, Mr. Wm. Bundy, Mr. Sullivan

Secretary McNamara, General Taylor

Mr. McCone, Mr. Colby

1. The meeting was addressed to a review of the attached draft memorandum, as a framework for Secretary McNamara's discussions with Ambassador Lodge and General Khanh during his forthcoming visit to Saigon.

2. The President commented with respect to page six, first paragraph, that he did not think we should be so dogmatic in our assertions that various Khanh proposals were not appropriate. Rather he said that he was sending Secretary McNamara there to examine the problem, to determine General Khanh's reasoning and upon the basis of his findings we could determine our conclusions. The item will be revised to state these as points to be examined.

3. Secretary Rusk invited the DCI to comment on Ambassador Lodge's conversation with General Khanh (SAIG EMBTEL-2108). The Director commented on the basis of Saigon 6203 (IN 76909) to the effect that General Khanh is not in any physical state of depression but that he has been overworked and is irritable with the mediocre officials around him. He then commented from Saigon 6207 (IN 76970) that Khanh's principal points were that the present means and methods of fighting the war are not adequate and that he is seeking to determine whether the U. S. will support a totally new approach. However, the specific suggestions he made have not been seriously staffed out and the Director suggested that they were more examples than formal recommendations. Secretary McNamara commented that he felt

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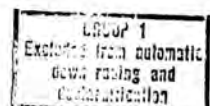
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 93-394

By rip, NARA, Date 7-27-95

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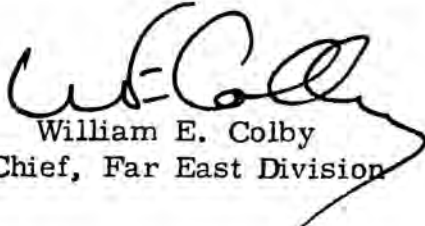
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his mission was to determine why Khanh came out with these statements and whether he believes the current course of action can only produce a long agony. The President added that he would like to know where and why Khanh felt U. S. support to be less than needed. The President stated that the U. S. does not wish to expand the war into North Vietnam or China and that Secretary McNamara should particularly concentrate on determining the basis for General Khanh's comments. If they stem from distress over his problems or the lack of support, it is one thing; if they stem from an ambition to attack North Vietnam, it is another. Secretary McNamara expressed his full agreement and recommended that we in no way assure Khanh of U. S. support of actions against North Vietnam (page three of the attached memo) until the U. S. Government itself has decided what it wishes to do. The DCI expressed his agreement with this. General Taylor commented that this should not disbar discussions of North Vietnam operations as he believed it important to obtain General Khanh's military judgment on various courses of action and the methods which would be necessary. His point was accepted.

4. At various times during the meeting, there was a discussion of the exact wording of a press question and the President's answer with respect to agreement or lack thereof with the USSR as to overflights of Cuba. All agreed that there had been a tentative agreement with Khrushchev for on-site inspections, which Castro refused to allow, but that there was no agreement, positive or negative, with respect to overflights.

  
William E. Colby  
Chief, Far East Division

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16 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting on Friday, 15 May at noon

ATTENDED BY: All members and the Bipartisan Leadership of  
both the House and the Senate

1. Rusk opened the meeting at the invitation of the President by reviewing the NATO discussions insofar as they related to the intentions of France towards NATO, the NATO Council urging de Gaulle to come forward with plans for reorganization of NATO, the problems de Gaulle has with his military who have been abroad so long, i.e. in South Vietnam, Algeria and elsewhere, that they no longer feel an allegiance to France itself. Also discussed were Cyprus, Vietnam, Cuba and the question of unification of Germany.

2. McNamara then reviewed in considerable detail the situation in South Vietnam following the substance of his report to the NSC meeting of the day before except that in reciting the facts he, for the benefit of the Congressional leadership, placed a more optimistic slant on the situation than indicated in the Colby Memorandum of the 14th of May meeting. Nevertheless the facts were essentially the same. He expressed Khanh's views were to consider a strike against the north after the end of the year as it would take until then to solidify the situation in South Vietnam so that any retaliatory moves by the North Vietnamese could be handled. He also said that Khanh believed decision to strike the north was to be a U.S. decision even though carried out by SVN. The President then asked if Khanh really was not asking for a U.S. guarantee of the integrity of the country, to which McNamara answered that since Khanh believes the decision must be one of the U.S., he obviously is looking to us to guarantee the success of the South Vietnam effort.

The President then asked General Taylor the probable responses of the NVN. Taylor stated (much to my surprise) that he feels there would be very little response unless the strike was quite large. If the strike was small, such as in bombing of isolated locations - Haiphong Harbor, oil refineries, etc., he would expect the response to be in some increased sabotage activities in SVN or some plastic bombing in Saigon. He pointed out that the NVN have no air force and no capability for an air strike and he questioned ChiCom's participation.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NEJ 93-394

By ijp, NARA, Date 7-27-95

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3. After a series of questions by Senators Dirksen and Saltonstall and Congressman Jensen, the President asked my views.

I responded that I was more pessimistic concerning the situation than indicated by the expressions I had heard. I based my position on the increased VC military activity, the obvious VC political action which is meeting some success, the VC gain of control of more people and more real estate than heretofore, political unrest within Saigon and the very great importance of the threatening religious conflict within the Buddhists and the Catholics as well. The President questioned me on this latter point, pointedly asking me if I feel the threat of religious conflict was really serious, to which I responded "yes". (It seems to me that the religious issue could very readily be "used" as an excuse or a reason for a change of policy one way or another or a defense of failure if we meet failure).

4. The President wound up the meeting by stating that a supplemental budget would be presented to the Congress on Monday.

NOTE: The Colby memorandum of May 14th meeting can be considered as a part of this report.

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16 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: National Security Council meeting - 16 May 1964

IN ATTENDANCE: The President, Secty Rusk, William Bundy,  
Mr. Sullivan, Secty McNamara, Gen. Taylor,  
Mr. McNaughton, Mr. McGeorge Bundy,  
Mr. Bell, Mr. Gordon, Mr. McCone,  
Mr. Colby and AID man (Coats?)

NOTE: Prior to the meeting I saw the President privately and alone  
for about 10 minutes and covered the following points:

1. I told the President that I gathered from discussions  
with Hedley Donovan, publisher of TIME-LIFE, and some of his associates  
that it was obvious from questions asked they were completely informed  
on all of the substance of Lodge's communications to Washington including  
the extreme and rather hysterical position taken by Khanh at that unusual  
morning meeting of May 4th. I expressed distress over this situation.  
The President made no comment.

2. I stated that CIA experienced analysts on Southeast  
Asian matters, at my direction, had carefully appraised the situation on  
the basis of all current intelligence and produced a report on "The Viability  
of South Vietnam", dated 15 May 1964, a copy of which I handed him and  
which he read. I noted that our position was more pessimistic than that  
reported by McNamara either at the NSC meeting Thursday or the meeting  
with the Leadership on Friday.

3. I told the President that I did not agree with General  
Taylor's response to his question concerning possible North Vietnamese,  
ChiCom or USSR reaction to bombing raids on North Vietnam. I pointed  
out that while it is true there are no known combat aircraft in NVN,  
several airfields have been improved during the last year and their  
runways can accept jet fighters and bombers. Also that a squadron of  
about 12 IL-28's were recently deployed into Hainan Island and, while  
we do not know if they are there at the moment (as they rotate in and out  
frequently), they could move in on short notice and could mount an attack  
on Saigon from this point. Furthermore, substantial ChiCom air force  
units, including MIG fighters, etc., are now deployed on to fields in  
southern China close to the North Vietnam border.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 93-395

By lip, NARA Date 7-30-96

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Hence if any action is taken against North Vietnam we must prepare for "the worst" in the way of retaliation and prudence therefore indicates that adequate air defense units be deployed into South Vietnam in advance of such operations irrespective of the scale on which they are carried out.

Furthermore I said I felt that Lodge's concept of denying SVN or U.S. participation in the raids was naive.

#### NSC MEETING

1. The meeting concerned itself with the budget problems attendant to furnishing additional economic and military aid to South Vietnam.
2. Mr. Bell presented a very strong argument favoring limiting the economic aid to \$40 million. McNamara insisted on the \$75 million requested by Khanh and Oanh. In his appeal he read the summary of the CIA May 15th Memorandum using that as an indication of the critical situation faced in SVN. (McNamara took no exception to the pessimistic tone of this Memorandum.)
3. I stated that I was not able to comment on the amount of economic aid which should be given but emphasized the seriousness of the situation, that deterioration was continuing and has not bottomed out and, in the opinion of CIA, the situation was worse than the pessimistic report that McNamara gave on Friday.
4. Bundy seemed to support the Oanh request of \$75 million and called on Colby who criticized the USOM-AID administration on the basis of nit-picking at the lower bureaucratic levels in Washington and Saigon. McNamara strongly supported Colby's position as did Bundy who stated that it was his impression that the South Vietnamese felt, in dealing with the AID bureaucracy, they were dealing with a "Mr. Passman". McNamara then urged \$75 million for economic aid and \$50 million for military aid. After some discussion it was decided to give \$70 million for economic aid and \$55 million for military aid.
5. There then followed a brief discussion of the Lodge cable (Bell and Gordon left the room). Rusk stated that Lodge had not been as precise in his talks with him as the May 15th cable #2212 indicated.

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Rusk asked for time to study the problem and determine a course of action. He indicated he had talked to the Canadian Foreign Minister and had presented the question of Canadian approach to Ho Chi Minh. He questioned whether the threat should be as positively stated as Lodge's cable indicated. The basic difference between Rusk and Lodge is one of timing. Rusk opposes conducting air raids prior to the Canadian-NVN discussion as recommended by Lodge. No decision was reached in this matter.

6. Bundy suggested that the next communications pass between Rusk and Lodge rather than the President and Lodge.

JAM/mfb

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20 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with the President, 20 May, 1:15 p.m.  
for about 20 minutes

1. I reviewed in detail my meeting with Senator Russell and his Committee concerning South Vietnam. Advised the President that:

a. Russell had no suggestions or alternative courses of action

b. Saltonstall had expressed objection of the [REDACTED] supplemental. Russell had indicated that he felt that it would be voted, but that it would have to come out of the overall foreign economic and military aid appropriations. In other words, there would be no increase in the total to take care of South Vietnam.

c. Russell did not see how we could go forward or withdraw (I mentioned the cow-on-the-fence example used by Russell.)

NOTE: Advised the President that in attendance were Russell, Hayden, Saltonstall, Young and Stennis.

2. Reviewed in considerable detail the status [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I drew the President's particular attention to the last paragraph of the memorandum.

3. Reviewed in detail the technical penetration of the American Embassy in Moscow, advising the President that the lead-in to the discovery of these penetrations [REDACTED]

SANITIZED

E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5

NLJ 04-216 and NLJ 95-29

By ius, NARA, Date 2-4-05

E.O. 12958 3.3(6)(1)

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4. I informed the President of the damage that I expected would result from the Wise-Ross book, "The Invisible Government." Stated it would be damaging to CIA, State, Defense, NSA and others for a variety of reasons which were discussed in some detail. I told the President of the actions I had taken in meeting with the authors on 15 May, contacts with Random House, contact with J. H. Whitney and discussing the book with Mr. Cowles of Look Magazine. I said that I felt all of this would come to naught, that I did not feel that the book would be modified, and that when published considerable harm would result. I suggested to the President that a statement could be made by him at a press conference, which at least would establish the fact that, in his opinion, CIA's actions were carefully coordinated. The President expressed regret that the book was published, discouragement over the license of government officials with the press, but didn't seem to know what to do about it.

JAM: [REDACTED]

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6  
NLJ 93-395  
By lip NARA Date 7-30-96

25 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion at Dinner at the White House on Sunday night, May 24th. In attendance: The President, Rusk, McNamara, Taylor, Bundy, George Mahon (there as a guest of the President) and McCone

1. The purpose of the meeting was to review the situation in Southeast Asia and for the President to receive the views developed at the Sunday morning meeting (memorandum of which is being prepared by Cooper and Colby), and to decide on actions to be taken.
2. Secretary Rusk pursued his position at this morning's meeting; namely, that action taken against North Vietnam should be in response to violations of the 1962 Laotian Agreement. McNamara and McCone disagreed, stating that there would be little public support for a reaction because of any issue in Laos, as Laos is not in particular the popular or important issue with the people of the United States.
3. Rusk felt that it would be difficult to justify any actions in North Vietnam on the evidence of violations of the 1954 Agreement of South Vietnam. He was not clear as to why he differentiated between the two. I made the point that the South Vietnamese issue appeared of much greater importance in the minds of the American public and the Congress than the Laotian issue. McNamara seemed to support this position.
4. The President, throughout the evening, expressed impatience that we had not reached a conclusion as to the course of action to be followed. He said that he felt that there was little developed throughout the dinner discussion that had not been evident several days or several weeks earlier.
5. I stated that I felt we must be extremely careful about action in North Vietnam. I observed that the Chiefs (at least General LeMay)

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advocated a strike deep into North Vietnam. I pointed out that if this were done it might unleash forces which could readily overcome the friendly forces in both Laos and South Vietnam, with the result that we would "lose our base" in Southeast Asia. This view was supported by Bundy and recognized by the President.

6. Bundy pointed out that the most important paper before the President was the estimate prepared by the Board of National Estimates which in effect said a limited strike against North Vietnam might cause a hesitation on the part of the North Vietnamese in their direction to the Pathet Lao and the Viet Cong, causing them to stand down their operations temporarily while events developed. On the other hand, the estimate pointed out that a large-scale attack might have just the opposite effect, i. e., intensification of action by the PL and VC and also intervention by the North Vietnamese and very possibly the Chinese Communists.

7. McNamara insisted, throughout the evening, that any action against North Vietnam must anticipate the commitment of at least seven Divisions in Southeast Asia. That while he did not intend to commit them, he felt that they should be pre-positioned and alerted. In fact, he said, they were already alerted. I took issue with this point, stating that in my opinion, (which was strictly non-professional and not supported by any studies) air attacks would be more decisive than this indicated and possibly conclusive. I furthermore said that if any action involved the commitment of troops to combat in South Vietnam, we had better forget it because the American people and the Congress would not support such action under any condition. I said that, in my opinion, the American public are fed up with adventures such as the Korean War and would not stand for another one.

8. Throughout the evening the President inquired as to whether all possible was being done in South Vietnam. The answer was affirmative and I did not take issue with this. There were some questions concerning the JCS plan of additional training and also some questions about closer integration of the SVN government and MACV. However, the meeting did not deal with these issues to any particular extent.

9. The President then summarized the course of action he desired to follow about as follows:

a. We should do all possible in South Vietnam. We should review all that is being done in South Vietnam and see that any

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possible action on our part which might improve the situation is undertaken. A conference should be arranged in Honolulu or elsewhere with Lodge to be sure that he is "on board" on everything we wish to do and that no stone is left unturned in supporting Khanh, training men, developing plans, etc., which will assist with the effort in South Vietnam. In this connection we should point out that we are handicapped by a cut in foreign aid and foreign military assistance funds by the Congress.

b. We should go to Khrushchev and appeal to him to use his offices to relieve the situation threatening the peace. The United States should be in the position of promoting peace. On the other hand, we would not stand to see a country over-run and imposed upon by its neighbors.

c. We should go to the United Nations and make all possible noise advocating peace, telling the world through the United Nations forum of the aggression from North Vietnam. This should be done through the Security Council (not the General Assembly). If a veto is encountered, then we should:

d. Go to SEATO, solicit their aid, their assistance and their support.

e. If all of the above failed, then we should prepare for action against North Vietnam on carefully selected targets (this term was not defined and the discussion did not turn to exactly what was meant by the term, carefully selected targets). If this involved a positioning of troops and other actions, then we should be prepared to take such actions.

10. These were the guidelines laid down for me for my discussion with Eisenhower, with special emphasis on the cut in foreign aid.

11. It was agreed that low-level flights over Laos would be authorized to the extent required and requested by MACV and to the extent of 9 flights per day with a 36-hour lead time on actual authorization from Washington.

JAM:mem (Tape)

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6 June 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WITH THE  
PRESIDENT. Saturday, 6 June, 10:45 a.m.**

**NOTE: Detailed memorandum on the conversation which took place being prepared by Mr. Colby.**

1. Secretary McNamara reported on the shoot-down of a Navy reconnaissance plane, the fact that the pilot was observed parachuting and had sent out radio signals and he had landed in an area infested with Pathet Lao. Efforts to retrieve him had failed and had been ordered stopped because of darkness. McNamara then recommended that a reconnaissance mission of two planes be sent out tomorrow, that it be accompanied by 8 fighter bombers, with orders to return fire if the reconnaissance planes were attacked.

2. The President then asked the opinion of each of the Chiefs. All expressed agreement with LeMay and Greene, favoring fighter-bomber operations prior to the reconnaissance flight. Wheeler and MacDonald were studying the Secretary's recommendation. The differing views were reconciled along the lines of the McNamara recommendation.

3. Rusk then was asked his views. He said that he felt the reconnaissance flights had been a deterrent to PL operations, that they should be continued to the extent "necessary and essential in developing photographic reconnaissance required by the situation". He opposed excessive flights and he opposed "loitering" to gain visual observation of villages, encampments, etc. With this restriction, Rusk agreed that the reconnaissance flight tomorrow with fighter-bomber accompaniment and orders to return fire.

4. The President then said that he questioned whether we had thought through where we are going; specifically he said, "and what comes next?" This question - the most important question raised in the meeting - remained unanswered.

5. The President then asked my opinion. I stated that it was probably true that the reconnaissance flights had ~~effectively~~ caused the Pathet Lao North Vietnamese to act with restraint. However I noted their limited time for military actions which involved going forward aggressively for a

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short period, pausing and then withdrawing was typical of PL operations and probably due <sup>more</sup> to logistic and support problems, ammunition shortages, etc., than to such considerations as our overflights. With respect to the McNamara recommendations, I supported them without hesitation or reservation.

6. The Attorney General likewise supported the recommendations.

7. The meeting adjourned.

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I then met briefly with Forrestal and asked if he had researched the SEATO Agreement and the extent to which we could lean on it if we wished it to commit actual war. Forrestal agreed to review the Treaty and the obligations over the weekend.

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I then met privately with Bundy and posed the same question to him. I said that the problems of securing a Joint Resolution were most serious as it would involve a debate on the Floor of the Senate which would probably be violent and corrosive to U.S. policy position. However in my opinion the commitment of ground troops to Laos would cause consternation throughout the country and the debate on the Hill infinitely more violent than the one that might arise over a Joint Resolution as outlined by the Attorney General. I said it would surprise me if several important Senators such as Russell and Saltonstall would not severely criticize the commitment of troops to Laos and that I felt a sampling of public opinion at this time would indicate that not one person in 50 favored such commitment. I pointed out that all of the "hardboiled spokesmen" such as Goldwater, Nixon, Rockefeller (to a lesser extent), and even Symington had advocated air strikes and envisaged our boys flying back to base in safety after having deposited their bombs on North Vietnam or elsewhere. I therefore viewed with great concern the consequences of the actions which we were "drifting into" and I wished Bundy to express this view to the President. Bundy agreed to give the President a brief memorandum.

I then told Bundy that I would send him a letter giving him my views on the Clifford report; essentially the Clifford report had pointed out the importance of the DCI's responsibilities in reconnaissance matters and the importance of preserving the "cutting edge" of CIA. Having done this, they turned around and made a series of recommendations which left the

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DCI with no authority over the program and the CIA with no participation except through the sufferance of the Secretary of Defense. Bundy said he expected this reaction from me. He would look forward to receiving my letter, and this was an issue in which the President would have to make a decision after hearing the views of the parties concerned.

Bundy then brought up the question of CIA re-entering South Vietnam in an active role such as that which had existed prior to Operation SWITCHBACK. I said that we would put our maximum effort into this providing the CIA role was clear, was *ordered* by a Presidential Directive and agreed to by both McNamara and Taylor. Otherwise we would continue "in support" as we had. I told him that a very professional, well-run operation developed by CIA over a period of several years, despite the continual resistance of the MAAG in Saigon, had been completely liquidated and lost as a result of Operation SWITCHBACK. CIA had predicted this, they regretted it, but to try to inject themselves back into the picture would cause a frightening interdepartmental quarrel unless the plan was enthusiastically endorsed by the President, SecDef, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Bundy asked that we draft such a Presidential Directive; however, before submitting it I feel that interested parties, General Carter, Kirkpatrick and others, should meet to establish a firm Agency policy position.

cc: Gen. Carter  
Mr. Helms

JAM/mfb (tape)

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**SANITIZED**  
**E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6**  
**NLJ 93-395**  
**By ig, NARA Date 7-30-96**

26 June 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT:** Discussion on Southeast Asia - 6:00 p.m. - 25 June 1964

**IN ATTENDANCE:** The President, Secretary McNamara,  
General Taylor, Secretary Alexis Johnson,  
Mr. William Bundy, Mr. Bill Sullivan,  
Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Mr. Forrestal,  
Mr. Carl Rowan, Mr. David Bell, Mr. McCone

1. The President read his letter of instruction to Ambassador Taylor and asked for comments. All approved the letter and it was formally signed.
2. The President urged Taylor be equipped with the best staff from all agencies. It was announced that Sullivan will go to Saigon to replace Nes as Deputy Chief of Mission. Bell reported that two candidates were under consideration for USOM Chief of Mission, with Jim Killim being favored. Killim is now in Korea and has had extensive service elsewhere.
3. The President then emphasized he wants Taylor's and Johnson's evaluations and recommendations and stated he would act promptly on them. He said he could not approve "going north" until the situation in South Vietnam was in better shape. He emphasized the danger of "losing our base" in South Vietnam if we carried the war north before the south was secure.

**NOTE:** In this regard he is reflecting the position I have taken with him, with Bundy, and with others for the past 60 days.

The President emphasized he was putting a first-rate team into the field and that he thought this, in itself, would improve the effectiveness of the South Vietnam government; however he was fearful of a coup and therefore Khanh must be strengthened promptly. The President stated that the recent trips of McNamara, Rusk, the Honolulu Conference, etc., have produced many ideas and recommendations but he observed that they have not been carried out by actions. He instructed the meeting to review all recommendations and proposals and to implement them promptly.

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Attention was then turned to securing participation by other countries. It was agreed that the Saigon Embassy and MAC V should supply specifics as to what was wanted and that the State Department should exhort their Ambassadors to urge other countries to help. The President placed great importance on this.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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The President was impatient that we did not have a list of specifics. McNamara made the point that we needed numbers; that we were at a disadvantage with the Congress and the public when we talked about only 5 or 10 from other countries, or 30 from Australia. What we needed was a contribution of several units from several countries and these could be engineering battalions, constructions teams, etc.

4. There was an extended discussion of propaganda. The President mentioned Eisenhower's views, expressed to him and to me, that we could not win this war unless the people were behind us. Carl Rowan stated that equipment was delivered for broadcasting, that progress was made on receiving such, but difficulties were encountered in developing a competence among the South Vietnamese to produce inspiring programs; however he added progress was being made in this area and we could expect better results in the future.

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**E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6**

**NLJ 93-395**

**By ing, NARA Date 7-30-96**

29 July 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT: National Security Council Meeting - 12:15 p.m. - 28 July 1964**  
Attended by the President, Rusk, Ball, Harriman, Thompson, McNamara, Vance, General Wheeler, Dillon, McGeorge Bundy, and McCone, plus three or four members of the President's staff, including George Reedy.

1. Rusk reported on the result of the OAS Conference, reviewing the resolution passed and the probable actions which will be taken by the OAS states against Cuba. He forecast that the resolution will have an important effect on Castro and intimated, but did not express, the thought that there would be a change in Castro's attitude as a result of the resolution. He seemed highly satisfied with the resolution.

NOTE: Check the exact terms of the resolution, as I am not clear whether it called for breaking of diplomatic relations or the discontinuance of diplomatic relations.

2. Ball reported on the discussions on Cyprus, reaffirming that some progress had been made, but there are many hurdles ahead. He expressed great satisfaction with Acheson's efforts and stated that Acheson had in effect replaced the Finnish arbitrator, who is providing Acheson with a "cover." He expected progress. He mentioned the Makarios problem, but thought that this was not insurmountable.

3. Ball then reported on Laos and South Vietnam. He indicated there was little action in Laos. The neutralist/rightist drive had begun. It was too early to detect results. The men were moving on foot through difficult terrain, but he intimated that we could expect a favorable result. He had no particular view on the political situation within Laos, indicating a wait-and-see attitude. He commented on Butler's trip to Moscow, stating that the British and the United States were in agreement concerning the terms of a summit conference. He indicated no change in U.S. attitudes or the "pre-conditions" for a 14-nation Geneva Conference.

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He stated that Khrushchev obviously was tired of the whole affair and wanted to extricate himself from any responsibility in fear that Laos might and Southeast Asia might break out into a more serious situation.

With respect to South Vietnam Ball added very little to what is known. He commented on the "go north" attitude of Khanh but felt that General Taylor's plan for some "joint planning" would calm things down for the time being.

4. Rusk stated that any change in attitude with respect to U. S. policy in Southeast Asia, including expanding the war in a manner suggested by the JCS, or any other "new look" in Southeast Asia must await the outcome of the Butler talks. He therefore dismissed any consideration of JCS plans.

5. McNamara reviewed the losses in South Vietnam, briefly reciting figures of the rising casualties, the increased rate of incidents and other difficulties. He made no statement concerning the "trend of the war." He agreed with Rusk that no action should be taken at the present time.

6. General Wheeler then said that JCS had considered three courses of action. He precisely stated the actions. He paralleled those contained in the Board of National Estimates memorandum. They involved air strikes in the Laos corridor, which he stated would "hamper but not stop" the infiltration. Secondly the intrusion into the corridor by SVN ground units and he made the same estimate concerning the effect of this. Third, the extension of the war to modest bombing of North Vietnam by unidentified and unmarked South Vietnam planes with SVN pilots. He presented this as an extension of 34-A. He estimated that this would involve no particular escalation of the war and no rise in threat from NVN. He therefore did not advocate a deployment of U. S. units, either ground units, air units or the fleet to strategic locations in Southeast Asia; namely, Clark Field, Thailand, etc. He stated that the Chiefs did not want to take such a move which would have the effect of tying up these units on a stand-by basis with no active mission and hence there would be a rapid deterioration of morale and great criticism at home.

Throughout the discussion by Rusk, McNamara and Wheeler the plan to send additional advisors to South Vietnam was mentioned

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without comment or explanation. It was accepted that since General Taylor wanted these additional men they should be furnished to him.

Wheeler reviewed the triangle operation in Laos, explained why it was going very slow, but did not seem concerned because of the difficulties and the terrain.

Harriman spoke of the use of the napalm explaining why we felt it should not be used in the PDJ and why the request of Souvanna was denied. Harriman thought napalm was a "sensitive" weapon and that its use would bring violent reaction from the Soviets and the Chinese Communists and would probably add to the pressure for a Geneva Conference on terms not desired by the United States.

The President then asked my views and those of CIA. I stated that we had no disagreement with the reports on the situation in South Vietnam and Laos. The situation in SVN was fragile but we could not detect a coalescence of the dissident forces opposed to Khanh and while Khanh was discouraged, we felt there was a better than even chance that he would survive for the next several months. (NOTE: This point was mentioned briefly in the meeting, elaborated on at the luncheon meeting.) I then said that we had reviewed the three courses of action proposed by the Joint Chiefs. Obviously courses one and two against Laos could not be considered in view of Unger's understandable opposition, which I understood had been accepted by State and JCS. (NOTE: JCS specifically referred to this in their written report.) There seemed to be no disagreement that Unger's position was valid. I then said with respect to the third course of action, the North Vietnamese response would be totally dependent upon the level of activity. An occasional bombing would probably be met in response by increased activity of one sort or another in South Vietnam, such as VC moves, acts of terrorism, etc. If the bombing increased in level of activity and the NVN felt a vital interest were threatened, we might see a deployment of air defense units, such as MIG-17's and 19's from Communist China. These indeed might be flown by ChiComs. We saw no reason to deploy military units to strategic locations, such as the Philippines or Thailand, unless and until a relatively substantial effort was programmed against NVN, which would lead the NVN and the ChiComs to feel that they were being really threatened.

The meeting adjourned after about 45 minutes. There were no policy matters to discuss. The purpose of the meeting was merely to report to the NSC.

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15  
#174778-34  
14 August 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting on Southeast Asia, 1230 on 14 August 1964

1. The meeting was convened late, at about 1230, and it was announced by McGeorge Bundy that the discussion would cover only Southeast Asia. The President began by asking the DCI to review the situation in Southeast Asia with particular reference to Communist reaction to the Gulf of Tonkin incident of last week.

2. The DCI described the situation in the Gulf of Tonkin and in South Vietnam and Laos, using the main topic sentences from the NSC briefing notes approved at this morning's DCI meeting. On South Vietnam he added a number of sentences emphasizing the fragility of morale and the political equilibrium in South Vietnam as set forth in the CIA Task Force paper commenting on Bill Bundy's memorandum on South Vietnam. In addition, the DCI repeated his previous statement to the President that he saw more grounds for pessimism than for optimism with respect to achieving US objectives in South Vietnam on the basis of present programs. Finally, the DCI mentioned that recent photographic evidence showed an advanced state of readiness at an installation in China (Lop Nor) which seems to be a nuclear energy weapons test site. He promised that an evaluation of this evidence and its impact on our estimate of the likelihood of an early Chinese Communist explosion of a nuclear device would be forthcoming early next week.

3. The Secretary of State then made a short presentation on forward planning for Southeast Asia much along the lines of Bill Bundy's memorandum on this subject. The Secretary said he felt there had been astonishingly favorable international response to US action in the Gulf of Tonkin last week, and probably more because of the restraint shown than because of the action itself. He said that Secretary McNamara had brought

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 93-395

By ing, NARA Date 7-30-96 ~~GROUP 1~~  
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up the point that we may have no way to continue increased pressure on North Vietnam without further clearly military provocations of the sort involved in the torpedo boat attack in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Secretary then outlined the forward steps set forth in the Bundy memorandum concerning Ops 34A, moves, etc. He said these steps may help the situation, but it is necessary also to be aware that they may not be enough to achieve the desired result of reducing North Vietnamese pressure on the South and that in any case increased United States military backup may be required to permit the South Vietnamese successfully to carry out some of the more active operations. In mentioning the temporary withdrawal of the DESOTO patrols, The Secretary said he thought very soon we should have some demonstration of US naval presence in the Gulf of Tonkin. He concluded by saying that the "brooding question" lying behind all of these measures was whether such a program is enough to force the North Vietnamese to stop this war in the South without the necessity of US major new military action against North Vietnam.

4. The President said that he had looked at the Bundy draft memorandum and was in general agreement with it. He said he thought the paper should go to CINCPAC and to Ambassador Taylor for comments, which was agreed by everyone. The President then said he did not have in his own mind a clear idea of exactly how the Vietnam program should develop in the next few months; but he hoped the best qualified planners and experts would devise steps to improve the situation in South Vietnam without major escalation during the period ahead, in which we cannot make a deliberate decision for any major military moves.

5. The President commented on the brief discussion in the Bundy memorandum of the possibility of withdrawing dependents in South Vietnam and said he had long felt that they should be taken out of there. He wanted to increase our military effort in South Vietnam, and he did not see why the withdrawal of US dependents would depress South Vietnamese morale. Secretary McNamara said that he thought the military view, including the view of Ambassador Taylor, would be that we should only announce the withdrawal of dependents at a time of specifically increasing military effort, so as to avoid any damage to South Vietnamese morale. At this point General Wheeler showed the President a map indicating the

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targets of a planned reconnaissance operation by two PT boats in the Gulf of Tonkin on 17 August. Secretary McNamara observed that he was in favor of such operations, but that he wanted to postpone them a week or ten days, mainly on the grounds that we should surface the whole S4A Operations program in order to take away its covert character and establish our position that it was a legitimate action by South Vietnam against similar North Vietnamese actions. The President said that he hoped the Chiefs and the Secretary could get together on a recommendation, but that there should be a delay in this specific PT boat operation until that time.

8. McGeorge Bundy summarized by saying that for the next ten days all we would be doing in the area would be reconnaissance flights [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and covert aerial re-supply of air dropped teams already in North Vietnam. There seemed to be general agreement with this statement and with the President's view that further study on forward steps should await comments from CINCPAC and Ambassador Taylor.

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*Ray B. Cline*

RAY B. CLINE  
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

cc: DCI (cy 2)  
AD/NE (cy 3)  
AD/CI (cy 4)  
C/FE (via DD/P) (cy 5)

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 93-395

By rip, NARA Date 7-30-96

9 September 1964

16

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the Leadership - 3:00 o'clock

PRESENT: The President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara,  
Amb. Taylor, Mr. McCone, and the Leadership

Amb. Taylor reported, retracing the political events since the Diem/Nhu overthrow on 1 November, and the situation as it has unfolded since then. Amb. Taylor's remarks did not deviate from the facts as we know them. He did emphasize, however, that the police would not act to restore order in Saigon or elsewhere during the recent demonstrations and incidents.

Taylor then stated the problems of forming a reliable government, selection of a Head of State and all of the other things that Khanh plans and has promised to have done in 60 days could not be done in 60 days. He therefore estimated that the rickety government of the type now existing, will exist in Saigon for many months. Taylor reviewed the plus's and minus's of the situation, stating that there was no diminution in the SVN/US effort in the field as yet and also no economic effects from the political turmoil.

Dirksen asked if Khanh was a Buddhist. Taylor answered, "Yes." Dirksen questioned concerning the differences between the goals of the Buddhists and the Catholics. Taylor said he couldn't answer, as the goals of the Buddhists were obscure. Dirksen asked what was the VC strength; Taylor responded 32,000 to 34,000 regulars, with 60,000 to 80,000 irregulars. Dirksen then referred to casualty rates, pointing out that if published figures were correct, VC losses equalled their reported regular strength each year. Taylor confirmed this, indicating replacements came from new recruitments, who were trained, and also from cadres from NVN.

Ford questioned how military operations could go forward in view of the confusion. Taylor stated they were normal because of decentralization in the practical autonomy in the four military zones.

Boggs asked whether Taylor was optimistic or pessimistic. Taylor responded that he was optimistic over the outcome, felt the course of action adopted would succeed, and that he was hopeful that a reasonably satisfactory government would prevail, that the dissensions had been identified, that steps had been taken to ameliorate some of them, that the more violent characters had been removed, and he thought things would go better.

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Aiken asked questions of the consequences of Tonkin Bay. Taylor said he couldn't say.

Russell asked why there was no stepup in VC activity during this confusion. Rusk at this point unfolded his theory that lack of Communist activity was due to talks and problems between Moscow, Peiping and Hanoi.

Dirksen asked what about defections, and where do we go from here? Taylor said many reports of defections were wrong. He cited a recent one which was absolutely untrue. With respect to the future, he said we must get a government worthy of its name, and in the meantime be sure there is no let-up in SVN/US anti-guerrilla effort.

There followed a discussion of whether other countries were helping and Rusk reported that 14 or 15 countries were helping, that Lodge had gotten all of them to agree to increase their help, and, while this didn't amount to a lot of people numerically, it was important from the morale standpoint.

Ford at this point asked if we were improving our situation militarily and Taylor (much to my surprise) said "Yes, slightly." There was more manpower in the ARVN, more U.S. advisors, the ARVN was equipped with better leadership, and that we recently made slight, though important headway in control of the population. He said that control of geography was not important, but control of population was. He said the government now controlled 32% of the population, the VC 20%, and the remaining 48% were disputed.

The President then asked for my views. I said that I concurred in the view that we must continue a dynamic effort, that we cannot lose the game, but that I was more pessimistic over the situation than even Amb. Taylor's pessimistic review. In summary I said the political differences were deep, that problems between political factions, religious factions, and individuals, both civilian and military, were difficult to reconcile and this provided a fertile field for Communist political action, and that our reports indicated that they were doing all possible to exacerbate these differences. I pointed out the dangers of the growing sentiment for neutralism among some of the factions, indicating that we have reports that certain leaders and groups advocated negotiation with the VC and/or the DRV and also expressed concern over anti-Americanism. In sum I supported the above Amb. Taylor thesis, but expressed greater pessimism over the current and future outlook than was expressed in the meeting.

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Fulbright then asked us if the 22,000 Americans were all we need. Taylor answered, "Yes." Fulbright then said, "You don't plan to fight a war all by ourselves, thus committing our troops to combat?" Taylor (significantly) answered, he hopes not. Russell raised the question why we needed so many and Wheeler responded by outlining the specific tasks, which he and the Joint Chiefs had agreed necessitated a step-up in U.S. personnel from 16,000 to 20,000. He indicated that 22,000 would be on board by late January or early February.

As to further questioning of an incidental nature, the President called on Rusk to report on the Indonesian/Malaysia problem.

Senator Kuchel asked about Moscow's interest in Indonesia. Rusk reported that there was apparent competition between Moscow and Peiping over influence of Indonesian policy and that in his opinion Peiping was in the lead. The President asked whether I concurred and I said that it appeared to me that Peiping may be more vocal because of the Chinese in Indonesia but in the final analysis Moscow would supply all Indonesian military equipment, had a powerful leverage, and hence, probably in the final analysis, had the greater influence. Questions were asked concerning our aid to Indonesia and it was reported that military aid had been cut off, some military training aid continued and the military mission remained in Djakarta, some PL 480 aid continued, but in general aid was kept at a minimum. Rusk made an appeal that the question of aid be left in the hands of the Executive so that we could use it as a trading point. (Dirksen, who has been discussing this subject with me during the last 2 or 3 days, indicated privately that he felt that he had the situation in hand and that Rusk's desires would be met).

NOTE: Following the meeting I had a visit with Hubert Humphrey, congratulating him.

ACTION: I should call Humphrey and offer a briefing.

JAM (tape)

lcc to Mr. Cline in draft.

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24 October 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with The President -- 22 October 1964

On 22 October I prepared to depart with Mrs. McCone to attend the funeral of Herbert Hoover, Sr. I was called by the White House and advised that the President requested specifically that we accompany him. I drove to Andrews Air Force Base and proceeded in the Presidential party to New York, to the services, and to the Presidential suite, 35A in the Waldorf, remaining there two hours, and returned with the Presidential party.

While traveling with the President I was able to discuss a number of matters with him. The principal items were:

1. The President stated that he did not know too much about CIA's organization but he had heard from many sources that we had a great many unusually competent people in the Agency. I responded by giving him briefly my appraisal of the quality of the personnel in the Agency from the standpoint of education, intellectual qualities and continuity of service. I emphasized the objectivity of the organization, the fact it had no parochial "axe to grind", in any field most particularly those relating to foreign policy and defense policy. The Agency looked upon its responsibility as that of collecting intelligence by every possible means and evaluating our own intelligence and that gathered by all other Community members carefully and objectively. The President asked the size of the organization.

[REDACTED] He asked about the future outlook. I said that I thought the organization was pretty well shaking down, the five-year forecast indicated no increases in personnel and the increases in the budget were minimal and attributable largely to the wage and salary increases and other escalations. I said this resulted from very careful management and that we hope to "hold the line" unless new tasks were assigned to the Agency. This would necessitate additional people and money. The President asked what part of our budget went for operational activities such as political action, paramilitary, etc.,

[REDACTED] This was the first opportunity I have had to discuss the Agency with the President. I thought he was interested and impressed.

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[REDACTED] I said that everyone working for CIA went under the polygraph at the time of his employment and periodically thereafter. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] He then said that McNamara should install the polygraph in all Pentagon personnel procedures. I responded this matter has been under most careful study for some time and it presented some serious problems. In the first place, there was Congressional objection and a great deal of criticism as many people felt the use of the polygraph in personnel procedures was a violation of individual rights. Secondly, the Pentagon was so enormous and there were so many people in the Services rotating in and out of the Pentagon that the use of the polygraph presents enormous practical problems. Furthermore there was a question of where it should be used or not used, as almost everyone in the building was exposed to sensitive materials and information.

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3.4(b)(1)

During the discussion the President seemed to appreciate the practical difficulties involved in the suggestion he made.

3. The President asked if I would write 1,000 to 1,500 words on the manner in which intelligence supports our security and the results of my trip to Europe. He said he thought this would be a good subject for his speech at the University of Miami on Sunday night. This paper is being prepared. *(Done but not used)*

NO DISTRIBUTION EXCEPT IF WE SEND A POUCH TO DDCI, THIS MAY BE INCLUDED.

JAM [REDACTED]

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26 October 1964

ADDENDUM to MR on Meeting w/President on 22 Oct 64

The President questioned me concerning South Vietnam, specifically asking whether I felt we could win the war or, rather, accomplish our objectives. I replied that I thought it very questionable that we could establish a viable government and a large and sufficiently powerful military and police force to contain the Viet Cong movement if our activities and those of the South Vietnamese were confined to South Vietnam. I stated that in my opinion the North Vietnamese could keep the pressure on by providing supplies and by direction and encouragement from North Vietnam and thus present the South Vietnam government with an unmanageable situation and the U.S. government with an extremely costly operation against which, ultimately, public opinion would revolt. I concluded that I felt our objectives could only be accomplished by carrying the war to the north. The President then asked if this would not mean engagement with the Chinese Communists. I responded that this was not necessarily true, and carefully controlled air actions directed against supply routes, POL, military depots and installations in the southern part of NVN would probably be effective and would probably not result in an overt NVN reprisal or ChiCom military move. I said that as the extent of operations against NVN increased, and the damage to vital NVN industrial installations became greater, then it would be more difficult to forecast just what the NVN and the ChiComs would do.

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**By ig, NARA Date 7-30-96**

4 December 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT:** Meeting on Tuesday, December 1st, to reach decisions on course of action in South Vietnam

**PRESENT:** The President, Vice President-elect, Secretary Rusk, William Bundy, Secretary McNamara, Mr. McNaughton, Gen. Wheeler, McGeorge Bundy, Amb. Taylor, Mr. McCone

1. The President specifically requested that the discussions of the meeting and the views expressed not be recorded nor communicated outside of the group listed above. Therefore I am not dictating a memorandum on this meeting but attached are my written notes.

2. The President made two points abundantly clear:

a. The strengthening of the South Vietnamese government was essential. He criticized past failures on our part to bring this about. He emphasized time and again, and in a number of different ways, the extreme danger of any intensified actions against NVN unless we had a viable government in South Vietnam, otherwise we would lose our base.

b. Secondly, the President insisted upon third country support. He ridiculed the extent of support indicated in the papers which have been submitted and which are a matter of record. He insisted that Taylor give him a statement as to the maximum third country support he could utilize and that the Secretary of State negotiate for such support within a week's time. If not, he would take a hand in it himself. The President indicated that third country support of our effort in South Vietnam would weigh heavily in his decisions on foreign and military aid.

3. Finally the President agreed upon the course of action recommended in the most recent draft of papers, in the statement Ambassador Taylor was to make to the Huong government, and in the contemplated actions during the 30-day initial period and the 30-day transition period.

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4. The President then went around the table asking the views of each in attendance.

My views were as follows: The initial actions (first 30-day period) will involve very little DRV action militarily or towards negotiation on terms satisfactory to us. We could expect acts of reprisals in South Vietnam resulting from successful mar-ops or other authorized U.S./GVN activities. Reprisals might possibly be taken against Americans. We could also expect an increasing level of propaganda from Hanoi, Peiping, and Moscow and the appearance of more materiel in North Vietnam from Moscow.

During the transition period the DRV reaction would be about as above except at this point some ChiCom volunteers might appear. There might be more of a tendency by the DRV to negotiate, but we could expect no softening in their "tough line."

I then questioned whether we could expect the <sup>Huong</sup>~~Hanoi~~ government to demonstrate its strength and capabilities within the time frame of the initial and transition period (60 days), as in my opinion it would take a much longer period for <sup>Huong</sup>~~Hanoi~~ to stabilize the political situation and to make visible progress both in Saigon and throughout the Provinces. Hence, consideration should be given to carrying the first phase for a longer period -- perhaps 6 months -- before initiating the second phase against NVN. Certainly I agreed with the President's view that the SVN government must be secure before we go very far against the north as it is obvious that the VC has a "burst capability." Finally, I pointed out that reprisals and counter-reprisals could very easily escalate the whole thing into phase 2 at an earlier period than we would like. I therefore urged caution in reprisals. This point was discussed and it was agreed that U.S./GVN reprisals would be weighed at the policy level before being taken in the field -- in other words, Ambassador Taylor and MACV were not authorized to initiate reprisals against the north without specific sanction from those in Washington responsible for policy.

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**By sig, NARA Date 7-30-96**

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19  
4 January 1965

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Briefing of President Johnson at Johnson City, Texas, December 28, 1964

1. Reviewed the subjects covered in the briefing notes, Nos. 1 through 27 which should be made a part of this memorandum. In this connection, I emphasized the following:

Reduction in manpower of the Soviet armed forces represented a reappraisal and a new estimate but not a reduction. There was no evidence of a reduction through demobilization.

2. Emphasized that new ICBM's, bigger and better, indicated Soviet policy of qualitative improvement with no attempt to match the U. S. quantitatively. We cannot explain this policy except that they hope for a breakthrough in strategic offensive techniques which will offset U. S. quantitative advantage.
3. Ground forces developing marine type units, are placing great emphasis on sealift and airlift, with apparent intent of developing a Commando capability for operations distant from the USSR. This is new because Soviet military forces have been landlocked since, and for that matter, prior to World War II.
4. The Soviet Air is relatively static. A new supersonic fighter plane being introduced but no evidence of supersonic long range bomber, although the Soviets have capability for such a development.
5. Air defense an enigma. After reviewing all evidence presented in attached papers, I concluded that Soviets were on an unexplained approach to either ABM or aircraft defense with a strong possibility that they had or were approaching a new technique. The status of construction in some of their facilities did not permit an accurate analysis of Soviet state of the art or air defense.
6. Soviets continue to expand special nuclear material production facilities, and I reviewed the figures in the paper, also photography of plant development.

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7. In pointing out the extensive new HENHOUSE radar developments, I stated that these facilities, which were very expensive, exceeded requirements for tracking satellites, were not properly located for Early Warning, and therefore were quite possibly directed toward an anti-satellite capability to "blind" us from photographic intelligence gathering and we must be alert for this eventuality.
8. In summary, we were seeing a dynamic, progressive Soviet military program that was not being cut back, that was sophisticated, that was directed toward quality rather than quantity, and that there was a possibility of a breakthrough of some sort which would redress the present balance of power. This I said must not be overlooked and we must continually be on the alert for such a development.

9. VIET NAM

Reviewed current conditions in South Viet Nam and in North Viet Nam. The President questioned whether we should make a reprisal for the bombing of the BOQ in Saigon. I advised against it, stating it was very difficult to trace the responsibility for this bombing to North Viet Nam. The President was non-committal as to his policy. In this connection, I said again and again that we were wrong in knocking over Diem, that I had told President Kennedy that if we moved in this direction it would result in political chaos, and this is what had happened. We went forward without being prepared to take the consequences of every possible result, and the possibility had happened and therefore we were in trouble. If we go North, there are a whole series of possibilities. Each of these must be examined and we must be prepared to counter the most remote of them before we take such a step. We cannot take this step thoughtlessly. We must have a stronger and more viable government in South Viet Nam. While striking the North might not bring unmanageable consequences, there could be very serious ones which I did not think we had planned to take care of.

10. Philippines

I said our reports indicated the Philippine situation not as serious as the press had indicated; however, it could build up, although I felt it would not necessarily do so.

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11. Congo

Reviewed the situation as covered in the paper.

12. Laos

Discussed the Laos situation as covered in the paper.

In connection with South Viet Nam, North Viet Nam, and Laos, told the President that we would report developments currently and fully and had issued instructions not only to the CIA but to the entire Intelligence Community.

The briefing was comprehensive. The President had few questions and very few remarks.

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3 February 1965

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with The President re South Vietnam

I told the President that I was exceedingly worried about the developing situation in South Vietnam and that reports received today indicated the prospect of a more serious and immediate political crisis in Saigon than was earlier anticipated. I explained that all reports from the Embassy and the Station indicated that Khanh's arrangements with the Buddhists had come unglued and he apparently was in serious trouble with most of the Generals. Therefore I felt the reports that Khanh's "days or even hours" were numbered were probably true. I therefore concluded that there was a high probability of immediate trouble.

I then pointed out to the President the composition of the Kosygin mission, indicating that with the Chief of the Soviet Air Force, the Chief negotiator for aid, and the Chief Civilian Aviation Minister included in this party, leads me to the conclusion Kosygin would offer military equipment, at least for air defense such as surface to air missiles, supplies and materiel to continue and intensify insurgency and would provide logistic support. In the final analysis we felt that Kosygin would encourage Hanoi to intensify what they were doing now in the way of subversion, political action and guerrilla activities and to avoid overt military action which would bring a confrontation with the United States. The President read the 2 February Watch Committee Report and then said, "If you were President of the United States, what would you do about it?"

I responded that we must produce a viable Government by breeding acceptable military leadership with the Buddhists and other civilian segments to produce the best possible Government and while this appeared difficult, I did not think it was impossible.

I said even with this we could not win the way we were going and therefore we must take military action against North Vietnam. I advocated bombing of selected targets in North Vietnam, starting in the south and working north and carrying the raids on intensively, that is at least one a day. I said that we should gradually work towards the north but should not strike deeply into North Vietnam territory (as advocated by the JCS) at the start.

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By cb, NARA Date 6-3-96

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The President asked if this would not bring in the Chinese Communists in the air or on the ground. I said there was a possibility that they would come in on the ground but they had little capability in the air. I said we had to face this contingency and be prepared to handle any possible development but added that while Chinese Communist ground intervention was a possibility, I did not estimate it as a probability under the course of action advocated.

The President then asked that I communicate with Bundy through ~~xxxx~~ our Chief of Station and develop immediately a cast of characters that might formulate a compatible Government, i.e. military, Buddhists, etc. With respect to Catholics, I said they would be difficult to handle but I did not think they would resort to extreme measures unless the Government established in this way represented a threat to the Catholic community.

The President questioned me concerning consequences of our withdrawal from Vietnam and I said that it would pave the way toward Communist takeover of all of Southeast Asia. I mentioned current moves in Thailand, the situation in Indonesia, and the probable developments in Malaysia under such circumstances.

Soviet Test 15 January/Test Ban Treaty. I explained to the President the results of the analysis of JAEC and its consultants and read him my memorandum, copy attached. I told him the substance of the memorandum to go to the Soviets, but I did not have the final draft. The President approved my reporting to the Joint Committee and others in Congress, if necessary, along the lines of my memorandum. I warned the President of the danger of any impression growing on the Hill that we were not carefully monitoring the Test Ban Agreement. I said that many Senators were "keeping book" and if the impression developed that the Administration was not doing a careful job of monitoring the Test Ban Agreement they would never support us on any other disarmament agreement. The President agreed with my concern.

We reviewed the President's proposed speech and I suggested some modifications, which he accepted. The balance of the conversation was personal.

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7 FEB 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : White House Meeting on Vietnam, 6 February 1965

PARTICIPANTS : The President, Mr. Smith, Mr. Reedy

Secretary McNamara, Deputy Secretary Vance,  
General Wheeler

Under Secretary Ball, Assistant Secretary William Bundy,  
Ambassador Thompson

Secretary Dillon

Director of USIA Rowen

The Speaker

Senator Mansfield

General Carter, Mr. Colby

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NLJ 93-396  
By CB, NARA Date 6-3-96

1. Mr. Vance reported to the President a telephone conversation with McGeorge Bundy which relayed the unanimous recommendation of the Country Team to authorize joint U.S./Vietnamese strikes at four targets in North Vietnam. There was some discussion of the number of aircraft involved, the fact that very slight resistance was expected and the need for a rapid decision in order to permit the strikes to take place during the remaining hours of daylight in Vietnam. Secretary McNamara pointed out that all the targets are in southern North Vietnam and all are directly related to North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam. He pointed out also that the targets were deliberately selected to avoid the necessity of a large operation to take out the MIG defensive forces in the North in order to permit a strike.

2. The President's first question was whether the U.S. efforts would be apt to alert the enemy which then could take advantage of the follow-on by the Vietnamese, as the latter were expected to be slower in getting off. Mr. McNamara expressed his doubt of this and his belief in the great importance that the Vietnamese actually do participate. Mr. McNamara pointed out that

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the matter had been cleared in general with the GVN hitherto and would be in response to a GVN request on this occasion. Asked who the "GVN" would be, he replied General Khanh.

3. The President then questioned how the Viet Cong had been able to launch the attack on Pleiku and whether there was a failure of local security. This was discussed generally, it being pointed out that infiltration even into the Pleiku area is not too difficult.

4. The President then asked the estimated effect of the proposed air strike. The reply emphasized that the objectives were mostly military, the main effect would occur in the Dong Hoi attack and that the estimated casualty rates ran in the neighborhood of 4,000 military with few civilians.

5. The President then asked Mr. Ball's views. Mr. Ball pointed out that all agreed that a retaliatory strike was necessary and he suggested that the targets chosen were appropriate. He said that the main problem would be how to handle the publicity and the Kosygin connection. He emphasized the necessity of relating the Pleiku attack and the infiltration directly to Hanoi, and to permit Kosygin the belief that he had been mouse-trapped by the North Vietnamese.

6. The President then requested consideration of the dependents question. He was informed that the dependents could be gotten out in 48 to 72 hours. This met general approval and the Speaker commented that the removal of dependents at this time would indicate the firmness of our intentions.

7. The President then went around the room asking each person if he concurred. All but one did so, especially Mr. Ball who emphasized the necessity of establishing an adequate and prompt response to the Pleiku attack. General Carter pointed out that the U.S. stood down the DeSoto Patrol and U-2 flights in deference to Kosygin's visit, but the enemy did not provide any similar recognition of Mr. Bundy's visit. Ambassador Thompson indicated his belief that the Soviets would protest and denounce and might call for a conference but that inaction would be worse. No exceptional enemy reactions were anticipated from either the Chinese or the North Vietnamese, although the Viet Cong was expected to step up its efforts, according to General Wheeler.

8. Senator Mansfield protested the decision, indicating that he thought that caution should be our watchword. He pointed out the lack of a solid government in Vietnam and indeed wondered what government we had cleared

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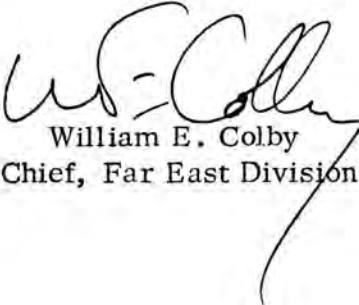


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this operation with. He further suggested that the dependents should be gotten out before any actions were taken. He particularly emphasized that the implications and possible developments from this step be carefully analyzed, including the possibility of engaging in a large-scale conflict with China, the position the Soviet Union would take, probably assisting the healing of the Soviet-Sino split, and in summary believed that the results could be worse than Korea.

9. The President took the opposite opinion, emphasizing that he had kept the shotgun over the mantel and the bullets in the basement for a long time now, but that the enemy was killing his personnel and he could not expect them to continue their work if he did not authorize them to take steps to defend themselves. He commented that "cowardice has gotten us into more wars than response has." He particularly recalled the fact that we would not have gotten into World War I if we had been courageous in the early stages, nor World War II. He then said he realized that there was a risk of involving the Soviets and Chinese but that neither of these are friendly with us and the problem is to face up to them both.

10. The President then decided to authorize the strikes, move the dependents and to meet again to consider further steps at 8:00 a.m. The execute order would be conditioned on the Vietnamese government's approval. For the dependents, the President directed that the Defense Department provide such additional military transport as would be necessary in order to move them rapidly.

  
William E. Colby  
Chief, Far East Division

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7 FEB 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : NSC Meeting, 7 February 1965

PARTICIPANTS : The President, Mr. Reedy, Mr. Kater, Mr. Valenti,  
General Clifton, and others

Secretary McNamara, Under Secretary Vance, General  
Wheeler

Under Secretary Ball, Assistant Secretary Bundy, Assistant  
Secretary Greenfield, Ambassador Thompson

The Speaker

Senator Mansfield

Representative Ford

General Carter, Mr. Colby

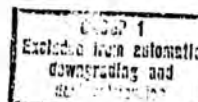
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**E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6**  
**NLJ 93-396**  
**By CL, NARA Date 6-3-96**

1. The first part of the meeting was devoted to editing the White House release on the evening's developments. General Taylor had recommended that the reference to the Tonkin incident be taken out as it was only a one-time activity. State agreed with this position. It was decided, however, to leave the reference in a modified form.

2. Senator Mansfield suggested that the release give particular emphasis to the President's resolution to avoid any wider war and that it indicate that we are prepared to bring this incident to the UN or to a reconvened Geneva Conference. The President said that his advisors had told him that it was hopeless to expect anything out of the UN, which Mr. Ball confirmed from Ambassador Stevenson. With respect to the Geneva Conference, the President said that he would be prepared to consider this somewhat later but not at this moment. Mr. Ball emphasized that any Geneva Conference should only be entered from a position of greater strength than we now have.

3. Mr. McNamara then gave a review of the situation. He brought out that Ambassador Taylor had recommended that all the additional targets not hit on the first run be undertaken on the second day. However, Mr. McNamara said he

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and Mr. Ball were of the opinion that additional U.S. strikes would not be appropriate but that a VNAF strike with U.S. support was not only appropriate but quite essential, in order to demonstrate full Vietnamese participation. Mr. McNamara and Mr. Ball based their recommendation on the desirability that Hanoi and Moscow not be led to believe that the U.S. had begun a full-blown offensive effort. They recommended that this be a matter of separate consideration and decision and not to be the result of bad weather. Mr. William Bundy reported that Ambassador Taylor will probably recommend such a steady increase in pressures but he also agreed that this should be considered separately perhaps after Mr. McGeorge Bundy's return. General Wheeler pointed out that the JCS believes that increased military pressures are needed but that these are not needed immediately and he agreed with the recommendation. Ambassador Thompson pointed out that another American strike could be construed as an American campaign whereas a VNAF strike would be comparatively easy to explain. The latter also left Kosygin some leeway. Senator Mansfield asked whether Kosygin would not consult with Peking on his way back to Moscow. Ambassador Thompson said that he might consult but that the leadership of the Soviet Union today is so much a collegial affair that no decision could be arrived at before Kosygin returned to Moscow to consult.

4. It was brought out that the VNAF alone might not do much but Mr. McNamara said they definitely should try. Mr. Dillon wondered at the possible bad effects of a VNAF failure. General Wheeler commented that they should be able to accomplish something, especially with full American assistance in navigation, flak suppression, etc. Senator Mansfield agreed with the current action as did the Speaker. The President said that he would agree with this step but wait for Mr. Bundy's return before making any decisions as to further courses of action.

5. Representative Ford stated that he found it difficult to understand why a plan that was considered appropriate last night was now stopped when only half-way completed. The President pointed out that the decision was to make a "prompt and adequate" response, that no one other than those present knew how many targets were contemplated and that the one target hit was by far the biggest and had the most potential for damage. He also said that he wished to have a chance to review the matter with Mr. Bundy on his return before making any decisions as to going further than the present. He added that a prompt, adequate and joint (with the GVN) reply was what was sought. Representative Ford indicated that he would prefer the original plan and Ambassador Taylor's recommendation. (COMMENT: Representative Ford's raising this was partly caused by his reading a CIA summary that preliminary post-strike reporting

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indicated that "at least some damage" was done. The President picked this up and asked whether CIA had any separate reports, which General Carter indicated was not the case. Mr. Vance and General Wheeler indicated that the reporting did indicate very substantial damage to the target area.)

6. Senator Mansfield stated that he believed that the purpose of the operation was to impress Ho Chi Minh, General Giap and so forth. He therefore agreed with Mr. Rowen and General Wheeler that it was necessary that Vietnamese participate in the operation, but that it was not necessary to go any further at this time. The President commented that he also intended to impress Kosygin and a number of others in the world, including our own citizens.

7. The President then emphasized the necessity that the VNAF strike's success be assured by the fullest possible support from the American side. He also directed that an extensive effort be made to determine the extent of the damage done in the first strike. He said that he would consider General Taylor's recommendation but that he would await Mr. Bundy's return before any additional steps.

8. With respect to dependents, it was pointed out that Ambassador Taylor preferred a 15 to 30 day evacuation on a deliberate scale in order not to create any feeling of panic. The President indicated considerable impatience with this saying that this 15 day type of operation had been going on for 15 months and he wished it to move. Secretary McNamara indicated that he preferred a rapid evacuation and wondered whether the President would accept a one or two week period. The President stated that he did not wish to have the number of days precisely fixed but he wished to push Ambassador Taylor to all deliberate speed, to provide him with all facilities, etc. However, he preferred that the matter not be exposed to public discussion until an agreement with Ambassador Taylor could be obtained. He therefore directed Secretary McNamara to consult with Ambassador Taylor on the phone in order to seek some agreement. Senator Mansfield commented that it might be good to scare some of the Saigonese who have participated too little in this war to date.

9. The President then went around the room asking for any additional comments. With respect to CIA, he asked whether it had any reports he should be made aware of or whether it had any suspicions as to what may happen. He commented that he did not wish to be told later that we had suspected something. General Carter said that all our reporting had been made available and that we had no reservations.

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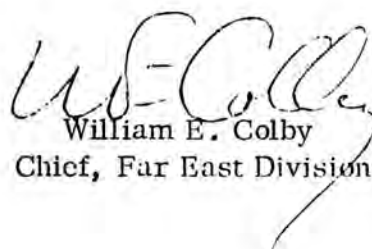


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10. Ambassador Thompson then commented that he anticipated the possibility of an action by the Communists in Laos, and by the Chinese to strengthen the defenses of North Vietnam. He believed that the result would be more apt to divide China from the Soviets than to put them together. General Wheeler anticipated additional Viet Cong pressure in South Vietnam.

11. Senator Mansfield said he had spoken frankly in response to the President's invitation but wished to assure him, now the decision was made, that he would work to support him.

12. The President made clear his insistence that all avoid comment on the meeting and refer questions to the State and Defense Departments.

  
William E. Colby  
Chief, Far East Division

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10 February 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting at the White House, 10 February 1965 - 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

ATTENDING: President, Vice President, McNamara, Vance, McNaughton, Adm. MacDonald for the JCS, Secty. Dillon, Carl Rowan, Ball, William Bundy, Unger, Thompson, McGeorge Bundy, Chet Cooper and McCone. Also Bill Moyers, Jack Valenti, Reedy and Watson (White House staff were in and out).

1. McNamara explained the recent reported events in South Vietnam including the bombing of the enlisted quarters at Qui Nhon, the SVN/VC battle near Danong and a number of other incidents. McCone distributed the CIA summary of events of February 7-8-9, copy attached.

2. McNamara then raised the question:

- a. Should we retaliate?
- b. When?
- c. What targets?

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By CL, NARA Date 6-3-96

His recommendation was immediate retaliation on specified targets, including a bridge (Target 14) within 75 miles of Hanoi.

Secretary Ball took exception to timing. He and Thompson placed great importance on the presence of Kosygin in the Far East. He felt that action by us during Kosygin's stay would prompt a greater Soviet reaction than would be the case if we waited until Kosygin returned to Moscow. Thompson supported this view; he laid particular emphasis on the visit of Kosygin to North Korea, stating that this would widen the Sino-Soviet schism; furthermore he noted the complications and the competition between the Soviets and the ChiCom over the forthcoming March 1st meeting. Ball, or more particularly Thompson, seemed anxious to tamp down any reaction on our part, deferring it at least until Kosygin's return to Moscow, and very possibly until March 1st.

3. The Vice President expressed support of the Ball/Thompson position. He also made the point that the South Vietnamese have to fight. He raised the question as to whether the South Vietnamese should not conduct these attacks, rather than the Americans. He questioned why the NVN police state was so good and SVN in such turmoil and ineffective. McNamara noted that even in a "South Vietnamese attack", U.S. planes provide the cover, flak suppression and the navigation. Therefore, there is a presence of half or more U.S. planes in a SVN strike.

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4. I expressed and advocated very strongly an immediate U.S./SVN strike of substantial proportions and urged that this be done promptly. I took issue with the arguments that we should defer action because of the Sino-Soviet split, the March 1st meeting and the totality of the political relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States. I stated that the Sino-Soviet split, the issues and the depths of the quarrel, was not wholly understood by us; that I did not think our actions would necessarily control it or its depth. Moreover, the March 1st meeting was an uncertainty and I did not think our actions would have a great deal of bearing on it. I said we must not lose sight of our purpose, which was to help South Vietnamese win freedom from Communist aggression and this could only be done by dynamic and positive action on our part which should not be compromised for collateral reasons. I pointed out the attack of Monday had already had salutary effects on the political situation in Saigon and that if we did not move in this instance, there would be serious disappointment and disillusionment. I therefore urged not only prompt retaliation but a program of sustained action against the North, selecting targets in the southern part of NVN, and predicted that this would cause Hanoi to reappraise and very probably modify their VC and PL support policies.

5. McNamara and Bundy exchanged views on whether we had turned the corner and had moved in the direction of sustained and repeated strikes, rather than occasional retaliations. McNamara took the view that retaliation was for all the actions of the NVN/VC in the South and not for any single specific VC operation; therefore we should keep going.

6. The President asked the field recommendations. McNamara read the latest cable which supported his earlier recommendations. The President asked the JCS -- Admiral MacDonald said there was unanimity that we should go right now.

7. Dillon, McGeorge Bundy, William Bundy, Unger, Carl Rowan, all expressed support of immediate action, with statements concerning how it should be kept in a low key, announced out of Saigon, etc., etc.

8. Thompson then suggested that we might defer action for a few days but announce that we were going to take retaliatory moves at a time of our choosing. This would permit Kosygin to get out of the Far East. This idea was vetoed. Thompson then suggested we work out communications to Hanoi, Peiping and Moscow concerning our purposes and see if they were not prepared to modify their tactics. It was agreed that we should keep open channels, which would probably be meaningless, as discussions would be on their terms, not ours.

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9. The President then raised the question of VC targets in South Vietnam. He seemed to feel that with all the Viet Cong and their irregulars, totaling in excess of 100,000, there should be some lucrative camps as targets. McNamara explained that there weren't.

10. Ball then raised the question of what would happen when the MIG's came in. He developed a scenario of MIG opposition, followed by the need to take out the MIG bases in North Vietnam. This then would be followed by ChiComs introducing MIG's from bases across the NVN border; then this would escalate into the necessity to take out those bases. Hence, he could see we were starting on a course that would escalate into an all-out conflict with China.

11. The question of China participation was raised. I stated that there was a possibility of Chinese volunteers coming in at any time and a capability to introduce them. They might do so. However, we did not believe they would introduce organized units now. At this point I said that the introduction of Chinese at this point was not considered a probable event, however, it was very definitely a possibility and in the consideration of our actions, we had to plan to take care of every single possibility, irrespective of how remote, and to be prepared to commit the forces, the resources, the money, etc., to this end. The President was in agreement with this point. NOTE: This was a repetition of what I had told him privately a week ago.

12. The President then raised the question of how we can prove that the support and direction of the VC was coming from Hanoi. McNamara and Ball quickly responded that this could be proven in the most positive and undeniable way and that State, Defense and CIA were working on papers which would convince even the most doubting people that this was true. (I did not enter into this discussion as I am not familiar with this effort, and I am not sure that the case can be undeniably proven, although I am convinced that this whole operation is directed out of Hanoi.) (Carter follow this up).

13. The President then invited a general discussion of the protection of our bases. McNamara repeated his position that it is impossible. It would take at least 100,000 men, 44 battalions, and the presence of such large forces in South Vietnam would be unacceptable for a variety of reasons. (I did not engage in this discussion as I don't believe this to be the case. I think that we can, and must, figure out some way to protect our bases and believe that a net of clandestine operations can be created by the intelligence community which would serve as "Paul Revere's" to furnish warning. (CIA follow this up.)

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14. Finally, there was a general agreement that the strike should take place at first light or as soon as command in the field could organize the operation. The Target 14 bridge was withdrawn, also the strike should be conducted by both the South Vietnamese and the U.S. Ball concurred, Thompson continued his reservations, and William Bundy interposed no objection.

15. Following this meeting, McNamara, Ball, Bundy, Dillon, and I remained to work out a press release. Bundy stated that the President had "turned the corner" and we were on the track of sustained and continuing operations against the North. I said this was a change from Monday, because I got the impression on Monday that he was approving a retaliation for a particular event. All in the room, and most particularly Dillon, stated that I had misunderstood the President's decision, that he did indeed turn the corner on Monday, and that a program of sustained operations, which was in effect the carrying out of "Phase II" was the order of the day. Despite this, I continue to feel that we are operating consciously or unconsciously on a "reprisal basis" and that if we were to run into a period of a lull for two weeks or three weeks in which no serious atrocities were conducted by the VC, our operations against the North would be automatically stood down. Despite all protestations to the contrary, I think this the frame of mind of State and McGeorge Bundy. It is my opinion that the only advocates of sustained phase of operations are the Joint Chiefs of Staff, McNamara, and myself. (Note my telephone conversation with McNamara on 2/11.)

16. At 6:15 we met in the President's lounge on the second floor of the Mansion with the Leadership and Principal Committee Chairmen, in addition to Mansfield, McCormack and other leaders, Rivers and George Mahon, the President, the Vice President, McNamara, Ball, McGeorge Bundy, and McCone.

17. The President opened the meeting by explaining the serious difficult situation that confronted us. He called on McNamara to give the details. McNamara repeated the reports from the field. Ball then expressed his views concerning the complications of Kosygin's presence in the Far East. The President then stated that the decision has been made to conduct the strikes. He asked me for an opinion of Soviet-Chinese Communist reactions. I said that in all probability there would be no Chinese Communist reaction to these strikes, although there was a possibility of the introduction of ChiCom volunteers into Laos and North Vietnam. I did not think the ChiComs would come in in organized units. With respect to the Soviets, I felt that they would probably increase their supplies of defense material and armament for use by VC insurgents, but I did not expect any military action, nor did I support the possibility of confrontation with us in other areas, i.e., Berlin and Cuba, etc.

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18. Bundy then reviewed at some length his observations in South Vietnam, dealing with the political situation.

19. The President then went around the room and there was no objection to the courses of action decided upon. Mansfield, who was present, made no comment whatsoever. The President pointedly avoided asking him for an opinion or for comment. The meeting adjourned about 8:15.

20. NOTE: Throughout this discussion the emphasis was laid on retaliation and reprisal for the events which had been described by McNamara. There was no intimation given that we were engulfed on a program of sustained and continuing strikes against the north.

21. Following the meeting I had a brief private discussion with the President and told him I was going to leave for the south and would be there for a few days to get over this cold, would be available on call, would keep a plane standing by. The President agreed this should be done, saw no immediate crisis requiring my staying on hand. I told him General Carter would be acting.

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25 February 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with President Johnson, Thursday evening,  
from 6:15 p.m. for about 10 minutes.

1. I handed President Johnson and briefly discussed the following:

a. Memorandum dated February 25th concerning attitude of Hanoi and Peiping towards negotiations. I stated our opinion was that both Communist China and NVN would, under current circumstances and conditions, enter negotiations only on their terms. Moscow on the other hand seemed to have a more lenient approach, as reported by the French, largely through the press.

b. Watch Report of February 25th pointing out the numbered paragraphs concerning indications of Communist movements southward in NVN, movement in Laos, high level of communications, and other indicators. I stated there was a high probability that the NVN, with the VC's, were assembling sufficient military strength to cut off the four Northern provinces of SVN. I stated that in June of 1962 Diem and Nhu told me that this was an objective of Hanoi, and for that reason they maintained large forces in the Northern provinces. However, these forces had since been removed because of deterioration in the Delta and other areas of SVN. The President agreed that this seemed to be the objective of the VC and the NVN.

c. Report of February 25th giving the background of military and political characters remaining in SVN and the status of the various religious sects, political groups, etc. I mentioned considerable suspicion and distrust in Generals Thi and Ky, noting that the former participated in the 1960 coup, fled to Phnom Penh, lived there for three years in close consultation with neutralists and possibly unfriendly forces and, as Commander of the 1st Corps, he was in a most strategic position to collaborate with the VC and the NVN in establishing an independent country composed of the four Northern provinces.

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By cb, NARA Date 6-3-96

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2. The President asked if Amb. Taylor was fully aware of all of this and I responded that in all probability he was, but I questioned whether he held Ky and Thi in the same suspicion as did I. He then said that it was too bad that Taylor could not "have his own man" running the place.

ACTION: I would like consideration of a summary of all of the above transmitted to Saigon station with instructions to discuss with Taylor, Johnson and the Country Team. Also, I wish to call attention of McNamara, Vance and Wheeler to all of the above.

3. Prior to this meeting I met privately with Secretary Rusk who was waiting to see the President and outlined all of the above to him. Rusk took no exception, noted the three documents, and said that he would review them personally with his staff when he returned to his office.

ACTION: I should call McNamara, Vance and Wheeler concerning the above.

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2 April 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting attended by the President, Vance, McNaughton, Wheeler, Rusk, McNamara, William Bundy, Goward, Carl Rowan, Amb. Taylor, Fowler, McGeorge Bundy, and McCone

The meeting was delayed for an hour because of a prior meeting between the President and representatives of ADA.

Bundy reported on the ADA meeting. The discussion was extended because they started out by opposing the bombing of North Vietnam and apparently had requested the meeting to protest U.S. actions. Bundy reported that the President converted them, and it is his impression that the group were unanimously in support of the U.S. policy and actions when they left the meeting.

NOTE: I would like press reports and also reports in Democratic journals to see what the actual expressions were after the meeting.

Rusk reported on the seventeen-nation appeal and stated that within two days he would have a carefully worded, serious and restrained reply which would be made public. Similar replies would be made from the Government of South Vietnam. Rusk expects replies from Moscow, Peking, and Hanoi, and stated that if their replies were antagonistic, belligerent, and uncompromising, our position in world opinion would improve. If on the other hand they were serious and restrained, it possibly might indicate an area was open for useful negotiations. Rusk commented that the House of Commons debate turned out favorably, there was no loss of UK support, the gas issue was quieting down, the South Vietnam internal political situation appeared somewhat more hopeful, although the Quat Government remained a new government totally untried -- however, he was hopeful. Rusk then went on to review some of the non-military actions which had been approved.

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Vance then reviewed roughly the military actions which had been approved, making a passing reference to the change in the mission assignment (there was no discussion of this point). He noted that Viet Cong actions had been down for the past four weeks, indicating that this might be the result of our bombing and other military measures.

Bundy then discussed the plan that is being developed for regional, social, and economic actions. What is envisaged here is U.S. plan to create some sort of Asian organization for the economic and social development of Asia with Western support, but with Asian sponsorship. This is not a South Vietnam question nor is it a bait to North Vietnam, but what is involved is a plan which will improve the U.S. and for that matter all Western standing in Asia. (Cooper is working on this and I suggest that some of our people discuss the plan with him.)

Ambassador Taylor then reported on his appearances before the House and Senate committees. He said the House was friendly, sympathetic, and cooperative. The Senate on the other hand was inclined to be critical and dealt harshly with him on the questions:

- a. How about the reports that we are going to send several divisions of ground troops to South Vietnam?
- b. Do you think this permissible under existing legislation?
- c. What about the carrot that we are reading about?

Taylor felt that he responded satisfactorily. He ran into no direct antagonism but no great friendly support.

Carl Rowan reviewed actions taken by USIA, which are quite extensive and should be reviewed by DDP as I believe he is undertaking a number of actions in which we have had considerable experience and can be helpful.

General Wheeler summarized the discussion at last night's meeting, the decisions taken, and again made a passing reference to the change in mission.

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In response to a request by the President for a comment from me, I stated that I could add nothing to the evaluation given last Friday; however, I wished to point out that the air strikes have not brought an indication that the DRV are softening in their attitude -- if anything they have hardened their position. I stated that I felt we must consider this carefully in view of yesterday's decision to change the mission of the ground forces. (I feel the President did not "hoist this point aboard" and I, therefore, asked McBundy to place a copy of my letter to Secretary of State, et al, in the President's reading file tonight. This Bundy agreed to do.)

The meeting was held up by an exchange between the President and Ambassador Taylor in which Taylor said he had everything he wanted, complete cooperation, and was going home satisfied with his week here. The President was most complimentary of Taylor.

Following the meeting I told Taylor that of the twelve points we proposed, I thought it was essential to initiate a covert program of political action to strengthen Quat and also a covert program among the generals to promote cohesion. I said that DDP would have specifics of their plans either in his hands before he left on Saturday or by the time he reached Saigon. He said that he would be very glad to entertain our proposals.

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21 April 1965

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 93-396  
By CG, NARA Date 6-3-96

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting

ATTENDED BY: The President, Secretary McNamara,  
Secretary Vance, Secretary Rusk,  
Secretary Ball, William Bundy,  
McGeorge Bundy, Mr. McCone, and  
Admiral Raborn

The purpose of the meeting was to consider Secretary McNamara's memorandum for the President, 21 April 1965, forwarding the conclusions of his meeting in Honolulu. After reading the statement, the President asked McNamara to explain the reasoning behind the report.

McNamara stated that the deployment of additional U.S. forces is necessary to avoid serious losses of U.S. forces now deployed which he considered inadequate to meet the threat of a Viet Cong attack. Furthermore, committing of U.S. forces to combat would be effective against the Viet Cong and would release ARVN forces for more distant operations. McNamara proposed a continuation of the strikes against the North at the present tempo. He did not propose extending the area geographically although later in the discussion William Bundy stated this was a possibility. McNamara definitely opposed striking industrial targets, power plants, POL centers, or anything in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. McNamara stated that what he was in effect proposing was to extend the bombing for a protracted period of 6 months or a year or even more, but not to intensify it.

The thrust of McNamara's statement and subsequent discussions was to change the purpose of the bombing attacks on North Vietnam from one of causing the DRV to seek a negotiated settlement to one of continual harassment of lines of supply, infiltrations, etc., while the combination of SVN forces and U.S. forces were engaging in defeating the Viet Cong to such a point that the DRV and other interested Communist States would realize the hopelessness of the Viet Cong effort and therefore would seek a peaceful negotiation. McNamara estimated that he did not expect to move towards political settlement at least for 6 months, and possibly 12 months.

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Secretary Rusk stated that he and Thompson had briefly reviewed the paper prior to the meeting and that they concurred in the level of bombing effort as outlined in paragraph 2.

Mr. Ball stated he thought we were making a major decision and that he was privately exploring an alternative scenario of action which he would like to discuss. He said that he felt there was more room for negotiation than was popularly accepted and that the DRV's "4 points" was, in reality, a signal of a willingness to negotiate. Ball stated that the war we are engaged in has very serious risks, i.e. escalation, capsizing of the Saigon government and increased opposition of one sort or another from both the Soviets and the ChiComs (hence he did not feel that the Sino-Soviet differences would be eliminated but rather that they would take independent courses of action in supporting the DRV). Ball stated that in his opinion it was totally unrealistic to feel that we could sustain an operation of the type envisaged for a year or two without something of an explosive nature taking place.

McGeorge Bundy pointed out that the program outlined in the McNamara paper is quite different from the course of action heretofore considered, and should be carefully studied. An estimate should be prepared on the reactions in Hanoi, Peking and Moscow to the deployment of American troops in the numbers indicated and committing those troops to military engagement in SVN. He also raised the question of the effect of this new course of action on past estimates of VC and Communist reactions. I said the proposed course of action troubled me greatly. I felt that the level of our bombing against NVN had undoubtedly inconvenienced and created difficulties for the VC and the DRV in their supply and infiltration operations but had not brought them to a halt, and I felt a continuation of such bombing could be absorbed by the DRV and would stiffen their determination rather than bring them to the conference table. I pointed out that the current estimate states that bombing at this level against targets in the southern DRV would result in increased VC activity in SVN with greater support from the DRV and possibly from the ChiComs. I stated that I could envisage a gradual but deliberate build-up of these forces and that this would present our ground forces with an increasingly difficult problem requiring more and more troops, that what we were talking about now was merely an early stage in a big effort. I felt we would drift into a combat situation where victory would be dubious and from which we could not extricate ourselves. I agreed with Mr. Ball that the risks and dangers were great and the Saigon government, while appearing better today, was indeed fragile.

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The President asked if I opposed committing forces, and I responded that I did not, but the commitment of forces must, in my opinion, be accompanied by a more dynamic action against the north. I recommended air strikes against industrial targets, power plants, POL centers, and the taking out of the MIGS.

McNamara then summarized my views and indicated that the only difference between his views and mine was in the level of effort against the north, and that he felt that strikes against the north should be limited in the manner outlined in paragraph 2 of his memorandum. Rusk agreed.

The President raised the question of the Quat government. McNamara quoted Amb. Taylor as stating that Quat is more confident than he has been, he feels morale is better, he recognizes dissension within the military but feels there is no coalition of dissident forces which will threaten his government. Rusk warned that we are setting a bad example for the Quat government by problems within our own camp and he indicated that the several U.S. organizations in SVN are not working together and, as a result, the Vietnamese are confused. McNamara felt that a great deal had been done to straighten out recent problems, details of which were not discussed.

The President raised the question of the kind of support we can expect from the U.S. public, the press, friendly countries, world opinion, etc. on the protracted program. He noted the amount of propaganda being directed against us and asked how serious it was. Secretary Ball stated that we were losing the propaganda war. McNamara contradicted this view by stating that he thought we were winning public opinion and that criticism appearing here and there did not amount to much. The President insisted that we must improve our propaganda and must do everything necessary to get our message over. He felt that his Baltimore speech and later statements had had little effect. Both McNamara and Rusk disagreed with him.

The President questioned whether there is an organized effort within the United States and elsewhere to discredit U.S. efforts in Vietnam and, if so, how <sup>would</sup> this develop under the proposed plan. He also questioned the effect on our normal friends of continuing the operations plus those which are now planned.

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The President urged that all take the initiative in the propaganda war to put the Communists on the defensive. He urged that we emphasize the good things that we are doing in every area such as medical, supplies, education, construction, aid, etc., and likewise to emphasize the villainous and cruel things being done by the Communists.

It was agreed to meet again on Thursday at 11:00 o'clock to consider the estimate. No action was taken on the McNamara recommendations although Secretary Rusk recommended that they be accepted. The President, however, was non-committal.

At the conclusion of the meeting I called the group's attention to the improved casualty ratio, pointing out that for the 4 weeks (Feb. 13 to March 13 '65) GVN killed and missing in action - 2,132 and VC killed and captured - 2,085. However, in the 4-week period March 14 to April 17 (with the days March 28 to April 2nd missing), the SVN killed and missing in action were 683 and the VC killed and captured 1,893. I stated that we had now analyzed the effect of the bombing within SVN as summarized in SC-04463 of 21 April and had concluded that the strikes had had a very considerable effect on the VC, that there was evidence that many VC had been killed and many VC compounds had been damaged or totally destroyed. I thought this was encouraging.

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NLJ 93-396  
By cb, NARA Date 6-9-96

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27

24 April 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of the NSC Executive Committee - 22 Apr 65

ATTENDING: The President, <sup>Secty Rusk</sup>/Secty. Ball, William Bundy, Secty. McNamara, Secty Vance, Gen. Wheeler, McGeorge Bundy, Admiral Raborn and Mr. McCone

I briefed the group on the April 21st estimate on the probable Communist and world reactions to the proposed U.S. courses of action in Vietnam. In my briefing I followed the exact wording of the sections of the briefing that are underscored and adjacent to the numbers that appear in the margin of the attached, modifying the wording as appears in ink. With reference to the statement that "We believe the Communist think time and tide is running in their favor," the President asked whether that was also our own estimate. I responded in the affirmative.

Secretary Rusk took some exceptions to my statements concerning world opinion, indicating that he believed that the intransigence of the Communist and their refusal to engage in negotiations would be understood and absorbed by world opinion and therefore world opinion would lean in our direction.

McNamara stated he agreed with the estimate, particularly the appraisal of the present situation in paragraph 1 and the appraisal of the probable ultimate reaction in paragraph 13. He said these two estimates defined our areas of maneuver. I immediately pointed out the implications and the importance of paragraph 10 in the paper and stated that in my opinion the Viet Cong build-up in South Vietnam initiated by the VC, NVN and Chinese Communists would probably be slow and deliberate and it would be progressive and would always confront us with an increasing demand for men, increasingly serious problems, and increasing casualties. I therefore urged the group not to overlook the implications in paragraph 10.

McGeorge Bundy stated that Lodge had had satisfactory talks with the Australians and they are willing to provide the brigade indicated in the McNamara paper. His talks with Macapagal had been satisfactory but there had been no commitment, and the position of Korea had not as yet been determined. General Wheeler then stated that the JCS unanimously supported the April 21st paper. He said it was necessary to deploy the additional men and to make preparations for still more men. He made no comment on the tempo of the bombing. He made no appeal for authority to bomb industrial targets, POL, power stations, etc. He expressed no concern over the idea that bombing would be carried on over a long period of time and, indeed, the operation itself would go on for a protracted period. He stated there was a need for more air power in South Vietnam because their

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air power was getting used up.

Note (a): His position was diametrically opposite from that taken by Admiral Mustin, Director of Planning for the Joint Chiefs, in his briefing to me 10 days ago. In that briefing the Admiral said that we were using less than 5% of our air power and he strongly advocated bombing the targets which are excluded above.

Note (b): I did not at this point raise the differences as it was obvious that Wheeler's position had changed as a result of the Honolulu meeting.

The President asked for Quat's reaction. McNamara stated that we cannot tell. We assume that he will go along. Some work has to be done with the South Vietnamese military leaders to insure their enthusiastic acceptance of large U.S. and third country forces; that the command structure has to be worked out carefully, but he said no problems. I raised the question of South Vietnam public reaction pointing out that the Vietnamese might feel that the war was being taken off their shoulders and fought by others and therefore they would relax. Also, I pointed out that the lift in morale, if it came about, might be quickly offset by an adverse reaction if the war intensified. Rusk elaborated on my statements, confirming them and supporting the estimate in this regard. Wheeler stated that this did not happen with air and when U.S. air went into action, South Vietnam air stepped up their effort. He also said that General Thi finds no problem with the military brigades now in the First Corps area.

The President then made brief reference to the alternative proposal of promoted negotiations and the memorandum prepared by Secretary Ball (which has been seen by only Mac Bundy, McNamara and Rusk and no others), and expressed the desire to discuss this subject only with those directly concerned, i.e., State and McNamara.

The President then discussed at great length the public reaction and the reaction on the Hill. He complained that no supporting speeches were being made and he felt that our Congressional support was very uncertain and wobbly and we could lose it rapidly. He felt that speeches by Morse, Gruening, Clark, and the statement by Fulbright would have their effect and he exhorted everyone to carry on an intense personal campaign with sympathetic senators and get them on their feet. He also thought that McNamara and Rusk should take every opportunity to make speeches, go on television, etc., and point out the

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reasonableness of U.S. policy and the ridiculousness of the suggestion that we stop bombing while the VC's continue bombing of a type that has been carried on. The President in his remarks, which were extended and quite bitter and directed toward McNamara and Rusk, to me represented a feeling on the President's part that his chief lieutenants had failed to carry Congressional opinion and public opinion with us. He said his mail was running about 50 to 1 against our policy. All in all he seemed very dissatisfied with the public relations effort. He made some passing reference to my working on certain senators but I made no comment nor did I make a commitment. Admiral Raborn suggested that I make a nation-wide television speech. The President did not respond.

The meeting adjourned without action on the McNamara paper. It was obvious that the President wished to give the subject further thought. He wished to get the reaction from South Vietnam. He also wished to explore the diplomatic track prior to making a commitment.

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28

28 April 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with the President alone on 28 April 1965 - 12:00 Noon

1. I told the President that time had not permitted me to take Admiral Raborn abroad to introduce him to our counterparts with whom we work very closely in a number of European and Asian countries. I explained to the President that in discussing this subject with Secretary Rusk, he had felt that the trip might well be postponed for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the need for Admiral Raborn to be close by during the next few weeks. We therefore plan to make the trip about the middle of June, assuming that indications at that time are such that a trip of this nature would be useful from the standpoint of the Government and the Agency, and desired by Admiral Raborn. It was agreed this was probably a good idea; final decision was left to a later date.

2. I raised the question of the importance of the President receiving intelligence information in person, and orally, in addition to receiving it through a written report, and recommended that some plan be worked out so that this could be done in the presence of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy. I said that if this were done, then he would receive the benefit of the opinions of the individuals and the interpretations that they placed on the intelligence reports and estimates and I thought this would be very much more valuable for him rather than only accepting the written report. I then recommended that Admiral Raborn appear at the Tuesday luncheon meetings, that they be scheduled so that items of interest to him would be first on the agenda and once disposed of, he could leave, because I recognized that a great many subjects arose at the Tuesday meetings which were not within the Admiral's area of interest or province of activity. The President agreed with the suggestion and indicated his intention to work something out along the above suggested lines, or some alternative thereto. However, obviously, he could not be totally committal without discussing the idea with the interested parties.

3. I then called the President's attention to the letter I had written him in reference to the January 1962 letter from President Kennedy. This had been transmitted to President Johnson on 26 April 1965. I said that if

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By CG, NARA Date 6-3-96

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Johnson concurred in the concept of President Kennedy with respect to the role and activities of the DCI, then a similar letter should be issued. The President felt this would be in order and this subject was subsequently discussed with Mr. Bundy. I would expect the President would act in this regard promptly although he will wish to coordinate the letter carefully with Messrs. Rusk, McNamara and Bundy.

4. I then reviewed my discussion at the NSC (restricted) meetings of last Thursday and Friday at which time I expressed some opposition to the April 21st proposal of Secretary McNamara and finally gave the President my letter of April 28, copy of which is attached and to which is appended my letter to Secty. Rusk, Secty McNamara and Mr. Bundy. The President asked if I had discussed the subject with Rusk and McNamara. I replied affirmatively, and told him I had also discussed this with McGeorge Bundy. The President accepted the letter and placed it on his desk without comment. I personally feel this is as far as I can go or, for that matter, as far as the Agency should go in this matter, which is of a strictly policy nature.

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