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#46a notes	Notes from 7/13/67 meeting with McNamara, Wheeler, McNamara, 1:25 p.m. [Sanitized NLJ 82-42] Secret 4 pp. <i>open 7-13-05 WLS/KAL 99-599</i>	7/13/67	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 1

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JULY 13, 1967 - 1:25 p.m.

45

Sec. McNamara
Gen. Wheeler
Gen. Westmoreland
George Christian

MEMORANDUM

21
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

46

~~TOP SECRET~~

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

July 13, 1967
7:15 p.m.

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

Tom
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached is a summary of notes taken during the President's meeting in the Family Dining Room with Secretary McNamara, General Wheeler, General Westmoreland, and George Christian.

The meeting began at 1:25 p.m. The meeting ended at 2:45 p.m.

Attachment.

~~TOP SECRET~~

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS 82-42

By ncw Date 11-7-83

SERVICE SET

EYES ONLY

Meeting began: 1:25 p.m.
Meeting ended: 2:45 p.m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING
WITH

46a

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SECRETARY McNAMARA
GENERAL WHEELER
GENERAL WESTMORELAND
GEORGE CHRISTIAN

IN THE FAMILY DINING ROOM, MANSION

The President said that it was the first time he had seen Senator Richard Russell (D-Ga) at a White House ceremony, when the Senator attended the 1 o'clock speech honoring retiring Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral McDonald. Secretary McNamara said that the Senator came because Admiral McDonald was from Georgia. General Wheeler said Senator Russell attended because he liked Admiral McDonald so well.

On the Congo problem, General Wheeler said there are more than 2000 U.S. people in the Congo. He said he was startled to learn there were so many in the Congo.

The President said that General Westmoreland was returning tonight to South Carolina to pick up his wife and then return to Vietnam.

General Westmoreland said that Congressman Rivers had asked him to stop by his office this afternoon. The group agreed this would be a good idea. General Westmoreland said he saw Senator Russell for five minutes during the ceremony, and all agreed that this was sufficient.

Secretary McNamara said that there was "complete accord" on how to proceed on the troop question. He reported to the President that 19 or 21 battalions would be required and that total troop strength would run 525,000.

The Secretary pointed out there may be some press speculation on this figure, particularly after testimony he has made on the Hill to the Congressional committees. The Secretary said that the field commanders would be supplied with the men required.

DECLASSIFIED

EYES ONLY

E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5

NLJ/RAC 99-159 and ERHS, vol. 5, #240

By MS, NARA, Date 4-28-05

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[1 of 4]

~~SECRET~~

EYES ONLY

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The Secretary said that the discussions which were begun in Vietnam with General Westmoreland and with his staff were continued this morning. The Secretary reported "complete agreement on this." The Secretary said that the matter must be discussed with the allies before final decisions are made.

General Wheeler reported that the Australians might be able to provide one additional battalion. He said he had military reports that the Australians are ready and willing and that the Australian government would be receptive to a request for additional troops.

General Wheeler also reported that he did not believe any troops could be obtained from the Philippines. He said perhaps one additional combat brigade could be required from the Koreans. He said that the Thais should be asked to fill out their regular combat team with at least two more battalions.

Secretary McNamara said that it was possible to say that the Vietnamese planned to increase their force units in Vietnam. He said, however, it would be unwise to announce this now. The Secretary said we must talk to our allies before any discussion of this is made public.

General Westmoreland said that for reasons of military security that we should not make any announcement of troop levels or planned increases.

Secretary McNamara said that the figures could be held reasonably tight for a few weeks. The Secretary said there must be a plan in the department, there must be proposals put down on paper, and there must be Congressional testimony on the defense budget. All of this would result in leaks eventually, the Secretary said.

General Wheeler said that the military and the Secretary of Defense are in accord on the troop decision. General Wheeler said this meets the need for Vietnam.

General Westmoreland said there is a plan to organize a division in South Vietnam, taking Task Force Oregon and organizing it into an Americal Division such as was organized during World War II. General Westmoreland said this would be handled by picking up bits and pieces of units which are currently in action.

EYES ONLY

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General Westmoreland pointed out that over the past two years a logistical base has been developed which can support the current force level of combat troops and many more. He pointed out that this meant that additional troops coming into Vietnam could be used for combat rather than some being used for support and some for combat as has been the policy in the past.

General Westmoreland said that by developing a very substantial logistical base that the units were capable of supporting many more combat troops than now are deployed.

The President asked the group whether or not he should send General Taylor and Clark Clifford on Presidential missions designed to discuss with the allies possible troop increases on their part.

Secretary McNamara and the group said yes, that General Taylor was highly respected and that Clark Clifford was a logical choice.

Secretary McNamara said the situation of more Thai troops will be a new burden on General Westmoreland rather than a benefit. He pointed out the reason for needing to get more Thai troops into South Vietnam was to teach them how to defend themselves.

The Secretary said that more Australians and Koreans would be a valuable asset to the total effort.

The Secretary and General Wheeler agreed that "we should put the bite" on Thailand for a larger troop commitment. They said that the Thais must be prepared to help themselves. Both agreed that it would be appropriate to send Clark Clifford and General Taylor to Vietnam first to consult with the allies in Vietnam and see how they are doing in the field before going to the countries from which they are sent to meet with the leaders of those countries.

On the question of censorship all said that the price which would have to be paid for censorship would be too great. Secretary McNamara, George Christian, General Westmoreland and General Wheeler said that while they are for censorship at times, that we would pay a terrible price for it.

George Christian said that censorship would be a morass. He said, "We cannot do it." General Wheeler said that the correspondents in Vietnam are immature, naive and hostile. Secretary McNamara said

EYES ONLY

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he had talked with USIA Director Leonard Marks this morning. Marks had just returned from Vietnam. Marks told the Secretary that the correspondents are too young and have no in-depth background about what has taken place in Vietnam. They are out there to win Pulitzer prizes for sensational articles rather than objective reporting.

It was agreed that no censorship would be taken.

General Westmoreland said on the matter of troop strength that he was delighted with the outcome of the deliberations.

He said that with the additional men "we will have a formidable force." With the troops, General Westmoreland said that progress can be accelerated once the troops are deployed and placed.

General Wheeler said that General Westmoreland is fully satisfied. He agreed we must talk to our allies about the total package.

General Westmoreland said that he had not asked for any specific number of troops. He asserted that his recommendations have been honored.

The President asked the group if we stop the bombing and if elections are held, would South Vietnam go Communist?

Secretary McNamara said, from what he had learned in the field, definitely no -- the country would not go Communist.

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