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#79a notes	Notes from 8/5/67 - 1:49 p.m. meeting with Clifford, Taylor, Rusk, Nitze, Ball, Rostow, McPherson, Christian [Sanitized NLJ 83-26] Possible classified information 7 pp. <i>open 11/8/00 NS 79-242</i>	8/5/67	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 1

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AUGUST 5, 1967 - 6:59 p.m.

Secretary Rusk	Walt Rostow
Under Sec. Nitze	George Ball
Clark Clifford	George Christian
Maxwell Taylor	Harry McPherson

MEMORANDUM

17)  
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 5, 1967  
6:00 p. m.

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LITERALLY EYES ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom  
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the minutes of your meeting today in the Family Dining Room.

Those attending were:

The President  
Secretary Rusk  
Under Secretary Nitze  
Mr. Clark Clifford  
General Maxwell Taylor  
Mr. Walt Rostow  
Mr. George Ball  
Mr. George Christian  
Mr. Harry McPherson  
Mr. Tom Johnson

The meeting began at 1:49 p. m. The meeting ended at 4:08 p. m.

Attachment.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

79a

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
MR. CLARK CLIFFORD  
AND  
GENERAL MAXWELL TAYLOR

In the Family Dining Room  
August 5, 1967

The President read the text of a formal report by Mr. Clifford and General Taylor. After reading it, the President said the report was very good.

Mr. Clifford said every country has very enthusiastic ideas about new ways to end the war. The Vietnamese have agreed to

- (1) Add 65,000 more troops
- (2) Lower the draft age to 18
- (3) Extend the length of service.

General Taylor said it will take at least a year to get these troops into combat although the South Vietnamese say this can be accomplished during this calendar year.

Secretary Rusk said that the Vietnamese have agreed to keep troops in service now who would have been demobilized.

The President said that Prime Minister Holt had sent a very nice telegram concerning the Taylor-Clifford mission. Mr. Clifford said that he believed it would be more difficult for the Australians to turn us down when they are in touch with the President directly.

Mr. Clifford said that each head of government had to say publically something which would show that there was nothing immediate on sending more troops. They also had to show through public statements that they were not "on the tail of the kite of the United States." There was unanimous agreement by the allies on the conduct of the war.

General Taylor said all the allies were glad that the President had sent the mission to ask their views.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NIJ 99-242

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

By CG, NARA Date 10-20-00

[1 of 7]

87-12-301

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

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The President said the worst thing we did was to announce that your visit was to discuss troops. Holt wanted us to let him suggest these things to the United States rather than our dictating to him.

The most important thing coming out of the mission, the President said, was that the allies now know what we are thinking. The President said it is important for these nations to have consultations with us.

Mr. Clifford said the head of each government used the trip because of elections in their countries. They arranged press briefings on arrival, before each meeting, and after each meeting.

Mr. Clifford said the Koreans emphasized the incidents along the parallel with North Korea more with the United States than they do in their country. He said the South Koreans are <sup>more</sup> concerned about infiltration of North Koreans into South Korea by boat than they are of the border incidents.

Mr. Clifford said the editorials and news reports obstructed their mission and in each meeting it was necessary to emphasize that they are not there to ask for troops. They pointed out that what was desired was an exchange of ideas across the board, including discussions on the conduct of the war, over-all strategy, the economy, and pacification.

The mission pointed out that the President faces a very high deficit in the area of \$20 billion. (The President brought them more up to date with a \$30 billion figure.) Mr. Clifford told the heads of state that the President could not manage that kind of deficit and that he has had to ask for a tax increase. He told them that the reaction in the United States would be "If we have to put this much money in the war, what are our allies going to do?" The President is not asking you to do anything. But he does want you to have these facts. For every man you put in there, the United States puts more. We have reached the point where you must help the President meet the demands in Vietnam.

Mr. Clifford said, as each argument was raised, it was "for them to do their part to enable us to do our part."

Mr. Clifford: The President wants to find out if this war is serious enough to you for him to go through what he's going through. Then they began to talk. It was stressed that the American people aren't going to believe this is important to us if it's not important to you.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

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Clifford said there was an enormous feeling of friendship and goodwill. There were very good statements about the Secretary of State.

The allies felt this was a personal message from the President to them. This gave them a flavor of the President's reasoning.

Secretary Rusk said it may be worth considering renewal of a practice begun during the Korean war of a weekly meeting between the ambassadors of the allied nations in the war.

General Taylor said he found a great deal in common in all the countries visited.

He made the following points:

- (1) All the countries said they were for the bombing program. Some asked why we are so humane -- that civilian casualties are inevitable during a war.
- (2) All would like to see Haiphong harbor closed, although they understand the risk and see it a bit differently than do we.
- (3) They favor an expansion of the war. They are not afraid of us moving north of the DMZ or into Laos, if necessary.
- (4) They favored a summit, although no place or time was discussed. All of them have elections in the fall, and it was felt that December would be the earliest, but in any case after the Vietnam elections are held.
- (5) All want a Foreign Ministers meeting prior to the Summit Conference in Saigon.
- (6) One criticism was of our propaganda program. We are not doing an effective job of presenting our case to the world.
- (7) All rejected the stalemate theory. The movement is not dramatic, and all felt we should increase our pressure to get movement.
- (8) We're going up gradually; they're going down gradually.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

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There was a general discussion of casualties, with the President asking questions about the method of tabulation. It was agreed that Defense should study the tabulation method, perhaps discounting those who are not hospitalized or who return to duty after treatment without distorting the figures.

General Taylor reported that captured documents show that we are killing more VC than the body counts show.

It was agreed that the infiltration rate give the most fuzzy figures. Secretary Nitze said we just do not know what the precise figures are.

Mr. Clifford made the following points:

- (1) There were valuable visits with Ky and Thieu.
- (2) There is a truce between Ky and Thieu now, but he does not know how long it will last.
- (3) The worst thing they could do is to rig the elections. They were told this.
- (4) On military front, they came through with a pledge to add 65,000 military and paramilitary troops.
- (5) Vietnamese have asked for observers for the elections. President wanted to know if it would be wise course to put in 50 of leading businessmen and newspaper executives to report back on the elections.
- (6) Clifford said he believes there will be honest elections.
- (7) Clifford said his evaluation of Ky and Thieu was that "they know all the right answers. They know what we want them to say and often will say it before they are asked."
- (8) Ky is shrewd. Thieu is possibly more discreet and more profound. Thieu doesn't have the flair for drama and exercises more caution. Thieu may be somewhat less popular, as a result.

There followed a discussion about the percent of non-American participation in South Vietnam.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

Secretary Rusk said that the percentage of non-American participation in Vietnam is larger than the non-American participation in Korea.

There was a discussion of the effectiveness of South Vietnamese troops. General Taylor reported:

- (1) There has been improvement in the ARVN.
- (2) They now are taking three weapons for every one lost.
- (3) The pacification troops are beginning to take hold.

The Vietnamese want to contract the circles of sanctuary around Hanoi and Haiphong and reduce the 30-mile buffer zone between Vietnam and China in the NVM bombing runs.

The President said he did not mind including some but he was afraid of the fliers going over the Chinese border. It was pointed out that it takes only 1 1/2 minutes for an F-4 to cross the border zone and three minutes for subsonic aircraft.

The President asked Mr. Rostow to look into the matter of sanctuaries. Secretary Rusk said the Russians have every reason to blockade Berlin now, that it probably would do that right away and attribute it to Vietnam.

Then, Mr. Clifford gave a country-by-country rundown on their visits:

Thailand

- (1) There were two long visits with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.
- (2) There was not a disagreement with us on the need for more Thai troops.
- (3) Thais say they have their problems with guerillas in North-east Thailand.
- (4) There is a leadership problem with the military. They do not have enough leaders for additional manpower.
- (5) Personally believe they are going to come through.



LITERALLY EYES ONLY

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Australia

- (1) Met all day Sunday.
- (2) They were hard nuts.
- (3) They had a long list of their contributions to Vietnam already.
- (4) Real progress was made with Holt when went upstairs alone and told of the seriousness of the matter.
- (5) Holt told Taylor that he was such a good salesman that he was glad he had not brought his wife to the meeting.
- (6) The Australian commander in Vietnam is interested in filling out his contingent from current strength of 6,500 to about 9,000.

New Zealand

- (1) They had a long list of reasons they should do more.
- (2) Prime Minister Holyoake said he would study the proposal and bring the public along.
- (3) The only anti-Vietnam demonstrations were in New Zealand.

Korea

- (1) Park showed up well.
- (2) They have 47,000 men there now.
- (3) We asked for another division.
- (4) They must get the approval of their assembly.
- (5) They offered additional support troops. These will total 3,000 to 3,500 to release other men for combat duty.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

LITERALLY EYES ONLY

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- (6) The Koreans would send 5,000 civilians to help with chores. These would be veterans who would come in for \$400 a month.

In summary, Clark Clifford said that if we continue at the same level of ground effort and bombing that he is unable to see that this will bring us to the point we want to be.

He said he believes that a year from now we again will be taking stock. We may be no closer a year from now than we are now.

As long as the supplies continue to reach the troops in the South coming in from Laos, over the Northeast Railroad, through Haiphong Harbor, and down from Cambodia we can't get the war over. As long as the faucets are on, we cannot reach our objective.

We have to give increased attention to stopping this flow. The attitudes of the allies is that we must increase this pressure. As long as Hanoi continues, there seems to be no diminishing of Hanoi's will to continue the war. We must focus on the supply. There was no concern anywhere in the countries visited about Red China entering the war. There was the same reaction to the Soviets entering the war.

Clifford suggested that the margins be moved closer to Red China and that additional targets be approved. He said the rewards justified the risks.

General Taylor said that they had left a lot of work for the ambassadors in each country. He said troops will trickle in. But there is a very genuine need to improve our presentation of U.S. policies and position to the world.

The allies agreed that our cause is just but our story isn't getting out. General Taylor said the graduated application of force was working, but there is a very great need to keep the pressure on.

# # #

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