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#91a notes	<p>Notes from 8/16/67 - 2:10 p.m. meeting with Rusk, McNamara, Helms, Rostow, Christian [Sanitized NLJ 82-42] Secret 3 pp. <i>Open 2-9-00 NLS 99-240</i> 3</p>	8/16/67	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 1

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90

AUGUST 16, 1967 - 2:10 p. m.

Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
Walt Rostow
George Christian

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 19, 1967

12 noon

EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET

FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting on Wednesday, August 16, 1967 with Secretary Rusk, Secretary McNamara, Director Helms, Walt Rostow, George Christian.

The meeting began at 2:10 p. m. The meeting ended at 4:00 p. m.

Attachment.

EYES ONLY

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DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING.

BY DCH ON 12-11-81

SERVICE SET

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Meeting began: 2:10 p.m.
Meeting ended: 4:00 p.m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING
WITH
SECRETARY RUSK
SECRETARY McNAMARA
CIA DIRECTOR HELMS
WALT ROSTOW
GEORGE CHRISTIAN

August 16, 1967
In the Mansion

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NEL 99-240
By is, NARA Date 1-27-00

Director Helms: Read proposed letter from the President to Key and Thieu on the Vietnamese elections.

The President: Read letter from Mike Mansfield on the mishandling of the Senate vote on Arms Sales.

Secretary McNamara: Said that he agreed that the vote had been badly mishandled. "We just failed on it, Mr. President."

The President: We have to do a better job. You will have to hire good people. We find that Mansfield only wants one White House aide in the Senate. I was leader eight years and didn't lose a vote. If you haven't got a bill which will pass, you have to make one that will pass.

Secretary McNamara: I have no excuses for our performance. It was a poor sequence of events.

The President: I guess something else would have been wrong. You've got to have good people, as Forrestal did. Marvin Watson is the most effective man we have here. The Tax Bill is practically hopeless but it's being worked on. I had Mills down here this morning to see where the bodies are.

I told Kiesinger we would consult fully. The meeting went better yesterday than today, just like the meetings at Glassboro. I got the feeling from him today that he is more frightened by DeGaulle than I thought he was. Kiesinger said yesterday he did not need a troop cut. He was a lot weaker today on the troop issue.

Secretary Rusk: We need to clarify our strategy on bombing policy.

The President: Our strategy, as I see it, is that we destroy all we can without involving China and Russia between now and September 1. I do not

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believe China and Russia will come in. The people will not stay with us if we do not get destroyed all we can. The targets we have authorized are in the Hanoi, Haiphong, and buffer zone areas. It's better to hit those targets authorized now rather than waiting six months.

Secretary Rusk: In the buffer zone there is a question as to whether these are specifically authorized strikes or repeaters. The larger the number of sorties in there, the higher the chances are of mistakes.

Secretary McNamara: I must point out that we could evade Chinese air space. Secretary McNamara said he proposed nothing new until next Tuesday. "I would like to have a week go by to check the accuracy of what we are doing."

Secretary Rusk: There appears to be no ascertainable connection between some of these targets and winning the war. We are trying to wage the war without enlarging it and without causing the Soviets or the Chinese to give us problems in Berlin or Korea. I have no reservations except on these targets.

The President: Let us find the least dangerous and the most productive targets. I would like to be able to say that we have hit six out of every seven targets requested. We have some weather now that is my type of weather. I think we should get every target as quickly as we can. There are three areas that we are not going to hit. We are not going to hit Haiphong Harbor because we are not going to hit any ships. We are not going to bomb Hanoi because we are not going to hit civilians. And we must be careful about the buffer zone because of the danger in going over the border. But we have got to put more pressure on. It was then agreed that the targets more than eight to ten miles away from the buffer zone could be hit without danger.

Secretary McNamara: We took out more rolling stock in one day after the Hanoi bridge was bombed than in any other day in the war.

He said he could get the President 20 more targets.

Secretary Rusk: It's question of what do you ask a man to die for. Some of these targets aren't worth the men lost.

Secretary McNamara: The losses would be the heaviest in the MIG airfield.

The President: What about sending three representatives from each of these organizations.

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The President then read a list of organizations representing labor, management, press, foundations, and other associations. It was agreed that this group could be invited to go to Vietnam as observers of the up-coming elections.

The President instructed Secretary Rusk to send the list to Ambassador Bunker for his reaction.

Secretary Rusk asked Secretary McNamara if he could space the air strikes so that it would not appear as a "Roman holiday." Secretary Rusk said that several strikes on the same day results in charges of escalation and ~~ex~~^{ac}celleration which may not be in our best interest.

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