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#113a notes	Notes from 10/17/67 - 1:40 p.m. meeting with McNamara, Rusk, Wheeler, Helms, Rostow, Christian [Sanitized NLJ 82-60] Top Secret 6 pp. <i>(Learner President's Appointed File (Dewey Library) 10-17-67)</i> Sanitized 7-26-96 NLJ 93-485 more info released Sanitized 1-24-01 NLJ/RAC 99-153 more info released same sanitization 5-19-03 NLJ/RAC 01-11 SAME SANITIZATION 8-15-05 NLJ 05-35	10/17/67	A

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Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 1

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OCTOBER 17, 1967 - 1:40 p.m.

Secretary McNamara
Secretary Rusk
General Wheeler
CIA Director Helms
Walt Rostow
George Christian

15
MEMORANDUM

113
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 17, 1967

5:25 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your luncheon meeting today in the Mansion.

Those who attended were: Secretary McNamara, Secretary Rusk, General Wheeler, CIA Director Helms, Walt Rostow and George Christian.

The meeting began at 1:40 p.m. The meeting ended at 2:50 p.m.

Attachment.

SERVICE SET

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~~EYES ONLY~~

113a

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

In the Mansion
October 17, 1967

The President discussed his visit with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew.

ROSTOW: We need to get him with Reston and Joe Kraft.

HELMS: He would be good.

THE PRESIDENT: He is vulnerable on Senator Jackson's question on how many troops does he have in Vietnam?

It look as though the news is all bad.

The President then read a memorandum about a large group of protestors in Oakland, California. The President also read a Situation Room report which showed in a battle late yesterday that 58 U. S. men were killed in Operation Shenandoah.

GENERAL WHEELER: The battalion had about 100 casualties out of a battalion of 900. Of course, the battalion is still operational.

THE PRESIDENT: They really worked on our planes yesterday, didn't they?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Yes, they hit three of four. I think they were lucky hits rather than any refinements in their anti-aircraft defenses.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let's have it analyzed so we will know what to say.

What did you think of the McCarthy speech?

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E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.5
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By isl, NARA, Date 8-15-05

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SECRETARY RUSK: It was a confused statement. I resent the "yellow peril" junk.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought your press conference was excellent, Dean.

SECRETARY RUSK: I have a problem with the Foreign Relations Committee. Fulbright asked me to come again for a public session. I do not like them saying that I am scared of them. That doesn't set well down in Cherokee county.

I think the appearance in 1966 was a plus, but I do not want seven hours of public debate. What is your judgment?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't talked to anybody who didn't think your press conference was the best you have ever had. Prime Minister Lee told me that today.

The Committee is entitled to a report and a response to their questions on our national interest. I do not think you need to have it televised. I resent that they did not carry your press conference on television.

SECRETARY RUSK: They wanted me to tell them in advance that I was about to announce a major new policy on Vietnam before they would carry it live.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would go to the hearings and hit them hard and solid. I applaud your raising your voice. You speak for a lot of people, including 500,000 men out there who can't speak for themselves.

SECRETARY RUSK: The response from young people has been overwhelming. I've had a number of them ask for my autograph, and there have been many letters including one from Abe Fortas.

THE PRESIDENT: Lee said the great mistake in Vietnam was not made in 1965 but was made in 1961.

SECRETARY RUSK: 

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THE PRESIDENT: What are we going to do about Radio Free Europe?
I do not think it is worth it unless we can get private support.

HELMS: We need to go to Mahon and Russell. [REDACTED]

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(b)(1)

ROSTOW: The technical judgment is that Radio Free Europe is worthwhile.
The 303 Committee wants to keep it with government financing. There is
some debate about Radio Liberty. They say VOA cannot do the job.

THE PRESIDENT: I will go along with the budget. My inclination is to
turn it over to John Daly and VOA. Let's not do something under the table.
If it is going to be government operated let's publicly support it.

SECRETARY RUSK: I want to draw a distinction between Radio Free Europe
and Radio Liberty. Radio Liberty is being jammed by the Soviets.

HELMS: I will talk to Mahon and Russell tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: You tell them how you feel and also how I feel about
the matter and get their judgment.

Mahon has a resolution which takes 5 percent out of all payrolls.

The President then went into discussions which he had had with Chairman
Mahon about proposed cuts.

The President said that if Radio Free Europe is any good his judgment is
to let VOA operate it.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the current feeling about Pennsylvania?

SECRETARY RUSK: There has been nothing back from Hanoi. We should
get M and A to agree that we have had nothing back.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I think we should keep our option of making
this whole sequence of events public.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree. We should let Secretary Rusk disclose it under
strong questioning.

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We should make the record clear that we said we would stop the bombing for productive discussions. They said no.

I think we should let our folks know that we have tried. We quit bombing August 22 inside the 10-mile perimeter of Hanoi. It has been two months.

SECRETARY RUSK: There is a difference here between stating the substance of what took place and identifying the individuals.

THE PRESIDENT: I would not identify the individuals. I would say that we had outside, fresh new professorial minds at work on this.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: If you are not going to have a pause, let's make as much of this as we can.

THE PRESIDENT: I would say it at executive session. It will take about two days for it to leak. After it does, we will be prepared to completely handle it.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: It would be good to have a white paper on this whole episode.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we should say that we had good outside help. We have to have something to carry us in this country. Every hawk and every dove and every general seems to be against us.

Buz, your generals almost destroyed us with their testimony before the Stennis Committee. We were murdered on the Hearings.

The President then discussed a credibility analysis which he received last night.

The President then asked how long we should wait on Pennsylvania.

SECRETARY RUSK: We should wait at least until Friday.

Activity on Phuc Yen is high. The Joint Chiefs are anxious to get it out of the way. I would include it as part of the 10-mile perimeter and do nothing before Friday.

GENERAL WHEELER: We lost three aircraft to MIGs. We've taken out other air fields. We recommend Phuc Yen, the Hanoi bridges and canals

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and the Hanoi thermal power plant.

THE PRESIDENT: None of this can be hit until after we finish up on Friday.

SECRETARY RUSK: I am not for a big fireworks display. Some people have advised me that it would take a hundred aircraft on Phuc Yen.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: What is scheduled is for four groups of 24 attack aircraft each.

SECRETARY RUSK: I am running out of gas on this.

THE PRESIDENT: We will open up the whole thing on Friday.

SECRETARY RUSK: We propose to send Secretary Udall, Ambassador Harriman and Nick Katzenbach as representatives to the Manglai Dam ceremony.

THE PRESIDENT: Do not send Nick. I need him in the State Department working to get new ideas.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: I talked with the Ford people. They said that they are not at a point where they can say a settlement has been reached but the Executive Vice President told me that they did not expect a settlement which was more inflationary than the one which had earlier been outlined.

THE PRESIDENT: Bob, I want you to spend as much time as you can with Senator Russell. Dean, you need to get your people to pull their gloves off in their public speeches and press conferences. Too many signs are bad now. There has been nothing good since the hearings. We need to be a little more outspoken.

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Eban wants no association with our intentions to provide arms to the moderate Arabs. Eban wants no part in support of our actions. I propose we hold his feet to the fire on this.

THE PRESIDENT: Walt, get in touch with Abe Feinberg on this. Tell them we can only support Israel if we do provide some help to the moderate Arabs.

The President ended the discussions with a review of his talks with Prime Minister Lee. Lee told the President that Singapore would be the first to go

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down the China chute if the U.S. gets out of Vietnam.

The President said he told Lee he intended to stay but the opposition in this country was steadily mounting.

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