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126a notes	NSC meeting, 11/8/67 Top Secret 5 p. [sanitized - placed in open file on 4/25/86] open NLT 8243 7-26-99	7/19/67	A

## FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meeting

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NOVEMBER 8, 1967 - 10:03 a.m.

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National Security Council

Vice President	Members of Congress
Sec. of State Rusk	White House staff
Sec. McNamara	
General Wheeler	
EOP Director Daniels	
Director Marks	
Cabinet members	



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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November 9, 1967

10:30 a.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Tom  
Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of the National Security Meeting in the Cabinet Room on November 8, 1967.

The meeting began at 10:03. It ended at 10:55.

Those attending were:

The President  
The Vice President  
Secretary of State Rusk  
Secretary of Defense McNamara  
JCS Chairman General Wheeler  
OEP Director Daniel  
USIA Director Marks  
Secretary of Treasury Fowler  
Attorney General Clark  
Postmaster General O'Brien  
Secretary of Interior Udall  
Secretary of Commerce Trowbridge  
Secretary of HEW Gardner  
Secretary of Labor Wirtz  
Secretary of HUD Weaver  
Secretary of Transportation Boyd  
Senator Mansfield  
Senator Richard Russell  
Senator Margaret Chase Smith  
Senator Fulbright  
Senator Hayden  
Representative McCormack  
Representative Bates  
Representative Mahon  
Walt Rostow  
George Christian  
Bromley Smith

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NLS 82-43  
By ccw, NARS, Date 11-8-83

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Meeting Began: 10:03  
Meeting Ended: 10:55

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH  
THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

November 8, 1967  
Cabinet Room

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5 & NLS 82-43  
NSC Memo, 1/30/95, State Dept. Guidelines  
By ju, NARA, Date 7-19-99

The President introduced the Vice President.

The Vice President said he spent 16 to 18 hours per day on the trip. He said he had frank discussions with Bunker and with the South Vietnamese.

He said there are a number of observations based on this trip in comparison with a trip he took to Vietnam 20 months ago, in February 1966. Those conclusions were:

1. The U. S. Team is exceptional. Ambassador Bunker, Ambassador Locke, Ambassador Komer and General Westmoreland's military leaders are excellent.
2. Ambassador Bunker enjoys the full confidence of Thieu. Thieu and Bunker have good rapport.
3. It is difficult to say exactly how the government will work out. They do not have a popular political base yet.
4. Thieu is no puppet. He worked long and hard on his inaugural address -- on his own. I saw it in his own handwriting.
5. There are some differences between Ky and Thieu, but Ky told me that he will do his best to cooperate.
6. The South Vietnamese Army is not a superior force, but General Abrams told me there has been much improvement in the ARVN. There were three smashing victories while I was there.
7. There is corruption in Vietnam, but we should not over-emphasize it. Thieu and Ky have a program to fight corruption, and while I was there a high-ranking officer was sentenced to death for corruption.
8. There are signs of new and better changes in the leadership of the military. They are beginning to make promotions

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on the basis of merit rather than on the basis of class distinction or family.

9. Pacification is a tough, dirty problem of security. Much is being done by the South Vietnamese military force. In 1966, pacification was no more than a plan. Today it is an action. Pacification is beginning to move.

10. The people feel a new sense of dignity.

11. On my last trip to Vietnam I came back "impressed." Today, I returned "encouraged."

12. The logistic basis is far superior today than it was 20 months ago.

13. The control of terrain and population is considerably better today than it was 20 months ago.

14. The allied troops in Vietnam are much better today than they were 20 months ago. The Thais are doing a better job. The Koreans are doing an extraordinarily good job.

15. The youth in Saigon could cause us some problems. The communists are moving in on them.

16. The South Vietnamese need a good information service. The work of the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese Army does not receive good attention. The press does not like to travel with the South Vietnamese troops because their accommodations are not nearly as good as with U. S. troops.

17. Most of the senior reporters with whom I met feel we are doing what needs to be done in Vietnam.

18. Southeast Asia will play a very important role in the last third of this century. As the leaders in Thailand and Malaysia told me, there is not one scintilla of hope for anybody if we fail in Vietnam.

19. The big question from our Asian allies is this: They want to know if we in the United States are going to stick it out.

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20. There was not one single act of unkindness, unpoliteness or dissent in my visit to Malaysia and Indonesia. I was received enthusiastically. I was the first elected American to be in Indonesia in several years.

In central Java there were no fewer than a million people lined up on the highways. They are thankful for what we have done for them.

As a final observation, I would say that Thieu is perfectly willing to probe every prospect for peace. The Vietnamese told me they are going to pull their fair share of the load. Thieu is willing and anxious to try any road which will bring him to the conference table. In short, things are better. I returned encouraged.

Secretary Rusk said that the new cabinet will be announced this week. It will be broad based.

Secretary Rusk said that in Indonesia international cooperation has been very effective. Japan and the Netherlands have substantial investments in Indonesia.

The President said that Ambassador Bunker would be in this weekend for talks and General Westmoreland would be returning shortly.

Secretary McNamara said he was delighted to hear about the performance of the South Vietnamese Army. He said he agreed with the Vice President's conclusion that we have the very best military and political team in Vietnam.

General Wheeler said he shared Secretary McNamara's view about the quality of our men and the size of the South Vietnamese Army.

The President asked for each of the officials attending for questions of the Vice President.

Senator Fulbright asked, "What is our objective out there?"

Vice President Humphrey said our objective has not changed. Before you can build a country, you have to put down the insurgency. Many of the Asian leaders told me that their number one enemy is Asian militant communism with headquarters in Peking.

Senator Fulbright said he was confused as to what the Vice President thinks our objective is. "Is the enemy the North Vietnamese or the Chinese? I think it makes a big difference."

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The Vice President said that the South Vietnamese know who the enemy is. Those boys out there who are being shot and maimed don't have any difficulty recognizing who the enemy is. For them it is the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. Our Asian friends take a much more philosophical view at "who the enemy is."

Senator Mansfield said the Vice President's report was "mildly encouraging." He said he had two questions:

1. What about the rate of infiltration?
2. What about the troop strength of the enemy in South Vietnam today compared to a year ago?

The Vice President said he did not ask specifically about the rate of infiltration. He said our military leaders think the bombing has a positive effect. He said Ambassador Bunker is working his heart out. He said that Ambassador Bunker asked him a very emotional question. He said Ambassador Bunker asked, "Hubert, what makes them think I am any different than I ever was? I do not want to deceive the people, and I am out here to do the best I can. I do not need this job."

As far as the troop strength, the strength of the enemy in South Vietnam is about the same as it was a year ago.

Senator Russell congratulated the Vice President on his report. He said it was very fine. The Senator said that there has been a tremendous build up by the North Vietnamese. They expend large quantities of ammunition on our men along the DMZ. All this leads him to conclude that the bombing is not effective in closing the infiltration routes and the supply lines. All the time, ships are lining the docks at Haiphong harbor. The Senator asked did the Vice President discuss the possible closing of the Port of Haiphong.

The Vice President said yes the matter was discussed but this was a policy decision. I know what the views of the military are on this.

The military thought the new bombing of targets around Haiphong was very effective. They also thought the bombing of Phuc Yen was helpful.

Most of the military commanders see air power as only one of the factors which the U.S. is bringing to bear on the enemy.

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Congressman Bates asked what about the duration of the war.

The Vice President said he did not find any prophets. The U. S. military in conjunction with the South Vietnamese have the initiative. The morale is good. Effort of the allies is better. The quality of the armed army is improved.

Congressman Mahon asked if the one billion dollars in foreign aid which had been poured into Indonesia was responsible for their success.

The Vice President said he did not believe it served the best interest of the Indonesians for us to claim that our foreign aid had caused it. It was a parallel part of the total anti-Communist effort.

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