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#140a notes	Notes from 12/4/67 - 12:23 P.M. Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting [Sanitized NLJ 82-60] Secret 5 pp. <i>more info released 12-13-93 NLJ 91-188</i>	12/4/67	A

## FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings; Box 1

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DECEMBER 4, 1967 - 12:23 p.m.

Joint Chiefs of Staff

Sec. McNamara	General Johnson
Under Sec. Nitze	General Greene
General Wheeler	Admiral Moore
General McConnell	

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 4, 1967

6:45 p. m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Cabinet Room on December 4, 1967.

Those attending the meeting were:

Secretary McNamara  
Undersecretary Nitze  
General Wheeler  
General McConnell  
General Johnson  
General Greene  
Admiral Moorer

The meeting began at 12:23 p. m. The meeting ended at 1:35 p. m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
SECRETARY McNAMARA  
UNDERSECRETARY NITZE  
GENERAL WHEELER  
GENERAL McCONNELL  
GENERAL JOHNSON  
GENERAL GREENE  
ADMIRAL MOORER

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December 4, 1967  
Cabinet Room

Secretary McNamara said this is the annual meeting with the President to review budgetary issues which the JCS feels are important enough to discuss with the President.

General Wheeler said the Joint Chiefs of Staff had two very long and productive sessions with Secretary McNamara concerning U. S. strategic forces and general purpose forces. He said there are only four issues which will be brought to the President's attention, and one has no impact on the FY'69 budget.

General Wheeler said this has been the most far-reaching and most extensive exchange of views the JCS has had in the four years he has participated. He said that budget decisions are still being considered, so it does not necessarily mean that additional questions will not be brought to the President's attention in the future. He said the questions before them today concern force modification and force structure. This does not affect Southeast Asia operations.

General McConnell said there is disagreement on whether we should have a new advanced strategic bomber in 1976. He says the JCS believe we should have one and Secretary McNamara does not believe we should have one.

Secretary McNamara said he believed General McConnell presented the issue well. He said by 1976 we would have 465 bombers including B-52s and FB-111s. In 1976 there will be 1542 missile launches "on line," and 8,190 separately targetable bombs or warheads.

The National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) are that our forces could adequately destroy Soviet capabilities as currently programed. If the Soviets go beyond NIE estimates, we go to what is called "greater than expected" threats. Even in the event that the "greater than expected" threat develops,

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we still have means of coping with this situation. These include adding the Spring Defense to the Minuteman system; the addition of hardened silos for the Minuteman missile; adding 150 more Minuteman missiles; and the addition of newer missiles to the B-52 bomber.

General McConnell did say that it is better to have these new bombers than to have to modify the system were the "greater than expected" threat to develop.

The President asked how much this would cost. General McConnell said it would range upto 7 1/2 billion dollars for 150 aircraft, but the amount asked for in FY'69 was only \$40 million for contract definition.

Secretary McNamara said he would recommend only about \$25 million and that this would delay the bomber program about a year. Under his plan, the current force would be modified and the \$7 1/2 billion investment would not be necessary.

General McConnell said it was his judgment that the bomber is superior in "sure destruction" of cities than is the missile. He recommended going to the contract definition on the bomber immediately.

Secretary McNamara said he felt that the threat is not realistic. If it does not develop we will not need the bomber. "I say we stand a good chance of not having to spend the \$7 billion. We are talking about 1976. We do not know what the Soviets will do between then and now."

General Johnson said there is some difference of opinion about the assumptions built into this which leads to the figures given in the NIE estimate.

General McConnell said the newest B-52 will be fourteen years old in 1976. "I believe we will need a new bomber by then."

Secretary McNamara said he did not think a new bomber would be necessary.

General Wheeler said the next issue was the modernization of the Fourth Military Air Wing. He said this is a reserve wing.

General Greene said that a later type aircraft is needed in this wing. He said, for example, they have no planes in this wing which can fly in storms or at night and there are no photo reconnaissance aircraft. He also said there is a shortage of helicopters in this wing and that more were needed.

General Greene said that about 23 fixed wing aircraft and 25 choppers would be required to bring this wing upto par with the other wings. The

budget request for FY'69 would be \$130.1 million and the projected cost for the total project would be \$631 million. Secretary McNamara said he did not believe that it was necessary. Secretary Nitze agreed with Secretary McNamara.

General Greene said it was a matter of what the President wanted this wing to be capable of doing in the event it were to be needed in actions independent of Vietnam. "If they are going to operate independently they are not able to do the job with the current equipment."

Secretary McNamara said the wing was ready to go if necessary.

General Greene said the wing has only thirty choppers.

Secretary McNamara asked how many choppers did it have three years ago? General Greene said there were none three years ago. Secretary McNamara said that was just the point -- there has been significant modernization in the wing during the last three years and that choppers could be reallocated in the event this wing were to be activated for duty.

The President asked if the Defense Department was doing all it could to get choppers to Vietnam.

Secretary McNamara said that indeed there was every priority given to putting more choppers into Vietnam. He said there now was a problem of parts, and there may be a need to shift the tension from choppers to parts. He said, in fact, that there were more choppers than could be used well.

General Johnson said there are 140 choppers per month coming into Vietnam.

Secretary McNamara said there was chopper pilot problems now. He said the need is for more roads in Vietnam so that much of the travel which is now by chopper can be handled on roads. In fact, he said that much of the movement could be handled more efficiently on roads rather than by chopper.

Secretary McNamara said Ambassador Komer and Ambassador Bunker asked for \$65 million in road money but that he could only give \$40 million.

General Greene said that if we have another crisis somewhere else in the world we would not have this Marine wing equipment well enough to sustain itself.

Secretary McNamara asked for more time to study this problem. He said it was his impression that the wing was not able to sustain itself.

Admiral Moorer said there is a need for a new tactical fighter. He said the F-4 is being used as a first line fighter. There is a need for a general purpose fighter for both services. He said that the services were asking for \$100 million for contract definition and that there is no dispute for a need for a fighter. The dispute is over the amount.

Secretary McNamara said Admiral Moorer stated the case well. There is a need for a modern fighter. He said the difference between the JCS and the Secretary is over \$60 million versus \$100 million.

Secretary McNamara said we will go as fast with money as decisions can be made, but that he would be inclined to leave the budget figure at \$60 million.

General McConnell said that the \$100 million figure would permit them to overcome any differences in design or contract definition.

Admiral Moorer said that the Secretary had agreed to make up any difference out of funds, were more than \$60 million required, so that was satisfactory to him.

General Johnson said that the JCS expected questioning on the differences between their position and that of the Secretary of Defense on the need for ABM defenses. He said the JCS still favors a heavy defense while the Secretary favors a thin defense.

Secretary McNamara said the arguments are well known. The Joint Chiefs are saying they haven't seen anything to change their views and I certainly have not seen anything to change mine.

The President urged that the JCS and the Secretary try to reconcile their differences before testifying. He pointed out the bad results which came out of the Stennis hearings this past session. "These differences permit them to propagandize that we have deep divisions between the civilian and military leadership. I certainly have seen no evidence of that while I have been here. I think you all are superior and stable and dependable.

"However, you must take into account not only what you say but the effects of what you say. You must keep in mind the relation between the military committees of Congress and the Chief Executive. Some committee chairmen think they should run the strategy of the war rather than the President. I base this on all my years in the Congress. We do want the understanding



of the committees, but it does not strengthen our system to air our differences.

"I am pleased and proud of your performance, your competence, and your dedication.

"All of you know that you are welcome to visit me anytime you want. You do not have to go through Marvin Watson. You can call my secretary and slip in through the side door if you have some personal problem or some complaint. There is nobody that stands between you and me if the issue is serious enough to bring it up.

"All of you should know that at any meeting where you are not represented Secretary McNamara has presented your view often better than his own. I remember several situations in which the Secretary presented his position and then presented the position of the Joint Chiefs and I went with your recommendation.

We are going into a very difficult period ahead. We are going to have a new Secretary of Defense. Most people do not realize how much our wife means to us until she leaves us. Then you learn how difficult it is to do your own cooking. It is the same way with the Secretary. We are going to have to learn to work these things out. It will require all you can -- particularly since this is going to be an election year and we are facing some serious financial problems.

"It appears we are not getting a tax bill. Interest rates are rising. We have a potential deficit of \$25 - \$35 billion depending on which assumptions you consider. Our revenues are down. Our expenditures are up.

"I am going to cut \$4 billion. \$2 billion of that will come from Defense. Even after that \$4 billion cut we will still have \$1 1/2 billion more than what we went in with on the budget in January.

"So I ask you to return to your departments and sharpen up your lead pencils. Take your lowest priority items and see what you can do to forgo everything except the pay increases and the men and materiel necessary."

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