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#61a notes	Notes from 2/13/68 - 1:12 p.m. Tuesday luncheon group with Rusk, McNamara, Helms, Clifford, Wheeler, Rostow [Sanitized NLJ 83-13] Secret - 7 pp. - <i>Open ALS 92-142 10-5-99</i>	2/13/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 2

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FEBRUARY 13, 1968 - 1:12 p.m.

TUESDAY LUNCHEON MEETING

60

Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
CIA Director Helms
Clark Clifford
General Wheeler
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

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MEMORANDUM

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61
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 14, 1968

12:40 p. m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your Tuesday luncheon meeting of February 13, 1968 in the Mansion.

Those who attended were:

Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
CIA Director Helms
Clark Clifford
General Wheeler
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

The meeting started at 1:12 p. m. The meeting ended at 2:30 p. m.

DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING

BY DCM ON 10-28-82

SECRET

Meeting began: 1:12 pm
Meeting ended: 2:30 pm

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S
LUNCHEON MEETING
WITH
SECRETARY RUSK
SECRETARY MCNAMARA
CIA DIRECTOR HELMS
CLARK CLIFFORD
GENERAL WHEELER
WALT ROSTOW
GEORGE CHRISTIAN
TOM JOHNSON

February 13
1968
In the Mansion

Director Helms: The report on a possible air attack by North Korea on Seoul was unnecessarily alarming. There is nothing to it.

We are worried by reports that the North Koreans have the log of the Pueblo and are publicizing specific co-ordinates.

Secretary Rusk: An operations order of 1966 CINPAC Fleet permitted these ships to go upto a three mile limit. We need to check to see if such an operation order might have been aboard this craft.

General Wheeler: The Pacific Command was placed on a high state of alert for the possibility of an attack on South Korea in any case.

Mr. Rostow: Representative Pucinski took Secretary Rusk's answer to Representative Carey on Capitol Hill last week. He violated his word about the off-the-record nature of the discussion in the belief he was helping the administration.

The President: When is our next meeting with the North Koreans?

Walt Rostow: 9 p. m. tonight.

The President: Anything new on Vietnam?

General Wheeler: There is continued resistance in Saigon, but it is fragmented. Dalat is clear. The enemy is still holding the citadel in Hue.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 92-142

By cb, NARA Date 9-16-99

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There is shooting but nothing important around Khesanh and the DMZ.

The President: What is your evaluation of the light activity around Khesanh?

General Wheeler: They had the hell knocked out of them. They are trying to reconstitute their forces. Their first wave was very savagely handled.

General Westmoreland indicated to me this morning that "things are looking better all over."

The enemy has a new flag with blue, red and yellow. The red represents blood; the blue represents the land; and the yellow represents the revolutionary spirit.

The President: What is the nature of the enemy forces in Saigon?

General Wheeler: The forces in the Saigon area are decreasing. There is still the build-up and the threat across the Cambodian border.

At Khesanh we got that C-130 out. He took off in 0-0 visibility. It was a very gallant action.

The President: How are the C-130s coming?

Secretary McNamara: Westmoreland asked for two squadrons of C-130s. They were sent on February 9.

The President: Is there no problem with the C-130? Do they have enough?

Secretary McNamara: There is no problem at present.

General Wheeler: We do not have with us now a recommendation on reserve call-up. The Joint Chiefs are working on that today.

The first troops will begin moving out of U. S. facilities tomorrow night at 6 p. m. (These are the first units of the 10,500 authorized and approved for immediate shipment in response to General Westmoreland's request. The Bunker announcement and press guidance are attached as Appendices A and B.)

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The Chiefs are preparing a paper, one proposal based on the minimum call-up necessary to support these troops and the second based on the desirable level in case we have to deploy the rest of the 82nd Division and more Marines.

The President: I sure want you and Bob McNamara to get together on one program. Let's agree on these things before you get here.

There are a number of questions which I want you to consider and get answers to me. Those questions are:

1. Why is it necessary to call up reserve units at this time?
 - a. To be ready for further reinforcement of Vietnam?
 - b. To be ready for other contingencies outside Vietnam?
 - c. To reassure allies such as NATO to whom we have military commitments?
 - d. To contribute to our overall deterrent posture by adding to our visible strength in being?
2. How large should the call-up be to satisfy the foregoing requirements? Can the call-up be diminished by such devices as a reduction in our overseas garrisons in Europe or Korea?
3. Why is it necessary to call up individual reservists at this time? Can't it be avoided or postponed? If not, how many must be called? When? From what sources?
4. What will happen to the reserve units and individuals called up? Where will they go? How long will they serve? Are the necessary housing, equipment, and training facilities ready for them?
5. What are the budgetary implications of these actions?
6. What must be requested from the Congress? What can be avoided or delayed?
7. What will be the manpower requirements for maintaining these increased forces? What will the effect be on draft calls?
8. What will be the domestic and international reactions to these decisions?

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9. How should our decision be explained to the domestic and international public? What should be the timing of our statement?

The next thing I want to discuss with you is the telegram I received from Cy Vance. I will read it:

There could only be one answer if the President really wants me to go. I have serious reservations, however, about going on to Saigon from here. I fear that decision to this effect could jeopardize any benefit which may come out of our mission. These people are ultra sensitive and in a hurt mood. There is a good chance they would feel they are being downgraded by being made a part of a two purpose mission and by lack of urgency in my reporting to the President on their problems.

Secretary Rusk: Bunker said we should not let the Vance mission be interpreted that the South Vietnamese government has the same problem with the U.S. Government as does the South Korean Government.

The President: Would you send him?

Secretary Rusk: I want you to get the best information and advice you need.

Secretary McNamara: I think it would be helpful to get a first-hand report from Vance.

Secretary Rusk: Somebody should go.

The President: It looks like it is a question of personalities then.

I think Cy has a point that Pak wants me to get the message from him as quickly as possible.

Secretary Rusk: Also we should not underestimate the trouble with South Korea Vance is handling.

General Wheeler: Admiral Sharp asked me whether we should move the cruiser Canberra from the Sea of Japan back to Vietnam in light of the political problems this might cause with South Korea.

The President: What is the situation on the Pueblo?

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Secretary Rusk: Ambassador Bohlen and I are having lunch with Dobrynin later this week. I am perturbed by this broadcast giving the log, plot, and co-ordinates of the ship. The North Koreans may want a confession and an apology. It is hard to confess something when you do not believe you did it. We need independent access to our men, but they may have us.

The President: Should we review the orders on all ships of this type?

Wheeler: The Pueblo Task Force under George Ball is looking at this now.

The President: Is there a significant difference in intelligence gathered three miles out verses fourteen miles out?

Director Helms: It depends on what you want to get. The farther out the ship is, the less communications intelligence you get.

Secretary McNamara: There are four near-term action programs which are proposed.

Those are as follows:

1. Defer additional reinforcements of U. S. forces in South Vietnam until requested by Westmoreland. Defer "call-up" of reserve units to replace the 6 battalions now being deployed until further information is available as to Westmoreland's additional troop requirements, the extent of defections in the ranks of the ARVN, RF/PF and South Vietnamese security forces and the success of the GVN in restoring services, coping with the refugee problem, etc. Defer request for new legislative authority.
2. Call up now a relatively small number of the Ready Reserves, approximately 40,000, recognizing that additional call-ups may be required later. This can be done without additional legislative authority. This call-up could be accompanied by a Presidential speech noting that a further call-up may become necessary depending upon developments in Southeast Asia, but that for the time being no legislative action is being requested on either personnel or financial matters.
3. Call up either a small (40,000) or large (130,000) number of Reserves and concurrently request Congress to authorize additional

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personnel actions to strengthen the Armed forces. 1/ Defer request for supplemental financial authorizations and appropriations, but indicate these will be required.

4. Call up either a small (40,000) or large (130,000) number of Reserves and concurrently request from Congress both the authority to take the needed personnel actions and the supplemental financial authorizations and appropriations required. 2/

1/ By Joint Resolution of Congress, the following authorities could be granted:

- (a) Authorize the extension of all enlistments, appointments, periods of active duty, and other periods of obligated service of Regular and Reserve members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.
- (b) Authorize activation of all needed individual Ready Reservists and extend beyond June 30, 1968 the authority to call both units and individuals of the Ready Reserve.
- (c) Authorize re-call of retired Reserve personnel.

2/ The possible increase in our effort in Southeast Asia may require, for Fiscal 1968, additional new Obligational Authority of \$1 billion, with additional expenditures of \$500 million, and for Fiscal 1969, additional new Obligational Authority of from \$2 to \$3 billion, with an increase of expenditures amounting to \$2 billion \$500 million.

General Wheeler: Senator Russell said it would be necessary to have a substantial reserve call-up before Congress would approve extension of enlistments.

The President: What would you get with an extension of enlistments?

Senator McNamara: You would get 17,000 extra men per week by extending enlistments. It would raise the readiness of our strategic reserves.

The President: How long would you extend tours?

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Secretary McNamara: It would depend on how many men are called up. We would ask for authority to extend one year. We would apply that authority if needed. For example, we need helicopter pilots extended.

General Wheeler: Yes, it would help with helicopter pilots.

The President: What do we do with the Roumanian?

Secretary Rusk: I think we should just thank him for his help. He brought back nothing.

The President: What about any targets in the Hanoi area?

Secretary McNamara: There are 13 authorized but not hit.

Secretary Rusk: In light of these recent attacks and the negative response to our visitor to Hanoi, I am ready to hit almost anything.

General Wheeler: The Joint Chiefs propose again limiting the circle around Hanoi to three miles and 1 1/2 miles around Haiphong. This would open everything else up to Route reconnaissance.

But these targets do not have to be brought up today, since the weather is bad and there are authorized targets which have not been struck.

The President: How do you feel about this, Bob?

Secretary McNamara: As I have said before, the military value is small. The risk is very high. The chance for civilian casualties is very high.

Secretary Rusk: We can consider this at a later time.

Clark Clifford: To get the reply you did do what I consider a very just and fair suggestion. It seems very reasonable and, in fact, well justified to increase the level of pressure in North Vietnam. I would favor a step up in the military pressure.

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APPENDIX A

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

In accordance with General Westmoreland's request, we are deploying 10,500 additional troops to South Vietnam.

PRESS GUIDANCE

Question: What troops?

Answer: They will come from various installations. I am not at liberty to go into that at this time.

Question: How will this affect the level (ceiling) of 525,000?

Answer: That will be evaluated at a later time.

Question: When will these troops be deployed?

Answer: As early as possible.

Question: Is this the number that General Westmoreland requested?

Answer: Yes, at this time. General Westmoreland wants to reach the previously authorized level as soon as possible.

APPENDIX B

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Luncheon with the President
Tuesday, February 13, 1968, 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Reserve Call-Up and Congressional Action (Sect. McNamara & Gen. Wheeler)
 - Which units ?
 - Which powers to be requested from Congress ?
 - Consequences for budget ?
 - Public presentation and rationale ?

2. Instruction to Vance (Sects. Rusk and McNamara)
 - Text will be available.

3. PUEBLO: Next Steps (Sect. Rusk)

4. The Roumanian (Sect. Rusk)
 - End of the line.

5. Other

W. Rostow Rostow

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