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#65a notes	Notes from 2/15/68 - 6:06 p.m. Cyrus Vance meeting on his return from Korea - and other foreign advisors Top Secret 12 pp. <i>Sanitized NLS 92-142 10-5-99</i> <i>see FRUS vol 29 p 170</i>	2/15/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 2

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FEBRUARY 15, 1968 - 6:06 p.m.

MEETING WITH CYRUS VANCE ON HIS RETURN
FROM KOREA

Cyrus Vance General Wheeler
The Vice President Walt Rostow
Secretary Rusk Clark Clifford
Secretary McNamara George Christian
Under Secretary Katzenbach Tom Johnson
General Wheeler

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 15, 1968

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FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ^{Tom} Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with Cyrus Vance on his return from Seoul, on February 15, 1968, in the Cabinet Room.

Attending the meeting were:

Cyrus Vance
The Vice President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary McNamara
Under Secretary Katzenbach
General Wheeler
Walt Rostow
Clark Clifford
George Christian
Tom Johnson

The meeting began at 6:06 p.m. The meeting ended at 7 p.m.

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING
WITH CYRUS VANCE

February 15, 1968
Cabinet Room

The President: All of us are deeply grateful to you, Cy, for all you have done.

Mr. Vance: The Joint Communique was issued at 1 o'clock today Seoul time. In the meeting this morning, I had difficulty with President Pak about issuing a joint communique. He was against a communique.

Meeting with President Pak, the Prime Minister and others this morning was in dramatic contrast with the meeting I had with Pak and the Cabinet when I arrived in Seoul. Tensions were high when I arrived. When I left, Pak put his arm around me and thanked me for coming. In terms of the basic objectives of easing tension and getting a friendly relationship re-established, the mission was a success. This was in evidence even with the press at the airport when I left.

In the long run, however, the picture is very dangerous.

The President: Before we get any further, what did we do to provoke the anger and hostility?

Mr. Vance: Because we did not permit any retaliatory action on the attack on Blue House. The depth of feeling over that is very deep. It was considered a personal affront and a loss of face. They considered it very serious that the raiders got within 300 yards of Blue House bent upon killing the President and his family.

The President: Does Pak blame us for that?

Mr. Vance: Yes, to some extent, because they got through the guards.

Pak wanted to react violently against North Korea. Ambassador Porter prevented this.

Blue House is now covered with guards and there is strict orders that any plane, no matter what its designation, will be shot down if it flies anywhere

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over or around Blue House.

They are also angry about the Pueblo. They wanted us to take out Wonsan and not doing so was in their opinion a loss of face.

One of their guys, the Defense Minister, is an absolute menace. He has organized a very elite anti-infiltration unit under his command which has been conducting raids across the border against North Korea.

So there is blame on all sides.

There is a very strong danger of unilateral action by Pak.

Pak controls the whole country. Nobody will tell him what he does not want to hear. He is moody, volatile and has been drinking heavily. He is a danger and rather unsafe.

The Prime Minister is a force for restraint. General Bonesteel called in the ROK Joint Chiefs and made it completely clear to them that if any unilateral action is taken that it would necessitate him recommending that U.S. troops be withdrawn. The Chiefs took this very calmly. The Prime Minister told me to make it clear to President Pak that he can't take unilateral action. There are a few men at the top who are aware of this danger.

Pak presents us with some problems. I do not know whether he will stand still. We went into some gut issues in our meeting with Porter and Pak. We got some commitments:

1. That they will take action to quiet their people.
2. They will stand by during the closed door sessions with North Korea as long as it doesn't go on for a long period of time.
3. There will be no reprisals for the Blue House or Pueblo.
4. There will be no reprisals in the future without consulting us if they are significant.
5. The most serious thing was this. They said they will go through the formality if another serious act occurs, but the consultations will be only formalities. They will act

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if another serious act occurs.

There was an understanding that they would keep their troops in South Vietnam. I did not raise the question of the committed troops since General Westmoreland's cable did not reach me until after my meeting had ended.

I made it very clear to Pak that were they even to consider removing troops from South Vietnam we would pull ours out of Korea.

In summary, the prospects for the future are not good.

- North Korea may try to get South Korea to take some unilateral action against the North to further divide us.
- There is an unstable political situation with Pak's mood and attitude as it is.
- There could be a serious problem raised with the possibility of unilateral action.
- I do not know if Pak will last.

In the past, South Korea has been a showcase for the United States, but we must look at the cold hard facts. There is no longer a perfect showcase.

I would recommend that a good, small group be put together to determine how we proceed in the days ahead.

That is my report in capsule form.

The President: Is Pak's drinking irrationally something new?

Mr. Vance: No, this has been going on for some time. He hit his wife with an ash tray. He has thrown ash trays at several of his assistants and I was fully prepared for that.

The President: What does he want us to give him?

Mr. Vance: He has a large shopping list. He wants:

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- Six squadrons of F-4s.
- One million dollars to augment his anti-guerilla forces.
- Four new air fields.
- Expansion of existing air bases.
- A large increase in the amount of aid.
- A promise to remove none of the air craft now in South Korea until the new ones he has requested are in place.

I told him I would pass this on to you. The amount comes to about \$1 1/2 billion.

The President: What do you think the consequences are of the 600 raids that have taken place this year? Have they hurt the South Koreans much?

Mr. Vance: No, not except for the Blue House raid.

The President: Was the Blue House raid intended for our Ambassador too?

Mr. Vance: No. The one infiltrator who was captured was told to say that he was after Ambassador Porter. But he really wasn't. He was told that before CIA and our interrogators got to him in order to put a little more political pressure on us to act.

The President: Did the South Koreans say what brought the Pueblo attack on?

Mr. Vance: Nothing more than they thought this was part of a North Korean political plan to destroy morale and to harm us and the South Koreans.

The President: Have they asked for any more U. S. troops?

Mr. Vance: No.

The President: Did they say anything about Vietnam?

Mr. Vance: No, they did not.

The President: Was there any criticism about Vietnam?

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Mr. Vance: No, they said their resolve was the same as it had always been.

Secretary Rusk: Did Ambassador Porter say we would pull out our troops in South Korea if they pull out their troops from Vietnam?

Mr. Vance: No, I do not know if Porter said that. I made it clear to Pak that he should not persist in that attitude. I told him that any talk of that would have grave impact on the future of relations of our two countries.

Secretary Rusk: If we had started this consultation earlier, could we have had all these problems? Or were they inherent in Pak before this happened?

Mr. Vance: They were inherent in the situation with Pak.

Under Secretary Katzenbach: Do they continue to think we should take Wonsan?

Mr. Vance: Yes, they went through a list of things with me that they would do if certain events were to happen.

The President: Doesn't Pak worry about what the Soviets or the Chinese might do?

Mr. Vance: Pak thinks the Soviets and the Chinese will stand aside. I told him that our judgment and his judgment on this matter were vastly different.

Pak is convinced that the North Koreans are going to try to take over South Korea by 1970. He said that if they tried to attack Blue House again that he would retaliate and that much blood would be shed and that there would be much pain and suffering.

Secretary McNamara: How about our raids into the North?

Mr. Vance: They are conducting about two a month.

The President: Do we have a clear idea of what they have done?

Mr. Vance: They have been operating two a month raids recently. The anti-infiltration units are under the command of the Defense Minister. They took out a division headquarters in recent attacks. An attack no later than March is planned across the DMZ again.

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There is much talk in military circles about this.

The numbers are not clear. They have about 200 anti-infiltration troops trained with each division upon the DMZ and have an additional group being trained by these men now.

On the other side, there are some highly trained guerilla units. They estimate there are 2400 of these in 30 man teams. They are well trained and tough, but they have been chopped up in the past. 80 to 90% of them have been eliminated, since the South Koreans turned them in quickly.

They have excellent cooperation from the people in turning these guerillas in. The exact number of South Koreans trained is a very closely held secret.

The President: Is there any connection in your mind between the Pueblo and the attacks in Vietnam? Is there one man calling the dance?

Mr. Vance: I am not clear as to the case.

Secretary Rusk: Now that we have made a case of the 570 raids across the DMZ aren't we in a difficult position if any of this information comes to light about South Korean raids into the North?

Secretary McNamara: We do not have adequate knowledge of this.

Mr. Vance: Here is a list of items right here. There have been eleven raids between 26 October and December.

The Vice President: When did they start?

Mr. Vance: I do not know, although I think it has been at least a year.

General Wheeler: General Bonesteel had rumors of this from his advisors who are with the Korean units. Hard information is difficult to get.

The President: What is the purpose of these raids?

General Wheeler: They are punitive.

The President: Are any of our soldiers doing any of this?

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General Wheeler: No, sir. It is routine that battalions go into the DMZ and behind the DMZ under the Armistice Agreement. General Bonesteel has talked to the Senior ROK Commanders about the dangers of this action.

We could not even prove these raids have taken place.

The President: I would just as soon not prove it.

Mr. Vance: There are going to be some problems. Only recently a unit took an M-79 grenade launcher with them. If the North Koreans have it, they may make some propaganda out of it.

The President: Have there been any complaints from the North Koreans?

Secretary Rusk: There have been some on the radio and at the meetings at Panmunjon.

General Wheeler: What about the public unrest?

Mr. Vance: The unrest is deep and real.

The people are personally offended. In the ^{South} ~~North~~ Korean General Assembly, there is talk that we do not have as strong a mutual security pact with South Korea as we do with the Philippines. This particularly relates to incident response. They wanted a commitment from me on that. They feel like they have a second class arrangement. The ROKs also feel their hands are tied since they are under the UN Command.

I met with the Speaker and the leaders of their Congress. They brought this up. There is some feeling in the populace about this issue.

The President: Is there any estimate of what you would recommend in the additional assistance?

Mr. Vance: For next year, I would think about \$200 million would be required. They need to increase their capability to take care of guerilla-type raids in order to contain things rapidly.

General Bonesteel believes more can be done. In addition, we have to give them some F-4s. They must have this for public consumption.

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But I made it clear that there was nothing in the woods beyond the \$100 million this year.

They do need strengthening in a number of areas. The dilemma we face is how much we build them up, how much we build up their strike capacity.

Secretary Rusk: We had the same problem with Syngman Rhee 20 years ago. How much do we give him when he is having to strike the North?

Clark Clifford: I am most distressed about President Pak's instability. Does he have power to start major action on his own?

Mr. Vance: The generals would let us know and would drag their feet. But if he said go, they would have to go.

One general told General Bonesteel that he was terrified of the possibility of unilateral action, but he said that if he is given the order, they will have to respond.

Clark Clifford: This is a weak reed we are leaning on. We must watch this with the greatest care. We have got to find a means to disengage ourselves from any possibility of unilateral action.

Mr. Vance: President Pak will issue all sorts of orders when he begins drinking. His generals will delay any action on them until the next morning. If he says nothing about those orders the following morning then they just forget what he had told them the night before.

The President: Where do we get this information from?

Mr. Vance: General Bonesteel gets it. The military have the greatest amount of respect for the UN Commander and for his position.

Clark Clifford: Is there any quarrel between Pak and his Congress?

Mr. Vance: Not that I know of.

Mr. Clifford: Are the South Koreans developing their own teams?

Mr. Vance: They are called AIUs (anti-infiltration units.) They have 2400 men. Beyond that, they have one airborne battalion with jump

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capability. They could be dropped in for guerilla activity, If a war starts, they would be parachuted in to harass the movement of supplies and munitions.

They have teams for each Province.

Clark Clifford: Did you get any threat at all, even a veiled threat, about withdrawing troops from South Vietnam?

Mr. Vance: The Prime Minister mentioned that the legislature might ask for that. I told him very bluntly that we would remove our troops from South Korea if that happened. The Prime Minister turned ashen. It really shook him.

Clark Clifford: Then you think they are clear on that?

Mr. Vance: Yes.

The President: Walt, do you have anything?

Walt Rostow: No.

The Vice President: What is the status of their Naval craft?

Mr. Vance: They need more to impede infiltration. Most of the infiltration comes in from the sea.

The Vice President: Did you detect any political rivalry between Pak and the Defense Minister?

Mr. Vance: No.

The President: Who is watching the situation on our behalf?

Mr. Vance: Ambassador Porter is watching the President. General Bonesteel will step in at any time.

General Wheeler: As I understand it, General Bonesteel focuses on the Defense Minister and the ROK Joint Chiefs.

General Taylor: It goes back 20 years when the military was a restraining force against Syngman Rhee. The senior military will talk frankly.

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Mr. Vance: That is why we meet with them.

Secretary Rusk: I got a reassuring feeling from your meeting this morning.

Mr. Vance: They did say what I consider a very serious thing. If there is a serious incident, they will consult but they will go ahead and take action.

The President: Then you feel pretty well about it all?

Mr. Vance: Except for that last point.

The President: Do our people feel that they are pretty well prepared out there?

General Wheeler: Yes, sir, but we will be doing several things to improve our situation. But, with our Air Force out there, with their ground troops, and with the improvements in the ammunition supplies, the troops in South Korean could do quite well.

The President: Are you ready to go to South Vietnam?

General Wheeler: Yes, sir, I will go on Saturday.

The President: OK, if you want to. The sooner the better.

Secretary McNamara: We have one problem with testimony on the Tonkin Gulf that is scheduled for Tuesday. I can handle it myself, however.

The President sent Jim Jones out to get a memorandum he had sent to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

Secretary McNamara read the memorandum. It follows:

February 15, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR

Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense

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Security of Classified Information

It is imperative that every possible precaution is taken to insure that classified information, whether documentary in character or not, does not pass to those not entitled to receive it. Carelessness in this regard on the part of anyone in your organization can endanger the lives of American servicemen and the safety of other American citizens as well.

You are directed to review security measures and practices in your Department or Agency to make certain that everything possible is done to maintain the integrity of classified information. In addition, similar precautions are to be taken whenever you or one of your subordinates testifies before a congressional committee in executive session in relation to classified matter. More particularly, you or your subordinate should satisfy himself that everyone present or able to read the testimony to be given, except members of Congress, has a security clearance commensurate with the highest classification of the information that may possibly come up for discussion.

The President asked for a report from General Wheeler on Vietnam.

General Wheeler: There is nothing new since the memo this morning. There were no attacks except for a mortar attack on an airfield. A report on that action is not in yet.

The President: How about the 1,000 marching on Hue?

General Wheeler: There is nothing sufficiently firm on this to take immediate action.

The President: What is your feeling about the next meeting on our forces in Vietnam and what action we take to strengthen them?

Secretary McNamara: I think we should wait until Buzz goes out there first, unless Westmoreland calls for more men.

General Westmoreland was rather calm and assured in his discussions with General Wheeler this morning, wasn't he, Buzz?

General Wheeler: Yes, he was.

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He indicated things were picking up and going well. The command and control centers of the Viet Cong were disrupted in the vicinity of Saigon.

General Taylor: The Intelligence Board raised today that there had been very few main force units in the attacks on the cities. They said most of the VC were Province units.

General Wheeler: That is not my information. With the exception of few cases, most of these were main force units.

General Taylor: This was a DIA-CIA briefing.

General Wheeler: We know that the 9th VC Division was in the Saigon area. I cannot understand that.

Secretary Rusk: I think all of us are grateful to Cy for the job he has done.

The President: We do appreciate what you have done, Cy. Thank you very much for an excellent report.

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