

# WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

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#17a notes	Notes from 4/23/68 - 2:15 p.m. Tuesday lunch with Rusk, Clifford, Wheeler, Helms, Rostow, Christian, Johnson [Sanitized NLJ 87-37] Secret 5 pp.	4/23/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 3

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SERVICE SET

16

APRIL 23, 1968 - 2:15 p.m.

TUESDAY LUNCH WITH FOREIGN  
POLICY ADVISERS

The President  
Secretary Rusk  
Secretary Clifford  
General Wheeler  
CIA Director Helms

George Christian  
Walt Rostow  
Tom Johnson

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 24, 1968

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting and lunch with your Foreign Policy Advisers on Tuesday, April 23, 1968 at 2:15 p.m. in the Family Dining Room.

Those attending the luncheon were:

The President  
Secretary Rusk  
Secretary Clifford  
General Wheeler  
CIA Director Helms  
George Christian  
Walt Rostow  
Tom Johnson

The meeting began at 2:15 p.m. The meeting ended at 3 p.m.

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by XX, NALG. Date 3-1-91

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Meeting began: 2:15 p.m.  
Meeting ended: 3:00 p.m.

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S TUESDAY LUNCHEON  
MEETING WITH HIS  
FOREIGN POLICY ADVISERS

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April 23, 1968  
In the Mansion

17a

SECRETARY RUSK: The message to Vietienne should be briefed generally to the allies.

THE PRESIDENT: Was the flash gotten out?

SECRETARY RUSK: The message to Vietienne was delivered. The message to Bunker has not been.

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody asked me how I read accurate accounts of what Hanoi is doing. I tell them I read leaks from the State Department in the New York Times.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: We may get an inquiry back from the message to the effect when will we stop all bombing?

SECRETARY RUSK: A "forum" is a "forum" as I put it to reporters in my backgrounder about the March 31 speech.

THE PRESIDENT: There will be no speech this week. What are the indications on a Saigon attack now?

GENERAL WHEELER: A captured Colonel said this plan of attack was expected. It was unfortunate it leaked because we could have clobbered them. It is the first time since the Civil War that we have given away information like this.

We have the following courses of action:

First, go back to RP 6 for 48 hours including Hanoi and Haiphong.

Second, Executing attacks selectively in Haiphong

Third, Executing attacks selectively in Hanoi.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 87-37

By ing, NARA, Date 6-20-89

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I would not recommend it on military or political grounds. It would only be pinprick and would result in high losses.

The fourth course of action would be to open up the 19th and 20th parallel area for all types of attacks. I would recommend this as well as a resumption of Water Dragon.

In summary, nothing north of the 20th parallel should be hit.

The weather will start turning in May. We had one good day only since March 31. I would recommend opening the area between the 19th and 20th parallel for three or four days.

THE PRESIDENT: Lets get maps-photography and estimates and I'll meet on it.

SECRETARY RUSK: I wouldn't object to route reconnaissance between the 19th and 20th parallels.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Let's wait two or three days for a response to the message.

SECRETARY RUSK: If there were a major attack on Saigon, I would go back to RP6.

THE PRESIDENT: It would bother me if we didn't. I am surprised Buzz did not recommend it. If they hit us, let's call them and raise them. We can't sit back and let them hit us without letting them have it.

SECRETARY RUSK: I want to hit Hanoi and Haiphong if they hit Hue and Saigon.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: From the military standpoint, the military results of a few days does not justify the military gains. If the President wants to make a decision --

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are going through a temporary armistice. I think they will break it as soon as it suits them.

MR. ROSTOW: [REDACTED] 1,3/2

SECRETARY RUSK: If there is a major attack on Saigon or Hue we should look at a heavy response.

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THE PRESIDENT: Do we have a plan to respond with if they take advantage of our restraint? I want maximum results if they violate the restraint we have shown. If they do, let's damage them as much as possible without being reckless.

They are having a celebration. There is no incentive for them to act. I will not act until May 1 unless they take advantage of us.

Let's have the plan in case they violate it. Let's rub out the leak on the 19th. The 20th is what we agreed to, not the 19th.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: We will have ready a plan for use against Hanoi and Haiphong.

THE PRESIDENT: We want it to be appropriate.

SECRETARY RUSK: Put it on key targets.

THE PRESIDENT: Phucyen airfield - you may want to hit it.

GENERAL WHEELER: They have IL-28's on it increasingly.

THE PRESIDENT: Goldberg tells me NPT will be put off until September, then past election.

SECRETARY RUSK: There is a feeling that the General Assembly should not get involved in domestic political issues.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD then discussed the MACV announcement of missions against North Vietnam -- the pros and cons of changing present method of announcement, and the problem that will arise when sorties now mounted in Laos are shifted to North Vietnam as Laos weather deteriorates.

SECRETARY RUSK: We have group sorties in limited missions. We can't stop putting out announcements. Put more sorties into a mission.

GENERAL WHEELER: There was a press policy of being completely open on everything.

THE PRESIDENT: Let's explore this. Also let's explore the whole area of press relations. Perhaps some South Vietnam rules out there. I don't know why we haven't had censorship out there. This AP report of the VC Colonel wasn't helpful.

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SECRETARY RUSK: Our principal power is what we ourselves say.

GEORGE CHRISTIAN: There is very little power. The best limitation is what we ourselves put out.

SECRETARY RUSK AND SECRETARY CLIFFORD then discussed the NPT and non-use of Nuclear Weapons Clause.

SECRETARY RUSK: It would involve a note from the President to Kosygin. You should study this.

THE PRESIDENT: Let's have a special meeting on this.

GENERAL WHEELER: Paragraph 6 and paragraph 10 are the ones which the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reservations about.

SECRETARY RUSK: Inside the Soviet Union they are having a problem with their military. We need to put some meat into the offer. It means we would be willing to talk about limiting land-based missiles.

THE PRESIDENT: At Glassboro, it just seemed they did not want to meet. Say to them we would like to meet with them to go into various questions and not get specific.

The problem of entering base area 607 in Laos was discussed.

SECRETARY RUSK: I would send indigenous forces in with U.S. advisers. Our Ambassador (Sullivan) has great problems with this. We should limit this to "Ashau Valley fighting."

GENERAL WHEELER: Westy wants to put one battalion in for 3 - 5 days. We will call it the Ashau Valley operation.

DIRECTOR HELMS: All you have are primitive tribesmen in the area.

GENERAL WHEELER: Ambassador Sullivan is worried about three sites for Air America flights being knocked out. We have a plan to hit Route 7 up to the 20th parallel.

THE PRESIDENT: Let's get the Defense supplemental up, together with other items.

A situation report was given on the progress with M-16s and helicopters.

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SECRETARY CLIFFORD: By July we will have provided all combat ARVN with M-16s. We have two additional sources for M16's now in line. We have Colt on a 7-day a week, 3-shift basis. They are pushing for 50,000 M16s this month.

We will turn out almost 700,000 more M16s.

The helicopters are going well. We got prior clearance on April 10 from the committees. It will take \$477 million for 1,075 more choppers. A program for additional engines is underway.

THE PRESIDENT: Are we losing choppers and planes?

GENERAL WHEELER: We are losing helicopters, not aircraft.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: We lost 11 in one action. We are comfortable with helicopters.

SECRETARY RUSK: You wrote the candidates that you would brief them in 1967.

THE PRESIDENT: Put those two items on my desk - what we did before. I will decide after that.

SECRETARY RUSK: We must not be silent on the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.

THE PRESIDENT: Let's take it up later.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)  
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983  
By Dust, NARA, Date 3-1-91

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Lunch Meeting With the President  
Tuesday, April 23, 1968 - 1:00 pm

AGENDA

1. Contact Site. (Sec. Rusk)
  - Present situation;
  - Possible next moves;
  - Speech by the President?
2. Contingency Planning for an Attack on Saigon. (Sec. Rusk and Sec. Clifford)

What would be an appropriate response?
3. MACV Announcement of Missions Against North Vietnam. (Sec. Clifford)
  - Pros and cons of changing present method of announcement.
  - Problem that will arise when sorties now mounted in Laos are shifted to North Vietnam as Laos weather deteriorates.
4. Strategic Arms Limitation Package. (Sec. Rusk and Sec. Clifford)

See Tab A: a new approach to Moscow.
5. NPT and non-use of Nuclear Weapons Clause. (Sec. Rusk and Sec. Clifford)

See Tab B: strong JCS reservations.
6. Assorted DOD Items. (Sec. Clifford and Gen. Wheeler)
  - The Hague Nuclear Planning Meeting: a brief report.
  - The problem of entering Base Area 607 (Laos) in the course of A Shau operation. (See Tab C)
  - The problem of bombing Northern Laos: Sullivan's commitment to Souvanna versus danger of hitting North Vietnam. (See Tab D)
  - FY 1968 Defense Supplemental (\$3.9 billion): situation report.
  - Progress with M-16's and helicopters: situation report.
  - Vietnam casualty reporting: situation report.
7. Briefing of Presidential Candidates? (Sec. Rusk)
8. Other.

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W. W. Rostow