

WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

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#30a notes	Notes from 5/14/68 - 1:10 p.m. Tuesday lunch with Foreign Policy Advisors [Sanitized NLJ-CBS-38] Top Secret 5 pp.	5/14/68	A open 5/22/82
#32 notes	Handwritten notes from 5/14/68 meeting open 5/22/82 Top Secret 13 pp.	5/14/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 3

RESTRICTION CODES

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NA FORM 1429 (6-85)

SERVICE SET

MAY 14, 1968 - 1:10 p.m.

29

TUESDAY LUNCH WITH FOREIGN POLICY
ADVISORS

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
General Wheeler
Director Helms

Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

May 14, 1968

30

MR. PRESIDENT:

51

Attached are the notes of the Tuesday
Luncheon today, May 14.

Tom

Tom Johnson

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Meeting began: 1:10 p.m.

Meeting ended: 2:30 p.m.

300

NOTES OF TUESDAY LUNCHEON

MAY 14, 1968

DECLASSIFIED *MLJ-CBS38*

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 1/30/95, State Dept. Guidelines

By *yc*, NARA, Date *5-17-02*

THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

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

The President: I do not know what we should do about conference report on taxes. Labor is completely against it. If we don't do it, Congress will go for more than \$6 billion. Mills has gotten by with an increase in debt limit without trouble in the past. Watson says he cannot live with the ceiling under this conference report. Nitze says he can't live with it at Defense, but Budget tells me you can by substituting military for civilians in jobs.

Secretary Rusk: We do not have recommendations of our team about how to handle tomorrow's Paris meeting. We either must speed up delegation or slow down talks. There was nothing new on the first day. We must not get too itchy to move on to new steps. We may want to repeat a few lines on Laos and Cambodia. I am concerned about time factors. We should tomorrow stick to opening statement -- not push on to something new.

The intervention by Trudeau in Canada is not good. It is like U Thant's -- it asks us to stop bombing; doesn't ask Hanoi to do anything.

The President: Are you concerned about Thieu's problem in forming a new cabinet.

Secretary Rusk: Yes, but Ky will go along if there are no changes in Generals.

Walt Rostow: The "deal" is that Ky will be main negotiator in "your side, our side" situation.

CIA Director Helms: It is troublesome until it settles down.

Secretary Rusk: Are you meeting with South Vietnam legislators?

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The President: They are not on the schedule.

Secretary Rusk: They are volatile.

The President: I called Senator Fulbright Friday. He was going to Arkansas. What is the military situation in Vietnam?

General Wheeler: General Westmoreland says it is relatively optimistic. The enemy has taken heavy losses. Westmoreland is coming out of Ashau Valley because of the weather. I do not expect enemy successes.

Secretary Clifford: The breakdown is as follows: I Corps -- 94 U. S. Maneuver battalions vs. 47 enemy battalions, two to one in our favor. We are in good shape in the coastal areas.

II Corps -- the U. S. has 61 Maneuver battalions vs. enemy 25 - 28.

III Corps -- the U. S. has 90 battalions vs. enemy 14 - 17.

IV Corps -- the U. S. has 48 battalions vs. enemy 11 - 13.

Hence, they are not going to run over us.

Secretary Rusk: Can we avoid massive destruction of housing as we did in Saigon.

General Wheeler: No, except house to house fighting.

Secretary Clifford: 20,000 dwellings were destroyed in Saigon. It was close to Tet figure of 27,000 dwellings destroyed.

The South Vietnamese are quick to call in artillery.

General Wheeler: That is true. They show less restraint than we do.

Secretary Clifford: We have had a good play on the role of South Vietnam. Life did a good story. South Vietnam did well in Ashau Valley.

Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland want our negotiations in Paris to have a man with recent Vietnamese experience. General Wheeler and the Pentagon favor it. Secretary Rusk and I think we must be careful that man is not too much brass. We think it would be good on a rotating basis available to them. We don't want him to be of high rank.

Secretary Rusk: I would have no problem with rotating Colonels.

General Wheeler: It would be good to do it on a two-week basis.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Secretary Clifford: Let's do it with no higher than Colonels sent.

Secretary Rusk: Is that okay with the President?

The President: Yes.

BOMBING TARGETS BETWEEN 19TH AND 20TH PARALLELS

General Wheeler: We propose extending armed reconnaissance to 19° 50' to establish buffer zone.

(Jim Jones enters. President agrees to 3:00 p.m. Cabinet Meeting).

General Wheeler: Showed the President a map with proposed targets. I also recommend seeding and rain-making in area.

The President: Are we together on this.

Secretary Rusk: I have no problems with seedings. The North Vietnamese representative in Paris used the 20th Parallel in his statement.

Secretary Clifford: Psychologically, it would be a bad time to expand our bombings. It would be difficult to ask them to phase down. The targets are not worth the political and psychological problems created. The product of our bombing will not be that important. General Wheeler and I will have to talk this out.

CIA REPORT

Secretary Rusk: I also am concerned that Hanoi thinks it can mobilize public opinion such that they can do anything and we must stop all our efforts. They must learn you did not withdraw in order to bend to their wishes. I would not oppose strikes between 19th and 20th.

The President: I want to hear both sides. I am sensitive that we do anything to hinder negotiations. I also worry that we kill some of our people by holding back to 19th.

Study this document carefully and let's meet on this tomorrow.

Secretary Clifford: I appear on Friday before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. They will want to get into sensitive areas.

Secretary Rusk: I would memorize the March 31 speech and not go beyond it.

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Secretary Clifford: I cannot go into the San Antonio formula?

Secretary Rusk: I would say to them what I have said to newsmen: "I make no point in my negotiating with you. We are trying to negotiate with Hanoi in Paris."

Walt Rostow: The rate of infiltration is one you must get down.

The President: What are the latest figures?

General Wheeler: Starting in November through May, we show 113,400 infiltrates. (These are starts -- not actual infiltrators into the South.) During March, April and May, there were 76,000 people on the move. They will start to arrive in June, extending into August for another round of attacks in July.

The President: I got the impression that since Tet there were 100,000 starting down.

CIA Director Helms: The figure was 80,000.

Walt Rostow: 100,000 since January 1.

CIA Director Helms: That's right.

General Wheeler: Two Divisions in North Vietnam are starting to move.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN SITUATION

Secretary Rusk: It looks like the Soviets are trying to pressure the Czechs, but not actually to move in troops. We are following this closely. We should stay out of public comment.

MIDDLE EAST

Secretary Rusk: We have Ambassador Goldberg in good attitude to avoid things most obnoxious to Israel on Jerusalem. We have had no cooperation from Israel.

The President: You were disappointed in Kosygin's letter, weren't you.

Secretary Rusk: Yes, it said that they would talk troops only after Israel is out of Jerusalem.

POSTPONEMENT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Secretary Rusk: Always it considers whether to delay until after elections.

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SERVICE SET

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This year we are having a special session and could postpone regular session. It would be good to have them delay it in order that they not pressure us on bombing.

The President: I thought you wanted it to go on.

Secretary Rusk: Only if we were in the position of having to ask for it to be postponed.

Walt Rostow: I have analyzed the North Vietnamese statement in Paris. It says again that the United States is the aggressor. "U Thant, DeGaulle, Senator Kennedy and Fulbright say you should stop bombing." They want world opinion to sway us. The sooner we show we will do what is right, the better.

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Lunch Meeting With the President
Tuesday, May 13, 1968 - 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Instructions to Paris Delegation. (Sec. Rusk)

Delegation is expected to recommend that Gov. Harriman be instructed at Wednesday's meeting to:

- Refute major points of North Vietnam statement.
- List areas of agreement found in Monday's statements.
- Propose subjects on which discussion can be concentrated.

Ambassador Bunker strongly recommends a "go very slow" policy on offering total cessation of bombing as long as North Vietnamese attacks go on in Saigon and throughout South Vietnam.

2. Proposal to send U.S. military officer from Saigon to join Paris Delegation.
 (Sec. Clifford)

Sec. Clifford wishes to discuss. Ambs. Harriman and Vance, Sec. Rusk and Gen. Wheeler support the proposal.

3. Bombing Targets between 19th and 20th parallels. (Sec. Clifford & Gen. Wheeler)

4. Appearance of Sec. Clifford before Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
 (Sec. Clifford)

First public appearance on Hill since confirmation, scheduled for Friday, May 17. Subject of hearing is military assistance. Formal statement to be released.

5. Czech-Soviet Situation. (Sec. Rusk)

Situation report.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

By Det, NARA, Date 3-6-91

6. Middle East Situation report. (Sec. Rusk)

7. Letter from Kosygn. (Sec. Rusk)

8. Postponement of UN General Assembly Fall Session. (Sec. Rusk)

George Ball and Amb. Goldberg recommend delay of meeting.

9. Other.

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W.A.W. Rostow

1:10

Tuesday lunch May 14

32

Rusk - Clifford - Wheeler - Helms - Rostow
Christian - Johnson.

Pies - I do not know what we should
do about conference report on taxes.
Labor is completely against it.
If we don't do it, Congress will
go for more than \$6 billion.
Mills has gotten by with
increase in debt limit without
trouble in past. Watson says
he cannot live with ceiling
under this conference report.
Nitty says he can't live
with it at Defense, but Budget
tells me you can by substituting
military for civilians in jobs.

Rusk: We do not have recommendations
of our team about how to
handle tomorrow's Paris
meeting. We either must
speed up delegation
or slow down talks.
There was nothing
new on the 1st day.
We must not get
too itchy to move
on to new steps.
We may want to repeat
a few lines on last

DECLASSIFIED, NLS-CBS 38

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 1/30/95, State Dept. Guidelines

By jc, NARA, Date 5-17-02

[17]

Cambodia. I am concerned about time factors. We should tomorrow stick to opening statement - not push on to something new.

The intervention by Trudeau in Canada is not good. It is like U Thant's - asks us to stop bombing; doesn't ask Hanoi to do anything.

Pres- Are you concerned about Thieu's problem in forming a new cabinet.

Rush: Yes, but Ky will go along if there are no changes in generals.

Postow: The "deal" is that Ky will be main negotiator in "your side, our side" situation.

Helms: It is troublesome until it settles down.

Rush: Are you meeting with SVN legislators

Pres: They are not on the schedule

Rush: They are volatile.

Pres: I called Fulbright Friday. He was going to Arkansas.

What is military situation in Vietnam

Wheeler: Westmoreland says it is relatively optimistic. Enemy has taken heavy losses. Westy is coming out of A Shau Valley because of weather. I do not expect enemy successes.

Clifford

I - Corps

US 94 maneuver bns
Enemy 47 in our favor
2-1

Coastal areas - we are in good

II

US 61 maneuver bns
Enemy 25-28

III

US 90
14-17

IV

US 48
Enemy 11-13

Hence, they are not going to
run over us.

Rusk: Can we avoid massive
destruction of housing as we
did in Saigon

Wheeler: No, except house to house fights

Clifford

20,000 dwellings destroyed
in Saigon. It was close to
Tet figure of 27,000
dwellings destroyed.

SUN are quick to call in
artillery + air.

Wheeler

That is true. They show
less restraint than we.

Clifford

we have good play on role
of SUN. Life did good
story. SUN did well
in Ashau Valley.

Bunker + Westy want our
negotiators in Paris to
have a man with
recent Vietnamese
experience. Buzyn
and Ventayon favored
Push + I think we must
be careful that man is
not too much brass

We think it would be good on a rotating basis available to them. We don't want him to be of high rank.

Rush: I would have no problem with rotating colonels.

Wheeler: It would be good to do it on two-week basis.

Clifford: Let's do it with no higher than colonels sent

Rush: Is it OK with Pres?

Pres: yes

Bombing Targets Between 19+20th

Wheeler: we propose extending armed reconnaissance to 19° 50' to establish buffer zone.

(Jim Jones enters. Pres. agrees to 3 p.m. Cabinet meeting).

Wheeler: Shows Pres. map with proposed targets

I also recommend seeding and rain-making in area.

Pres - Are we together on this

Clifford: I have some problems with this

Rush I have no problems with seedings.

The RNN representative in Paris used the 20th Parallel in his statement.

Clifford: Psychologically, it would be bad time to expand our bombings. It would be difficult to ask them to phase down. The targets are not worth the political

and psychological problems created. The product of our bombing will not be that important. Buzg and I will have to talk this out.

CIA - report

Rush: I also am concerned that Hanoi thinks it can mobilize public opinion such that they can do anything and we must stop all our efforts. They must learn you did not withdraw in order to bend to their wishes. I would not oppose strikes between 19th & 20th

Pres: I want to hear both sides. I am sensitive that we do anything to hinder negotiations. I also worry that we tell some of our people by holding back to 19th.

Pres: we got out of Hanoi +
Haiphong to get away
from hitting population
centers. We restricted
to 20th because we said
we would create an
inferno down there.
CIA says they are
taking full advantage
of the restriction to
the 19th.

Study this document
carefully + let's meet
on this tomorrow.

Clifford: I appear on Friday before
Senate Foreign Affairs
Committee. They will
want to get into
sensitive areas.

Rusk: I would memorize March
31 speech + not go beyond
it.

Clifford: I cannot go into
San Antonio formula.

Rush: I use no point
in my negotiating point
with you. We are trying
to negotiate with
Hanoi in Paris.

Rostow: Rate of infiltration
is one you must get
down.

Pres. - What are latest figures?

Wheeler:

Starting Nov. through
May show 113,400 infil. trees.
(These are starts — not
actual)

March - April - May
76,000 people on move.

Start to arrive in June
& extending into August
for another round of talks
in July.

Pres - I got impression since
Tet there were 100,000
starting down

Helms: The figure was 80,000

Rostow: 100,000 since January 1.

Helms: That's right

Wheeler: 2 divisions in north
Vietnam are starting
to move.

Czech Situation

Rush: Looks like Soviets
try to pressure Czechs,
but not actually to
move in troops. We
are following this
closely. We should
stay out of public
comment.

Middle East

Rusk: We have Goldberg in good attitude to avoid things most obvious to Israel on Jerusalem. We have had no cooperation from Israel.

Pres - You were disappointed in Kossygin letter, weren't you

Reich - Yes, I said that they would talk troops only after Israel is out of Jerusalem.

Postponement of General Assembly

Rusk: Always it considers whether to delay until after elections. This year we are having a special session and could postpone regular session. It would be good.

to have them delay it in order
that they not pressure
us on bombing.

Pres — I thought you wanted it
to go on.

Rush — Only if we are in position
of having to ask for it
to be postponed.

Rostow: Speech on Crisis

- you are aggressor

- U Thant, De Gaulle, Sen Kennedy

and Fulbright say you should stop
bombing. They want world
opinion to sway us.

• Sooner we show we
will do what is right. OK.