

# WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

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#45 notes	Meeting w/Congressional Leadership 6 p. Top Secret  [sanitized - placed in open file on 4-25-86]	5/28/68	A
#46 notes	Handwritten notes on which #45 is based Top Secret 18 p.	5/28/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 3

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214  
MAY 28, 1968 6:30 p.m.

BI-PARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP  
MEETING WITH CYRUS VANCE

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Meeting Began: 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Ended:

45

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NOTES OF BI-PARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL

LEADERSHIP MEETING WITH

CYRUS VANCE

May 28, 1968

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THE PRESIDENT: Vance came in late last evening. He met with the Executive branch this morning. I wanted you to get all the information he has. We want your advice and suggestions.

We are concerned about our situation in Vietnam. We have shown restraint. They have shown none. We lost 1,100 men in the last two weeks.

MR. VANCE: I have little to add to what you already know.

Procedural discussions took two days and amounted to four total hours.

Substantive sections now are all from printed documents. Their room to improvise is quite limited.

Thumb-nail sketches on each member of the North Vietnamese delegation. Outlined they have background in propaganda.

They are using talks as a propaganda device. It seems a fight-and-talk strategy. Broadening of government in South Vietnam has been a step forward.

No tangible progress at conference table.

In public opinion, North Vietnam credibility has been shaken by denial of having troops in South.

U. S. has made constructive proposals.

We have sought to have private talks without success.

We need to get into private discussions.

We are going to be patient

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MR. VANCE: Things have gone about as expected.

Road will be long and difficult.

CONGRESSMAN MAHON: Are there reasons which would cause North Vietnam to engage in private talks or do they consider these talks merely a second front?

MR. VANCE: They may want to change their position. I do not know.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Do you discuss our military operations and theirs?

MR. VANCE: We have not been able to get into informal dialogue.

They charge us with being aggressors. They allege we violate 1954 accords.

They refuse to acknowledge <sup>they</sup> we have troops in the South.

PRESIDENT: They have shown no restraint.

MR. VANCE: They say we should get first to the cessation of the bombing.

BILL BATES: What reason are they there?

MR. VANCE: They want to reach a solution on their terms. There will be compromise on down the road.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Has instability in France affected talks?

MR. VANCE: Not yet.

SENATOR YOUNG: Can they act without bowing to China or Russia.

MR. VANCE: Yes. They show that by fact they are talking. They went away from China's advice.

SENATOR RUSSELL: What do you mean they have admitted they have troops in South.

[illegible]

They concluded they cannot win militarily in Vietnam.

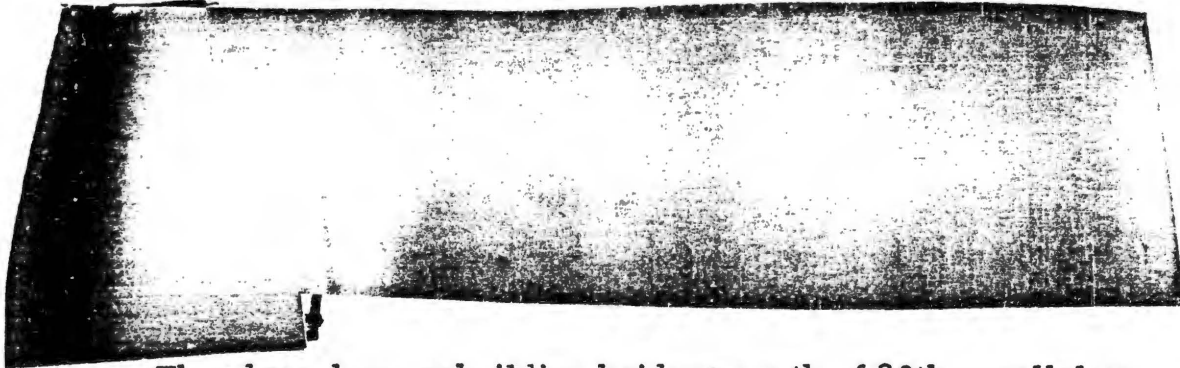
So, they seek a political settlement in Paris.

We must stay with these negotiations as long as we can.

GENERAL WHEELER: Military activity in South have been substantial

- Just South of DMZ
- in Saigon area
- in Western highlands

They have shown no signs of restraint in North.



They have been rebuilding bridges north of 20th parallel on permanent basis. Rebuilt railroads. They have improved airfields.

There is no substantial movement of AA.

SENATOR RUSSELL: What is policy in our forces on Migs in South.

GENERAL WHEELER: If they penetrate south of 19<sup>0</sup>, we go after them. They could go south to 16<sup>0</sup>, near Danang. They may try to knock down a B52.

SECRETARY KATZENBACH: These have not been negotiations yet. Patience is important. So is firmness.

Objectives of North Vietnam.

1. Destroy Saigon government.
2. Split us from allies.
3. Seek to win propaganda war.

SECRETARY KATZENBACH: There will be further efforts in South to strengthen their position in the South.

Exposure of North Vietnamese delegation to Western press. They have been exposed for what they are.

PRESIDENT: We are grateful to Cy Vance.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: From JCS point -of-view, are you in agreement with guidelines you have.

GENERAL WHEELER: Yes.

Support for war was low. In reducing bombing on March 31 to 20th, we lost very little because of bad weather.

We did take some psychological loss.

As weather gets better military costs get higher.

I thought we should limit ourselves to try to bring this miserable war to a close.

SENATOR BYRD: How long can we refrain from bombing north of 20th?

GENERAL WHEELER: It will depend on talks in Paris.

It will depend on political factors. We need to give diplomatic track a full chance of success.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: We have increased number of sorties south of 20th. We are concentrating now on Panhandle.

In March we knocked out --

180 trucks of 1967 March  
680 trucks of 1968 March

242 April 67  
765 April 68

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1. North Vietnam had political objective

- bring down South Vietnamese government.
- bring divisiveness between U.S. and allies
- cause dissent in U.S. over war.

40% of men coming down are for Saigon area.

2. World opinion has shifted since March 31.

Anti-Americanism has quieted.

The intelligence shows they intend to go all out.

PRESIDENT: Enemy wants to bring out division between Allies and show we were a country divided.

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