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#73 notes	Notes from 8/10/68 - 12:25 p.m. President's briefing of Former Vice President Nixon and Gov. Agnew [Sanitized NLJ 87-31] Secret 5 pp.	8/10/68	A
#74 notes	Handwritten notes from 8/10/68 briefing Secret 19 pp.	8/10/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 3

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NA FORM 1429 (6-85)

72  
AUGUST 10, 1968 - 12:25 p.m.

Briefing of Vice President Nixon and Governor  
Agnew

The President  
Secretary Rusk  
Director Helms

Cyrus Vance  
Former VP Nixon  
Governor Agnew

~~MEETING NOTES  
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AND GOVERNOR AGNEWAUGUST 10, 1968 -- LBJ RANCH ~~MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED~~~~Publication Requires  
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THOSE ATTENDING THE BRIEFING WERE:

The President  
Former Vice President Nixon  
Secretary Rusk  
CIA Director Helms  
Cyrus Vance  
Governor Agnew  
Tom Johnson *Tom*

SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 87-31

By *48*, NARA, Date *6-20-89*

CIA Director Helms: Czechoslovakia is eased, not over. The Czechs want to reduce commitment to Warsaw Pact. Czechoslovakia made certain assurances. Prague meeting will take place in September. Soviets seek to bring about reforms.

Nixon: Is it your opinion that the Soviets can't let this happen?

Secretary Rusk: The problem is if both sides can move along so Czechoslovakia can progress and the Soviets can take care of its problems with its students, visitors.

Nixon: Will pressure be kept on?

CIA Director Helms: Yes. The situation will continue to be a tense one.

Nixon: The best line publicly is that this is a sensitive situation. We have sympathy but to say anything would not be helpful.

Secretary Rusk: That is right.

Governor Agnew: What is the relation of this to the Jewish question?

CIA Director Helms: No antisemitism in Czechoslovakia.

Nixon: The Czech government goes to great pains to show Jewish cemetery. It is no problem. It is a problem in Poland.

Secretary Rusk: Don't give the Russians a pretext for action. We've been tough on the USSR privately, not in public.

CIA Director Helms: MID-EAST. The *J*arring mission has not worked. There is very little movement. The Israelis have crushed Jordanians because of terrorists raids.

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The Soviets seem to be easing off revolutionary Arab countries. The last thing the Soviets want is another confrontation. Their fleet cruises around in the Mediterranean.

Re the Persian Gulf and the British pullout-- there is some problem about oil. There is some trouble with tribes in S. Yemen. Saudi Arabia and Turkey are in good shape.

Secretary Rusk: There is instability in Iraq and Syria. Nasser's health is not good.

Governor Agnew: How old is Nasser?

Cyrus Vance: He is 51.

CIA Director Helms: He has a bag<sup>ck</sup> problem.

Nixon: Would the Israelis like to have a change in the more moderate states in the area?

Secretary Rusk: The most difficult problem is the Jerusalem problem.

CIA Director Helms: VIETNAM -- The war is at the tensest point. Lull is not hard to explain.

- Lost 128,000 men
- Needed to fill out units
- Units now coming back
- Attack could come anytime.

The primary objective is -- ruination of Saigon's government.

Secretary Rusk: The offensive has been slowed by 40 of equipment being captured. They may be tired of military activity.

Nixon: Would the attacks be city attacks?

CIA Director Helms: Yes, city attacks.

#### WESTERN HEMISPHERE --

- No missiles in Cuba
- [REDACTED] A1,5
- They have 24 surface to air missiles
- Best army in Latin America
- Stability in Dominican Republic
- Haiti is a mess

Governor Agnew: How strong is Castro now?

CIA Director Helms: He is leader without question. The level of subsistence is not yet back to pre-Castro level. All the intelligent people left.

Vance: No tangible progress on central issue.

-- Some advance. We have gone to Paris.

-- We have had three prisoners released. We may get more out.

Le Duc Tho is on the way back from Hanoi.

Cessation of bombing

Public sessions -- rigid and unbending.

We will stop bombing under right conditions.

PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS: We have tried to come up with formula to let us stop the bombing with no public

Vance: They have refused to suggest anything at this point. They will not permit the Thieu-Ky government to sit at the table.

I arranged the original talks at a Tea Break. So far no progress.

Governor Agnew: Is there any difference between private and public talks.

Vance: There is no difference between private and public talks on substance.

Le Duc Tho -- he stops at Peking and Moscow enroute to <sup>Paris</sup> ~~Washington~~.

There is possibility of discussion between third country.

Secretary Rusk: We just got a message that they could not do this until September.

Nixon: Why are they talking?

Vance: Eventually they want a solution.

Secretary Rusk: They want a solution, but on what terms.

Vance: They would like it on their basis.

Nixon: We have people on our side who are constantly screwing us on propaganda. They signed an agreement in 1954 which gave them less on paper than they could have won on the battlefield.

What about China? What are they doing? Are the North Vietnamese sophisticated?

Vance: They are. They have sophistication.

Nixon: Do they still believe we have lost the war?

CIA Director Helms: The North Vietnamese are convinced they won after Dien Bien Phu.

The President: They think we believe that we lost the war. They don't think so.

Nixon: We have got to tell our people to remember that every word they write will be read by Hanoi.

Governor Agnew: How much information comes from Peking?

CIA Director Helms: Peking supports Hanoi with ammunition, munitions, food.

The President: We cannot certify how much influence on Hanoi China is.

CIA Director Helms: Ho wants their help, not their advice.

The President: I cannot tell you how much influence either Kosygin or Mao has.

The President: When we have a pause, we have a difficult time getting back.

Nixon: Who talks to the Soviets?

Secretary Rusk: We talk to Soviets in Washington and in Paris.

Nixon: Is there a shift in the Soviet attitude?

The President: The USSR suggested <sup>the</sup> 37-day pause. They can't deliver.

Secretary Rusk: The current mood is "stop the bombing".

Nixon: Any discussions with the Chinese?

Vance: No.

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Nixon: Do we talk at Warsaw?

Vance: Yes.

Secretary Rusk: If Tito were reaching out to grab Greece, you would have a parallel.

Nixon: What is the Laos situation.

Secretary Rusk: There is nothing decisive.

Governor Agnew: What is the relationship between the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. What is the degree of military deficiency before and after.

CIA Director Helms: 90% North Vietnamese ~~was~~ now vs. 60% earlier.

GOVERNOR Agnew: This might offset qualities.

CIA Director Helms: They are not as good now as they were.

Nixon: What about Thieu's attitude. He did not object to the Viet Cong being at negotiations.

Secretary Rusk: We and the South Vietnamese would be at the table on an our-side your-side basic, but the Viet Cong won't sit down with the Hanoi government.

The President: They have no problem making their views known.

Secretary Rusk:

Nixon: It's so much like a labor negotiation. You cannot give away the game in advance.

Secretary Rusk: In Latin America no coup has occurred in 27 years. Things are beginning to stabilize. The next Administration will see more movements in the Communist world. Mao is 75. Lots of ferment. It may evolve to non-Communist mainland.

Nixon: Why are they enamored with philosophy that even old Communism is outdated.

The Apparatus is working.

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