OCTOBER 14, 1968

MEETING WITH FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORS

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
General Wheeler

General Taylor
Director Helms
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

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MEETING WITH FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORY GROUP MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1968

THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NU 87-33 NARA, Date <u>5-19-89</u>

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

Tom Johnson

General Wheeler: German military are working hard to improve their armed forces in face of the Czech crisis. The visit to Berlin by Secretary Clifford and myself was excellent.

Secretary Rusk: Europeans now realize that use of nuclear weapons is serious business and reliance on this won't necessarily save them.

The President: What about the NPT?

Secretary Clifford: The matter wasn't raised.

The President: What do you think of Abrams views?

General Wheeler: I agree with Abrams' views.

The President: Do you anticipate problems if we stop bombing if they include the Government of South Vietnam at the Conference Table, assuming we believe they will A. Stop shelling of cities and B. not take advantage of the DMZ.

General Wheeler: No sir.

The President: Can we restart the bombing easily if they violate the cities or the DMZ?

General Wheeler: Yes, sir.

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The President: What would happen militarily

-- if the DMZ is not violated,

-- if cities are not shelled, and they go "all out" on the ground?

General Wheeler: They couldn't get off the ground if they try to step up attacks. I agree with Abrams that it would take them two months to get back up to strength.

The President: I hear we are only operating in the cities.

General Wheeler: That's not true. We are out in the countryside.

The ARVN are doing an excellent job. We captured more weapons and killed many enemy last week.

If we get these three conditions it's okay. If they mount an offensive across the DMZ or on cities, we restart.

The President: You've been in this pause before. You're no virgin, Bus. Who will help you get started back.

General Wheeler: You, Sir, and me, and Secretary Rusk and Secretary Clifford.

The President: How will the Joint Chiefs of Staff feel?

General Wheeler: They will not be opposed to it. At least one will favor it. One will be reluctant. Others won't object to it.

I remember 37-day pause well. It was undertaken on the basis of pious hope. This is undertaken on the basis of three points.

The President: The Soviets said they needed at least 12 days and no more than 20 to get serious talks going.

What about the Soviets?

Secretary Rusk: We should hear soon.

Walt Rostow: The Communists will test us with minor violations. There should be rules of engagement for Abrams. I doubt that they would start with attacks across the DMZ or on the cities. We should tell the Soviets we have given field commanders freedom to respond to violations.

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The President: I thought we had told Abrams that.

General Wheeler: We have put that in cable.

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Walt Rostow: We must have this.

Acres Mary

Secretary Rusk: If we get 15 rounds Abrams should be able to plaster the area from which this attack was launched.

<u>Walt Rostow</u>: If they will accept the GVN and are ready for serious talks, they won't break them up over engagements in the field.

The President: I feel they are hurting as a result of tenacity and endurance of our people. The ARVN has improved, but I doubt they feel they are going to bring about peace very quickly.

We must have solid answers to back up our taking this action. I won't continue fighting if there is reasonable prospect for getting terms. But I am not as optimistic as my colleagues.

If we expect they won't hit cities, violate the DMZ, and they will accept the GVN at the table, we can accept this as "almost anything." This will give us an opportunity for substantive discussions. All we have for taking firepower away is talks.

General Wheeler: The weather is bad in the DMZ area. There is six inches of rain predicted today. If the integrity of the DMZ is maintained, this is a military advantage to us. We can use sorties in Laos along the trail that would be used otherwise along the DMZ.

The President: What do we give up?

General Wheeler: Some pressure.

The President: But you shift it to Laos.

General Wheeler: That is correct.

Secretary Rusk: Abrams expresses considerable confidence. But if Hanoi demands new government in Saigon it might appeal to the New York Times. We will reject it. We do not want a 'give away' schedule.

George Christian: They will cooperate for a period because they have endorsed the Vice President.

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The President: It's hard to sell a house at my price of \$40,000 if Lady Bird tells the buyer at the door that she would sell it for \$35,000 -- or if a Mac Bundy would sell it for \$30,000 -- or another Administration man wants to sell it for \$25,000.

We must sell our case on: 1. We don't give up much. 2. We can get back if it doesn't work.

Secretary Rusk: A speech by Bundy at this time was bad. This might throw Hanoi off the track.

Walt Rostow: I told him that. He said he must decide on the timing for himself.

Secretary Rusk: Hanoi could have come unhooked because of this.

Secretary Rusk: We must go to troop-contributing countries first to consult them.

The President: I do not know what I want to do yet here. This is not an easy decision for me. Many people will call it a "cheap political trick."

General Taylor: The pitfalls and loopholes are there. We must look at the contingencies and how we deal with them -- the marginal infractions and rocket attacks.

Secretary Rusk: We made it clear to the Russians and to Hanoi.

General Taylor: Abrams and Thieu said they may propose a ceasefire.

We can't take off pressure in the South. They would be another Panmunjom.

Also, air reconnaissance must be part of the deal. We must also determine how the NLF will fit into that.

The President: Does'acts of war" include reconnaissance?

Secretary Rusk: It has been interpreted that way at times. We must and will have reconnaisssance, particularly along the DMZ.

The President: Should we talk to the candidates first?

General Taylor: If elected, I would.

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Secretary Rusk: Nixon is aware of all three points. He has great interest in getting this as far down the line as possible. Nixon wants a little more time if we move.

The President: He made that clear to me.

Secretary Rusk: I am concerned about the troop contributors. Thailand and Korea will understand. Gorton is more of a problem.

Secretary Rusk: The Sequence:

- 1. Go to troop contributors today.
- 2. Go to Vance-Harriman on instructions.

The President: Go to Vance-Harriman first.

Secretary Rusk: Go to:

- 1. Harriman- Vance.
- 2. Troop contributors.
- 3. Go to Hanoi.
- 4. If okay with Hanoi, go to candidates and key leaders.
 - 1. Mansfield, 2. Dirksen, 3. Russell, 4. Albert, 5. Ford
 - 6. Speaker.

The President: How many in State know.

Secretary Rusk: Four.

Secretary Clifford: The major equation is elementary.

Taking Hanoi at its word and seeing if it really means what it says.

They said if we stop bombing North of the DMZ they will get down to serious talks.

I think they have dropped their four points in Paris.

The President: Do you think stopping the bombing will do it? What about "other acts of war."

Secretary Clifford: I think "stopping bombing" and "acts of war" does not include that. It includes planes dropping bombs and naval shelling.

The President: I thought other acts of war would include reconnaissance.

Secretary Clifford: I cannot go into it blindfolded. We have must have

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high-level, low-level and drones. We are going to test their good faith.

You keep three conditions. 1. GVN 2. Cities 3. DMZ.

There has been a shift by them on 1. The GVN. It is a condition precedent. And we have made 2. DMZ and 3. Cities assumptions. (Conditions subsequent).

We must let them know we will not accept mass infiltration across the DMZ or attacks on the cities.

If they do either, we restart the bombing. You can lay firm predicate for resumption.

The President: Would you favor resumption of bombing if they violate any of these three?

Secretary Clifford: Yes, Sir, I would.

The President: If they know what will happen and we know what will happen then that's good.

The President: They have implied they would have the GVN in talks and understand the other two points. Don't we have more today than ever before?

Secretary Rusk: Yes, we do.

Secretary Clifford: Yes, we do have.

I think there will be a lowering of level of combat when this happens.

Abrams has shown more flexibility and mobility than Westmoreland.

The President: I do not agree. I think Abrams has inherited most of this from Westmoreland.

The President: When Secretary Clifford came in, we made decisions on M16's and other things that has helped.

Secretary Clifford: There will be diminution in level of combat. I would not let up.

The President: What does "respect the DMZ" mean? What does "shelling cities" mean.

Secretary Clifford: The shelling of cities is easy to ascertain.

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Secretary Rusk: With the first rocket -- we would raise hell with the Hanoi delegation. With 20 rockets -- we would do some bombing.

The President: Abrams lists four rules of engagement. Do you agree with them?

Secretary Rusk: Yes.

Secretary Clifford: Yes.

The real threat is staging of 20,000 men or so North of the DMZ. We would warn the delegation and slug them.

The President: Why does Abrams feel different today than he did in August about the bombing.

- 1. The DMZ agreement -- will respect the deal.
- 2. The weather is much worse in October than in August.

General Wheeler: That is right, Sir.

We are going to test their faith.

Secretary Clifford: Kosygin's letter said if you stopped the bombing substantial benefits would flow. We now are taking him up. We need to send a letter to Kosygin from the President. It gives them a continuing responsibility.

The President: We said to Kosygin a meeting could bring about a start on limitation of offensive and defensive weapons. We said we would give thought to continuing to pursue these things despite Czechoslovakia.

Secretary Rusk talked to Gromyko and leveled with him on three points. He got no contract on it.

Secretary Clifford: In view of that we need to keep this working with Kosygin.

Secretary Clifford: The timing of it is important.

The desire of people to try this road is overwhelming. We will have much support.

The three candidates should not be notified ahead of time. A leak now would be damaging.

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Secretary Rusk: My view of all this will be rather simple if true negotiating starts.

- 1. We have invested 28,000 dead and \$75 billion.
- 2. I will not accept giving North Vietnam one-half of South Vietnam or a part of South Vietnam or a coalition government.
- 3. I will insist that the North Vietnamese in South Vietnam go home; that the North Vietnamese in Laos go home. And a return to the 1962 Geneva Accords.

Electoral tricks we must watch for. Nixon has been honorable on Vietnam. We must give him a chance to roll with this. We must give him a chance to know about this.

He has actually been more responsible on this than our own candidate.

Secretary Clifford: He must be told a day in advance that this is a decision the President has made.

Secretary Rusk: I would have the President call him and emphasize the need for discretion and gravity of the situation.

Secretary Clifford: As soon as the decision is made don't let the date of the election concern you. The weight of public opinion is for this. It is too unwise to brief candidates on this much ahead.

I expect Nixon would play it fair with you. The security factor is so important.

Secretary Clifford: Troop contributing countries: We do not have to get commitments from them. We have carried the whole load. Australians have lost few. The Thais have lost only a few hundred. We could get a lead too easily. We could notify them about the time of release.

Secretary Rusk: We have had excellent results with Park, New Zealand, and Australia. I do not trust Marcos at all to hold it.

Walt Rostow: The Australian relationship is important.

Secretary Clifford: I recommend the President proceed on this. As soon as possible. There is more benefit than detriment. It will leave not a single stone unturned in your quest for peace.

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General Wheeler: 1. Get comments of Harriman and Vance. 2. Based on that, go ahead and make a decision to stop bombing on the basis of three points. We must have Hanoi agreement on GVN.

The President: You do not think the military risks are significant?

General Wheeler: Abrams and his people can handle it.

I prefer these conditions to those at the time of the 37-day pause.

General Taylor: I would make sure the GVN are at the Conference Table -- that reconnaissance will continue -- that cities and the DMZ are respected.

The President: What will you get today that you won't get three weeks from now.

General Taylor: I do not have the same sense of urgency.

Secretary Clifford: There comes a time in the tide of men's affairs that it is a time to move.

It is away (three weeks) from the election. It will receive commendation of the world and the country. I consider it a very real point to get the job done now.

<u>CIA Director Helms</u>: Bunker and Abrams point to the stake of North Vietnam in this. Negotiations will be miserable. They are not down yet. Still, I would take this step.

Secretary Rusk: I agree you should go ahead as soon as possible.

The President: Why, Dean?

Secretary Rusk: There is a major shift on Hanoi's part on role of GVN. There also is a good chance of performance on cities and the DMZ.

On the negative side, if we don't move we will be destroyed by the record now that they have agreed to do this. But, Hanoi is not buttoned up.

The President: I doubt if Hanoi is serious, but we must test if they are.

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The President: Le Duc Tho left Paris this morning for Moscow. What is the significance of it?

<u>CIA Director Helms</u>: There may be disagreement with the Soviets in light of Bundy's speech.

Secretary Rusk: Hanoi may have gotten unhorsed and the Soviets are trying to stay on the horse.

The President: What are the facts on the two times Drew Pearson says we blew peace.

Secretary Rusk: I never heard of it.

Secretary Clifford: Neither have I.

The President: Get the Bunker-Abrams wire to Vance - Harriman. I want them on board.

The President: Let's meet again this afternoon.

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Monday, Oct 14 10 A.M

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Pres TALLEY Rusk Helms Christian Clifford Wheelest Rostow JE GASON

Wheeler: Sermon military are working had to improve their amul forces. in face of Guch crisis. The viset to Berlin by Clifford and me was excellent

Kuse: Europeans now realize that rise of nuclear weapons is serious business and reliance on this want necessarily save them

Pres: what about NPT CC. matter warn't raised.

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Pres What do you think of Abranes views Wheeler I agree with Abranes' views. We are in excellent

Pres: Do you anticopte problems
of we stop bombing if they
include the GUN at conference table
assummin we believe they will
A) Stop shellin of cities
B) not take advantage of DMZ

Wheeler. No S.R

Pres Can we restart bombing easily if they violate the cities or the DMZ

Wheeler: Hes, sin

Pres what would tagger mulitarity — If DMT not wolsted — if cities not sheelled and they go all out on ground?

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Pres I hear eve are only operating in the cities

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We captured more weapons and hilled many enemy last week. If we get these conditions it's OK. If they the mount offensive across DMT or on alies, we restort. Hes. You've been in this puise Virgin, Bus Who will Telp you get started Wheeler : You, sir, sind me Pres of assumptions don't

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Pres How will JCS feel Wheeler They will not be opposed to it at least I will favor it One will be reluctant Others won't object to il Demember 37 daysucre well. It was under taken on basis of prous tope. This is under taken on basis of 3 soints.

Pres Soviets said they niedel at last / 2 days and no more than 20 to get servous lalls going.

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Pres: What do we give up?
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Wheeler: That is correct.

Rusk: Abrams expresses considerable confidence.

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Christian: They will cooperate for a period because thy have endorsed HHH.

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Pres: It's hard to sell a house Lady Bid tells buyer at Soor she would sell it for \$ 35,000 - or if a Mac Brendy would sell it for \$30,000 - or another administration man wants to seel it for \$25,000 We must sell our cose on: (1) we don't give up much (a) we can get back of it downt work Barren agent As Asp Sondings Kusk: A speech by Bundy at this time was bad. This might throw Hawi off

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Pres: I do not know what I want to do yet here

This is not an easy decision for me. Many people will call it a "cheap political track"

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Permission of Copyright Holder: W. Thomas Johnson MAX TAYLOR: The pitfalls and loop holes Are there. We must look at contigenin and how we deal with them

-MAYGINA! infractions

rocket Attacks

Rusk: We made it clear to Russians and Hanoi.

Taylor: Abramo and Thieu said they
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We can't take off pressure in South. That would be Another Pannunjon.

Also, Air reconnaissance must be Bort of deal.

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Taylor: We must also determine how NLF will fit into that.

Pres: Does acts of war "include reconnaissance.

Rusk: It has been interpreted that way at times.

We must And will have reconnaissance, particularly Along DMZ

Pres: Should we talk to candidates 1st?

Taylor: If elected, I would.
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Rusk: Nixon is Aware of All 3

Points. He has great
interest in getting this As
far down line as possible.

Niron wants a little time.

Pres: He made that clear to me.

Rusk: I Am concerned about troop contributors. Theiland and Koveans will understand. Govton is more of problem.

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Kusk:

SEQUENCE

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Pres: 90 to VAnce- Harriman 1st

90 to:

1 Harriman - Vance

@ Troop contributors

3 go to HAnoi

4) IF OK with HAMOI,

go to candidates

And key leaders

1) Manufield Dickson-Blussell
(4) Albert-Stord-Especker

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Pres: How many in State know

Rusk: four.

<u>Clifford</u>: Major equation is elementary.

Taking Hanvi at its word and seeing if it really means what it says.

They said if we stop bombing North of DMZ they will get down to serous talks.

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Pres: Do you think stopping bombing only will do it? What about "other acts of war."

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Clifford: I think "stopping bombing" And
"Acts of war" does not include that. It
includes planes dropping bombs and Naval Shelling
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CC: I cannot go into it blind-folded. We must have high-level, low-level + drones

we are going to test their good faith.

You keep 3 conditions

- (1) 9UN
- (2) Cities
- (3) DMZ

There has been shift by them only I'm and we have made

(2) DM2 And (3) Cities Assumptions

(conditions subsequent).

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Rusk: Yes, we do

Clifford: Yes, we do have.

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CC: There will be diminuition in level of combat. I would not let up.

Pres: What does respect the DMZ"
mean? What does
"Shelling cities" means.

CC: Shelling of cities is easy to Ascertain.

Rusk: 1st rocket = we would raise hell with Hanoi delegation. 20 rockets = we would do some. Bombing.

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Pres: Abrams list & rules of engagement Do you agree with them?

Rusk: Yes

Clifford: Yes.

Rool threat is staging of 20,000 men as so north of DMZ. We would warn delegation and 5/ug them.

Pres: Why down Ahrans feel different today than he did in Bright About booking.

1) DMZ agreement - Will respect the dee!

2) Weather much wase in October

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Rusz talked to Gromyko and leveled with him on 3 points. He got no contract on it.

CE: In crew of that we need to keep this working with Kosygin.

CC: Timing of it is important.

Desire of people to try this ROAD is overwhelming. We will have much support.

3 candidates should not be notified ahead of time.

Leak now would be damaging.

Dean Rusk: My view of All this will be rather simple if true regotiating starts.

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- 2) I will not accept qiving Nun 1/2 of Sun or a port of Sun or a coalition queenment.
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Rusk: Electoral tricks we must watch for Nixon hers been honorable on Vietnam. We must give him a chance to roll with this. We must give him a chance to know about this.

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Rusk: I would have President call him And emphasing the rule for discretion and gravity of the Situation.

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Rusk: We have had excellent results with PARK, New Zealand, and Australia. I do not trust Marcos at All to hold it.

Rostow: Australian relationship is important.

CC: I recommend Bros. Proceed on this.
as soon as possible. There is
more benefit than detriment.

It will leave not a single stone unturned in your quest for poace

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Wheeler:

1) Get comments of Harriman + Vance 2) Based on that, goahed+ make a decision to stop Tombuny on basis of.
3 points. Must some Hanvi agreement on GUN.

Pres: you do not thinh military visks Are significant?

Wheele: Ahrons + his geogle Can handle it.

Tourse at true of 37-day
zause.

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TAYLOV: I would make sure

GUN are at conference
table - that reconnacion
will continue - that
cities and DMZ are
respected

Pres: What will you get today that you want get 3 weeks from now

Taylor: I do not have same sense of urgency

CC: Thre comes a time in the title of men's offers that it is time to move.

It is acting (3 weeks) from election It will receive commenceation of warest country

consider it a very real point to get the job done now.

Helms: Bunker and Abroms
point to stake of NUN
in this. Negotiations will be
misurable. They are not
doron yet.

Still, Iwould take this step.

Rusk: lagree you should go Ahead
AS SOON AS POSSible.

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Pres: Why, Dean?

DRusk: There is A major shift on Hanois part on role of 9UN.

There also is good chance of performance of cities and DMZ

On negative side, if we don't move we will be destroyed by the record now that they have agreed to do this.

BUT, Handi is not butloned up

Pres: I doubt Henoi is serious, but we must test it they are.

Pres: Le Duc Tho left Paris
this morning for Mascoar.
What is significantes of it.

Helms: There new he disagreement with Soviets in light of Bundip speech.

Rusk: Hanoi may have gotten renhorsed and soviets are trying to skey on the horse.

Pres: What are the faction 2 time Drew Verson says we blue peace.

Ruse: Never Learl of L Clifford: Neither trees .

. . . .

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THE WHITE HOUSE

DR: Week in N-Y. : U.N meeting

C.C.+: in germany: NATO meeting

BLO.

128,000 dead

+ NUN: SUN of home

+ NUN: Leon go home

+ 62 genera accords

Nevelea |

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Pres: get/wine to Vance-Harriman

WANT THEM ON BOARD

P- Let's med again this Athernoon.