

35
10-15-68
OCTOBER 15, 1968 - 1:20 p.m.

TUESDAY LUNCHEON WITH FOREIGN
POLICY ADVISORS

The President
Secretary Clifford
Secretary Rusk
General Wheeler

Director Helms
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

NOTES ON THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE TUESDAY
LUNCH GROUP, OCTOBER 15, 1968

THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

The President
Secretary Clifford
Secretary Rusk
General Wheeler
CIA Director Richard Helms

Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

The President: Senator Mansfield said the announcement is "expected."
I will be surprised if it is not on evening news.

Secretary Rusk: Bunker says he needs 24 hours.

The President: Smathers called on me. He said Nixon people think
a "political trick" is planned.

General Wheeler: 1. We have two teams in North Vietnam of 20 men.
It will take 24 hours. 2. I have to get a reconnaissance program.
3. We must position forces in the DMZ. 4. We must get the rules
of engagement. 5. We must set guidelines for reprisals.

I need the President's authority to draft programs when you give word.

Secretary Clifford: No leak of any kind has ever come from the Joint
Staff.

The President: I think the odds are 50-50 they won't do it.

Secretary Clifford: We need to draft initial orders.

General Wheeler: Ten people will be involved.

The President: Only military?

General Wheeler: Yes.

The President: Okay. Which civilians know?

Secretary Clifford: Only me, no others.

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George Christian: I doubt if it will hold thru today. The New York Times story by Rick Smith and Marvin Kalb at 8:00 a.m. today may be put together.

The President: Tell Bunker to get Thieu moving on telling his people now.

Thieu must tell Ky, Prime Minister, and Defense Minister and draft a statement.

The President: Making the bombing order not effective for 24 hours is okay. We cannot delay announcement.

The President signed "Futherance" papers at 1:37 p.m.

Walt Rostow: The worst thing is for Ky to learn of this from a press leak or from one of troop-contributing countries.

Rostow called the situation room to arrange secure phone call from Rusk to Bunker (1:40 p.m. EDT).

The President read letter to Kosygin on bombing halt. (Attachment A)

The following are remarks of the President made previously on reciprocity.

News Conference on February 2, 1967

"Q. Mr. President, we have said in the past that we would be willing to suspend the bombing of North Vietnam in exchange for some suitable step by the other side. Are you prepared at all to tell us what kind of other steps the other side should take for this suspension of bombing?

The President: Just almost any step. As far as we can see, they have not taken any yet.

And we would be glad to explore any reciprocal action that they or any of their spokesmen would care to suggest.

We have made one proposal after the other. We would like to have a cease-fire. We would be very glad to stop our bombing, as we have on two previous occasions, if we could have any indication of reciprocal action."

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News Conference of March 9, 1967

"Q. Mr. President, sir, one point that some of your critics on Vietnam have discussed in the past week is the question of whether or not what we would ask in return for stopping the bombing has changed in the past year.

They say that a year ago, apparently we would have settled for simply getting talks if we stopped, whereas, now you are speaking of the need for reciprocal military action. Could you discuss this?

The President: We have talked about reciprocal military action in every pause we have had, Mr. Bailey.

We have had five pauses now.

On the first pause of 5 days we made it very clear that we were taking this action and we would keep our ear to the receiver and listen intently for any indication from the enemy that he would take reciprocal action.

Later, we had a 37-day pause. We were told before we went into that pause by some of the same people who are recommending a pause now, or urging a pause now, that if we would go into it for 12 days or at the most 20 days, we could get reciprocal action.

We went 37 days. They gave us no indication that they were willing to take any reciprocal action.

We have just finished a pause of six days during the Tet period.

At the beginning of each of these pauses we made it clear that we were going to pause, ask our men to withhold action, and give them an opportunity to agree to come to conditional discussions, unconditional discussions, any kind of discussion. We have just completed that 6-day pause.

So I would respond to your question by saying at the beginning of each pause we made it clear that we would take action, we would listen intently for action on their part. We have. We have heard the same story every time."

"Q. Mr. President, you and Secretary Rusk have both talked of a military quid pro quo and reciprocal action in exchange for a halt in the bombing. I wonder if you could be specific and say what we would require from the other side as part of this quid pro quo?

The President: I think a good, general way to express it is what I said at my last press conference -- just almost any reciprocal action on their part. We have said that we would be glad to stop our invasion of North

Vietnam, if they would stop their invasion of South Vietnam. "

We would be glad to halt our bombing if they would halt their aggression and their infiltration. We are prepared to discuss anything that they are willing to discuss. But they are not willing to discuss anything, as of now. "

Tennessee Legislature, March 15, 1967

"But reciprocity must be the fundamental principle of any reduction in hostilities. The United States cannot and will not reduce its activities unless and until there is some reduction on the other side. "

News Conference of July 18, 1967

"Q. Mr. President, may I follow up Mr. Deakin's question and your answer? Is the United States position that we would only be willing to stop the bombing if there were reciprocal action on their side?

The President: The United States position is that we are ready to meet with them any time to discuss arrangements for bringing the war to an end on an equitable and just basis. We have never been able to get them or any of their friends to bring them to a conference table.

Until we can, we are not able to explore with them what they might be willing to do. We hear from travelers and from self-appointed spokesmen from time to time this and that. On occasions we have attempted to confirm it, and we have negotiated directly with them.

I think the last position stated by Mr. Ho Chi Minh is a safe statement of their viewpoint. I refer you--as I did Mr. Deakin -- to their position as enumerated in that letter. Our position is that we would be glad to meet tomorrow, next week, or any time to discuss conditionally or unconditionally, on any basis, to see what they would be willing to do. "

San Antonio, September 29, 1967

"The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Vietnam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation. "

News Conference, September 30, 1967

"Q. Mr. President, in the past you have mentioned a reciprocal move by North Vietnam as a condition for our either halting or decreasing the bombing. Last night in your San Antonio speech, you did not mention this reciprocity. Was this not mentioning it any change in our policy or any softening of our position?

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The President: I will let that speech stand for itself. I don't agree, necessarily, with the first part of your statement, that in the past when I only referred to it I referred to it in a certain way. That is your statement and not mine."

Detroit, August 19, 1968

"This administration does not intend to move further until it has good reason to believe that the other side intends seriously to join us in de-escalating the war and moving seriously toward peace."

New Orleans, September 10, 1968

"... The Commander in Chief has insisted that the bombing will not stop until we are confident that it will not lead to an increase in American casualties. That is why we have placed such emphasis on re-establish the DMZ."

End of remarks of the President made previously on reciprocity.

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SERVICE SET

At 1:52 p.m. Secretary Rusk leaves to talk to Ambassador Bunker on secure phone.

CIA Director Helms: The CIA sent a report today on the situation in Vietnam.

- No enemy military objectives achieved.
- Enemy forces badly mauled.
- There will be a forced "lull" because of it.
- From August 18 to October 1 there were 22,000 enemy killed in action.
- Serious supply deficiencies.
- ARVN improved; suffered most casualties.

The President: Can we stop bombing at midnight Wednesday?

General Wheeler: I'll check. If we got orders out tonight we could knock off at midnight, October 16 or 12:00 noon in Saigon on the 17th.

I would like to send message and get teams out.

CIA Director Helms: That is clandestine.

The President: Okay, go ahead.

General Wheeler: Okay, I'll go ahead.

The President: The New Jersey is doing a good job.

General Wheeler: I need proposed rules of engagement Abe sent.

Walt Rostow: There is equipment trouble in Saigon. We are standing by for repair.

1. On Briefing Candidates

Have all of them on a conference call.

2. Text of Announcement

Approved by Clifford with one deletion.

APPROVE SET

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3. Leadership

Talk to them by phone.

4. Briefing.

- A. Start with Kosygin's letter.
- B. Mrs. Ghandhi letter.
- C. Views of House & Senate.
- D. Wouldn't stop unless it leads to stopping war.
- E. Rusk talked to Gromyko. Told him three things.
 - 1. Inclusion of GVN.
 - 2. No attacks on cities.
 - 3. No abuse on DMZ.
- F. September 17, told Harriman.
- G. October 5, 6, 7, Vance told.
- H. Hanoi said they might permit GVN to sit in.
- I. Met with Joint Chiefs of Staff -- all signed on.
- J. Talked to all troop-contributors. They agreed.
- K. No top military or diplomatic leader disagreed.
- L. If they shell cities, or abuse DMZ, we'll restart possibly.
- M. Offer each man a chance to come. If they take advantage we are prepared.

5. Backgrounders

Wheeler and Clifford - Military
Diplomatic - Rusk
President's -- White House

6. Talk to Eisenhower.

Honolulu Communique.

7. Letter to Kosygin.

Clifford and Rusk draft it.

8. Letter to Wilson -- Rusk

2:24 p.m. CIA Director Richard Helms looked at the President, shook hands and said "good luck. "

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Luncheon Meeting

1:20

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Pres: Mansfield said the announcement is "expected." I will be surprised if it is not on evening news.

Rusk: Bunker says he needs 24 hours

Pres: Smathers called on me. He said Nixon people think a "political trick" is planned.

Wheeler:

- 1) we have 2 teams in NVN of 20 men. It will take 24 hours.
- 2) I have to get a recon program

3) must position forces in Drill 2

4) Must get rules of engagement

5) Must set guidelines for reprisals

I need President's Authority to
draft programs when you give
word

CC: No leak of any kind has
ever come from joint
staff.

Pres: I think odds are 50-50
they won't do it.

CC: We need to draft initial
orders.

Wheeler: 10 people will be involved

Pres: Only military?

Wheeler: Yes

Pres: OK

Which civilians know?

CC: Only me, no others.

Christian: I doubt if it will
hold thru today. The
NY Times story by Rick
Smith and Marvin Kalb at 8 A.M.
today may be put together

Pres: Tell Bunker to get Thieu
moving on telling his people
Now.

Thieu must tell Ky, Prime Minister,
And Defense Minister And draft a statement

Pres: Making bombing order
not effective for 24
hours is OK. We cannot
delay announcement

President signed "Futhurance"
papers at 1:37 p.m.

Rostow: Worst thing is for Ky
to learn of this from
press leak or from one
of troop-contributing countries.

Rostow called Sit Room
to Arrange Secure Phone
call from Rusk to
Bunker (1:40 p.m EDT)

Pres read letter to Kosygin on bombing halt.
(Attachment A)

(Insert the passages giving
President's prior remarks
on reciprocity.)

1:52 - Secretary Rusk leaves
to talk to Am. Bunker
on secure phone.

Helms - CIA sent A report today
on situation in VN:

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+ Have all of them on
A conference call.

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+ TALK to them by phone

④. Briefing

- A Start with Kosygin's letter,
- B Mrs. Gandhi letter,
- C Views of House & Senate,
- D Wouldn't stop unless it leads to
stopping war.

SERVICE SET

E. Rusk talked to Gromyko.

told him 3 things

- (1) Inclusion of GUN.
- (2) No ATTACKS on cities.
- (3) No ABUSE on DMZ.

F. Sept 17 Told Harriman

G. Oct 5-6-7 Vance told

H. Hanoi said they might permit
GUN to sit in.

I Met with JCS - All signed on
includin

J Talked to All ~~deop~~-contributors
They Agreed

K No top military or diplomatic
leader disagreed

L IF they shoo cities, or Abuse DMZ
we'll restart possibly.

M Offer each man a chance to come in

If they take Advantage
we are prepared

⑥ BACKgrounder

WHEELER / CLIFFORD — MILITARY
DIPLOMACY — RESK
PRESIDENT'S — WHITE HOUSE

⑦ TALK TO Eisenhower.

Honolulu Communique

⑧ Letter to Kosygin
(Clifford + Resk draft it)

⑨ Letter to Wilson — Resk

2:24 - Dick Helms looked at Pres
Shook hands & said
"good luck"

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"Q. Mr. President, we have said in the past that we would be willing to suspend the bombing of North Vietnam in exchange for some suitable step by the other side. Are you prepared at all to tell us what kind of other steps the other side should take for this suspension of bombing?

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