

~~MEETING NOTES~~  
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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING

WITH:

SECRETARY RUSK  
SECRETARY CLIFFORD  
GENERAL WHEELER  
WALT ROSTOW  
GEORGE CHRISTIAN  
TOM JOHNSON

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October 22, 1968  
President's Office  
At 12:50 p.m.

WALT ROSTOW: Bill Jorden thinks they will back off for five days.

GENERAL WHEELER: You could stand it. The problem is related to morale, particularly the Vietnamese morale. The sooner there is an actual meeting with the GVN present, the better the performance of the ARVN and the U.S. forces will be.

SECRETARY RUSK: We need to get this in the announcement -- the inclusion of the GVN.

THE PRESIDENT: Why do they need more than one day?

SECRETARY RUSK: To get people there.

THE PRESIDENT: I'd rather not stop bombing until we get them there.

SECRETARY RUSK: I guess they understand that this is to get away from the "condition" set by a halt in the bombing.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the weather?

GENERAL WHEELER: It is terrible. The monsoon season has hit. The roads are practically impassible. The effects on the ARVN of a long delay could be bad -- not in terms of physical damage, but in terms of morale. McConnell said if we were to stop the bombing, now is the time to do it.

THE PRESIDENT: If they used the week badly it could hurt us.

GENERAL WHEELER: I'm more concerned about the effect on the ARVN. They have been doing well. They will sit on their hands if the effect is bad. I am a one-day man.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4  
NIJ 87-38  
By isp NARA, Date 5-19-89

SECRETARY RUSK: A week is too long. Two weeks are impossible.

1. There could be a meeting at 3 p.m.
2. We could stop the bombing at midnight Friday, and announce it Friday evening here, which is Saturday morning Saigon time.

THE PRESIDENT: We could go Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. On their Monday meeting, it would be held.

GENERAL WHEELER: 12 midnight Saigon time is noon here. 1500 hours Paris time is 10 p.m. Saigon time, 10 a.m. Washington time Monday, the 28th.

WALT ROSTOW: With the ambiguity in Thieu's statement, Ambassador Bunker should ask Thieu whether we could live through it.

THE PRESIDENT: I worry about the morale.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: There is a missing factor here. I don't know what happened since last week.

THE PRESIDENT: The implications of the negotiators were that they didn't have an agreement they thought they had.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: I thought we had an agreement. Why did we consult with the allies?

SECRETARY RUSK: Hanoi came up with changes in timing.

THE PRESIDENT: We thought they said they would have negotiations the next day.

SECRETARY RUSK: Hanoi didn't have this buttoned up with the NLF.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we have an agreement now.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Neither do I.

Prime Minister Gorton had a press conference.

SECRETARY RUSK: What is your reaction?

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: The agreement must be solid and firm.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: We may need to get it in writing.

When I left here Monday, I thought we had a deal. On Tuesday, I learned we didn't have a deal since the Paris delegation had to go back to Hanoi.

We must have a kind of agreement whereby:

- (a) The bombing is stopped as of a certain time.
- (b) The time when the meeting is to be held with the NLF and the GVN present is determined. We must get it in writing.

SECRETARY RUSK: Take it easy on written requirements.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Nobody told me they had gone back on it.

THE PRESIDENT: Mac Bundy said we ought to stop it. Vice President Humphrey said the same thing.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: There is no need to go back to the troop contributors.

THE PRESIDENT: I must get Abrams on board.

WALT ROSTOW: We must have them honor the DMZ or Abe will respond instantly. He and Thieu must know they must stand firm.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the deal now? Get Cy and Averill to insure we understand each other. Get Bunker and Abe to please tell us what problems this will cause us. Are they together on times?

SECRETARY RUSK: If each side can talk, time is the key factor.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Mr. President, your approach is the right one. What is the deal? Write it out.

In three days, send a cable to Cy and Averill to see if they're aboard. See if Bunker and Abe agree. See if Hanoi is aboard and the Soviets are aboard.

THE PRESIDENT: Get the language.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: They can name the participants.

GENERAL WHEELER: They must name the GVN.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Get this square with Thieu.

THE PRESIDENT: He has worse problems at home than I do with Fulbright. He has problems with his Senate and his people, too.

SECRETARY RUSK: It was Thieu who insisted that there not be a mention of NLF in the joint statement. They want to treat the NLF as non-existent.

The first of the meetings will be for the birds.

We have debacles. That's why we have diplomats. We are the Department of Debacles.

Here are the conditions:

- (1) The bombing ceases as of a certain time. Reconnaissance continues.
- (2) There is a meeting within three days. A time is announced for the meeting e.g. midnight Friday Saigon time, 3 p.m. Paris time, noon, Washington time.
- (3) The DMZ is not violated. If so, Abrams responds.
- (4) The cities are not attacked. If so, there is a response.
- (5) The GVN are present at the negotiating sessions.

The meeting is 3 p.m. Monday Paris time.

They proposed the 24th or 25th.

GENERAL WHEELER: This is an example.

SECRETARY RUSK: I would put this as a hard proposal.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: If we have trouble over a date, the whole thing will collapse.

WALT ROSTOW: Cy is convinced they understand the DMZ and cities part. What we say is important. Can we get Thieu aboard?

SECRETARY RUSK: Yes.

WALT ROSTOW: We cannot treat the NLF as an entity. The delay cannot be too long.

SECRETARY RUSK: This weekend is the last chance. We cannot do it directly before or afterwards.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Publicity has extracted the sting of politics.

SECRETARY RUSK: Nixon seem to be comfortable.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: We should say we have an agreement; we will stop the bombing; we will do it within three days.

WALT ROSTOW: This would be to Bunker-Abrams.

END

①

Pres  
Rusk  
Clifford  
Wheeler

Rostow  
Christian  
Johnson

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Oct 22  
President's Office

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- 12:50

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By JW, NARA, Date 2-22-91

Rostow: Bill Jordan thinks they will  
back off for 5 days

Wheeler: You could stand it. Problem  
is related to morale,  
particularly Vietnamese  
Sooner there is actual  
meeting with GVN  
presence the better  
the performance of  
the ARVN and US forces

Rusk: We need to get this in  
Announcement - inclusion  
of GVN.

Pres: Why do they need more  
than one day

Rusk: To get people there

Pres: I'd rather not stop  
bombing until we  
get them there.

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Rusk: I guess they understand that this is to get away from "condition" set by halt in bombing.

Pres: What is weather?

Wheeler: Terrible. Monsoon has hit. Roads practically impassible. Effects on ARVN of long delay could be bad not in terms of physical damage but in terms of morale. McConnell said if we were to stop bombing now is time to do it.

Pres: If they used week badly it could hurt us.

Wheeler: I'm more concerned about effect on ARVN. They have been doing well. They will sit on hands if effect is bad. I am a one-day man.

Rusk: A week is too long; 2 weeks  
are impossible

- ① Meeting at 3 p.m.
- ② Stop bombing midnight Friday  
announce Friday evening  
here; Saturday morning  
Saigon time

Pres Go Friday - Saturday - Sunday -  
Monday

On their Monday meeting would  
be held.

Wheeler:

12 midnight Saigon is noon here

1500 Paris time is 10 p.m. Saigon  
| 10 am Washington  
Monday 28th.

Rostow: With ambiguity in  
Thieu's statement, Benham  
should ask Thieu whether  
we could live through  
it

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Pres: I worry about morale

CC: There is missing factor here.  
I don't know what happened  
since last week.

Pres: Implications of negotiations  
were that they didn't have  
agreement they thought  
they had.

CC: I thought we had  
agreement. Why did we  
consult with allies.

Rush: Hanoi came up with  
changes in timing

Pres: we thought they said  
they would have  
negotiations next day.

Rush: Hanoi didn't have this  
buttoned up with ~~the~~ NLF.

Pres: I don't think we have  
agreement now.

cc: Neither do I.

CC: Dorton had a press conference.

Rush: What is your reaction

CC: Agreement must be solid & firm

Pres.: I agree.

CC: We may need to get it in writing.

When I left here on Monday I thought we had a deal.

On Tuesday I learned we didn't have a deal since Paris delegation had to go back to Hanoi.

We must have kind of agreement whereby

(A) bombing stopped as of certain time

(B) time when meeting is to be held. [5]

CC: Agree on time when bombing stops  
Agree on time when meeting held  
with NLF, GVN present.  
Get it in writing

Rush: Take it easy on written  
requirements.

CC: Nobody told me they had  
gone back on it.

Pres: Mac Bundy said we ought  
to stop it. HHH said  
same thing.

Rush CC: No need to go back to  
troop contributors.

Pres: I must get Abrams  
on board.

Roston: We must have them  
honor DMZ or Abe will  
respond instantly.  
He and Thieu must know  
they must stand firm

Pres: What is deal now?  
Get Cy + Averill to  
insure we understand  
each other.  
Get Bunker + Abe to  
Please tell us what  
problems this will cause us.

Are they together on times?

Rusk: If each side can talk  
time is key factor

CC: Mr. P, your approach is  
right one.

What is deal? Write it out.

13 days! - Send to Cy + Abe  
See if they're aboard  
See if Bunker - ~~Abraham~~ Abe agree  
See if Hanoi is aboard  
Soviets are aboard

Pres: ① Get language

CC: They can name participants.

Old Wheeler: Must name GUN

CC: Get this square with  
Thieu.

Pres: He has worse problems  
at home than I do with  
**Fullbright**.

He has problems with his  
Senate and his people, too.

Rusk: It was Thieu who insisted  
that there not be a  
mention of NLF in  
joint statement.

They want to treat  
NLF as non-existence.

First of meeting will be  
for the birds.

Rush: we have debates.  
That's why we have  
diplomats. We are  
The Dept of Debates

① Bombing ceases as of certain time  
Rec continues

eg.  
midnight Friday So. gov } ② Meeting within 3 days  
3 P. m Paris  
Noon Wash time } Time announced for meeting, eg

③ DMZ not violated  
If so, Abrams responds

④ Cites not attached  
If so, response.

⑤ GUN present.

Meeting 3 pm Monday Paris time.

Rush: They proposed 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>.

Wheeler: This is example.

Rush: I would put this as hard proposal [71]

CC: If have trouble over date  
whole thing collapses.

Rostow: Cy is convinced they  
understand DMZ + etc

What we say is important.  
[Can we get Thien aboard?

Rusk: yes

Rostow: We cannot treat NLF as  
entity

Delay cannot be too long.

Rusk: This weekend is last chance  
we cannot do it directly  
beforehand or afterwards.

CC: Callahan has extracted  
the sting of politics

Rusk: Nixon seems to be comfortable.

[10]

Clifford: We should say we  
have agreement; we will  
stop the bombing; we will  
do it within 5 days.

Rostow. This would be to  
Brinker - Abrams.