

54
OCTOBER 28, 1968 - 6:30 p.m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH
HIS FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORS

The President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
General Wheeler

Director Helms
Walt Rostow
General Taylor
Tom Johnson

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING

WITH

SECRETARY RUSK
SECRETARY CLIFFORD
GENERAL WHEELER
DIRECTOR HELMS
WALT ROSTOW
GENERAL TAYLOR
TOM JOHNSON

MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED
Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson

October 28, 1968
6:30 p.m.
Cabinet Room

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 87-38
By ing NARA, Date 5-18-89

SECRETARY RUSK: We must carefully prepare the briefings for the candidates and the T. V. speech.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Hanoi chose Sunday as the day to relent and accept the GVN at the conference table.

WALT ROSTOW: Mid-month was time.

GENERAL TAYLOR: He should say he hasn't settled the war. It is just another step.

WALT ROSTOW: Should Bunker inform Thieu alone that you might make a decision tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: How does this differ from before when he leaked it?

SECRETARY RUSK: We must have Thieu aboard.

THE PRESIDENT: A burnt child dreads fire.

SECRETARY RUSK: So do I.

THE PRESIDENT: I will not make a decision until Tuesday morning.

The suggested cessation time is 0800 hours, October 30. The President has made no decision on this proposal.

When do you want to make the announcement?

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: An extra 14 or 16 hours does not bother me. If Abrams gets here and is aboard, you notify Wheeler. He'll

MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED
Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson

LIBRARY

notify McCain that bombing is to stop, as of 7 p. m. tomorrow evening.

GENERAL WHEELER: It will leak in Washington and in Saigon. I would make the announcement as soon thereafter as possible.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Will it be on TV?

THE PRESIDENT: That depends on Secretary Clifford's speech. "I want to know what kind of dress I have before I agree to go to the dance."

WALT ROSTOW: Should Thieu be sent a Presidential letter?

THE PRESIDENT: Only if a decision to go is made.

GENERAL WHEELER: If I can get the red-rocket message by 6 a. m. they can stand down by 7 p. m. -- a total of 13 hours.

I would have to set up the red-rocket system for between 0500 and 0600 tomorrow. Can we do that?

THE PRESIDENT: What is Abrams' schedule?

GENERAL WHEELER: At 5:15 he was in Alaska. At 0330 a. m. he arrives at Andrews.

SECRETARY RUSK: The ground forces should pull out of the DMZ. It is a three mile area.

GENERAL WHEELER: We move in only on patrols.

THE PRESIDENT: Should the battalion be pulled out of the DMZ?

GENERAL WHEELER: It is O. K. with me.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: If we have boys in there they will shoot at us.

WALT ROSTOW: Not if they are serious.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not want to abandon the DMZ. We need information.

GENERAL WHEELER: We can include the DMZ.

THE PRESIDENT: Let's take this up with Abrams.

GENERAL WHEELER: "You should position your forces south of the southern boundary of the DMZ"; this language could be inserted.

THE PRESIDENT: What do we do if he comes across the DMZ?

GENERAL WHEELER: He has immediate authority to respond.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you assume that North Vietnam will move out of the DMZ?

GENERAL WHEELER: Yes, sir. That's the language.

We do not go across PMDL.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Have we ever been across it?

GENERAL WHEELER: Only on a covert basis.

GENERAL TAYLOR: What about the attack on reconnaissance planes?

GENERAL WHEELER: Two phases below 19°.

- (1) Make shallow, short, high-speed penetrations.
- (2) Regular reconnaissance program.

Tab D has to do with covert operations.

THE PRESIDENT: When do we go to the troop-contributors?

SECRETARY RUSK: After the decision.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we have everything we want?

SECRETARY RUSK: The message said: What is your view. Do they understand the facts of life? Do The Viet Cong and Hanoi think they would abide with the facts of life?

They responded "events will give our answer."

The record is as hard as it can be short of a contract.

I told the Soviets last night you know what the three facts of life are.

They came back and said we should stop the bombing. North Vietnam understands these matters and that our doubts were "groundless."

We didn't want anybody to charge us with deception.

THE PRESIDENT: What about the leadership and the candidates?

SECRETARY RUSK: I would see them separately between 4 and 6.

I would start with Vice President Humphrey.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Only one factor remains -- has a deal been made?

GENERAL TAYLOR: Walt's paper is a good one.

SECRETARY RUSK: Don't try to "interpret" the other side. Don't try to read their minds.

THE PRESIDENT: Should the candidates come in the same room?

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: It increases the level of the event.

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't gone into this much with the candidates.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: Hanoi finally yielded on the question of the GVN.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Are we going to touch base with Hanoi-Vietcong again?

DIRECTOR HELMS: If the candidates called to Washington, they would flash the President has stopped the bombing.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you looked at the speech?

SECRETARY CLIFFORD: I think it is a good speech.

THE PRESIDENT: We have got to say moments of encouragement were wiped away with time of encouragement.

We must say that the timing was in their hands.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Say this is not the final victory - only a step on the way.

THE PRESIDENT: I'll see Abe as soon as he gets here.

#

#

#

~~MEETING NOTES~~

MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED

Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson

56

6:30 P.M.

MONDAY, OCT 28

CABINET ROOM

Rusk
Clifford
Wheeler
Rostow
Taylor
Johnson

MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED
Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.4
BY 67-38
DATE 11-25-91

Rusk: We must carefully prepare the briefings for candidates and TV speech.

CC: HANOI CHOSE SUNDAY AS DAY TO RELENT AND ACCEPT GUN AT TABLE.

Rostow: Mid-month was time.

T: He should say he hasn't settled the war. It is just another step.

Rostow: Should Bunker inform Thieu alone that you might make a decision tomorrow?

P: How does this differ from before we've leaked it.

Rusk: We must have Thieu ABOARD.

P: A burnt child dreads fire.

Rusk: So do I

P: I will ^{NOT} make a decision until Tuesday morning.

P: Suggested cessation time is
0800 Oct 30.

The President has made
no decision on this
proposal.

When do you WANT TO
MAKE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT?

CC: Extra 14 or 16 hours
does not bother me.
If Abrams gets here and
is ABAND, you notify
Wheeler. He'll notify
McCain that bombing
is to stop AS OF
7 p.m. tomorrow
evening.

Wheeler: It will leak in
Washington AND in Saigon.
I would make Announcement
AS soon thereafter
order AS possible.

CC: Will it be on TV.

P: That depends on CC's speech.
"I want to know what
kind of dress I have
before I agree" to go
to the dance."

Rostow: Should Thieu be sent
President's letter

P: Only if decision to go is
MADE.

Wheeler: If I can get red-rocket message by 6 A.M., they can stand down by 7 A.M. — total of 13 hours.

I would have to set up red-rocket system for between 0500 and 0600 tomorrow.

We can do that?

P: What is Abrams' schedule?

Wheeler:

At 5:15 he was in Alaska
0330 A.M. he Arrives at Andrews.

Rusk: Ground forces should pull out of DMZ. It is a 3-mile Area.

Wheeler: We move in only on patrols.

P: Should battalion be pulled out of D.M.Z.?

Wheeler: It is OK with me.

CC: IF we HAVE BOYS in there they will shoot at us.

W: Not if they are serious.

P: I do not want to ABANDON DMZ. We need information.

Wheeler: We can include DMZ.

Pres: Let's take this up with
Abrams.

Wheeler: "You should position your
forces south of the Southern
boundary of the DMZ;"
this language could be
inserted.

Pres: What do we do if he
comes across DMZ?

W: He has immediate authority
to respond

P: Do you assume NUN
will move out DMZ.

Wheeler: Yes, sir. That's the language.

We do not go across PMDL

CC: Have we ever been across it?

Wheeler: Only on covert basis.

Taylor: What about attack on reconnaissance planes?

Wheeler: 2 phases below 19°

- 1) Make shallow, short, high-speed penetrations.
- 2) Regular recon program.

Wheeler: TAB D has to do with
covert operations.

P: When do we go to troop-
contributors?

Rusk: AFTER decision.

P: Do we have everything
we want?

Rusk: Message said: What is
your view. Do they understand
facts of life? Do U-H.
think they would ABide
with facts of life?

They responded "events will
give our answer."

Record is hard as it can be
short of contract.

I told Soviets ^{last night} you know
what 3 facts of life are.

They came back + said we
should stop bombing. NUN
understands these matters
+ that our doubts were
"groundless."

| We didn't want any body to
| charge us with deception.

P: What about leadership
and candidates.

Rusk: I would see them
separately between 4+6.

Rusk: I would start with HHH.

CC: Only one factor remains —
has a deal been made.

Taylor: Walt's paper is a good
one.

Rusk: Don't try to "interpret"
the other side. Don't
try to read their minds.

P: Should candidates come in
same room?

1. CC: It increases the level
of the event.

Pres: We haven't gone
into this much with
the candidates.

CC: | Hanoi finally yielded
on question of GUN.

I: Are we going to touch
base with H-U Again.

Helms: If candidates called
to Washington, they
would flash the
President has
stopped bombing.

P: Have you looked
at speech?

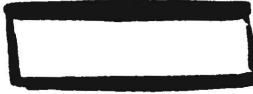
MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED

Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson

MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED

Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson

P: I'll see Abe AS soon
as he gets here.



MEETING NOTES COPYRIGHTED

Publication Requires
Permission of Copyright
Holder: W. Thomas Johnson