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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#93 notes	<i>same sanitization 1-15-97 NLJ 96-26</i> Notes from 11/11/68 - 3 p.m. meeting with President and and President-elect Nixon [Sanitized NLJ 83-113] Secret 10 pp. more info released 1-12-93 NLJ 91-336	11/11/68	A
#94 notes	Handwritten notes from 11/11/68 meeting Secret 28 pp.	11/11/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 4

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NOVEMBER 11, 1968 - 3 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT-
ELECT NIXON

The President
President-Elect Nixon
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
General Wheeler
Director Helms'
Walt Rostow

INFORMATION

EYES ONLY

Pres file

Friday, November 15, 1968 -- 9:10 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith a combination of my notes, pages 1-3, and Tom's, with key passages side-lined on pages 1, 5, 6, and 9 (paperclipped).

four It is clear from the context that only ~~two~~ things were involved:

-- Nixon liaison men to become fully informed before January 20.

-- Checking with Nixon where he is personally involved; for example, when Rusk was to talk at NATO about the outlook of the new administration on NATO.

-- Replying to telegrams to Nixon.

On the NPT, there was, in effect, solicitation of his support for Senate action before January 20.

W. W. Rostow

EYES ONLY

WWRostow:rlh

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE
PRESIDENT-ELECT RICHARD NIXON

November 11, 1968

PRESENT AT THE MEETING WERE:

The President
President-elect Richard M. Nixon
Secretary Dean Rusk
Secretary Clark Clifford
General Earle G. Wheeler
Director Richard Helms
W. W. Rostow

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 96-26
By isp, NARA Date 12-26-96

The President and President-elect came in at 3:00 p.m.

The President began by telling Mr. Nixon that the Secretaries of State and Defense would brief him on Vietnam. Secretary Rusk would also touch on problems in other areas. General Wheeler was available to deal with the military situation; and Mr. Helms would contribute intelligence data and make arrangements for keeping Mr. Nixon informed from day to day.

Secretary Rusk immediately suggested that it would be wise if Mr. Nixon would appoint a man in whom he had absolute confidence and adequate background to be stationed in a room next to Secretary Rusk's office for immediate liaison purposes.

Mr. Nixon said that, despite observations in the press, he had made no decisions on his Cabinet. He hopes to have his Cabinet appointed by December 5. He would naturally like to have someone keep in touch on Vietnam. To this end he had contacted Cabot Lodge. He found Lodge's views close to his own and those of President Johnson. In general, he found no significant difference between his views on Vietnam and those of the present Administration. Cabot said he did not wish to be considered for any permanent position in the new Administration.

Nixon said he accepted that view but would use him for special chores. He said that if it were acceptable to the present Administration, he would like Cabot Lodge to be his observer on Vietnam. He had great confidence in him. The only question he would raise is whether it would disturb the Germans if he were pulled out of Bonn for this special immediate task.

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Secretary Rusk said immediately that Cabot Lodge would be wholly acceptable to him.

Mr. Nixon said that he needed someone for this task who had a deep knowledge of the Vietnam situation. He could not begin an education on Vietnam now. He asked how much of a problem would it be with Bonn. How good is the DCM?

Secretary Rusk said that Russ Fessenden, the DCM, was competent. He would have a better feel for the danger of leaving the Ambassador's post open after he went to the NATO meeting. He would not raise the matter directly with Willy Brandt, but he would get a feel for the risk of leaving the post open for several months.

Mr. Nixon said he planned to appoint a career man to Bonn; it is too technical a post to appoint a political man.

Mr. Nixon said he would say and do nothing about this until he had a chance to hear from Secretary Rusk. He would discuss it further with Cabot in whom he had great confidence. He hoped the matter could be settled soon.

The President then asked Secretary Rusk if he would review the diplomatic situation. Working from the attached chronological paper, Secretary Rusk said that for the first two months there was no progress in Paris. The U. S. held to the President's position of March 31. Hanoi held to its position of April 3; namely, that the only purpose of the meeting in Paris was for us to stop the bombing unconditionally.

During June, the your-side, our-side formula was talked over with Thieu. By the end of June Thieu and Ky had agreed that this was the best practical way to proceed. In July, Vance spelled out the your-side, our-side formula to Lau. Nothing came of it, however, at that time.

In mid-September the President, through a special channel, put his basic three points to the Soviet leadership. On the 9th of October the delegation from Hanoi in Paris indicated an interest in the question of GVN participation and its relation to a bombing cessation. On 11 October they asked bluntly, would the bombing stop if the GVN were to participate in the Paris talks. Harriman said he would have to refer it to Washington, but reaffirmed the facts of life about the DMZ and the cities.

SERVICE SET

We then checked with Bunker and Abrams, who agreed to Harriman's instructions based on the President's three points.

A Soviet diplomat in Paris affirmed to us that Hanoi would accept GVN participation.

On 13 October Thieu fully agreed to the proposed instructions to Harriman.

There were then meetings at which the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State expressed to the President their agreement. The JCS were polled individually and agreed. We then went out to the troop contributing countries who accepted the proposition.

On October 16 the President briefed the three candidates and received their support.

When the proposition was put to the Hanoi delegation in Paris, however, they raised other issues.

First, they proposed that the new, enlarged meetings be called a "four-power conference." This we refused. They also proposed that we state the bombing cessation was "without conditions." This we also refused because the President's "facts of Life" represented, in effect, "conditions subsequent." Finally, there was the question of the time that would elapse between a bombing cessation and the first meeting. Hanoi offered "several weeks." We pressed them back towards a period of about three days, because the South Vietnamese government had steadily insisted that the time interval should be minimal. They thought that a gap might be politically awkward for them; and it might be awkward here as well, because the opening of the wider talks was the one concrete action in the wake of bombing cessation we could talk about frankly.

On October 27 there was a breakthrough. Hanoi dropped all the unacceptable points it had been pressing upon us and accepted a gap of three days and sixteen hours between the bombing cessation and the first meeting.

The President then requested General Abrams to return.

Secretary Rusk: We insisted on three points:

- (1) That Hanoi recognize the GVN and let them participate in the talks.
- (2) Restore the DMZ to its demilitarized state.
- (3) No shelling of the cities of South Vietnam.

We checked with Dobrynin. On October 13 President Thieu agreed. All of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred. On October 15 all the troop contributing countries agreed.

We got locked up on some points with Hanoi. They dropped the "unconditional" clause. There was a breakthrough on October 27 when they dropped the words "unconditional."

Then General Abrams was ordered home for consultations.

We agreed with President Thieu on a joint announcement. It was short and simple. Thieu raised the points about having a session with his legislature; said more time was needed to get the delegation present.

The your-side, our-side formula was to give different views about the status of the four delegations. It has taken several months to sweep these things under the rug.

Issues have cropped up in Thieu's mind. Still it was thought possible that Thieu would join the talks after the President's announcement. On the basis of an agreement with Thieu earlier we had locked on to an agreement. We couldn't go back.

We think we can meet most of Thieu's demands.

It does not concede that South Vietnam heads the delegation. We can't have them speaking for us. We will give them anything short of speaking for us.

We met in Paris this morning.

Artillery and rockets came out of the DMZ. We met with the DRV and protested strongly. This is in direct violation of the agreement on no abuse of the DMZ.

General Wheeler: This is the second incident since the President's statement of October 31.

Secretary Rusk: On October 27th we went to the Russians and reminded them of our three points. The Russians said our doubts on this were unfounded.

They more or less underwrote this agreement.

Mr. Nixon: As far as Bunker is concerned, he has good rapport?

Secretary Rusk: Yes, he does. Their nerves have gotten frazzled.

Mr. Nixon: It is best to leave matters with him then. Any talk about being of help should be through him.

Secretary Rusk: Dirksen's talk with Ambassador Bui Diem was helpful.

Mr. Nixon: My position has been to do nothing unless the President and ~~Secret Service~~ ^{Secretary of State} thought it would be helpful. I will do nothing unless it is seen to be helpful by you. You would want me to stay where I am?

The President: Yes. I thought that travel wouldn't come into it. It would be better if this talk in Paris is private. The basic decision comes out of this room.

What you did here in Washington could be very helpful.

My judgment is that in the month of October the election campaign came at a bad time -- delayed us from getting substantive talks.

The first two weeks we were charged by the Democrats. The last two weeks we were charged by the Republicans.

You should pick the man closest to you to participate or be informed on the decisions and instructions.

Mr. Nixon: We must be a united front. ^{There} ~~We~~ must be of ^a ~~the~~ conviction there will be a continuation of policy after January 20 ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ both Saigon and Hanoi.

Do you feel an observer in Paris would not be helpful - have him where the decisions are being made and instructions issued.

Secretary Rusk: Washington is the site of highly discreet contacts with the Soviets.

Mr. Nixon: What are Lodge's credentials with South Vietnam?

The President: Excellent. He left of his own choosing.

Mr. Nixon: I don't want anybody messing it up.

The President: I would want it -- if he has access to you and will be your man.

Mr. Nixon: He would be. I can see you ought to have a man here.

Secretary Clifford: I think it is a practical necessity to have a man here. You can be very helpful in next 65 days - I know you want to wind this up as soon as we.

Mr. Nixon: The quicker the better.

The President: I think in this period you should keep him informed. Lodge will have my confidence.

Secretary Rusk: Bring Lodge back on temporary duty.

General Wheeler: All the principal military men -- General Abrams, General Brown, General Goodpaster, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- say we are in a strong military position in Vietnam today. We can cope with anything they try.

There has been a withdrawal of twelve regiments in I and II Corps. There is a threat in III Corps from Cambodia.

Mr. Nixon: I Corps is up along the DMZ.

General Wheeler: None of us have any worry about it.

Mr. Nixon: Are we keeping the pressure on?

General Wheeler: Yes, if anything, the pressure is up. They're going after the enemy hammer and tongs.

There has been no effect on the South Vietnam military by this current political imbroglio.

There is no sign of any breach between the United States and South Vietnam military.

Secretary Clifford: In order to understand present military situation, you must know:

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- (1) For three years North Vietnam had guerilla strategy
- (2) In 1967 they found this was not succeeding. The Military in South Vietnam was more effective.
- (3) In 1967 they met and decided to change strategy. They decided to mount an offensive to destroy the South Vietnam government.
- (4) By January 1968 they mounted the TET offensive. 50 to 60 cities were attacked including Saigon. They penetrated the U. S. Embassy compound.
- (5) It was a military disaster. They lost a great many elite men. They withdrew - refitted - re-equipped.
- (6) They launched the May offensive. It was less successful than the January offensive - they had huge losses.
- (7) They attempted another in the last of August - the so-called third offensive. We had much better intelligence -- we hit them with B-52's. This was even worse.
- (8) They withdrew again. They may have taken 40,000 men out of South Vietnam further distances. This shows where they are today. They have tried that from January through November.

I think this accounts for their presence in Paris. They don't know where else to go militarily.

Since November 1, part of the understanding was not to violate the DMZ. We have not entered but one violation - Saturday evening they launched 16 artillery rounds. They also launched rocket rounds: 8 122 millimeter rocket rounds; 4 U.S. Marines killed in action, 41 insured. This is a violation of the DMZ.

I do not take it too seriously. We thought they might test us out -- to see if we really would respond. Abrams fired back immediately. It may not happen again.

We went from November 1 to November 9 without violation. There have been no other violations since Saturday night.

Secretary Rusk notified Ambassador Harriman and Mr. Vance. They took it up with North Vietnam. They said they would look into it.

Our understanding with North Vietnam is an excellent understanding from our standpoint. We do not have to worry about men coming across the DMZ or hitting the cities.

We are giving them fits in Laos. The weather is good in Laos. The weather is bad in North Vietnam. We are not going up much.

From the military standpoint it would be good for South Vietnam to appear in Paris. We need to resolve this uncertainty. We need to do everything we can do to get South Vietnam to the table.

Secretary Rusk: The Nonproliferation Treaty has been in negotiation for five years. It is important to press the treaty forward. We need the signatures of the principal countries:

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| (1) Germany | (4) Brazil |
| (2) Israel | (5) India |
| (3) Japan | |

If Germany did not come in, a nuclear Germany would split NATO wide open. The Soviets would not permit Germany to become nuclear.

1.3
(a)(5) You will face problems of how to keep [REDACTED]

The President: I had hoped we could have acted on the Nonproliferation Treaty prior to the Phantoms. Both Mansfield and Dirksen think a special session would cause problems.

1.3
(a)(5) I do not know what delay has ^{caused} ~~called~~. [REDACTED]

Mr. Nixon: What is the situation in Czechoslovakia?

Director Helms: They have seven ^{divisions} ~~regiments~~ of troops left. They are pulling out three now.

Mr. Nixon: I am for the treaty. Has it cooled enough? I will support it if you want to call a special session. Wouldn't you need a nose count?

The President: Yes.

Secretary Rusk: There will be a strong vote. There won't be more than 12 or 15 votes against it.

The President: Dirksen said it would be brought up soon after Congress returns on January 4th.

Secretary Rusk: Foreign Relations does not need to go back all over this.

The President: Mansfield and Fulbright will "give you all sorts of help."

Mr. Nixon: "I understand" (laughter)

Secretary Rusk: NATO's 20th year runs out next year. They may want to put in language for indefinite continuance. In my speech I would not want to speak for you, but I would want to say this. (showed Mr. Nixon a note.)

Mr. Nixon: Good.

Secretary Rusk: Eshkol is fighting for his political life. The Arabs think Israel is interested in territorial expansion. The Israelis think the Arabs are interested in exterminating Israel.

The Soviets want the Jarring mission to continue. So do we.

Secretary Rusk: We are getting congratulatory messages from other nations to you.

Mr. Nixon: Would you have somebody in State prepare them and send them to me?

The President: Yes.

Mr. Rostow: Both Bundy and I feel ^{it} would be to your advantage to have somebody in central communications role to feel how things evolve -- to get to know the staff - functions -- make assessment and advise you.

We have a very delicate situation in the Mideast. We are at your disposal.

Mr. Nixon: John Mitchell will be in charge of transition for me.

Secretary Rusk: 250 Presidential appointees are in State Department. Those who want to go out will resign now. The others will resign to you after January.

Secretary Clifford: You could appoint a normal Secretary of Defense two to four weeks before hand. I hope you will designate the Secretary of Defense as soon as possible - and get him cleared. He ought to sit in staff meetings with the Service secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I wish you could get him over a month early - by December 15 or 20. He'll need every day.

Mr. Nixon: I have nobody up to it. *It is one thing to have candidates for a job; another to find men who are qualified.*