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#95 notes	Notes from 11/20/68 meeting with Tuesday lunch group [Sanitized NLJ-CBS 40] Secret 4 pp.	11/20/68	A
#96 notes	Handwritten notes from 11/20/68 meeting Secret 14 pp.	11/20/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 4

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NOTES ON PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE TUESDAY LUNCHEON
GROUP, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1968

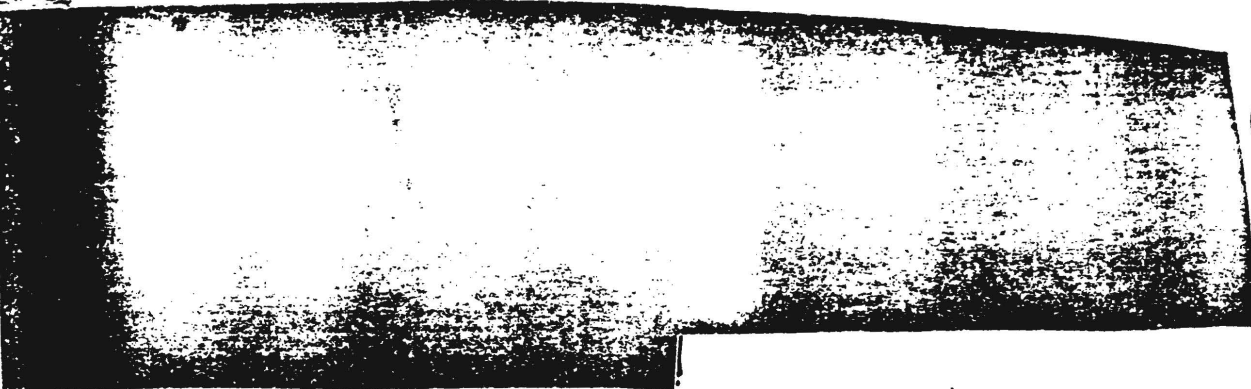
THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE:

The President
The Vice President
Secretary Rusk
Secretary Clifford
General McConnell
CIA Director Helms
Walt Rostow
George Christian
Tom Johnson

Case # 40
Document # 4

SANITIZED
Authority NLS-CBS 40
By ms, NARS, Date 10-9-84

The President: What do we hear from the money markets?



(5)

VIETNAM

Secretary Clifford: Danang: The shelling was directed at the military base
-- not cities.

On the DMZ there is some sporadic activity.

There is substantial movement of supplies to Laos -- not through the DMZ.
Helms says 100,000 North Vietnamese troops are still in South Vietnam.

We are doing a good interdiction job in Laos. I think we should clear out the
southern half of the DMZ when the talks start.

General McConnell: AA and SAM's are being shipped into Laos. They
are concentrating north of the DMZ. Harriman wants to see if there are
North Vietnamese in the southern half of the DMZ. We propose sending
patrols in there to capture a few to positively identify them as North
Vietnamese rather than Viet Cong as North Vietnam is charging in Paris.

Secretary Rusk: I would be for that.

We should be tough about the DMZ. We should be in a position to make demands.

Secretary Clifford: We could have a battle in the southern half of the DMZ.

Secretary Rusk: These fellows are looking for the margin of tolerance. We must tell them that we expected this when we stopped the bombing.

Walt Rostow: They are occupying all of the Northern half of the DMZ. They have some men in the southern half. We must do what is right on this.

CIA Director Helms: I agree with the Secretary.

Secretary Clifford: We have twelve reconnaissance flights per day. Now they have bad weather. They want to do it on a weekly basis.

The President: I'm for it.

General McConnell: Abrams wants to send some small units in to capture North Vietnamese in the southern half.

78 violations of the DMZ.

7 fired at us.

72 people observed.

The President: Do the Joint Chiefs think we should do it?

General McConnell: Yes.

The President: Rusk, Helms, and the Joint Chiefs are for it. So is Rostow.

Secretary Clifford: I would go along since Abrams recommends it.

The President: Let's do it.

Secretary Clifford: Welll send out an order today.

DIPLOMATIC SITUATION

Secretary Rusk: Congress would murder us with Thieu acting like he's acting now. We are short of measures.

CIA Director Helms: We may need more patience.

Secretary Clifford: We are getting a run-around in Saigon. Before, Bunker could always see Thieu.

The points they stick on are fundamental to agreement. We cannot agree to what they're insisting on. We have a perfect right to on with plans for the talks.

You've stopped bombing and want to get talks started. 20 days have gone by. I think time is running out. We have exactly 2 months left today.

I would meet on Friday of next week. If the GVN come, a wide range of talks can take place. If they don't, we can talk on purely military matters.

We cannot go indefinitely without talks starting.

- the DMZ will erode.
- military support will be lost.
- cities agreement will erode.

I think the talks will get us somewhere.

I would like to withdraw a contingent of troops. We have right to proceed with this.

It would be a great day to pull out 5000.

Secretary Rusk: I would go ahead and talk to North Vietnam in a private session.

The President: It should be a shove to Thieu.

Secretary Rusk: I would shove him hard.

The President: Would you go along.

Secretary Rusk: I'd go pretty far. There will be fast erosion of support here otherwise.

I do not really know what is holding up Thieu.

Secretary Clifford: We are encountering a sharp difference in goals -- a policy difference.

The South Vietnamese are
-- not for talks
-- not for pause

-- they'd be for us to just go along as we are now.

We want to terminate the present type of involvement. They do not.

Vice President Humphrey: The public will be very disenchanted unless something happens. The attitude in Saigon is hurting the Administration. Nixon will move and move fast. He'll sell them down the river.

You ought to proceed with Hanoi without being abrasive with Thieu.

This isn't your problem -- it's a problem. I think you should proceed.

The President: Have we suffered any militarily?

General McConnell: No, sir. We haven't except for the supplies in Laos and above the DMZ. There are eleven times as much POL in the DMZ in November as there was in all the preceding months.

I agree with everything Secretary Clifford said, except the military will stay with you a lot longer than the public.

I heard not one -- not one-- complaint about stopping the bombing when you stopped it. I was in Vietnam at the time and talked with, I guess 100,000 men.

The President: I have been shaken by Thieu. I thought we would have known about Thieu's problems prior to October 31.

Let's be sure this is a desirable thing.

Nixon may be tougher than we are toward the GVN.

Secretary Rusk: You come to a different conclusion when you see what happened in Eisenhower's years. We don't have a credible justification for what GVN is doing. Let's try to get Thieu aboard.

Secretary Clifford: I would like to see both Hanoi or the NLF present.

Secretary Rusk: I would like to see it worked out with North Vietnam only.

The President: Walt, Clark and Secretary Rusk go back and put it on paper.

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THE PRESIDENT

Evelyn - please
type up - per
Mr Tom Johnson