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#106 notes	Handwritten notes from 12/3/68 - 1:29 Tuesday luncheon Secret HVCCO 19 pp. <i>SANITIZED - RAC 8/200</i>	12/3/68	A

**FILE LOCATION**

Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 4

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NOTES ON THE TUESDAY LUNCHEON MEETING  
DECEMBER 3, 1968

THOSE ATTENDING :

- The President
- Secretary Rusk
- Secretary Clifford
- CIA Director Helms
- General Wheeler
- Walt Rostow
- George Christian
- Tom Johnson

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Secretary Rusk: Nixon asked to see Harriman. He will see him Thursday morning.

The President: Communications, Transportation, Medics and the Secret Service have never failed me. I like the new Military Aide, Colonel Hughes. Doctor Burkley has done a wonderful job. All of them are under paid.

Secretary Rusk: I would echo that. The wing at Andrews is excellent. They have flown me 850,000 miles. I would authorize larger forces than a squad to go into the DMZ to protect the forces.

Secretary Clifford: My concern is the tactics of the South Vietnamese Government. Last word is that Ky won't get there until the 9th.

You stopped bombing 32 days ago. I fear we will have this package fall apart and get back to heavy fighting.

Saigon appears to be stalling until after January 20. We see ahead delay and delay and delay.

We are not getting progress. We have Saigon delaying and stalling. I think we should agree on a date for the talks to start. I would suggest Wednesday, December 11. That is 8 days off.

Secretary Rusk: We are now in talks with Hanoi. We should go ahead tomorrow and push hard on the DMZ.

I regret that Saigon hasn't turned up, but I regret more what Hanoi has been doing -- they were clear on the DMZ and reconnaissance.

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Averell feels the President should get credit for withdrawal of U. S. forces in South Vietnam.

I think that is the wrong way to get peace in South Vietnam. We must be careful about a token withdrawal of forces. We agreed to pour it on in South Vietnam after the bombing was halted.

I would not have a token withdrawal. I would work toward clearing out the DMZ.

Secretary Clifford: If an agreement could be reached, it would be good to start a mutual withdrawal of troops.

A withdrawal of 5000 troops by each side would mark a significant change in the conduct of the war.

If this step could be taken it would show the turn had been taken. This would be valuable framework for future talks.

Secretary Rusk: Provided this is real and not phony.

Two infiltration groups a day are scheduled into South Vietnam. If we are going to bring back troops, it must be that.

Secretary Clifford: They must have a net reduction in troops.

General Wheeler: A piecemeal approach to military de-escalation is the worst thing you could have.

CIA Director Helms: I agree.

Secretary Rusk: I am for a total mutual reduction.

CIA Director Helms: North Vietnam and the Soviets aren't playing -- they said if we stopped the bombing they would help. They haven't. I think we should turn the heat on.

The President: 1. Dean, get all the heat on South Vietnam you can to get there.

2. Go strong on reconnaissance and the DMZ tomorrow morning.

We have stood about all the delay from South Vietnam we can. See if they can be there by December 11.

I think we are justified in resuming the bombing.

We have tested them and they have been proved wanting.

I would like to leave office de-escalating -- not escalating -- but I do not want to make a phony gesture. I do not want to run. We have listened to dovish advisers. We have tested them. We don't want a sellout.

General Wheeler: General Abrams' authority expires at 11:00 o'clock today to put squad size patrols in the DMZ.

The President: You can extend that now.

General Wheeler: He wants same authority.

The President: I am for that.

Secretary Rusk: Unless we get quick answers from North Vietnam tomorrow, we should go all out in the DMZ.

Walt Rostow: They have taken the northern part of the DMZ as their own.

They won't talk sense unless we go up to Binh Hoi River. This is much more satisfactory.

Secretary Rusk: Today is Tuesday. Tomorrow we should look at this.

Let's meet at 5:00 tomorrow. Do it at 1:30 p.m. Lunch tomorrow.

BIAFRA:

Secretary Rusk: There will be tremendous starvation in January. We need to get food ships offshore.

We propose to go to DeGaulle.

The President: See if somebody else can contact DeGaulle.

GOODPASTER:

General Wheeler: Goodpaster told Harlowe he preferred to stay in the field, but would do what he was told to do. Nixon wants him 6-7 weeks starting in mid-December.

The President: I would do just what Nixon proposes.

General Wheeler: General Abrams can do it.

Secretary Clifford: I would hope you could put a limitation on it.

Secretary Rusk: Goodpaster's future is with the next President.

The President: Say we passed on the request. Talked to Goodpaster.

Secretary Clifford: I hope talks on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons can take place.

Secretary Rusk: My remarks were over-reported. There are lots of questions on a summit.

The President: The Pearson and Marvin Kalb stories were accurate.

Nixon invited himself to ABM talks. Then he decided not to go. Let's be careful. We said it would be the 16th at Geneva.

Secretary Rusk: Gromyko said he couldn't comment on the 16th. I think Thompson should see Dobrynin.

The President: What is your impression of Kissinger.

Secretary Rusk: Theoretical more than practical.

The President: Does McConnell go out in July?

General Wheeler: Yes, sir.

Secretary Rusk: If Rusk must choose "do less" or "do more" he'll do less.

Kissinger handled himself in an honest fashion on the Paris talks.

Walt Rostow: They may let the NPT die. Henry likes loose European arrangement. They don't understand the dangers of small nuclear possession.

Henry is a man of integrity and decency. Henry doesn't understand emergency Asia.

# # #

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Lunch Meeting With the President  
Tuesday, December 3, 1968 - 1:00 pm

AGENDA

1. Vietnam Negotiating Strategy. (Sec. Rusk and Sec. Clifford)

We ought to be clear before the President sees Harriman, especially on the issue of limited de-escalation inside South Vietnam at an early stage.

2. The Request for Temporary Duty for Gen. Goodpaster. (Sec. Clifford and Gen. Wheeler)

3. Military Situation in South Vietnam. (Sec. Clifford and Gen. Wheeler)

- enemy intentions
- DMZ
- recce flights

4. Biafra. (Sec. Rusk)

The State Department is working at an initiative to try to head off the mass starvation which will mount in the weeks ahead.

5. Other.

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White House Operations

By W.R., NARA, 3-4-91

*W.R.* Rostow

~~SECRET~~

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TUESDAY, DEC 3

Lunch

Fies

Rusk

Roscoe

Clifford

Alnis

Johnson

Christian

Wheeler

SAITIZED

1:25 p.m.

Rusk: Nixon asked to see Harriman  
He will see him Thursday  
morning.

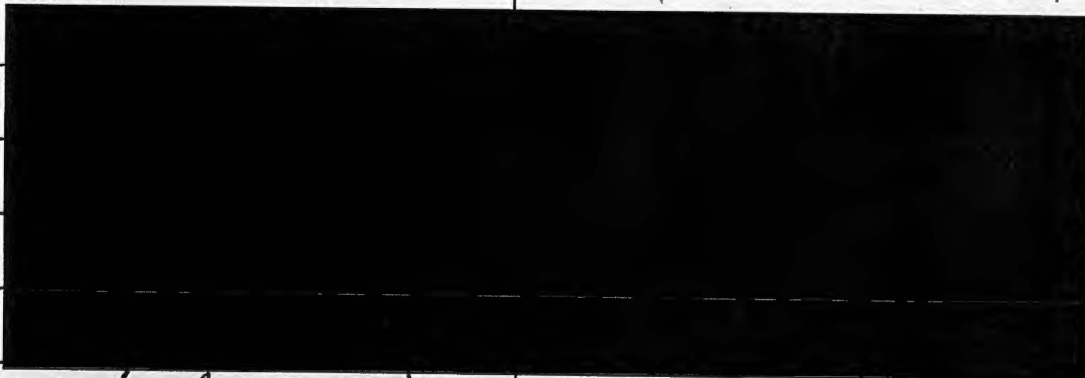
Pres.: Communications, transportation, medicals  
and Secret Service have  
never failed me. I like  
the new military aide,  
Col. Hughes. Doctor  
Breskey, has done a  
wonderful job. All of them  
are underpaid.

Rusk: I would echo that.  
The wing at Andrews  
is excellent. They have  
flown me 850,000 miles.

Rusk: Col. Han of the NVN delegation has just asked to see Cy Vance tomorrow. NVN denies it has any people in the DMZ. We need to go back hard on this.

C.C.: Soviets + NVN said they would believe if we stopped the bombing. Time is now to agree on the DMZ.

25X1D



Wheeler: We sighted 300 in 1st week of Nov and 400 in 2nd week of Nov.

I would authorize larger  
forces than a squad to  
go into DMZ to protect  
the forces

CC My concern is the tactics  
of SVN govt. Last word is  
that they won't get there until  
the 7th.

You stopped bombing 32 days  
ago. They haven't got the  
delegation there yet

I fear we will have this  
package fall apart and  
get back to heavy fighting.

Saigon appears to be stalling  
until after Jan 20. We  
see ahead delay and delay  
and delay.

We are not getting progress  
we have Saigon delaying  
and stalling

I think we should agree on  
a date for the talks to start.

I would suggest Wed, Dec.  
11. That is 8 days off.

Rusk: We are now in talks with  
Hanoi. We should go ahead  
tomorrow + push hard on  
DMZ.

I regret Saigon hasn't turned up, but I regret more what Hanoi has been doing — they were clear on DMZ and Ft reconnaissance

Averill feels the Pres. should get credit for withdrawal of US forces in SVN.

I think that is wrong way to get peace in SVN. We must be careful about a token withdrawal of forces.

We agreed to pour it on in SVN after Combing was halted.

I would not have a token withdrawal.

I would work toward clearing out DMZ.

CC: If agreement could be reached, it would be good to start a mutual withdrawal of troops.

A withdrawal of 5,000 troops by each side would mark a significant change in the conduct of the war.

If this step could be taken it would show the turn had been taken. This would be valuable framework for future talks.

Rush: Provided this is real and not phony.

2 infiltration groups/day is scheduled into SUP.

If we are going to bring back troops, it must be that.

CC: They must have a net reduction in troops.

Wheeler: A peaceable approach to military ~~is~~ deescalation is the worst thing you could have.

Helm: I agree

Rusk: I am for a total mutual reduction.

Helm: NVA and Soviets aren't playing - They said if we stopped bombing they would help. They haven't. I think we should turn heat on

P: ① Dean, get all heat on SON  
you can to get there.

② Go strong on renewance  
+ DMZ tomorrow morning.

We have stood about all  
the delay from SON we  
can see if they can  
be there by Dec 11.

I think we are justified  
in resuming the bombing.

We have tested them  
and they have been  
proved wanting.

I would like to leave off  
deescalating — not  
escalating — but I  
do not want to make a  
phony gesture. I do  
not want to run.

We have listened to dovish  
advisers. We have tested  
them. We don't want a  
sellout.

Wheeling: Abrams' authority  
expires at 11 o'clock today  
to put equal size patrols  
in DMZ.

Pres: You can expect that  
now

~~Adams~~

Wheeler. He wants some  
authority.

Pres: I am for that

Rush: Unless we get quick  
answers from NUN  
tomorrow we should go  
all out in DMZ

Rostow: They have taken  
northern part of DMZ  
as their own.

They won't take sense  
unless we go up to  
Binh Hai River.  
This is much more  
satisfactory.

BIAFRA:

Rusk: There will be  
tremendous starvation  
in January

We need to get food  
ships offshore.

We propose to go to  
De Gaulle

Pres. See if somebody  
else can contact  
De Gaulle

Rusk: Today is Tuesday.  
tomorrow we should look  
at this.

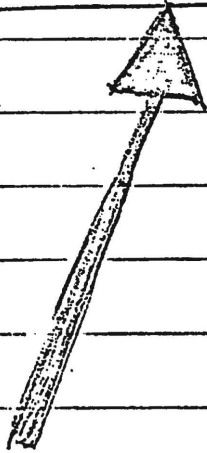
Let's meet at 5 tomorrow.

Do it at 1:30 tomorrow

Lunch

→ take up Thursday

Harriman today



Good pasture

Wheeler: Goodpastor told  
Forlowe he preferred to stay  
in field, but would do what told to do  
Nixon wants him 6-7  
weeks starting in mid-  
December

Pres: I would do just  
what Nixon proposes

Wheeler: Abrams can  
do it

C.C.: I would  
hope you could put  
a limitation on it

Rush: Goodpastor's future  
is <sup>with</sup> next President

Pres: say we missed on request. Talked to Goodpastor.

CC: I hoped <sup>talks on</sup> limitation of strategic nuclear weapons can take place.

Rusk: My remarks were over-reported. There are lot of questions on summit.

Pres: The Pearson and Marvin Kalb story were accurate.

Pres: Nixon invited himself to ABM talks. Then he decided not to go.

Let's be careful. We said that it would be the 16th at Geneva.

Rusk: Gromyko said he couldn't comment on 16th.  
I think Thompson should see Dobrynin.

Pres: What is your impression  
of Kissinger

Rusk: theoretical more than practical

Pres: Does McConnell go out  
in July?

Wheeler: Yes, sir.

Rusk: If Rusk must choose  
"do less" or "do  
more" he'll do  
less.

Kissinger handled  
self in honest fashion  
on Paris thing.

Portow: They may let NPT die  
they like loose European arrangement

They don't understand the dangers  
of small nuclear possession.

Henny is man of integrity  
and decency.

They don't understand energy  
Asia.

