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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#3 report	more info released 6-11-91 NLS 91-47 open summary notes of 555th NSC Meeting Top secret sanitized 10-23-84 downgraded to NLS 91-47	8-26-96 NLS 94-391	
#2 memo	to Secretary from Ben Read 91-47 possible classified info	01/05/66	A
#4a memo	to Dean Rusk from Leonard Marks Confidential open 8-3-94 per NLS 94-315	01/06/66	A
#5 agenda	for NSC 1/5/66 meeting secret open 3-26-90	01/05/66	A
#3b memcon open 12-19-08 NLS/RAC07-85	VP meetings with leadership of Japan, China, Korea 3 p. possible classified info sanitized 5-19-92 NLS 91-44 sanitized 10-17-96 NLS 94-321 more released	12/28/65 to 1/2/66	A
#3c memo	VP to President re Japan possible classified info sanitized 5-19-92 NLS 91-44 open 10-17-96 NLS 94-321	1/5/66	A
#3d memo	VP to the President re the Philippines 4 p possible classified info. open 5-2-10	1/5/66	A
#3f memo	VP to President re Korea possible classified info open 5-19-92 NLS 91-44	1/5/66	A

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NSC Meetings, Vol. 3 Tab 37, 1/5/66, Peace Offensive re Vietnam

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January 5, 1966

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THE SECRETARY
THE UNDER SECRETARY

Points you may wish to make at HSC 5:45 Meeting Today

1. We have contacted all 113 countries with which we have relations as well as the UN, the Vatican, the ICRC, and the OAU since December 28 to explain our Vietnam position. We have received reports from approximately 70 of these contacts as follows:

57 countries have responded favorably to US peace efforts, as have SYG U Thant, the Pope, the President of the ICRC and the OAU Secretary General.

6 countries received our representations without comment.

2 countries (Thailand and South Korea) have indicated that they think the US suspension of bombing is a mistake.

The GVN "understands" and has stated no objections to date.

2. A number of foreign governments have indicated to us that they would contact Communist countries or groups to reinforce our peace initiatives:

11 have undertaken to contact the Soviet Union.

5 DRV

2 NLF

2 Poland

2 Yugoslavia

~~NOBIS - PINTA~~

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NOBIS - PINTA

-2-

1 Czechoslovakia

1 Hungary

3. The President has sent special emissaries to contact 34 foreign governments.

(a) Harriman has visited Warsaw, Belgrade, Peshawar, Delhi, Tehran, Cairo and Bangkok. He leaves Bangkok early tomorrow morning for Tokyo and will proceed from there to Canberra and Saigon.

(b) Arthur Goldberg has visited the Pope, Saragat, Moro, Fanfani, DeGaulle, Couve and Harold Wilson.

(c) Governor Williams has visited Morocco, Algiers, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Ghana. In the next 48 hours he will visit Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Liberia.

(d) The Vice President has visited Japan, the Philippines, GRC and South Korea.

(e) Tom Mann has met with the Mexican President.

(f) Mac Dundy briefed Prime Minister Pearson in Ottawa.

4. The President has dispatched 33 letters to 33 Chiefs of State or Heads of Government to backstop the US moves.

Benjamin H. Read

NOBIS - PINTA

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~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NIJ

94-591

cb, NARA, Date 1-20-96

DECLASSIFIED

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SUMMARY NOTES OF 555th NSC MEETING
January 5, 1966; 5:45 to 6:30 P.M.

Peace Offensive Regarding Vietnam

The Vice President: reported on a recent trip to Japan, Korea, Formosa, and the Philippines. (Copies of the Vice President's memoranda are attached.) He said the theme of his report was expressed in a sentence in Philippine President Marcos' speech: "Those who fight for liberty fight for us." This sentence describes the attitude of the four countries visited.

There is recognition by Asian leaders that Asians must do much more about their own problems in the Asian area.

The Japanese are elated over our peace offensive and are supporting it by talking to the Russians.

The Philipinos are prepared to commit additional forces in Vietnam but they welcome the peace offensive.

In Taiwan, skepticism was expressed about the peace offensive. They believe the enemy is Communist China more than North Vietnam.

In Korea, the attitude toward the war is the best of the four countries. If the Koreans are asked to send more troops to Vietnam, they will want assurances covering their security. They doubt that the peace offensive will affect morale. Negotiations do not effect the commitment to South Vietnam.

In general, the peace offensive is supported, but doubts are expressed that it would produce any results.

Ambassador Goldberg reported on his conversations with UN Secretary General U Thant, the Pope, Italian leaders, de Gaulle, and Prime Minister Wilson.

- a. UN Secretary General U Thant said the peace offensive would test whether Hanoi was dominated by Communist China.
- b. The Pope accepted our sincerity, said he believed we were sincere in seeking peace, adding that he would do everything he could to work for a settlement.
- c. Italian leaders favored the bombing lull. They believed our action had been helpful to the Moro government.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

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- d. De Gaulle was polite but expressed his lack of confidence in the peace offensive. For him, the only course of action is U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam. Foreign Minister Couve took a slightly different position, arguing that the National Liberation Front should be part of a coalition government before negotiations could be undertaken.
- e. Prime Minister Wilson spoke of a new British initiative as ICC co-chairman. He asked that the peace offensive be prolonged long enough for the Soviets to react on the basis of Shelepin's visit.

USIA Director Marks summarized world press reaction to the peace offensive. The USIA summary is attached.

In general, the peace initiative is welcomed but doubts are expressed that it will produce results. Some writers think the peace offensive is merely a prelude to further military action.

The Japanese press is not helpful despite the favorable view of its government. In Latin America, the press gives unreserved support. In the Middle East, press reaction is mixed.

Secretary Rusk summarized the scope of the peace offensive.

Of the 113 countries which have been contacted since the offensive was launched December 28, 70 have responded. Of these, 57 countries have responded favorably, six countries received our representations without comment, two countries (Thailand and South Korea) have indicated they think the U.S. suspension of bombing is a mistake. The South Vietnamese are noncommittal, having stated no objection so far.

Special emissaries have been sent to 34 foreign governments. Further details are contained in a State Department memorandum attached.)

The reaction from the other side is not what it was last May when Hanoi rejected our note, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko said the note was insulting, and the press from the first day said the pause would not lead to negotiations. This time, none of these things happened.

Twenty-five secondary demarches are under way. The Yugoslavs tell us that Hanoi is under great pressure.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Southeast Asia began in Vienna with President Kennedy. A serious effort is being made to find a solution and

Secretary Rusk (continued)

it is generally believed that if this fails, our full military effort in South Vietnam will be renewed. However, if we resume the bombing, we will lose the support of almost all those who now support us. Mr. Shelepin leaves tomorrow but we do not know how long he will stay.

On the political side, we have had a plus for the last ten days, but the situation in South Vietnam has not improved.

Our position will erode here if we wait much longer to resume the bombing but abroad we will lose support if we resume.

Secretary Rusk said he wished to discuss privately with the President on the next moves.

Secretary McNamara said the problem of timing the resumption of the bombing was serious. The American people looked at the situation soberly. The Administration is speaking with one voice. It is very helpful that divergent views are not being publicized.

The President: We are in a difficult position but it is a much better position than if we had not responded to the urging that we hold off bombing to see whether this would lead to peace. We have made the record clear. We can return to the earlier situation if the pause does not work. We have a better basis to call on the U.S. people not only for their sons, but also their treasure. Americans feel better if they know we have gone the last mile even if we have had grave doubts about doing so. The basis for a supplemental budget to pay the increased costs of the war has been laid. Secretary Rusk and Ambassador Goldberg will pursue whatever leads they may get.

We don't intend to become weaker in Southeast Asia. We are following a course to unite our people and make possible a follow through. The diplomatic offensive boils down to saying that we are ready to reason this out. One poll shows that 73 percent of the American people wanted us to increase our diplomatic efforts. In the last twelve months, 200 conferences have been held by Secretary Rusk in an attempt to get negotiations going. But his efforts are not known publicly. Tonight, more people in the U.S. and the world think we want peace than thought so two weeks ago. This is an asset.

Bromley Smith

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 5, 1966

Dear Mr. President:

Attached are memoranda relating to topics discussed at our meetings in Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of China, and Korea.

The one common denominator in all discussions was the recognition by Asian leaders that Asians must do much more about their own problems in the Asian area. Without exception, the leaders in Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of China, and Korea, along with the Foreign Minister of Thailand and the Chairman of the Military Directorate of Vietnam (both of whom I talked to), recognized that much more had to be done by the leaders of free Asian countries to explain the danger of communist aggression in South Vietnam. These same spokesmen expressed the necessity of Asians carrying the message of the Vietnamese struggle to the international community. They recognized that the United States was being vilified by communist propaganda and that all too little had been done by Asian leaders to offset this propaganda.

The Vietnamese are preparing to dispatch teams of defectors from the Viet Cong and North Vietnam to travel in Europe, Africa, and South America explaining what's going on in Vietnam. These are defectors who have been thoroughly rehabilitated and can make a persuasive case for the defense of South Vietnam and the role of the United States and other countries in that defense. These teams will be ready to travel and talk early this year.

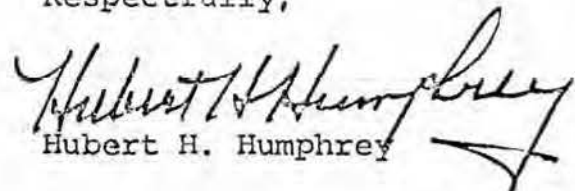
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The Pres:
Page 2
January 5 1966

The Foreign Minister of Thailand expressed to me his desire to call a meeting of leaders of free Asian countries to promote greater regional cooperation and regional economic development in Southeast Asia. This same view was expressed and supported by Prime Minister Sato of Japan and President Park of Korea. The Japanese have plans in mind for a Southeast Asian economic conference at the ministerial level. The President of Korea through his Foreign Minister wishes to call a conference of free Asian leaders sometime this year to discuss political developments in the area as well as economic and social plans. There is no doubt but that there is a reawakening among these leaders as to their responsibilities and opportunities.

I have spelled out certain other observations and recommendations in the attached memoranda on a country by country basis. It was a high honor and privilege to be your representative in these countries. I trust that the information that you have received from those who were in the delegation will prove of value in your deliberations.

Respectfully,


Hubert H. Humphrey

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

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Summary of conversations with the leadership of Japan, Philippines, Republic of China, and Korea. *1/11/66*
December 28, 1965, to January 2, 1966.

Japan (PM Sato, FoMin Shiina, Yasukawa of American Desk, Hachimoto, Chief of the Cabinet)

U.S. discussed need of help from Japan on refugees in South Vietnam, to provide additional medical teams, to assist with Japanese public opinion in supporting the U.S. effort in behalf of the South Vietnamese, to help get the message to the Communist leadership of the U.S. willingness to enter into negotiations and at the same time our intention to fight on if necessary, finally, that the U.S. would encourage Japanese cooperation in the space effort.

Japanese reaction:

unstable public opinion, press and assembly difficult to handle, but welcomed opportunity to publicize details of Rusk conversations and the "peace basket" proposals.

preparing to send additional medical teams if can get volunteers, also preparing to send delegation to South Vietnam to review and study medical, refugee and orphan needs.

instructions by PM to the foreign minister to take up with the Soviet leaders early in January the possibility of direct Soviet intervention in behalf of negotiations over Vietnam.

great Japanese interest continued in the Asian Development Bank, despite disappointment regarding site of bank in Manila. Still interested in a Japanese president. Japanese clearly interested in economic assistance in Southeast Asia.

Japanese intention to encourage an economic conference on Southeast Asia at the ministerial level sometime early in summer, after April.

very favorable reaction to President Johnson's peace offensive.

Philippines (President Ferdinand E. Marcos)

U.S. proposals were to get Philippines to speak up for U.S. and our position in Southeast Asia, to indicate willingness to negotiate for a commitment of engineers and supporting forces, and to explain precise U.S. position on negotiations.

Philippines reaction:

will place themselves squarely in the fight against Communism.

wish to equip seven Army engineer construction battalions - perhaps utilizing one or more of them in Vietnam.

want to completely modernize Army, but with concentration on the engineers, for they can be used for civic action. Also much interested in improving the constabulary.

desire U.S. procurement of supplies for Vietnam.

proposed that Philippines be given contracts for housing in Vietnam and to supply labor for projects.

Taiwan (Chiang Kai Shek)

We expressed President Johnson's friendship and explained U.S. peace proposals.

Chinese proposals:

U.S. should not be using own troops as principal forces in Southeast Asia, but rather Asian troops and American logistics support. You cannot match the Chinese capability in manpower.

If agreement in principle that ChiComs are the real enemy, and not the Vietcong or North Vietnamese, we can work out measures to deal with them - including returning to mainland.

The Soviet Union's actions in the present crisis, particularly the Shelepin visit may be very, very significant. Does not believe that Soviet would support ChiComs in a "civil war" which would erupt with a "return to the mainland."

President Johnson's course in the "peace offensive" a wise and prudent effort, "necessary and important." But what if they don't negotiate? (Answer: up to the President of the U.S. but we will resist the aggressor.)

Taiwan very much interested in expanding their technical assistance program to increase food production in Latin America, Asia and Africa, with assistance from U.S. through PL 480.

3.

Could step up aid to South Vietnam - possibly one or two LST ships for U.S. use.

Korea (President Park, PM Chung, Deputy PM Chang)

U.S. position was one of gratitude for the excellent Korean commitment, encouragement of additional commitment of troops, and willingness to enter negotiations so that Korea would not suffer from such a commitment. No blank checks in terms of money, but a flat commitment to South Korea's security. Explained U.S. peace proposals and bombing lull.

Korean reactions:

Korea now close to take-off economically. An economic push would put them into flight. They see a commitment of Korean troops as killing several birds: not only helps their ally and fights their enemy in another place, but it could stimulate their economy greatly if they could play a role similar to Japan in the Korean conflict.

They see end to grants in aid, but they would like U.S. markets, and some protection in those markets, particularly in offshore procurement for the Vietnamese action. They are also interested in additional program loans, and the loan of some U.S. ships to alleviate their balance of payments problem.

It is Korea's moral obligation to take up arms for any nation assaulted by Communism. Also to speak up for Asia in defending the American position in South Vietnam. Yet no commitment of additional troops can be permitted to weaken the security of Korea, or weaken its economy. Would need to have this clear to get authority from Assembly and support from public.

Intends to visit Southeast Asia soon, seeking regional outlook.

Supports U.S. peace offensive with reservations - fear weakening of morale in Southeast Asia and another Panmunjom situation.

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E.O. 12556, Sec. 3.4
BY 94-321
By CB, NARA, Date 9-9-96

Attachment #2

3C

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 5, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: JAPAN

This memorandum will supplement the report of Jack Valenti relating to our discussions in Japan with Prime Minister Sato and his Cabinet officers.

The Prime Minister was very much pleased with the Rusk document relating to our peace initiatives and what we are prepared to do for the so-called peace basket. The Prime Minister expressed his concern over the failure of Japan to do more to be of assistance in Southeast Asia. He explained in some detail the nature of the political opposition in Japan and why he had to proceed with caution.

I urged the Prime Minister to take a more active role in Southeast Asian development, both political and economic. It was obvious that this is in the mind of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. I do believe

that we can expect the Japanese to take a much more active role in the economic development of Southeast Asia, but we should continue to prod them - stressing the urgency of the situation and the necessity for prompt action. I discussed with the Prime Minister the need of greater Japanese presence and participation in South Vietnam. I asked for increased Japanese medical teams, suggesting that the Japanese might wish to provide full medical services for one or more provinces in Vietnam.

We also discussed the urgency of prompt assistance on the refugee problem. The Prime Minister spoke of the problem of the orphans. As related in Mr. Valenti's report, the Prime Minister is sending a team of Buddhist legislators to Vietnam to study and report on both the refugee and the orphan situation.

He expressed concern over medical aid and how it would be administered or supervised, but he did not reject increased Japanese contribution. I do believe that our Ambassador, by insisting and persevering, can obtain a much larger Japanese commitment.

We do have an economic lever in terms of offshore procurement. Possibly the Japanese could be informed indirectly that it is exceedingly difficult for us to place orders with Japanese firms when we have friends in the area who are willing to commit combat forces and yet at the same time need purchases from the United States to bolster their economy. I am confident that the Prime Minister would get the point quickly. I explained to the Prime Minister that we also needed the voice of Japanese leaders in explaining our role in Vietnam to the international community.

I expressed your willingness to cooperate with Japan in the field of space activities. It would be well for our science advisor at the American Embassy or someone from NASA to follow up on this proposal.

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 5, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: THE PHILIPPINES

This memorandum will supplement the report presented to you by Jack Valenti.

It is my view that you will find President Marcos of the Philippines cooperative, able, and effective. He appears to have the capacity and ability to be a good president and to give responsible leadership to his country. He surely has the intellectual equipment and the necessary political experience. He is a man of great courage - firm, tough, and mature. He gives one the impression of understanding the needs of his people on the home front as well as the dangers of communist aggression on the international front. His inaugural address spelled this out in clear-cut language.

In my conversation with him, he emphasized his readiness to ask the Philippine Congress for authority

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Authority: NIJ 90-22(31c)

J. J. Lip

DATE: 2-11-10

SERVICE SET

to commit Philippine forces to Vietnam. He was fully aware of the proposal for engineers and the necessary security forces. He expressed a willingness to commit the Philippine Republic as an active ally in Vietnam. In fact, he said he had the will to do it but there was a lack of resources which he hoped we might help provide. President Marcos suggested that the Philippines could supply considerable material for our operations in Vietnam, including housing. He also suggested that the Philippines had available surplus labor which could and should be used by American contractors in Vietnam.

I suggested that he outline his proposals in more detail and present them to our Ambassador. I further suggested that the Koreans were likewise anxious for the United States to purchase materials from the Korean economy and to recruit workers from the Korean labor forces. I then added that Korea had already committed one division of combat troops and that Koreans felt this should give them some priority on both procurement and supplying labor for U.S. commitments in Vietnam.

President Marcos got the point and said that he was pleased "to learn that we rewarded our friends." He had often heard that we were more kind to our enemies or our former enemies. This was an obvious reference to Japan and particularly Japan during the Korean Conflict when a good deal of offshore procurement was obtained in Japan.

I expressed to President Marcos the need of an active participation by the Philippines in Vietnam. The President readily stated that he was prepared to offer leadership on this in the coming session of his Congress. He would immediately ask for authority to commit Philippine forces to the defense of South Vietnam. He once again stressed, however, the necessity of modernization of the Philippine armed forces and the proper equipment of seven engineer battalions. These battalions could be used in Vietnam and for public works projects in the Philippines. He wanted us to review the military assistance program in order to provide some modern equipment for the Philippine forces.

It is my judgment that we can expect considerable help from the Philippines if we are willing to provide a reasonable amount of modern equipment along the lines suggested by President Marcos. The amount of equipment is negotiable but, if we want Philippine forces available, we should proceed at once to review the material needs of the Philippine armed forces. It would strengthen the hand of Marcos in dealing with Congress if he could say that we were prepared to offer assistance, materials, and equipment. We should make clear our willingness to do this prior to his request for new authority from the Congress.

I further suggest that we not leave all of these matters in the hands of the Ambassador. While the Ambassador is a personal friend of mine and, I believe, is doing a reasonably good job, President Marcos would feel somewhat flattered if a high-level officer from our government, such as Secretary Vance or Secretary Ball, were sent to Manila to initiate negotiations and discussions and to lay down the general guidelines for United States-Philippine military cooperation.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 5, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

I wish to supplement the report of Jack Valenti on our discussions in the Republic of China, Taiwan.

This country represents a success story for American foreign aid. Our economic and technical assistance has been well used. The economy of Taiwan has been greatly strengthened, and the Republic of China is prepared to do a great deal more in the international community, both in the field of economic development and technical assistance.

The Republic of China has a request before our government relating to additional PL 480 surplus food assistance. It wishes to purchase under Title I, PL 480 cotton and wheat in the sum of approximately \$30 million. As I recall, it was about \$18 million in cotton (of which we have a huge surplus) and \$12 million in wheat. This

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additional assistance to the economy of Nationalist China will permit that country to carry out a very extensive technical assistance program in Africa and Latin America.

We were given an excellent review of the economy and of the proposal for expanded technical assistance. The Title I wheat and cotton would generate currency in the sum of about \$30 million which would make possible a five-year program of technical assistance running at the rate of \$25 million per year. Without the Title I commodities, the maximum amount of technical assistance would be about \$10 million per year. Thus, for an investment of \$30 million in PL 480 commodities, the Republic of China could provide \$125 million in technical assistance in Africa and Latin America. Without PL 480 commodities, the maximum amount of technical assistance would be approximately \$50 million over a five-year period.

Furthermore, the PL 480 supplies would generate local currency of which approximately 30% or \$9 million would be available for Cooley loans to American enterprises and 20% or \$6 million available for U.S. Government

purchases in Taiwan. The balance of 50% or \$15 million would be made available to the Chinese economy and repayable in dollars under the terms of the loan agreement.

On careful review of this proposal, it has much to recommend it. I am hopeful that it can be expedited from our end. I shall bring this to the attention of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Agriculture. I am sure they will both wish to review it.

The Valendi document reports very accurately the balance of our conversation with the Nationalist Chinese officials.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

January 5, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: KOREA

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12856, Sec. 3.4
NLI 91-44
By NARA Date 5-12-92

In my discussions with President Park of the Republic of Korea, I was told that there had been undue delay in the provision of military assistance during the past year. Furthermore, there was a grave shortage of spare parts. I was further informed that much of the equipment, radar, field pieces, anti-aircraft guns and rifles were of World War II vintage and in a serious state of disrepair. This same message was given to me by the military authorities during my inspection of ROK troops.

I am not in a position to judge the accurateness of this complaint, but I do pass it along for your information and respectfully suggest that an inquiry be made at the Defense Department. If there is delay, then indeed someone should expedite the shipment of the necessary equipment and parts.

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There was grave concern in the government circles of Korea that we would be sharply reducing military assistance at the very time that Korea was taking a more active role in Vietnam. The President and the Prime Minister of Korea made a strong plea for offshore procurement from Korea to supply forces in Vietnam. They emphasized first of all that all offshore purchasing for the Korean forces in Vietnam should be made from Korea. They also requested that a sizable portion of offshore procurement for other forces in Vietnam be obtained through Korean sources. Both the President and the Prime Minister and other Cabinet officials expressed concern that the United States might do most of its offshore purchasing from Japan. I assured the Korean officials that these observations would be brought to your attention. The report of Mr. Valenti as to my conversations with President Park and the Prime Minister relates in more detail the substance of the Korean position on procurement and its relationship to additional Korean forces in Vietnam.

President Park is anxious to be of greater help in Vietnam but faces some serious political and economic problems at home. He feels that he could overcome these problems even though 1967 is an election year, if the United States would give special consideration to Korean economic needs by purchasing supplies in Korea and making available the necessary military assistance to further modernize the Korean armed forces. I made it quite clear to President Park and his government that there was no U.S. blank check or open-end account. I urged that he make a specific proposal to our Ambassador so that we had something to talk about and some idea of what the Koreans wanted and needed. I stressed that it would not be possible for us to estimate Korean needs or offer any effective assistance until we had a proposal from the Korean government. I gather that such will be forthcoming.



DIRECTOR


UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

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January 6, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

At yesterday's meeting of the National Security Council, I reported on world press reaction to the peace offensive in Vietnam. I thought it would be helpful for you to have the attached report giving further details on this subject.

I will prepare additional reports and send them to you periodically.


Leonard H. Marks

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ attachment

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OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

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January 6, 1966

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Dean Rusk
Secretary of State

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 94-315
dy cl NARA. Date 8-3-94

SUBJECT: Summary Reaction to the "Peace Offensive"

The President's initiative, widely seen as motivated by a sincere desire for peace in Vietnam, was welcomed by the West European press. Papers which criticized the "rodeo" facets of the initiative and deplored the "exaggerated publicity" attributed this to the President's style rather than to insincerity.

A number said that if the effort fails its primary objective, it will have served at least to convince U.S. and world opinion that the U.S. has no choice but to prosecute the war with vigor. Most papers considered this latter motive as subordinate to that of achieving peace but a critical minority suggested that the President might use the failure of the "global justification campaign" as an "alibi" to intensify the war.

Hanoi's failure to respond to the U.S. initiative is critically noted even by those papers which voice some suspicion of American motives. Some papers, however, hold Hanoi less responsible for continued intransigence than "outrageously cynical" Peking. Some commentators focused their hopes on the Shelepin mission. However, the desire and ability of Soviet and East European leaders to exercise a moderating influence at this time were questioned. Communist China was generally seen to be in a more favorable strategic position in the Far East than the Soviet Union.

Fear of a new escalation of the conflict prompted expressions of anxiety, particularly in West Germany, that the U.S. will now ask its NATO allies to participate militarily in Vietnam. Scattered comment on this possibility suggests that our West European allies would be loath to do more than provide additional moral, economic and technical support.

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- 2 -

Far East -- Apart from the Communist-line newspapers there was in the Far East a general disposition to give the U.S. good marks for effort, together with a general skepticism as to the results, and in many quarters a wait-and-see attitude resulting in an unwillingness to make any comment.

Burmese reaction is reported as equivocal, but on the whole more sympathetic than usual. Interest was shown in unusually heavy news coverage. Indonesia, preoccupied with domestic turmoil, has paid no attention to the question.

Warmest reaction comes from Australia, Malaysia and the Philippines, where both confidence in the sincerity of President Johnson's desire for peace and a belief that U.S. efforts are wise, whatever the result may be, are dominant. In Thailand, South Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan a good deal more skepticism as to the possible results characterizes what reaction is available. The hard-line Taiwan and overseas-Chinese press tends to treat peace efforts with apprehension, fears being expressed that the U.S. might lose too much at the peace table. There is some recognition in these quarters, however, that present efforts will have a good effect on world opinion. Korea, too, has its doubts, and we are warned not to accept a "second Panmunjom." In Saigon the idea of "unconditional talks" seems too much of a concession, giving the Communists time to strengthen themselves. Bangkok seems not ready to comment, apart from the Chinese press.

While Japanese official circles continue to be sympathetic, press reaction cannot be described as wholly friendly. Only the Tokyo Shimbun is forthrightly sympathetic, while the rest seem to feel that recent developments confirm their misgivings about the U.S. role in Vietnam and provide Japan with an opportunity to take a hand in the affair in order to mitigate the bellicosity of the great powers, not excluding the U.S.

Near East, South Asia -- Media are typically unsophisticated in their editorial reaction to the U.S. peace initiative on Vietnam, although press and public interest in the peace effort is high in most countries, especially in those visited by Ambassador Harriman. Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, preoccupied with their own regional problem, report the least interest.

The U.S. peace purpose is accepted and its peace effort is preponderantly hailed in four countries: India, Iran, Israel and Lebanon.

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- 3 -

And in three of these four countries -- the exception being Israel -- the press is generally optimistic about the outcome of the peace campaign. On balance, the limited Iraqi comment has been unfavorable to the U.S. The press in the remaining countries in the area has been either neutral or noncommittal on the U.S. effort, expressing hope for peace but, on the whole, neither great optimism nor pessimism.

Latin America -- In most countries the "great U.S. peace offensive" received complete and adequate front-page news coverage but little editorial comment. News treatment was markedly favorable in most countries.

Editorial comment from five of those countries unreservedly lauded the U.S. effort. A few newspapers linked the U.S. effort with Pope Paul's initiatives. Most comments expressed hope that the "unprecedented" and "sincere" U.S. effort would succeed, but a few expressed doubt. Those who discussed the possibility that the initiative might fail said emphatically that the fault would be Communist China's because, as Argentina's conservative La Nacion said, the "North Vietnamese leader is compelled to follow the war chariot driven by the Chinese." However, many seemed to feel that if the "offensive" failed, the U.S. is ready for "the big war" (Chile's conservative El Diario Ilustrado.)

Africa -- In a majority of the African states, media coverage of current U.S. peace efforts has been extensive to moderate and generally factual with sustained comment limited to Algeria and Tunisia.

Press commentary in both Tunisia and Algeria was mixed, but papers representing official views were favorable to U.S. efforts. Tunisia's official L'Action said that America's proposals are being advanced with "firmness that makes it difficult to question the genuineness of America's desire for peace" and that the "U.S. peace effort has not evoked an appropriate response from the adversary." However, Tunisia's influential and independent Jeune Afrique suggested "it could all be an effort to make a new level of escalation more palatable to world opinion."

Full and factual reporting by the Algerian ruling party organ, Al-Shaab, conveyed both the sincerity of U.S. efforts and the negative responses of the adversary attributing pessimism regarding the results to French observers. El-Moujahid, another Algerian ruling party organ but less of a spokesman for the government than Al-Shaab, described the efforts as a "diplomatic ballet" designed as a "smokescreen" for "Pentagon machinations" and further escalation.

Leonard H. Marks
Director

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AGENDA FOR NSC MEETING, JANUARY 5, 1966
5:45 P. M.

SUBJECT: Next steps in the effort for peace.

1. The Western Pacific -- The Vice President
2. Report on Rome, Paris and London -- Ambassador Goldberg
3. Report on public comment overseas -- Mr. Marks
4. Late diplomatic round-up -- The Secretary of State
5. Preliminary discussion of next steps -- The Secretary of State

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LIST OF ATTENDEES FOR 555th NSC MTG.
January 5, 1966

The President

The Vice President

Secretary of State Rusk
George W. Ball
Ambassador Goldberg

Secretary of Defense McNamara

Treasury Secretary Fowler

CIA Director Raborn
Deputy Director Helms

JCS Chairman Wheeler

USIA Director Marks

Jack Valenti
Bill Moyers
McGeorge Bundy
Bromley Smith

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