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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
<del>#2 report</del>	<del>of President's meetings with NSC possible classified info "CONFIDENTIAL"</del>	<del>6 p</del>	<del>A</del>
<del>#3 memo</del>	<del>to the President from Walt Rostow top secret</del>	<del>2 p</del>	<del>A</del>
	<p><i>Sanitized 8-5-85 NLJ 83-45 OPEN NLJ 98-198 5-5-99            sanitized - rereleased 12-3-92 NLJ 91-378            Open 7-3-90 NLJ 90-123</i></p>		

**FILE LOCATION**  
 NATIONAL SECURITY FILE, National Security Council File  
 NSC Meetings, Vol. 3 Tab 42, 6/22/66, Discussion Including Major POL Targets

**RESTRICTION CODES**  
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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

June 22, 1966

Bill Bundy: It is very clear there was no response from Hanoi. We had a long read-out from Ronning. There is no give in their position. They indicated they wouldn't even talk as they did in Rangoon. There may be a slight lateral shift, but no forward move. Canada accepts that. Martin went before the House today. Our area of worry is their general underlying lack of sympathy with us. Martin said he would be disturbed if Canadians thought they had been used. They may charge we put them in a false position.

Secretary Rusk: We cannot accept the merit of Martin's argument.

Secretary McNamara: (Discussing proposed air attacks on POL)  
What are the benefits and costs? Why now?

1. Why now? The situation has changed dramatically. This is now an important target. Tonnage to the South is increasing; truck traffic is up 100%, personnel infiltration 120%.

2. Costs? Criticism from abroad; dissension in the United States. There will be some civilian casualties, and the estimate is 50 to 300. (Secretary McNamara read the orders, directing that the strikes be made only under ideal conditions).

General Wheeler: A POL strike will not stop infiltration, but it will establish another ceiling on what they can support. There are three divisions there with another ready to move.

The President: How much chance is there of hitting a Russian ship?

General Wheeler: Negligible. There is a tanker in port now. It draws too much water to get close. We have never seen a tanker tied up at any other pier. They use a 250 foot floating pipeline. The strike area is 1500 to 1600 yards from the main tank centers. The tanker will be at least 1100 yards away.

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6  
NLJ 98-198  
By is, NARA Date 5-3-99

The President: MIG's?

General Wheeler: Tactical surprise may prevent that. When there are later strikes, they may use MIGs to defend.

The President: How many planes will we lose?

General Wheeler: In all 7 strikes, we will lose about 10.

The President: Suppose your dreams are fulfilled. What are the results?

General Wheeler: Over the next 60 to 90 days, this will start to affect the total infiltration effort. It will cost them more. In a very real sense, this is a war of attrition.

The President: You have no qualification, no doubt that this is in the national interest?

General Wheeler: None whatsoever.

The President: People tell me what not to do, what I do wrong. I don't get any alternatives. What might I be asked next? Destroy industry, disregard human life? Suppose I say no, what else would you recommend?

General Wheeler: Mining Haiphong.

The President: Do you think this will involve the Chinese Communists and the Soviets?

General Wheeler: No, Sir.

The President: Are you more sure than MacArthur was?

General Wheeler: This is different. We had ground forces moving to the Yalu.

Secretary Rusk: How many days until we are ready?

General Wheeler: A week or ten days.

The President: Can that tanker shoot back?

General Wheeler: Is is unarmed.

The President: Will there be retaliatory pressure from the USSR?

General Wheeler: They could stop duty trains in Germany. In 1962 they ran maneuvers in the air corridors in West Berlin.

If the tanker is at the pier, we will not strike the pier.

The President: Are we adequately prepared?

General Wheeler: We have a family of contingency plans to counteract Soviet retaliation.

Secretary McNamara: No senior military leader recommends anything other than proceeding with this program.

The President: Would General Taylor give me his views.

General Taylor: I am optimistic. I think we have to press hard on all four fronts -- economic, political, military and diplomatic. I see a movement upward all the way. We should be escalating. Personally I would mine Haiphong at the same time and get the political flak over with.

The President: I think that public approval is deteriorating, and that it will continue to go down. Some in Congress are disgusted about the Buddhist uprising and are talking about pulling out.

Secretary Rusk: The overplay on the Buddhist matter hurt more than anything else.

The President: What is the difference between POL and the power plant?

Secretary McNamara: The plant is more dangerous in that they may react more forcefully.

General Wheeler: POL is recognized as a legitimate military target, related to the movement of military supplies. We have already hit 4 POL facilities.

Secretary Rusk: Llewellyn Thompson does not believe there is a danger from the USSR.

The President: Who should we talk to?

Secretary Rusk: The chiefs of governments with troops in Vietnam,

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Pearson.

Secretary Rusk: On this matter of retaliation, might the North Vietnamese try to hit our carrier?

Admiral McDonald: No problem.

The President (going around the table): How do you stand?

General Johnson: For, without qualification.

Admiral McDonald: I am too.

General McConnell: Agreed.

General Greene: I concur fully.

The President: Do we have enough men to prevent trouble?

General Johnson: Yes.

The President: If you were Ho, what would you do?

General Wheeler: Attack in Pleiku. Westmoreland expects that and has concentrated his forces. He has his eye on eventualities of this kind.

Admiral McDonald: If I were Ho, I would send IL 28's against the air base at Danang.

General McConnell: I would too.

Admiral McDonald: We would have a hard time stopping them at Danang.

The President: That is a little alarming. Bob, will you comment?

Secretary McNamara: He would lose his Air Force. It would be a fool-hardy military operation. Also, if we can't beat 6 obsolete bombers, we ought to abolish the carriers.

The Vice President: I reaffirm my position in favor.

Cy Vance: Fully agree.

Walt Rostow: Fully agree.

Ambassador Goldberg: I am still opposed. I do not think it will bring them to the conference table. I am the least expert of any in this room, but I can see these risks:

- More involvement of North Vietnam in the South.
  - No real shortage of supplies (Red China has plenty for them);
  - More involvement by the Chinese;
  - More involvement by the Soviets. (It is inconceivable that they can allow this significant action to pass without reaction of some kind.)
  - Attrition of friends abroad and people at home.
- This would be regarded in the world as a major step and there are bound to be reactions.

What are the alternatives? Don't withdraw. I think we are doing well. Beef up our forces, go after more successes and pressure of that type. Don't convert this to an extension of the war even to Hanoi. It is tougher and painful to absorb, but it will hopefully lead to an agreed solution to let the people in the South alone.

Secretary Fowler: I support it as an operational movement, and think it will increase the prospects for peace. The time is urgent.

Leonard Marks: I am for the target.

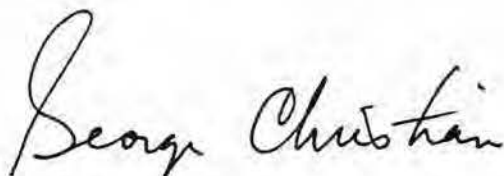
Mr. Raborn: I support. We need even more pressure, such as mining.

Dick Helms: The most effective thing we can do is mining. It would do extra damage of course. I agree there would be reaction from them.

The President: Any warnings you want to give me before I go to commune with myself and my God?

Mr. Ball: All things equal, this is a good thing to do, but it does not outweigh disadvantages. The world thinks Hanoi and Haiphong shibboleth that war not expanded. It will affect Europe. It won't affect North Vietnamese manpower. It would be hard for the Russians to take. They will have to supply POL across China. I am concerned about increasing the level of violence. I believe we have considerable trouble ahead on the political front. But if we are going to do it, do it now.

Mr. Bundy: I favor the strikes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Christian". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

George Christian

# # # #

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLJ 90-123

By mg NARA. Date 7-2-90

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

Wednesday, June 22, 1966

MR. PRESIDENT:

Herewith my proposed working agenda for today's NSC meeting at 12:30 p. m.

1. Report from Bill Bundy on Ottawa.  
Conclusion: They are not now prepared to negotiate on acceptable terms.
2. The military case for attack on POL:  
Secretary McNamara; and then poll the Chiefs one by one.
3. Anticipatory messages to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.  
FYI. I personally do not believe it is necessary to inform the Canadians in advance. It may even be an embarrassment to them; however, Secretary Rusk may have different views.  
Secretary Rusk
4. Explaining the operation:
  - a. The theme: it is not a change in policy. It is simply an extension of our policy of attacking the logistical base for infiltration into the South. It should be closely linked to the expansion in infiltration and in infiltration routes, plus the expanded use of trucks over the past year. Secretaries Rusk and McNamara
  - b. What should Saigon say and who should say it? Sects. Rusk & McNamara  

I believe Westmoreland should brief the Saigon press.
  - c. What should Secretary McNamara say? Secretary McNamara
  - d. What should the Department of State say: publicly; through a circular cable to all Embassies at the time of the attack; in the North Atlantic Council. Secretary Rusk
  - e. Should we say anything to the Russians: in Washington; in Moscow. (FYI: I believe a low-key conversation with Dobrynin indicating that this is a continuation of policy, with no change in objectives, might be appropriate.)  
Secretary Rusk

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

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f. USIA handling. Mr. Marks

5. A last check-out by you of the military on the operational orders, and your concern that civilian casualties be limited to the extent consistent with the safety of our crews. General Wheeler
6. You may wish to go around the table to get final recommendations.
7. Timing of operation: As you know, Secretary Rusk recommends early next week. Secretaries Rusk and McNamara
8. A statement of your decision and your expectation about security and the unity of the Government in this matter.
9. Assign a point of coordination in the Government for orchestrating this scenario. Since we intend to play it as a military operation, Secretary McNamara is my choice.

*W. A. Rostow*

LIST OF OFFICERS ATTENDING THE 560TH NSC MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 1966, AT 12:30 PM, IN THE CABINET ROOM

Vice President Humphrey  
Secretary of State Rusk  
Under Secretary of State Ball  
Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy  
Secretary of Defense McNamara  
Deputy Secretary of Defense Vance  
Assistant Secretary of Defense McNaughton  
Secretary of the Treasury Fowler  
Ambassador to the UN Goldberg  
CIA Director Raborn  
CIA Deputy Director Helms  
JCS Chairman General Wheeler  
Army Chief of Staff General Johnson  
Chief of Naval Operations Admiral McDonald  
Air Force Chief of Staff General McConnell  
Marine Corps Commandant General Greene  
USIA Director Marks  
General Maxwell Taylor  
Walt Rostow  
Bromley Smith  
Robert Kintner  
George Christian  
Y. Okamoto (photographer)

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