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January 7, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: National Security Council Meeting, Wednesday, June 7, 1967

The following is a record from my notes made during the meeting, but, because of the fast moving events in the Middle East, not transcribed until today.

Secretary Rusk opened the discussion of the situation in the Middle East by reporting that Nasser had suffered a "stunning loss." He had miscalculated the military situation and Soviet support. There was widespread disillusionment with Nasser in the Middle East. The Soviets seemed to have been guilty of encouraging him. The Arabs in the UN felt that the USSR had let them down. Israel was riding high and its demands will be substantial. Israel will probably demand a peace treaty with the Arabs with the following objectives:

- a. Clear resolution of the state of belligerence.
- b. Getting rid of the UN truce supervisory machinery. Israel will accept no arrangements that derogate its sovereignty.
- c. At the beginning it seemed that Israel was not seeking territorial acquisition, but Ambassador Barbour feels they will want Sharm el-Sheikh and straightened out borders.

Looking ahead, the Secretary spoke of the importance to us of removing belligerent rights, resuming international guarantees, and regional economic and social developments to absorb intra-Arab and Arab-Israeli quarrels. If we do not make ourselves "attorneys for Israel," we cannot recoup our losses. We do have something to bargain with in that Israel must be grateful to the US and Israel requires continuing US support.

The Secretary reviewed the question of "who did what?" He said we had a primary obligation to ourselves to maintain peace. What we would have done had we been in Prime Minister Eshkol's shoes is another question. Eban had laid bare Israeli thinking and we understood it. In any case, the situation on June 8 appeared "more manageable than five days or three days ago." The air battle had been significant.

Mr. Helms said that the Russians had badly miscalculated, even more so than in the Cuban missile crisis.

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Mr. Katzenbach said that arrangements for evacuation of Americans were in progress everywhere except in Jordan. We still were holding off in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Gaud reported that we had had aid programs in six of the fourteen Arab countries (plus Israel)--Sudan, Jordan, Tunisia, the UAR, Morocco, Israel--and a pipeline of one sort or another to twelve. He had stopped obligations to all of these countries. He had frozen everything for those countries who have broken diplomatic relations. In addition there are US contributions to the world food program, UNRWA and voluntary agencies which we had not stopped. The pipeline of unliquidated obligations added up to about \$130 million. The President asked Mr. Rostow to pull all of this information together and to see how it sorted itself out.

With regard to our aid through international or private agencies, Secretary Rusk said it would be serious to pull out of the FAO. On the other hand, with American personnel coming out of countries like the UAR, voluntary agency programs might have to give for the time being.

The discussion turned to the question of military equipment. The Vice President said the Congress was watching the flow of arms shipments very carefully. Mr. E. V. Rostow noted Soviet shipments to the Arabs.

The President said "he was not sure we were out of our troubles." He could not visualize the USSR saying it had miscalculated, and then walking away. Our objective should be to "develop as few heroes and as few heels as we can." It is important for everybody to know we are not for aggression. We are sorry this has taken place. We are in as good a position as we could be given the complexities of the situation. We thought we had a commitment from those governments, but it went up in smoke very quickly. The President said that by the time we get through with all the festering problems we are going to wish the war had not happened.

Ambassador Thompson said he could figure out no explanation for the Soviet misjudgment. The Russians should have known the Arabs' capability. He felt the end of belligerence should be relatively easy to handle with the USSR. Barring a direct threat to Cairo, he felt the Soviets would probably stay out of war.

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Secretary Rusk felt that, in Moscow, those advising caution may be strengthened.

General Wheeler reported briefly on the air war, noting that the Israelis had caught a large portion of the UAR air force on the ground. He also pointed out that the striking nature of the Israeli success reflected great superiority in maintenance, leadership, training and discipline rather than numerical superiority.

The President then went on to read a statement later released to the press (attached), establishing a Special Committee of the National Security Council to deal with the Middle East crisis, with McGeorge Bundy to serve as Executive Secretary and as a special consultant to the President and with Secretary Rusk as chairman.

Secretary Fowler discussed briefly the effect of hostilities on the money markets of the world. In sum, he felt there was nothing to indicate any massive movement of funds. He said we were not interfering.

At the President's request for comment, Mr. Bundy said the following about his new assignment: He would be in familiar company and would do his best. He needed the help of people who had been working in the crisis and would require the support of a small staff. He knew his job was primarily to take the best possible advantage of work already going on.

Secretary Rusk concluded by suggesting that there be a meeting of the new committee at 6:30 p. m.

*H. H. S.*

Harold H. Saunders

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## OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

## THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT OF GEORGE CHRISTIAN  
AND INTERVIEW OF MC GEORGE BUNDY  
ENTRANCE TO WEST LOBBY

AT 1:37 P.M. EDT

MR. CHRISTIAN: The President met today with the National Security Council in the Cabinet Room here at the White House.

He made a statement to the Council which I shall read and paraphrase.

"The United Nations Security Council has called for a cease-fire in the Middle East. This first clear step toward lasting peace has the strongest support of our government. We have worked as hard as we could to avoid hostilities and to end them. But the fighting came, and the road forward to real peace and progress will not be easy. Still there is now a real chance for all to turn from the frustrations of the past to the hopes of a peaceful future. While the first responsibility falls to the peoples and governments in the area, we must do our best to that end, both inside and outside the United Nations.

"The continuing crisis and the effort to help build a new peace will require the most careful coordination of the work of our government. To ensure this coordination I am today establishing a Special Committee of the National Security Council. The Secretary of State will preside over this Committee, and its members will be the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General Wheeler), the Director of the CIA (Mr. Helms), the Chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (Mr. Clark Clifford), and Mr. Walt Rostow (the President's Special Assistant.) I shall meet with the Committee from time to time as necessary, and so will the Vice President and the Ambassador to the United Nations."

That was the President's statement this morning. The President has asked Mr. McGeorge Bundy to serve as a Special Consultant to the President and to be Executive Secretary of the Committee. Mr. Bundy has worked with the President before, and he has been in informal consultation during this past year on a number of subjects. Mr. Bundy has now asked his Board of Trustees at the Ford Foundation for a temporary leave of absence. He is already at work at the White House. The President has asked all the agencies of the government to assist Mr. Bundy with such staff support as he may request for the Special Committee. The Committee will meet regularly at the White House.

Mr. Bundy is here with me and will take a few questions, if you would like.

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Q Mr. Bundy, could you tell us what is the scope of your work? This will be long-range planning, I presume.

MR. BUNDY: I don't want to go beyond the President's own description. The work of the committee is obviously just beginning, although the general work of the Government -- in a number of ways -- has obviously gone forward very intensively throughout the period of this crisis.

Q Mr. Bundy, will you compare this to the Special Committee that President Kennedy set up in the Cuban Missile Crisis?

MR. BUNDY: The two situations are not identical.

Like that committee -- and like others that have been set up from time to time over the last six or seven years -- to my knowledge, this one is designed to deal with the particular set of problems -- obviously a very varied and complex set of problems -- which have been brought to a point of crisis in the Middle East in recent weeks.

Q What do you see as your first priority, your first job?

MR. BUNDY: I am the Executive Secretary of a committee of Cabinet Officers, which will, undoubtedly, make clear to me what those priorities are as we go about our work.

Q Mr. Bundy, is the idea of this committee to stop the war and get the crisis settled, or is it to solve the long-term problems of the Middle East?

MR. BUNDY: I don't think I can go beyond the President's own statement on that point.

Q He doesn't explain.

MR. BUNDY: We are just at the beginning of our work and I think it's important not to try to explain our solutions, answers, or labors before we have begun them.

Q Mr. Bundy, will you evaluate this crisis in terms of the security of this country right now?

MR. BUNDY: No, I think it would not be useful for me to engage in evaluations. I am down here on a temporary basis as a staff officer, which is something I have done before. There really isn't much I can add to that.

Q Mr. Bundy, are you thinking in terms of weeks or months?

MR. BUNDY: I don't have any clear prospects on that.

Q What were you told about why the normal machinery of the NSC was not best?

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MR. BUNDY: Well, I don't think this is -- in that sense -- abnormal machinery. I think it is really quite normal when you have a special situation to try to devise the appropriate special means for dealing with it.

My own impression is that we do now face the kind of situation which the President's statement describes. I have been here informally in the last two or three days, since Monday morning.

And it is very plain when you have a set of explosive events like these, they create situations which are not the same as those that he had to deal with before and you have a need to address yourself, as a Government, to the problems of the future -- as I think the President's statement says.

Q Mr. Bundy, will you have any kind of staff of your own working on problems?

MR. BUNDY: There is always the question of a few people to keep the messages straight and to keep in touch with other parts of the Government -- and that kind of thing.

But we certainly don't plan anything very elaborate. I am expecting to occupy a small group of offices in the Executive Office Building.

Q Mr. Bundy, do you foresee your effort as more in a long-range category than an immediate category? We couldn't hear back here.

MR. BUNDY: I think that is the third time we have had that question and I have said I think the President's statement has said what I would say on the subject.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

1:45 P.M. EDT

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National Security Council Meeting, Noon, June 7

Suggested order of business

1. Ask Secretary McNamara and Director Helms to comment on the military situation.
2. Ask Secretary Rusk to summarize the situation in the UN and in relations with the Arab countries--and also to make any broader political comments he thinks he may wish to offer.
3. Tell the Council of your decision to establish a special committee. Draft statement attached.

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LIST OF ATTENDEES, 571st NSC MEETING

June 7, 1967; 12:07 P. M.

The Vice President

Secretary Rusk

- Under Secretary Katzenbach
- Under Secretary Eugene Rostow
- Ambassador Thompson
- AID Director Gaud
- Assistant Secretary Battle
- Assistant Secretary Sisco

Secretary McNamara

- Deputy Secretary Vance
- General Wheeler

Secretary Fowler

Governor Bryant

Director Helms

McGeorge Bundy

Clark Clifford

- Walt Rostow
- George Christian
- Bromley Smith
- Harold Saunders
- Francis Bator
- Joseph Califano

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