

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
#24a Memorandum from meeting notes	<i>sanitization upheld per NLJ 85-257</i> <i>sanitized 10-7-83 per NLJ 83-100</i> NSC meeting, 7/27/65 Notes by McGeorge Bundy Possible classified information 2 p. SECRET (per NSC 8-23-83 letter)	11/2/68	A
#24b Memorandum from meeting notes	Meeting with Joint Leadership Notes by McGeorge Bundy Possible classified info. 6 p. <i>open 4-27-83</i>	12/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Meeting Notes File, Box 1

[JULY 27, 1965]

DCH 10/81

RESTRICTION CODES

- (A) Closed by Executive Order 11652 governing access to national security information.
- (B) Closed by statute or by the agency which originated the document.
- (C) Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in the donor's deed of gift.

89
24

McGEORGE BUNDY
320 EAST 43RD STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

August 5, 1969

Dear Tom:

At last I have had a chance to pull together the manuscript notes which I have left over from Washington and put them in something as near chronological order as possible. I am sending them to you in a bulky package separately. Meanwhile, as a first installment I enclose two memoranda that I did prepare last winter when Walt Rostow first asked me to check my files and see what I had on important meetings in 1965. These two meetings may relate to the formal discussions of the President's decision of July on troops for Vietnam, first in the NSC and then with the Congressional Leaders.

I am sorry that this is such an unfinished piece of staff work, and if there are questions about specific memoranda at any point, I will be glad to try to explain my hieroglyphics.

I hope you will convey my warm regards to the President and my apologies for this untidy contribution.

Sincerely,

Ma

Mr. W. Thomas Johnson
Executive Assistant
Office of the Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson
Austin, Texas 78701

SERVICE SET

Memorandum prepared on November 2, 1968, from notes dated July 27, 1965, at SANITIZED 6:00 p.m. (The memorandum is strictly limited to what the notes themselves contain; there is no reliance on memory).

The meeting was a meeting of the National Security Council. There were opening presentations by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense -- the Notes: "standard speeches." There followed a discussion between Mr. Rusk and Mr. McNamara on the question whether the maps being used for the presentation did not exaggerate the degree of Viet Cong control in South Vietnam. The Secretary of State raised the question, and the Secretary of Defense defended the maps, stating that the Viet Cong in these areas had taxing and recruiting power. [REDACTED] (4)

[REDACTED] The notes record General Wheeler's opinion that the pacification program was stalled.

The President summarized the matter as follows. The situation was not good and we confronted five choices.

The first choice was to use massive power to bring the enemy to his knees -- "blowing him out of the water tonight." The President thought less than 10% of the country favored such a course.

Another group feels that we ought never to have been there and would get out tomorrow if we could. But not many people feel that way, and we have our commitments made by three Presidents.

A third choice would be to stay where we are with our 80,000 men, taking casualties and doing nothing. No one is satisfied with this choice.

A fourth choice would be to go to the Congress and ask for all the money and men we might need, calling up the reserves and asking for billions and billions in appropriations and even declaring a state of emergency. There was a good deal of feeling that this should be done and the President referred in this context to the special problem of the surface-to-air missile sites which had been under discussion in these days. On the other hand, it was a question whether such action would not lay down a gauntlet to the world. If we should take this course, the North Vietnamese might look at their friends in China and say you should do the same thing for us. Thus the Chinese would get tied into a larger effort. The President himself did not wish to be dramatic and to make big television appeals.

The fifth choice would be to give the commanders the men and materials they say they need from existing forces to use money under a transfer authority -- to try not to bluff or brag or thunder -- and at the same time to get Ambassador Goldberg and Secretary Rusk to go and work for a diplomatic position.

SANITIZED

Authority NLJ 83-100By LS, NARS, Date 10-7-83

The notes also report the President's account of a conversation with John Oakes. Oakes had asked the President if we should have been there in 1954. The President had answered that we were in 1965, and "I enjoyed it if he didn't."

The notes also record my own feeling that while the President was placing his preference for alternative five, as against alternative four, on international grounds, his unspoken object was to protect his legislative program -- or at least this had appeared to be his object in his informal talk as late as Thursday and Friday of the preceding week -- July 22, and July 23.

Memorandum, prepared in December 1963, of a meeting with the Joint Leadership on July 27, 1965, at 6:30 p.m. (This memorandum is dictated from notes taken July 27, 1965. Nothing not clearly stated in the notes is included.) Present were the President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, General Wheeler, Admiral Raborn, Ambassador Lodge, Senators Mansfield, Dirksen, Hickenlooper, Smathers, Kuchel, and Long; Speaker McCormack, Representatives Ford, Arends, Boggs, and Albert, and from the White House -- Richard Goodwin, Moyers, Busby, Valenti, O'Brien, Cater, Califano and Bundy.

The President began by outlining the five possible choices: first, to blow them up -- not much thought had been given to that.

Second, that we ought to get out. Some people felt that way but did not really come out and say what they thought until you pursued them.

Third, we could leave things just as they are with 80,000 to 90,000 men there today and get Lodge out there and see if he can pull a rabbit out of the hat.

Fourth, we could declare an emergency, call in the reserves, thousands of men and billions of dollars -- tell the country that our best guess was Y billion dollars and X thousand men, and ask for it. That course had a good deal of appeal to the President because we should do what is needed, but there is an argument against it in the possible reaction of Hanoi. We did not want to have things get more violent just as we have a new man going to the U. N. We have hints from the Russians what we should take account of. The President did not want to make this any more provocative than necessary. He had reasons for not overstating the case. He did not himself believe that you can simply get in an airplane and settle this thing.

The fifth choice would be to supply Westmoreland with the men and materials he had requested, increase draft calls (the notes say 17-20, 24-28-35) extend enlistment of sailors and marines; and go into the Senate for an additional appropriation of \$1 or \$2 billion and defer a full presentation of requirements until January, 1966. By then we would be through the monsoon. In the meantime, the Congress would keep its power to call itself back into session. Maybe by then we would be past the monsoon and the Communists would have further thoughts. If the Russians did not come in and if China was not gambling we might be able to say "Cut out your foolishness and come to the conference table." The President didn't think there was much chance of an early settlement but others kept saying we've got to try even though we have tried fifteen times. Before the President went into the districts of the Congressmen and Senators he would have done what Westy and Wheeler want done. Meanwhile he would lay plans for more reserves. The President also reported that the British pound was in great danger.

In summary the President said the choice was between course four and course five. Either way he would give General Westmoreland what he wants. One course would be to go the full Congressional route now and the other way is to give the Congressional leadership the story now and the bill later. Concluding his presentation, the President said that he was prepared to stay in the meeting just as long as members of the Leadership wanted.

The President was followed by the Secretary of State who gave a political analysis. He pointed out that there was no real reason for a basic difference between the U. S. and the U.S.S.R. on Vietnam, but that Moscow had no real influence on the ground. Furthermore, Moscow had a dilemma because of other Communist pressures. At the other end of the spectrum was Peking which was adamant against negotiations -- bitter and harsh.

(At this point Bundy was out of the meeting getting certain "The papers") for the President.) When he returned the notes pick up again.

Secretary McNamara was discussing the SAM-site problem.

The President then called on Ambassador Lodge who knocked down choices one, two and three -- alternative one would not solve the problem, alternative two was worse than a victory for the Kaiser or Hitler in the two World Wars. Alternative three was no alternative at all since you needed a bigger perimeter and you also needed Camranh Bay.

Congressman Albert then said that he agreed with the President's proposal.

Senator Smathers said that we did not want to get into World War III but we did want to stay there. Was there any change in this policy?

The President answered that there was no change in policy but that as their effort increased, ours must.

Congressman Boggs asked if there was any major defection of GVN forces. Secretary McNamara replied in the negative. Congressman Boggs asked about the government and Secretary McNamara said it was a weak government and would be while the VC were free to attack it district by district. About this point the President told the Leadership why he did not call the Leadership earlier (the notes say that this statement was "per my memo to him on Lodge").

Congressman Boggs asked why we needed a ten-to-one ratio. General Wheeler took that question and said that perhaps four-to-one was a right ratio, but that ten-to-one was not necessary because the helicopter had provided a new mobility and that this was why the ARVN had been so successful until recently.

The President remarked that we all know that it is a bad situation and we wish we were ten years back or even ten months back.

Senator Long said that Ho Chi Minh talks of a twenty-year war but that he thought that it might be a hundred years long. We should look at the stakes and look at the fact that we have been touched up. Should we put in more men or take a whipping? We'd better go in.

The Speaker said that he did not see any alternatives. Dedicated military leaders have asked for more help. He was impressed by the analogy to Hitler. The road to appeasement was a road to war. We have warned them. We do the things we should, hard as they are. (The notes here remark that "The Leadership seems mighty hawkish so far.") The Russians had problems and weaknesses of their own.

The President read parts of a message from General Eisenhower to Prime Minister Churchill at a time of crisis in Vietnam in 1954. The passage the President was reading came from "Mandate for Change."

Congressman Ford asked for clarification of choices four and five. The answer (the speaker is not clearly defined by the notes) was that in either case Westmoreland would get what he wants. The question was rather how you would go about the process -- under four you would ask funds from the Congress now and under five you would come back in January and ask for them. The President said that we would ask for the money in any event. We can either guess about larger figures or go for a limited sum in the Senate now. He thought there were good reasons for not calling the reserves; if you call them now you really won't be ready.

In January you would have it better worked out. Under alternative five he might tell the Leadership three times that he was sending an additional 30,000 or so, without saying X billion and 100,000 men if he could avoid it.

Representative Ford said that under alternative five you would double draft calls -- and how much of a burden would that place on training forces? The President said that the difference between four and five was that one was more dramatic and blunter and more powerful -- if that is what you wanted.

Secretary McNamara said that the draft calls under option five would be about the same as under option four -- since when we called the reserves we would still have to double the draft calls. Secretary McNamara also pointed out that Sections 512A and C of the Appropriation Act gave authority to spend money and then get a deficiency appropriation.

The President said again that under alternative four he would have to get a new bill and a great big reserve plan and go through a big process. Under five we would simply put \$1.8 billion or whatever into the appropriation bills on the Senate side and then get in order for January.

The Secretary of Defense said that the war was very difficult to predict, that under four we would be asking for a blank check because we did not know what would happen, while under five we would ask for what we see clearly between now and January. Congressman Arends asked what General Westmoreland's needs were. Secretary McNamara answered that he had an immediate requirement of thirteen battalions and 50,000 men. Beyond that there would be a need for further forces before January 1. The Secretary also said that we could supply forces faster than General Westmoreland could receive them. The Secretary of State remarked that while there were sharp engagements, the fighting had not reached the stage of Giap's phase three. The President referred to a speech by the Vice President and said that we were running the danger of saying to Ho what he wants to hear. He also said that he did not want Russia and China in it if he could help it.

Senator Dirksen quoted President Woodrow Wilson to the effect that "the business at hand is undramatic." But the President was going to have to tell the country that we are in a very serious business. There was then an exchange with Secretary McNamara, about which the notes are unclear -- McNamara's comment was that "there was more baloney on that than any other subject," but the notes do not show what he was talking about.

Senator Dirksen apparently also asked about any possible diversion (?) of anticipated shipments. The President's comment is that every man who leaves will be announced. Senator Dirksen noted that he was receiving many questioning calls, and the President said he was going to tell the country just as soon as he got through telling the Leadership. Senator Dirksen said that he was not going to be like the Committee on the Conduct of the War. The President said that in the morning he was going to get to General Eisenhower. Senator Dirksen said that from now to January was five months and you could not wait that long if you need it. "If you need it you ought to ask for it." The

President said that we would get what we needed. There would be a sizable supplementary in January -- a few billion dollars. Senator Dirksen said we should make the country realize that this is dangerous, serious business. The President said he thought the country did realize it.

Senator Mansfield asked the President's indulgence and read a statement in which there appeared remarks about apathy, disquiet, and apprehension. He thought that nothing should be put out from the meeting except by the President. He said he would support the President's position as a Senator and as Majority Leader.

Senator Hickenlooper asked if we were getting low on helicopters and whether we were increasing our orders. Secretary McNamara said we had built up our helicopters enormously. The loss rate was only one in 10,000 sortie's and helicopters did not wear out. Up to now there was no basis for concern about numbers of helicopters. Nevertheless we were increasing production.

Senator Hickenlooper said that alternatives one, two and three were out. That anything short of a result that would make a reliable buffer against Communism would be disastrous. A negotiated so-called peace that did not do this would merely compound the felony. He did not know just which way it should be done -- and he remarked that over the years mistakes had been made. He differentiated between approval and support. He thought his decision now would be to support it but not approve it. The President remarked that he was in the same position as Senator Hickenlooper. He had supported the decisions of 1954 without approving them. Now there were 80,000 to 90,000 men out there asking for help and his answer was yes.

Senator Kuchel asked what Westmorland's orders were. Must he clean up all the red spots? The notes do not show what answer he got.

Congressman Boggs said that alternative five was the logical way out. The President said that his object was to get the government together, to get the Allies together and to get the country together. And he would make his decision tomorrow. He spelled out three phases in the future and thought that by 1 November we would double our forces.

Congressman Arends asked Secretary Rusk if the Allies could help us on limiting shipping to the DRV. Secretary Rusk answered about help in South Vietnam from Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. Arends persisted on shipping. The Secretary of State said that there had been some improvement and that through various devices we could get a cutback in shipments to Hanoi which might make us feel better but would not really change the situation.

Senator Hickenlooper said that we were treating symptoms; there was a great danger of a negotiated stalemate, and we needed a reliable settlement. The President said that Senator Hickenlooper should talk to Mike Mansfield and Bill Fullbright and see what the three could agree on. Right now settlement was not a practicable problem, because the Communists thought they were winning. The question of settlement was a good long way away. Senator Hickenlooper said the big question was what we were going to do. The President said that we are going to try to bring about a situation where the government of South Vietnam will be able to defend itself against foreign ideology. "Westmoreland wants help -- I'm going to give it -- the question is how."

The Speaker closed the meeting by saying that the President would have united support. This was a historic meeting. The President would have the support of all true Americans.

After the meeting with the Leadership, the President held a small meeting in his office. Present were the President -- the two Secretaries, Goodwin, Moyers, Busby, and Bundy. The President remarked that we were prolonging the agony for 90 days and that he wanted a statement of 700 words, the essence of which would be that he was giving Westmoreland what he needed. Secretary McNamara repeated the thirteen battalion, 50,000 men figure, and expressed his confidence on the handling of the matter.