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#40 meeting notes	1/26/66 meeting with foreign policy advisors on resumption of bombing <i>SANITIZED</i> <i>NSC 3-24-82</i> possible classified information 3 p.	1/26/66	A

FILE LOCATION

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Meeting in Cabinet Room
January 26, 1966

Subject: Resumption of Bombing

Present: The President, Rusk, McNamara, Mac Bundy, Raborn,,
Ball, Valenti

(From J. Valenti notes)

Rusk: Souvanna has problem -- possibility of NVN coming back this weekend.

Considerable strength if you resume the bombing as much in sorrow as in anger.

You thought very hard about everything they said.

And beneficial to let Michael Stewart get out of town before bombing.

We are a little thin about VC activity on the ground. This may cause some trouble when we start.

If you think you can stand the pressure -- recommend you wait until Sat.

President: Worried not about pressure -- am worried about another Souvanna item. Each time they will bring up something to delay us. J.S. Cooper (Senator from Kentucky) wants to wait. I asked him if he could deliver VC if I gave him more time. He couldn't answer.

Rusk: But the central policy issue is embarrassment over some thin issue --

McNamara: We can't start before Friday their time -- and according to Dean he wants Saturday their time. Only a matter of 24 hours.

President: Must emphasize how sorrowful we are -- we must let this be known. If you understand Fulbright he wants us to get out. Mansfield wants us to hunker up.

Rusk: Am disturbed as much by other statements as much as M. and F.

President: I agree.

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Meeting in Cabinet Room
January 26, 1966

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Rusk: No one can look you in the eye and tell you where we are going if we don't get peace.

President: Do you really believe Souvanna will pull something off?

Bundy: No. Odds are nine to one nothing will happen. We ought to lean on Souvanna hard and tell him we're his friends and we'll wait til Saturday.

President: I'm afraid they'll give us some peace treatment that will be phony -- and put us in a box.

McNamara: It is only 24 hours -- and we ought to wait. We need that 24 hours.

President: Could you go tomorrow if we had to?

McNamara: Yes, we can -- 12 hours from now, but it may be a little ragged. Better on 24 hour lead.

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McNamara: What disturbs me is feeling the fire of the heavier bombing boys. I'm not sure we can shut off supplies with bombing.

President: Bring me all you have of military evidence during the pause.

~~Ball: Let the Ambassador show it to government and not put it out to American press~~

Ball: Let the Ambassadors show it to governments and not put it out to the American press.

President: That's good. Let's do it that way.

McNamara: When should we have this evidence

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Meeting in Cabinet Room
January 26, 1966

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Bundy: In 24 hours.

President: When will we hear from Souvanna?

Rusk: Friday night out time.

Bundy: He's supposed to go Thursday and come back Friday.

(Discussion about Fulbright and his position)

President: I don't want to be in Asia but if we tuck our tails and run...

How do you answer Ball's memo on China (coming) in the war?

McNamara: I believe we can tell China we do not intend to destroy the political institutions in NVN.

Ball: What we need is a philosophy of the bombing. We don't have any now.

McNamara: I disagree.

(McNamara had to leave to testify on the Hill.)

President: There is something wrong with our system when our leaders are testifying instead of thinking about the war.

Let's re-write the "Why Vietnam" booklet. Bring it up to date.

END OF NOTES.

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