

# WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

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#48 meeting notes	<p><del>2/26/66 meeting with foreign policy advisors on Vietnam</del> <i>open 12-5-92</i></p> <p><del>possible classified information</del> 5 p</p> <p>[declassified 2/18/88 per NLJ 86-201 "C" restrictions sanitized]</p> <p><i>enclosing removed 12-9-92</i></p>	2/26/66	<del>A # C</del>

FILE LOCATION

Meeting Notes File, Box 1

DCH 10/81

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Meeting in Cabinet Room  
Date: February 26, 1966  
Time: 1:05 p.m.

Present: President, Rusk, McNamara, Vance, Wheeler, Marks, Bundy, Vice President, Raborn, Helms, Gaud, General Johnson, Rostow, Unger, Komer, Valenti

(From notes by J. Valenti)

President: Want to meet in limited time on Vietnam -- maybe every Saturday -- during week -- (make) sure we're doing everything we need to do.

Going to pick someone to be assistant to President or Secretary (of State) to be Porter's counterpart on peace. Special Assistant to Secretary, probably. Assume no irritation from Pentagon. Will pick him in next three or four days.

Lot of talk about pacification. Thrilled about General Walt. What he's doing makes you proud. Work being done by Marines on health, reconstruction, schools.

General Green was very cooperative. Tribute to military. Need this special assistant in Washington to carry out peace plans.

Any requests from Freeman?

Bundy: Will come in Monday.

Need organization to match Porter's. We need that here.

Marks: Gaud will put up money to get TV going in Vietnam.

President: What about TV sets?

Marks: Hope to assemble sets there. Hope Japanese will contribute sets.

Bundy: Had senior American to advise on economic (matters) and inflation. Robert Nathan is our choice.

President: Vice President talked to him.

Bundy: He ought not to be under Charles Mann. Report directly to Lodge and Porter.

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Meeting in Cabinet Room  
February 26, 1966

2

Rusk: President of Security Council at UN has letter to U Thant -- amounts to resignation of UN from problem.

Had hassle over paragraph on mutual reduction of action. Africans didn't want mutual because of our bombing. That is now out.

Morse will call for meeting of Assembly but Assembly will do exactly what Security Council did.

President: Let Goldberg find forum to explain this.

Rusk: Would be inopportune to hold debate.

Bundy: Get Goldberg to hold press conference next week with State Department auditorium.

President: Think it ought to be this afternoon, otherwise newsmen will draw conclusions.

Bundy: One loose end in public opinion. Hanson-Baldwin article.

McNamara: Statement will be ready (unreadable). Have to get Times to be printed in entirety.

Vice President: If statements are ready ahead of time, I can do work quietly with key Congressmen.

Bundy: Resolution matter -- President put rose on Morse -- willing to have that issue joined.

Raborn: Meeting didn't go as planned. Committee members interested in what I had to say. But Chairman cut it off and asked questions aimed at finding out how we got our intelligence. Need to equate intelligence with sources of intelligence. McCarthy tried to get me to admit that F.R. (Foreign Relations) members ought to be on Russell's committee. Pell interested we didn't overdo covert action. Hickenlooper and Symington came to my rescue.

Gaud: Have you read my memo?

President: Haven't read it yet. Didn't want to predict at press conference any length of time -- or victory.

Meeting in Cabinet Room  
February 26, 1966

3

Wheeler: Military actions at same tempo in past (unreadable) satisfactory events -- though nothing dramatic to herald a change,

Rolling Thunder in North hampered by bad weather lately.

President: Want Goodpaster to be in touch with Ike. Want Goodpaster to know what you know. Ridgway seemed to support us. Yet Fulbright used Ridgway letter to hit us.

McNamara: I think Ridgway letter is a difference.

President: Why don't we send bright colonels to see Bradley and others -- and get their statements out.

Wheeler: Gavin wants no part of this anymore. He's ready to retire. It's one of these things where he's a writer and didn't realize it was going to cause a stir.

President: He thinks he's an authority or geo-political expert. Thinks we can't afford to keep commitments around the world. Kennan had the same view when he was on policy planning staff. Believes Asia is not worth it.

Bundy: He got in trouble with Russia and Yugoslavia. Wholly unfit for operational duty.

President: Why don't we do a real study on brown men -- and Asia -- Task Force on Asia -- heavy thinking on Asia -- potentialities and solutions -- liven it up -- Asian Task Force. That group ought to be getting up recommendations on what we ought to be saying and doing.

Rostow: In wake of Asian Development Bank -- Asia CIAP -- ought to challenge that group of Asian planners. Would force this Asia CIAP over and above the bank. Need challenge from you to get it going.

President: Perhaps a number of Asian leaders coming here could request us to join with them. Have our group staff an Asian Task Force. Then try to allow Asians to do these things on their own.

Rusk: Might want to bring in Arthur Dean, and let him take over.

Komer: New York business community feels if we are going to spend \$10 billion -- let elections take place -- and then bug out, then we ought to get out now.

President: It was shocking to RFK that after conferring with LBJ aides, he was (unreadable) to be wrong.

Vice President: (unreadable) and I agree with Rostow's assessment -- they want to do something on their own. Maybe by the time Black goes out, the Task Force will have something to give him.

McNamara: Russell feels strongly about three things:

1. Resolution giving President the power.
2. Calling up the Reserves.
3. Bombing Haiphong POLs.

Rusk: First thing in Korean war was to unleash Stu Symington.

Vice President: Morse repeal resolution will not get four votes. Morse, Gruening -- maybe Burdick, Young. Counter-resolution will lose more votes.

Moyers: Latest in Harris Poll. American people want honorable end. Two to one to see it through. More in a split -- hawks and doves. Support has dwindled -- 63 per cent to 49 per cent.

Fifty-one fair or poor handling. Policy fails to satisfy either group. Sixty-seven (January) to sixty-two (February) in job rating.

Gallop - 59 to 62 in job rating.

Doves -- 10 per cent. Hawks - 16 per cent, up from 12 per cent.

Great bulk are in between. As result administration is being criticized from both ends.

President is either not moving strong enough or too strong.

January '65 -- 41 per cent excellent or good.

March '65 -- 60 per cent.

Meeting in Cabinet Room  
February 26, 1966

5

May '65 -- 57 per cent.

July '65 -- 65 per cent.

September '65 -- 66 per cent.

October '65 -- 65 per cent.

December '65 -- 66 per cent.

January '66 -- 63 per cent.

February '66 -- 49 per cent.

In February:

Disagree with policy (carry war to North Vietnam) -- 16 per cent.

Agree with policy (increased military effort in South) -- 33 per cent.

Agree with policy (negotiate) -- 34 per cent.

Disagree (pull out) -- 9 per cent.

Not sure -- 8 per cent.

Those who changed -- biggest shift: those who agree but want more bombing -- those who agree but want to negotiate.

First signs of American impatience with long war.

President lost five points in popularity:

- Vietnam
- Cost of living

END OF MEETING