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FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
# 65 memo w/meeting notes	Rostow to President re meeting 4/22/68 Secret 2 p. open 10-11-83 NLS 82-85	n.d.	A
#65a memo	Rostow to President 4/22/68 Secret 1 p. open 10-11-83 NLS 82-85	4/22/68	A
#65b memo	Rostow to President 1 p. Secret open 7-8-85 NLS 84-363	4/21/68	A
#65c draft cable	to Hanoi via Vientiane 1 p. possible classified information	4/22/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Meeting Notes File, Box 2

DCH 10/81

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Authority NLS 82-85
By 10-11-83

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Meeting With the President, Monday, April 22, 1968, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Present: The President
Secretary Dean Rusk
Secretary Clark Clifford
Walt W. Rostow

The President asked Mr. Rostow to define the problem.

On the basis of the attached memorandum (Tab A), he said that we had come to a point where it was to our interest to attempt to break the deadlock on the site for "contacts." Our objective should be:

- To produce a formula which would induce Hanoi to move, if it now faces real problems with a site and wishes to talk.
- To create a situation, if Hanoi would not move, which would convince our people that we had done all that was possible.

In the latter case we could resume full-scale military action with public support.

Mr. Rostow cited the list of possible initiatives to break the log jam, as developed by William Jorden, and suggested that the Secretary of State be heard.

Sec. Rusk said the best way to proceed was to raise with Hanoi the possibility of private ambassadorial talks in either Warsaw or Vientiane, narrowly addressed to arranging a mutually-agreed site for "contacts."

The President indicated that he preferred Vientiane.

A draft was prepared, in line with Sec. Rusk's proposal, in which we would propose that the ambassadors in Vientiane meet for this narrow purpose; but we would withdraw Vientiane from our list of places for the proposed subsequent "contact."

There were two reasons for the latter condition:

- Vientiane was one of the places on our list which Hanoi did not like, and it was judged fair to soften that point by withdrawing it from our "contact" list;

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- The initiation of this principle would make it more difficult for Hanoi to propose Warsaw for the ambassadorial discussion of site, because we would have created the precedent that the place for discussion of site would not be the place for the contact itself.

The President continued to feel somewhat uneasy about proposing a site for private ambassadorial talks, which we had already proposed for "contact" and which they had refused.

Sec. Clifford then underlined his grave uneasiness with our proposing Vientiane. He suggested, instead, that we simply give Hanoi the option of listing, say, three locations which had not previously been considered by either side for the limited private discussions.

It was generally agreed this was about as fair a proposal as we could make; and our people would judge it so, if it were made public. Moreover, we would probably not have difficulties with our allies in private discussions to establish a site at almost any point Hanoi might suggest, since the talks would not be substantive. We could, therefore, take very considerable risk on this point.

After several drafts were formulated and examined, the attached was agreed by the President and dispatched by the Secretary of State to Vientiane for transmission to Hanoi. (Tab B)

Underlying the discussion was agreement that there would be great frustration in the U.S. and difficulty in subsequently conducting the war at full throttle unless the President's initiative of March 31 resulted in some kind of contact with Hanoi and a clear demonstration that they were not operating in good faith.

W. W. Rostow

Attachments

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MEMORANDUM

ACTION ~~72~~ 55

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Monday, April 22, 1968

5:10 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

SUBJECT: 6:00 p.m. meeting with Secretaries Rusk and Clifford on site for North Vietnamese contact

1. Sect. Rusk has been considering possible diplomatic next steps, of which the attached list illustrates some possibilities.

2. Although he will make his own case, I believe his preference is something like para. 4 in attached list; that is, diplomatic discussions about sites between our Ambassador and their/in either Warsaw or Vientiane.

3. As I see it, we face this situation:

-- our people want contacts to begin and this wish is being exploited by Hanoi to force us to Warsaw or Phnom Penh, where we would pay a heavy price in Saigon and Asia;

-- we will not be able to get our people into line until either:

-- contacts begin;

-- or Hanoi turns down an obviously fair proposal.

-- getting our people in line is of great importance if we were to discover that Hanoi in fact does not wish to negotiate and we have to resume the bombing of Hanoi-Haiphong.

3. It is in that dual context that we ought to look at Bill Jorden's list and any other proposals:

-- is Hanoi likely to accept?

-- if they turn it down, will it help convince our people that we, at least, are being reasonable and going as far as we can go in good conscience?

Attachment

Authority

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NCS 82-85

By uc

Thms, Date 10-11-83

W. Rostow

Tab A

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DE WIE 1693

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP81027

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Authority NLI 84-363

By rig, NARS, Date 7-8-85

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APRIL 21, 1968

I ASKED BILL JORDEN TO SET ON PAPER ALL THE GIMMICKS HE COULD THINK OF, INCLUDING SOME THAT WE DISCUSSED THIS MORNING. HERE THEY ARE. I AM MAKING A COPY AVAILABLE TO SECRETARY RUSK.

SOME ALTERNATIVES ON A SITE FOR TALKS WITH HANOI

1) A NEUTRAL SHIP

--ASK U THANT TO ARRANGE

--ASK MOST COUNTRY TO PROPOSE

(NOTE: WE SUGGESTED A SHIP FOR ARMISTICE TALKS IN KOREA)

2) ACCEPT THEIR CHOICE FOR "CONTACTS" (I.E. PHNOM PENH OR WARSAW) IF THEY ACCEPT OUR SITE FOR "TALKS" (RANGOON, DELHI, ETC.)

3) SEND A REPRESENTATIVE (POSSIBLE OUR NO. 2 NEGOTIATOR) TO WARSAW TO MAKE CONTACT WITH HANOI'S REPRESENTATIVE TO ARRANGE A MUTUALLY AGREED SITE.

4) NEGOTIATE A SITE THROUGH ALREADY ESTABLISHED CONTACTS (E.G. VIENTIANE WITH OUR AMBASSADOR AND THEIR CHARGE)

5) ASK THE POPE TO PROPOSE VATICAN CITY AS THE SITE.

6) A ROTATION PLAN--ONE MONTH IN THEIR SPOT, ONE MONTH IN OURS, E.G. PHNOM PENH AND RANGOON, WARSAW AND DELHI.

7) ROTATION PLAN BETWEEN CAPITALS OF THE CO-CHAIRMEN (I.E. LONDON AND MOSCOW)

8) ASK THE CO-CHAIRMEN (BRITISH AND SOVIETS) TO AGREE ON AND PROPOSE AN "APPROPRIATE" SITE.

9) ROTATE TALKS AMONG THE THREE ICC CAPITALS (DELHI, WARSAW, OTTAWA)

10) GET A THIRD PARTY (E.G. U THANT CO-CHAIRMEN, ETC.) TO PROPOSE BUCHAREST.

11) A SITE ON THE DMZ IN VIET-NAM WITH GUARANTEES FOR THE SECURITY OF THE SITE, LEE CAMP, AND ACCESS ROADS (AS IN PANMUNJOM)

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