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#69 meeting notes	<del>NSC Meeting</del> 2 p. possible classified info. <i>open 8-3-84</i>	10/31/68	<del>A</del>

**FILE LOCATION**

Meeting Notes File, Box 3

DCH 11/81

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MEETING IN THE CABINET ROOM. October 31, 1968

Meeting started at 6:40 p.m., when the President entered. Meeting ended at 6:48 p.m.

Bromley Smith will have a list of those in attendance.

The following are based on the combined notes of Larry Levinson, Bob Hardesty and Harry Middleton.

The President was attired in a grey suit and grey tie. He spoke in a voice that seemed hoarse. His delivery was rapid and business-like.

He stated:

We are ready to announce that we are going to stop bombing North Vietnam.

We have always held that conferences will not be productive unless the Government of Vietnam is represented; unless the other side refrains from shelling the cities; unless there is no violation of the DMZ.

Hanoi has said that it is willing for South Vietnam to sit in on the meetings.

We have let them know that any violation of the DMZ will trigger an attack from us.

We have talked with the Soviet Union and others and they understand this.

We will test their faith and see.

I am going on the air at 8 p.m. tonight to talk to the Nation. Just before that, I will order the bombing to stop at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

Negotiations will resume on November 6. If they are there, fine. If not, we will go on anyway.

I've gotten the judgment of my advisers on this.

(At this point, the President read statements from his advisers: Rusk said to proceed on this basis. I look to him to guide me in foreign relations. Secretary Clifford's just as strong. Westmoreland--Ok. Abrams, subscribes 100%.)

They must respect the DMZ and the cities. It's worth the last mile. I'm willing to take that chance. All my advisers support me. If you have any differing opinions, I would like for you to say so.

Bunker and Thieu are meeting. We hope to issue a joint statement. But if not, we will go ahead with our own.

Do you have any objections? (The President went around the **SERVICE SET** table)

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was prompt and unanimous agreement among those present. Among the comments: "OK" "Absolutely" "Strong" "The thing to do" "The right decision.")

Others ~~who~~ who said wait a little while -- you'll get a better deal from the other fellow.

We're doing this to test their good faith.

There will be some hard negotiating ahead.

Secretary Rusk interjected: There will be some hard fighting ahead.

The President: But this is worth a try. There will no doubt be charges of politics arise. But the next meeting won't be until November 6.

(At this point the press photographers were admitted.)

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At the conclusion of the meeting, Walt Rostow told us (with what also seemed a hoarse voice): This is the most sustained day and night effort I've had since the Cuban missile crisis.

*Barry Brundage*

SERVICE SET