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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
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17 February 1965

3099 MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, 17 February 1965

Present: The President  
General Eisenhower  
Secretary McNamara  
General Wheeler  
Mr. McGeorge Bundy (for part of meeting)  
General Goodpaster

The meeting, held in the Cabinet Room, began at 1000 and ended at 1230. The President welcomed General Eisenhower, and said he was hopeful he could hear General Eisenhower's thinking concerning the situation in South Viet-Nam. (During two or three minutes prior to The President's entry into the Cabinet Room, General Eisenhower had begun an exposition of his views on the subject.) General Eisenhower began by stating that he viewed our purpose as that of denying Southeast Asia to the Communists. This is a purpose we share with other nations of the Western World, and they should be brought to acknowledge and support this effort. His second point was that the securing of the area could not be accomplished by a "Roman wall," composed of outside forces such as our own. It is necessary to stop the infiltration, and the Vietnamese themselves must be the basis for that effort. We can, however, play a major part in destroying the will of the enemy to continue the war.

The next major point was that morale is the key factor. He stressed that he was referring to morale in its broadest sense. To emphasize its importance, he quoted Napoleon as saying that "in war morale is to the material element as three is to one"; his only disagreement is that he would rate it as higher than three to one. The factor of morale applies in several ways. First, our aim must be to destroy the enemy's morale; i. e., to destroy his will to continue the war and attack the south. Second, we must do everything possible to raise the morale of our own side. In his judgment, air strikes against the north cannot deny the ability of the DRV to infiltrate. The strikes can, however, discourage the north, and can make them pay a cost for continuing their aggression. He thought that morale is more important in a guerilla war than in a conventional war.

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In the latter case, the combat could be conducted with elite forces, but in the former the participation, and hence the morale, of the entire population is required.

He regarded it as of fundamental importance that the population of South Viet-Nam wants to be friendly to us. He recognized that there are limits as to how far they can manifest such friendliness to us. If security is lacking in the hamlets and in the country side, the population will be frightened and unable to cooperate. If they see that if they defend themselves against the Communists their local leaders will be killed and their village destroyed, they will do little. The question is how to build morale. His first point is that success and victory, even if local and limited, begin to build morale effectively. He noted that morale in the south has risen because of the strikes by U.S. and VNAF against the north. The strikes following the Tonkin Gulf incident raised morale, which then suffered when there was no followup. He also noted that the morale of the ARVN, despite the bitter fighting in which they have been engaged, is high. We should ask ourselves what can be done to get the nation to feel the same confidence in itself as the ARVN units feel.

He made a strong plea for proper support for the Information Service. He referred to the lack of Congressional support for this activity in the past, and commented that he had once been told that the Russians spend more on information activities in France alone than the U.S. spends in the whole world. He related this need to the recent attacks on our embassies. He thought that too many of the people in the countries involved do not know the probity of our aims. While the participation of Communists in such attacks is to be expected, they could not continue without some public participation, or public tolerance. In stressing the need for better information and propaganda, he said he thought the U.S. could take a half billion dollars out of other governmental programs and put it into this with greater advantage. There is too little understanding around the world of the record of the U.S. through recent years, e.g., from 1920 onward. He thought the information activity should fall into three categories. The first is official; everything done in this way should stick strictly to the truth and be entirely objective, disseminating pure information concerning the activities of our country. The second is such activities as Radio Free Europe, which furnish opinion; these should be supported, and should have more latitude. The third should be clandestine; in this field we should get other friends, governments and organizations to do the actual job.

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General Eisenhower then reverted to the needs in South Viet-Nam. There is a need in his opinion for information and inspiration. Also, it is necessary to give security to the population, and to train the local forces in particular for this purpose. He said he understood frequently villagers are threatened and turn over their arms. Mr. McCone had told him that the Viet Cong obtain a large percentage of their arms by capture from the ARVN. He felt that people must want to be saved; otherwise nothing can be done. He added that he believes that the people of South Viet-Nam do want to be saved, but they need a feeling of protection for themselves and their families. They also need the promise of independence and a better life. The French failed to recognize the importance of the desire for independence. We should put great stress on more rice for the people, medical assistance, and local help of many kinds.

Reverting to the question of the air strikes, he said that in his opinion these retaliation actions have helped the situation a great deal. However, he felt it is now important to shift to a campaign of pressure. Targets should be struck north of the border which have an obvious connection with infiltration. He thought such strikes could be well justified before the world.

He commented that he was out of touch with the local political situation there. The changes of government have been bewildering, and it is hard to know whom to deal with. From his experience in the Orient, however, he thought it was important to find someone who is promising and try to bolster him. He commented that he had known Diem well. He recognized the difficulties attending Diem, but recalled that, in the case of France, before De Gaulle came to power, he was anxious to see him gain control. Even though he knew De Gaulle would cause trouble in many areas, he thought De Gaulle was the best hope of saving the situation in France, which was rapidly going to pieces. Diem also was a capable man. Despite his nepotism, he would have been effective, and he felt that the removal of Diem resulted in a great setback for our cause. He reiterated that we need someone to back. He summarized the need for improving the morale of the government, of the population, and of the armed services, particularly the local forces. If morale is up, and with the resources we can make available, there will be progress. We have the basis for this since we are supporting Vietnamese freedom, unlike the French, who would not commit themselves to the freedom of Viet-Nam. He stressed strongly that the U.S. Government must tell our own people just what we are doing in the area, i. e., what our policy is, and what course of action we are following.

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He next considered the question of Chinese Communist or Soviet intervention. He said that if they threaten to intervene we should pass the word back to them to take care lest dire results occur to them. He commented on how the armistice was brought about in Korea. Following two years or more of inconclusive effort, shortly after he came to office, he had three messages passed to the Koreans and the Chinese, one through Nehru, one through Chiang Kai-Shek, and one through officials at lower level who were participating in armistice discussions. The gist of the messages was that if a satisfactory armistice were not signed promptly, we would remove the limits we were observing as to the area of combat and the weapons employed. He thought we should let them know now what we are seeking to do in South Viet-Nam, and that we would act against them if necessary. This should not be done publicly, but rather very quietly. He recalled that at the time of the Suez incident, the Soviets had threatened to use rockets against Britain and France. We had immediately passed the word to the Soviets that, although we were in disagreement with Britain and France, if any action were taken against them by the Soviets, we would respond in their support with all means required.

General Eisenhower said he had a final point on tactics and the conduct of operations. He strongly advised decentralization. The essential is to back a commander and trust him. This requires that policies and missions be defined. The mission can be very broadly stated. He recalled his own as a model -- to enter the continent of Europe and bring about the destruction of Germany's war power. He quoted an old adage, "Centralization is the refuge of fear." Our representatives in the field are much more effective if we show that we have confidence in them to do the job. As another tactical point, he said he would not destroy the MIG's in the Hanoi area right away. He would work hard on pacification in South Viet-Nam, and start the attacks in the southern region of North Viet-Nam, in order to begin to charge a price to them for their continued aggression. He would let them and their Communist supporters have no mistaken idea as to our purpose. He would make clear what we are going to do in this regard.

At the President's request General Wheeler commented that the U.S. Government has already started action with the objective of finding ways to strengthen the security of the people of South Viet-Nam. In addition, on the military aspects of General Eisenhower's comments, he stated that in a general way these suggestions have been the approach the Administration has been taking.

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The President, after thanking General Eisenhower for his comments, said he could best give the thinking of the Administration by quoting from a message being sent to Ambassador Bruce as a basis for discussion with Prime Minister Wilson of the U.K. The text he read was as follows:

"For your guidance in talking with Wilson, our current thinking is as follows:

"1. We have recommended, and we think the President will concur in, continuing air and naval action against North Viet-Nam whenever and wherever necessary. Our thinking has been and continues to be that any such action shall be limited and fitting and adequate as a response to the continuous aggression in South Viet-Nam directed in Hanoi.

"2. Within 24 hours after the next military action we expect to make a statement. Current plan is that this statement would come from the Secretary of State, but decision is not final. This statement of policy will reflect following elements of our thinking:

"a. First and foremost, we shall intensify by all available means the program of pacification within South Viet-Nam. Every possible step will be taken to find and attack Viet Cong concentrations and headquarters within South Viet-Nam by any and every conventional means available to GVN and US.

"b. Execution of a joint program of measured and limited air action against selected military targets in the DRV. Air strikes under this program will be jointly planned and agreed. We presently plan to present this program to our National Security Council tomorrow.

"c. We plan detailed presentation to UN Security Council of the case against the DRV as the aggressor. We do not repeat not expect to touch upon readiness for talks or negotiations at this time.

"In execution of item c., above, Ambassador Stevenson will call for a meeting of the Security Council immediately after next military action against DRV and will there present a fully documented demonstration that the basic cause of the trouble in SVN is aggression from the North. Stevenson will keep focus on DRV aggression.

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"3. Careful public statements of USG, combined with fact of continuing air action, are expected to make it clear that military action will continue while aggression continues. But focus of public attention will be kept as far as possible on aggression, not on military operations. There will be no comment of any sort on future actions except that all such actions will be adequate and measured and fitting to aggression. Each new military action will be reported at once to the Security Council, together with an account of continuing acts of aggression.

"4. Concurrently with next military action, the US will inform major friendly governments as well as the Soviet Government of our views as outlined above.

"In presenting this position you should emphasize to the Prime Minister the very high degree of secrecy attaching to this plan of action until final Presidential decision and orders have put it into operation. "

The President made two comments. First, he was planning to meet with the National Security Council later in the day, or the following day, and expected to make his decision at that time. Second, he commented that there had been a good deal of discussion regarding the reference in paragraph 2. c. of the message to negotiations. Some of his advisers were inclined to go further in the direction of indicating a readiness or desire for an early conference. He invited General Eisenhower's comment on this point. General Eisenhower cited President Lincoln's handling of the Emancipation Proclamation. He had had it ready for issuance long before it was promulgated, and in fact had wanted to put it out. He felt, however, that he had to wait for a success, since otherwise its issuance would be taken as an act of weakness if not desperation. He therefore held it during the dreary months of military reverses, but seized upon Lee's retreat from the Battle of Antietam (at which Lee's army might well have been destroyed) as the occasion to issue it. With regard to negotiations, General Eisenhower felt that negotiation from weakness is likely to lead only into deceit and vulnerability, which could be disastrous to us. On the other hand, if we can show a fine record of successes, or real and dramatic accomplishment, we would be in good position to negotiate. He advised not to negotiate from a position of weakness. He commented that Prime Minister Wilson of the U.K. has not had experience with this kind of problem. We, however, have learned that Munichs win nothing; therefore, his answer to the British would be "Not now boys. "

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The President read again the text of the message concerning Ambassador Stevenson's presentation of the case in the U. N. -- it is to be cast in terms of DRV aggression from the north. He read again that military action would continue while the aggression continues. General Eisenhower thought the message was a good one. As to tactics, he would suggest that we should have the VNAF ready so that, if the Viet Cong murder a governmental official, within as little as two hours they could strike with six or eight planes against some targets in the north. This should be done every time there is such an atrocity, and in this case the action should be "blared out" publicly to create an immediate impact and let the DRV know they will not be getting a free ride any longer.

The President then read from a message received from Ambassador Martin in Bangkok reporting his meeting with the Thai Foreign Minister. The text he read was as follows:

"This morning in my first meeting with Thanat after my return, I found him in a rosy glow over vast improvement in morale throughout Southeast Asia as a result of American and SVN strikes at DRV. He was particularly pleased at the SVN participation. He said he hoped that as result of release of details on extent of DRV infiltration we would realize we had perfectly justifiable rationale to continue such joint strikes at <sup>DRV</sup> DGN targets connected with such infiltration. Thanat said future strikes need not, therefore, be limited to reprisals for attacks on American installations or personnel.

"He went on to observe that it was quite possible that we had now seen the low point and future progress should be steadily upward. He said the vastly increased hopefulness would quite likely serve as a cement of sorts among SVN factions and said Quat seemed to have best chance since 1954 to create more broadly based regime. He agreed with my observation it quite likely Viet Cong would try more spectacular strikes but thought prompt retaliatory action would soon prove this unprofitable tactic. He made it clear, in response to my request for elaboration his thought 'low point' had been reached, that he well aware struggle would take long time with sharp reverses from time to time but again expressed conviction that psychological turn-around reached if we remained firm. Thanat said he had only one worry. Referring to 15 Feb issue of Paris edition of NY HERALD TRIBUNE and NY TIMES, carrying spate of stories on 'negotiations', he said he was certain Secretary understood now was not the proper moment to indicate any desire to return to conference

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table. When I pressed him on Thai reaction he said, after considerable pause for reflection, he thought he could bring Thai government to new conference, but only when we had continued pressures on north for sufficient period to make negotiation worthwhile to north to obtain relief from such pressures. This, he said, obviously was quite a bit in the future since Hanoi would undoubtedly need quite a bit of convincing. I said I thought the Secretary had made this position very clear in his reiteration of the necessity for Hanoi to begin observance of the commitments undertaken in 1954 before considering new negotiations. Thanat agreed.

"In response to my question Thanat said he gathered from comments from officials Soviet Embassy here that Kosygin taken completely by surprise at Pleiku attacks. He thought Sovs would confine their reactions to 'noise' and a bit more ink on American Embassy walls throughout the world. He thought Soviet hard-headed appraisal their self-interest almost guaranteed no greater reaction. Similarly, he thought in absence direct threat to ChiCom borders, there would be no Chinese reaction. He did think, however, that Thailand would be subjected to increasing subversive pressures and hoped we could be helpful. I said my consultations in Washington convinced me that specific Thai plans in this regard would find helpful and forthcoming response from U.S. side."

General Eisenhower said this was a fine message, and expressed congratulations to the Ambassador for asking the right questions.

Secretary McNamara picked up the point of not trying to destroy the capability of the DRV to support the insurgency in the south. He thought such an attempt would not succeed. Instead we should try to destroy the will of the DRV to continue their political interference and their guerilla activity. We should try to induce them to get out of the war without having their country destroyed and to realize that if they do not get out, their country will be destroyed. General Eisenhower added that an objective of the strikes is to improve the morale of the people in the south. He cited the example of Mosby's operations in northern Virginia during the Civil War. Mosby could succeed only as long as he had the support of the population. The importance of such support also was shown in Lee's failures both times he attempted to invade the north and found himself without intelligence because he was surrounded by a hostile population.

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The morale of South Viet-Nam will rise when the people see the strikes in the north, and when they are given some security in the south. More than this is needed however. There should be inspiration and some positive contribution. In the Orient the radio is an outstanding way to motivate. General Eisenhower referred to his observation in an Indian village where all the people of the village would gather around a single radio in very bad repair to gain contact with the outer world. Help should also be given to the population of the countryside and the hamlets, to let them know that America is with them. In addition, rice, medical attention and many other practical forms of help to the people should be utilized.

The President said he was much interested in General Eisenhower's recommendations concerning the strengthening of the information services and activities. He stated that he had in mind to send Frank Stanton and Carl Rowan out to Viet-Nam in the near future to see what could be done to strengthen these activities. He observed that the air strikes against the north might well have an additional effect, beyond those mentioned, of helping to stabilize the government in the south.

(Mr. McGeorge Bundy joined the meeting at this point.)

The President next said that he wished to make a close analysis of these strikes, to consider how much provocation they would give, and what the effects of various types of strikes might be. He mentioned specifically the "prestige" bridge target. At his request, General Wheeler explained the targeting that has been accomplished, drawing upon the 94 target list, and indicating the general complex of targets in the south which have been hit and are under consideration for the next strikes. General Eisenhower thought it would be good to confine strike activities to the southern end of North Viet-Nam initially. If the Viet Cong do something big in the way of attacking in South Viet-Nam, then we should "hit them big" in the north. He thought we should do as much as possible with the VNAF. Their airmen are bound to brag about what they have done, and this will give a psychology of accomplishment to the South Vietnamese, with benefit to their morale. He thought the program should be one in which we put the pressure on and keep it on. He would obliterate the facilities the DRV have constructed in the DMZ.

The President asked for a judgment as to the likelihood of the Chinese and the Russians coming into the war. General Eisenhower thought the Chinese would react in a much harder way than the Russians. To a question by The President as to whether the Russians might put pressure on Berlin,

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General Eisenhower felt that, in a matter so serious, they would choose their own course rather than be influenced by what we do. He said he would not fear such a reaction. The President then asked what we might do if Chinese forces were to come south, posing a requirement for eight to ten U.S. divisions in Southeast Asia. General Eisenhower said he would hit them at once with air, picking out the key points along their support routes. He said he would use any weapons required, adding that if we were to use tactical nuclear weapons, such use would not in itself add to the chance of escalation. With regard to starting a bigger war, he felt that the Chinese would not do this unless they had made the decision on their own. He further stated that he believed they would not come in to the war, but that, if they should, he would use some additional ground units against them, but would essentially shift to use of different weapons. He commented that the U.S. must take extreme care never to allow itself to get over-deployed. Our rule must always be to "hit the head of the snake." (As an aside, he commented that in his opinion the U.S. is over-deployed in Europe. The need of the Europeans for U.S. forces there has long since diminished. He acknowledged that many people do not agree with him in this view.) He stated that if our intelligence saw fifteen to twenty Chinese divisions coming into the war, we should hit their LOC with the strongest possible attacks. General Wheeler commented that we have given thought to the possibility of putting one U.S. division south of the DMZ, both to protect and to deter while the strikes against the north go on. General Eisenhower said he would see merit in action of this kind, but would not send in anything like a dozen U.S. divisions, and start a big war of that kind. He would use whatever was needed to immobilize the attacking forces and would secure the key areas in South Viet-Nam, for example, the three major airfield areas which were outlined to him.

At this point members of The President's staff came into the Cabinet Room to ask what might be said to the press, and whether pictures might be taken. The President thought it might simply be pointed out that General Eisenhower was in the city having a monthly physical checkup at Walter Reed, and that he had taken advantage of his presence to meet with him to talk about Europe, Southeast Asia, and other world problems. He asked whether General Eisenhower would care to meet the press, and General Eisenhower said he felt that any statements made concerning meetings in the White House should be made by The President or on his behalf, and that he would simply go out as he had come in, through the south grounds.

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General Eisenhower suggested that every one of our ambassadors should be given the substance of the message sent to Ambassador Bruce, and they should be advised to say to the government to which they are accredited that these governments also should take some responsibility for what is being done in Southeast Asia in behalf of the freedom of South Viet-Nam. To illustrate his point, he described how France and Britain had failed to tell their people what stand our government was taking on the Suez matter prior to the invasion. As a result, there was bitter feeling in those countries on the unjustified grounds that we had not given notice we would oppose them.

The President said he would like to revert to the subject of negotiations. General Eisenhower said there are two requirements in his view. First, the enemy must want to come to us, which means that we must be in the position of strength. The second is that any agreement reached must be self-enforcing, or we must be able to put our own people into the area in order to verify performance. He asked in this regard what the Russians are doing about their recent nuclear tests, which "vented" in violation of the treaty. Mr. Bundy reviewed the exchange of notes with the Russians, and indicated that the dialogue is still going on. He also indicated that the treaty is not precise on this score, and that if the Russians take the view that very small amounts of debris should be disregarded, we may be able to use such latitude ourselves in the future. General Eisenhower saw merit in such a position.

The President next referred to the Resolution the Congress had passed following the Tonkin Gulf incident, giving him authority to act. He asked General Eisenhower whether he thought that Resolution was strong enough, and ample to fill the need. General Eisenhower said that it had sounded to him very much like the Formosa Resolution which had left a large area of discretion and flexibility to The President, and that he thought that this is the way it should be. The President commented that the Formosa Resolution had been the model for this one.

At The President's request Mr. Bundy reviewed very briefly the observations he had made on his recent trip to South Viet-Nam. Two outstanding points were the lack of security for the population in the countryside, and the little experience of government which South Viet-Nam has had. The President commented that steps are being taken to try to strengthen the government and to seek some rapprochement with Khanh. He said he is considering the possibility of trying to get some good U.S. reporters and TV people to go out to the area for a period of thirty to ninety days, in order to

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introduce greater responsibility in the handling of the political reporting. Mr. Bundy made the point that the Buddhists have had no experience in taking responsibility. Theirs has been an opposition role. Also he stated that Khanh is very Asian and devious politically. He added that General Westmoreland had said that, in the military matters on which he deals with Khanh, the latter had never deceived him.

The President said he saw great importance in developing a sense of participation on the part of the South Vietnamese. We should find targets they can really hit, and should work the VNAF hard. General Wheeler reviewed the "MAROPS" program of unacknowledged attacks from the sea conducted by the South Vietnamese. General Eisenhower said he thought these operations were valuable. The President reiterated that we should get as many South Vietnamese as possible in sea and patrol operations.

(At this point The President and General Eisenhower went into The President's office to have pictures taken, and Mr. Bundy left the meeting.)

When the President and General Eisenhower returned, Mr. McNamara asked for further comment on how General Eisenhower would advise responding to escalation, and what he had in mind regarding tactical nuclear weapons. General Eisenhower said he would make use of our carrier strength in the area for instant retaliation. For this purpose it should be kept in constant readiness. He would pass warnings to the Chinese Communists. Pick out the two or three key points in South Viet-Nam, such as Saigon and the air bases, and guard these strongly. General Wheeler identified these as Da Nang, Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa. General Eisenhower said tactical nuclear weapons should be used when the enemy comes in large strength as organized formations. If they have strong forces these will have depots which can be struck. General Wheeler commented that there are bridges very important to such a campaign over the Red River north of Hanoi. General Eisenhower commented that this would be in effect a new war. We should be sure that the enemy does not lack an appreciation of our stamina and determination to keep nations free by whatever means required. He thought that if they find we are ready, they will not come in in great strength. He referred to the Chinese in Korea. There was a gentlemen's agreement between us and our allies after the very early days of the war -- well known to the Chinese -- that we would not cross the Yalu or even strike the bridges on the Yalu, nor would we use nuclear weapons. With regard to South Viet-Nam, we should let it be known that we are not bound by such restrictions.

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The President asked General Eisenhower what he could tell him about the course of events in Korea. General Eisenhower said that in 1949 severe cuts were made in the U.S. military budget. The Joint Chiefs of Staff at that time (with himself presiding as chairman at The President's request) reached the view that in a global war Korea would not be important, although it was important in a cold war situation. As a result of the cut back of the budget and of the armed forces, it was necessary to withdraw our units from Korea. Secretary Acheson made a public statement at that time that Korea lay outside our security perimeter. Soon thereafter the Communists invaded the country. Mr. Truman initially attempted to meet the attack, using only naval and air forces. General Eisenhower said once we had committed ourselves to the war, he had advised Mr. Truman that we must use whatever force was needed. He had told him that we must succeed, and that if ground forces were required they should be put in. The President said he is concerned regarding the North Vietnamese, and the possibility that war in Viet-Nam might follow the same course as the war in Korea. General Eisenhower said the U.S. has put its prestige onto the proposition of keeping Southeast Asia free. Indonesia is now failing. We cannot let the Indo-Chinese peninsula go. He hoped it would not be necessary to use the six to eight divisions mentioned, but if it should be necessary, so be it. He would warn the Chinese in advance through many channels.

The President asked just what General Eisenhower had done in 1953 to bring the war in Korea to a close. He said he had had the word passed through the three channels he had previously mentioned, telling the Chinese that they must agree to an armistice quickly, since he had decided to remove the restrictions of area and weapons if the war had to be continued. General Eisenhower said that the greatest danger in his judgment in the present situation is that the Chinese get the idea that we will go just so far and no further in terms of the level of war we would conduct. That would be the beginning of the end, since they would know all they had to do was go further than we do. The President asked how such information might be gotten out, i. e., that we think the situation would be most dangerous unless the Chinese understood that we will do whatever is required. He and General Eisenhower discussed the possibility of approaching Ayub on this matter. They agreed he is a very fine man with whom we are having some difficulties at the present time. The President is considering what can be done to improve our ties with him. General Eisenhower described this problem as one boil in the whole world system. We must look at the effect of our actions on the whole world. When we say we will help other countries we must then be staunch. It is, of course, necessary to work out our tactics, and we should not be unnecessarily provocative.

General Eisenhower next referred to a talk which had taken place between himself and General De Gaulle at the Churchill funeral. General Eisenhower had told him that accounts were appearing in the press that General De Gaulle had stated that he had sent a memo on NATO organization to President Eisenhower in 1958, and that the memorandum was never answered or even acknowledged. General Eisenhower recalled to him that the memorandum was fully answered, and, in fact, a counter proposal was made. General De Gaulle stated that he remembered the exchange clearly, and that he had never made a statement such as the press has been carrying. At The President's request, General Eisenhower offered some suggestions as to the manner in which a meeting of The President and De Gaulle might be conducted. At their first meeting he would suggest not getting into specific problems, but talking about the world situation in very broad terms and the cultural role of France. In a subsequent meeting a few specific problems might be introduced, with an explanation of the purposes of the U.S. in this regard. No commitment should be expected from De Gaulle. However, he responds to a friendly approach. General Eisenhower described him as a warm friend of many years standing -- a man who is determined, dedicated and deeply wounded by any slight to France or to himself. The President stated that although France and De Gaulle have done many things that bother us, he is determined not to reply in kind. He commented on an incident that had occurred at the time of President Kennedy's funeral. President De Gaulle had indicated an interest in visiting the U.S. in the spring of 1964. Subsequently, President Johnson, in explaining to a group of governors why he was some minutes late joining their meeting, told them he had been meeting with General De Gaulle and told them of General De Gaulle's interest in a later visit to the U.S. This word was leaked to the press, and the French sent word that General De Gaulle would not visit the U.S., but would be happy to receive President Johnson in Paris. General Eisenhower thought that a visit by The President to Paris, London, Bonn and Rome, this year if possible, would be extremely valuable. The President stated that he had such a trip very much in mind.

At the luncheon of The President and General Eisenhower the primary subject of discussion was the problem of gold flow and U.S. balance of payments. Certain of the problems involved as a result of the requirement that individuals considered for Cabinet posts divest themselves of stock holdings were also discussed.



A. J. GOODPASTER  
Lt. General, U.S.A.



National Security Archive,  
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,  
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,  
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)