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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NIJ 94-190
By cb, NARA, Date 4-3-98

Thursday, August 10, 1967

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Call by Senator Symington

You agreed to receive Senator Symington at 11:15 a.m. today.

I assume his main interest will be Viet-Nam, specifically the role of air power and hitting the North harder.

Some of the questions he asked Admiral Sharp yesterday on the Hill reflect his thinking:

- (1) Why not hit Fukien (a province in China)?
- (2) Is it worth an F-4 to hit a few trucks?
- (3) Wouldn't more bombing mean a need for fewer troops?
- (4) How many troops did General Westmoreland ask for compared with what he got?
- (5) What percentage of the North Vietnamese Army is fighting in the South?
- (6) Should the VC be allowed a sanctuary in Cambodia?

In response, I would note the following:

(1) This would mean war with Red China -- and the Soviets would almost certainly have to support them. Fukien is not a major base for operations against us, though we know the North Vietnamese have been using some airfields for repair and refitting.

(2) F-4's and other aircraft are hitting a lot more than trucks.

(3) We have limited the flow of men and supplies by bombing. But you pass a point where all the bombing in the world cannot stop small groups of men from moving down jungle trails.

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(4) He didn't ask for numbers of men but for units -- about two and a half divisions. That is about what he is getting.

(5) Roughly 20 per cent -- and they are taking heavy casualties.

(6) A tough political and military question. Would it help to hit a few VC units in Cambodia -- and turn the entire Cambodian nation against us and force them into outright cooperation with the North and the VC?

The Senator may also follow up on the line launched by Congressman Ford. Attached is a point-by-point rebuttal of the Ford contentions. It shows how far from the mark were his many allegations. The basic answer to the Ford argument is that we are now doing just about what he advocates -- with the exception of hitting the dikes and mining Haiphong.

W. W. Rostow

Att.

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