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Thursday, October 19, 1967
3:50 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Andy Goodpaster's
account of his latest conversation
with Gen. Eisenhower.

W. W. Rostow

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WWRostow:rla

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)

White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983

By *mg* NARA, Date 11-4-91

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20315

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18 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Attached is a memorandum for record of my meeting with General Eisenhower at Walter Reed Hospital today. His principal comments are indicated in the opening paragraph, the fifth paragraph and the last paragraph.

He is receiving medical care for a prostatic condition which is causing discomfort and requires some medication, but is not regarded as serious at this time. He was in good spirits and seemed to be in good health.

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as


A. J. GOODPASTER
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army

DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE
MARKING. CANCELLED PER E.O. 12812
SEC. 1.3 AND ARCHIVIST'S MEMO OF
MAR. 18, 1983.

BY ry ON 11-14-91

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20315

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18 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with General Eisenhower, 18 October 1967

I met with General Eisenhower for an hour at Walter Reed Hospital this morning. (Because of the fog, our planned meeting yesterday was cancelled.)

General Eisenhower began with the comment that many of the people who see him -- neither "Hawks" nor "doves" -- are talking in terms of discouragement about the course of the war in Vietnam. They say that nothing seems to be going well and that, perhaps, it would be better to get out of it than to continue. I said I had planned to cover the trend of the war with him and that it differs considerably from their premise that nothing seems to be going well. I referred particularly to the overall trend of conflict in South Vietnam. Although some conflict continues in the main parts of the Second, Third and Fourth Corps (particularly in war zone areas) the populated rice-producing areas are becoming relatively secure, and the military action is moving back into the mountains and along the borders with Laos and Cambodia to a considerable degree. Also the most intensive fighting is in the northern part of the First Corps. This overall pattern is a good one, since it suggests that the main populated areas are becoming less involved in the combat of main units, and less subject to main force VC and NVA depredations. This trend is reinforced by the noticeable improvement in the last two and a half years in the percentage of SVN population under governmental control and in the rise in the numbers and percentage of adults registered and voting in the elections. I showed him a chart on this matter given me by Mr. Rostow. With regard to the second point, that of the discouragement of these people, this must therefore principally be a failure for the information to get across effectively.

General Eisenhower added that people have also commented to him that, as long as the Soviets and China can see this war waged with little cost to themselves and much to us, there seems little reason why they should want to see it end, since they think it is bad for us as

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a nation materially as well as psychologically, in addition to causing adverse world opinion. I confirmed that the Chinese have been adamant against an end to the war or a cease-fire on other than Communist terms. With regard to the USSR, although one can never be sure, they have given strong indication in many ways (including their discussions with the President, previously reported) that they would like to see an end to the war. I recalled that we are pressing them in various ways in this direction.

I next covered the matter of the effectiveness of the ARVN, utilizing General Westmoreland's comment on the Arnett story, together with a fact sheet furnished me by the Joint Staff. While some units are still poor -- generally because of poor leadership -- our military people are impressed by the average Vietnamese fighting man, and ARVN effectiveness is judged by MACV to have greatly increased in the past year. Their casualty figures, and the much higher casualty figures of the VC and NVA show that they are fighting hard. Morale is not impaired. Desertions are substantially down, and the High Command shows increased confidence deriving in part from their successful running of the country, and successful progress towards constitutional government.

I then covered the situation in the Con Thien area and reported the steps being taken by General Westmoreland to improve the situation there (two additional ARVN battalions, new Marine forces to relieve pressure in the rear and along lines of communication, shift of Army forces to the southern part of First Corps, additional U.S. artillery battalions, thinning out of forces in the forwardmost area, and concentrated priority air support in the DMZ area). General Eisenhower asked whether the North Vietnam forces were in the DMZ or north of it. I told him their units seemed to move through the DMZ every few months, conduct operations for awhile and then withdraw north. In addition, there are artillery and supplies both in the DMZ and north of it. He commented that if we are short of force in this important area we should be thinking about an additional corps for the area to move against the North Vietnamese and clean them out in a rapid operation. I told him that as of the moment, there was no further request from General Westmoreland for additional forces.

I next took up the progress of the air campaign against North Vietnam, drawing upon a copy of Mr. Rostow's memorandum of October 4th which he had furnished to me. I stressed two points -- that the VC/NVA are obviously limited, in terms of men and material,


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in how many battalion days of sustained combat they can mount per month in South Vietnam, and if they could provide more men and material they could intensify the combat; and second, that the unending stream of proposals and requests for stopping the bombing in the north is a strong indication that it is hurting them there. While the possibility exists that a cessation of bombing might be worked out if accompanied by a cessation of infiltration and artillery fire across the DMZ, a cessation of bombing by itself would give great advantage to the North Vietnamese, both in North Vietnam and in the military operations in South Vietnam.

I also took the opportunity to show General Eisenhower a map, and give him a rough outline, of the proposed "thin" ABM deployment for the United States.

As our meeting ended, General Eisenhower said that CBS has asked him to do a television hour explaining the war (giving a "rounded view of the war") and indicating what he thinks about the situation today. He would go back to such things as how our interests are involved, why the area should not be let go to the Communists, why we put in advisers, and increased them, why we introduced our combat forces, why we are bombing the north, etc. He said that, if he does this, he would want to keep the discussion quite factual using such statistics as how many murders and kidnappings the VC has perpetrated. He indicated that he would like me to provide him some factual material for this purpose, and I told him I would start getting it together. He said he was thinking of mid or late November as the time for such a talk.


A. J. GOODPASTER
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army

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