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Tuesday, October 24, 1967
3:45 p.m.

Mr. President:

Win Brown's analysis and reflections
on the Governors' conference may interest
you.

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

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

Subject: Ambassador Brown's Commentary
on the 59th Annual National
Governor's Conference

Attached are two reports prepared by Ambassador Brown upon his return from the 59th Annual National Governor's Conference. His report at Tab (1) summarizes his involvement in the consideration of a resolution on Vietnam and consideration of the exposition, "Hemis Fair 1968".

At Tab (2) Ambassador Brown analyzes "the reason for and significance of the failure of the conference to consider a resolution on Vietnam." I believe you will find this to be of special interest.

GHR

Benjamin H. Read

Attachments:

As stated.

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Page 1 of 2 Copies; Series 1.

IN REPLY REFER TO:

MEMORANDUM

October 23, 1967

TO : The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S *W*

FROM : S/GOV - Winthrop G. Brown *W*

SUBJECT: The 59th Annual National Governors' Conference.
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

By separate memorandum I have reported the events of my attendance at the National Governors' Conference. This memorandum is my best appraisal of the reason for and significance of the failure of the Conference to consider a resolution on Vietnam. The appraisal is based upon conversations which Mr. Manell and I had with numerous Governors and Governors Daniel and Bryant before the vote and talks with three key Democratic and two key Republican Governors, as well as with Governor Daniel, after it.

1. The underlying cause for failure to act is the deep division and frustration in the country about the war in Vietnam, which, as it drags on, and as the election approaches, brings it more and more into the arena of partisan politics.

2. The vote against consideration of the resolution was not a vote of lack of support for the war. (Babcock and Reagan, for example, are hawks and Volpe and Love have made their support of the war clear). It was rather a straight political maneuver. The major Republican Governors were so preoccupied with keeping their options open so as to be able to see more clearly the course of events and mood of the people before taking a firm position, that they put these personal considerations above the national interest. They were supported by all the other Republicans except one out of party loyalty and the binding

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effect of a Republican caucus vote. Volpe and Babcock, for example, were clearly unhappy about the impression likely to be created by the vote and told me that they would do their best to make clear to their constituents that it did not show lack of support for the war.

3. The management of the matter could have been better. We were told that at the outset some Democratic Governors were too eager and high pressure. Governor Volpe, who was sympathetic to consideration of the issue, told me that he first got a copy of the proposed resolution from the press. (Incidentally, he considered the first draft to be a very tough endorsement of the President's policy). The misdirection of the telegram to Price Daniel did not help. Republicans were suspicious that once the rules were waived to permit consideration of the second, milder, draft, the Democrats would seek to make it tougher by majority vote, which Volpe said was permissible under the rules.

4. Many Republican Governors are unhappy at the action they took. Some Democratic Governors feel that they have a new issue with which to attack their adversaries, namely, the charge of being afraid to stand up and be counted on an issue of vital national importance. Governor Connally was eloquent in stressing the responsibility of Governors, as leaders, to inform the public of their views. And it was ironic, at dinner after the reunion, sitting at a Republican Governor's table, to hear the entertainer say that she had been three times to Vietnam to sing to the troops, and was going again this Christmas, that the troops knew what they were fighting for, that they were wholly dedicated to that cause and deserved whole-hearted support from home. After which she brought the whole audience to its feet in a standing ovation by a sonorous rendition of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic".

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Tab A

Draft Resolution on Vietnam

Whereas, the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability with honor and integrity is vital to the national interests of the United States of America as well as to the interests of other nations and has historically been a cardinal objective of United States foreign policy; and

Whereas, in pursuit of this objective and during four administrations, the United States has faithfully and consistently honored its commitments to other nations, including Vietnam, to help them to defend themselves against outside aggression by force; and

Whereas, the National Governors' Conference has twice previously affirmed its support for United States fulfillment of these commitments; and

Whereas, the United States has at the same time sought and still seeks to bring the conflict in Vietnam to an honorable conclusion under terms consistent with its commitments and vital national interests;

Now therefore be it resolved: that the National Governors' Conference reaffirms to the President, the American public, the service men and women of the military forces of the United States and our allies, its resolute support of our commitments and responsibilities in the world, including our support of the military defense of Vietnam against aggression and our continuing search for a meaningful solution for assuring peace and stability in the area.

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TAB B Text of Resolution on Vietnam, Presented at
Closing Session of Conference

Whereas, this Nation is involved in an armed conflict in southeast Asia which is the daily concern of every American; and

Whereas, 500,000 American youth are immediately involved in that conflict, at daily peril to their lives; and

Whereas, as Americans, above partisanship, and beyond any question of approval or disapproval of the strategic and tactical decisions which are not our responsibility, we stand united in our fight for the freedom and self-government of the people of South Viet Nam; and

Whereas, we are anxious that none of our enemies abroad misconstrue our tolerance for dissent in this free society as a weakening of our national purpose;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Governors of the United States in conference assembled that we stand committed to the successful conclusion of the struggle for freedom in Southeast Asia, by peaceful negotiation if we can, and by victory in battle if we must; and

Be it further resolved that we encourage our national leadership to persist in our search for peace, and to persevere in our struggle for victory.

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