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44
Friday, November 3, 1967

MR. PRESIDENT:

Pres file

I did not take full notes in yesterday's advisory meeting; but I did try to list suggestions for action.

Here is my list.

Dean Acheson:

- organize citizen's committees in all cities over 100,000;
- get fresh faces to defend our Viet Nam policy.

McGeorge Bundy:

- cool attention to bombing: make it routine;
- reward in White House ceremonies those who have done great work in the provinces, military and civilians;
- assure that military men on advisory duty in pacification are promoted on same basis as those in combat;
- develop publicity that Vietnamese are doing more, and make sure they do;
- shift our stance on negotiations to one of not expecting negotiations until after November 1968;
- dramatize that we have already won a great strategic victory in Asia: lift people's eyes from Viet Nam to the whole scene;
- brief the key editors and communicators just as the group was briefed (Dick Helms has no objection to using Carver when it's off-the-record and no public attribution);
- let good news speak for itself: don't strain publicly to convince people progress is being made.

Douglas Dillon:

- spend time not on how we got into Viet Nam, but on position we're in and real choices we face;
- clarify what we are doing on the ground and in bombing;

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Douglas Dillon (cont'd)

- develop sense of progress: sense of stalemate is what invites extreme doves and hawks; let events speak for themselves, but there are ways of getting good news out;
- have Bunker -- a fresh and trusted voice -- report to the nation;
- the President should brief top college presidents and deans as Advisory Group was briefed.

Arthur Dean:

- clarify our "get out of Viet Nam" position: if we're really going to get out, why spend all this blood and treasure?
- explain critical importance of Viet Nam to our Asia and Pacific positions: people don't understand implications for U. S. national interest of loss of Viet Nam;
- avoid another Panmunjom.

Cabot Lodge:

- an independent audit of the pace and success of the revamping and re-orientation of the ARVN;
- limit U. S. casualties by diminishing "search and destroy" operations, substituting a doctrine of "split up and keep off balance";
- encourage a "true revolution" in South Viet Nam by throwing our weight behind private cooperative institutions such as farmers' unions, marketing organizations, which would stimulate, agitate, and engage the people themselves and begin to push the French and Chinese middlemen to the wall. (WWR comment: the French and Chinese businessmen ought to be moving into light industry at this stage of Vietnamese development.)
- agreed with Acheson on a no-bombing versus DMZ deal;
- urged that Bunker and his views be given maximum exposure.

Nov. 3, 1967

Robert Murphy:

- sharpen focus and action against small group of Hanoi villains: we have no target for hate in this, as opposed to other wars.

General Omar Bradley:

- talk less about negotiations: Hanoi takes it as a sign of weakness;
- use "Patience" as a slogan;

General Maxwell Taylor:

- questions close-in defense of DMZ;
- decide what we are prepared to offer the VC; that is a major gap in our policy and ought to be filled;
- bombing should not be traded against DMZ pressure but against level of VC incidents in the South: bombing is our equivalent of guerrilla warfare;
- organize nationwide, continuous campaign of speeches in support of policy;
- organize an hour TV program regularly: government replies to its citizens on Viet Nam, answering questions.

George Ball:

- stop bombing, except across the DMZ, to create climate for negotiation.

Abe Fortas:

- get George Carver to briefing on television. (Dean Acheson, Dick Helms, and others objected to using Carver in public.)

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-4-

Nov. 3, 1967

Clark Clifford:

-- bring Thieu to the United States (Nick Katzenbach implied we should make sure his political base in Saigon would be safe during such a tour).

W. W. R.