

INFORMATION

**SECRET**

*Pres file*

Friday, February 9, 1968  
5:20 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Andy Goodpaster's  
latest briefing of Gen. Eisenhower.

Key passages are marked.

W. W. Rostow

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

9 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Attached is a memorandum for record of my meeting with General Eisenhower at Palm Desert yesterday. As the memorandum indicates, he exhibits no special concern over the Soviet missile and nuclear programs. He did offer some suggestions for consideration, set forth in paragraph 7. Also he made the comments indicated in paragraph 3.

He was appreciative for the report on the Communist TET attacks in South Vietnam and on the Pueblo incident. He made only limited comments, indicated in paragraphs 9 and 15.

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

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ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING  
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INFORMATION, E. O. 12356,  
SEC. 1.1(a)

BY rg ON 2-492

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

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9 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with General Eisenhower, 8 February 1968

1. I met with General Eisenhower for two hours at his office and home at Palm Desert on 8 February. The meeting covered 3 subjects: The Soviet missile and nuclear program; the Communist TET offensive in SVN; and the Pueblo incident.

2. I first covered the Soviet missile, nuclear and related programs at length, stressing that I would try to give a balanced picture, although many of the figures are subject to uncertainty and interpretation. To begin, I pointed out that we are at a significant point in the evolution of Soviet strategic nuclear forces in relation to our own. Major increases in Soviet missile forces are now underway and are anticipated in the next several years, the effect of which is to bring them generally to parity with us, and probably to surpass us in certain indices such as "megatonnage". Their expansion poses the issue of whether it makes better sense for us to accept that this is happening, or to initiate a further expansion ourselves in order to seek to "stay ahead".

3. General Eisenhower made two comments on this point. First, when we get to a point at which we think we have plenty in number on our side, it makes no sense simply to add more. Instead, we should concentrate on how to go forward in efficiency--i. e., advancement in performance--so that we will never be outmatched in performance. Second, he asked whether the numbers of weapons that would be produced by straight extrapolation would have any military meaning. I said that the number needed to give an assured capability of destroying the enemy nation, no matter what the circumstances--probably in the range of 500 to a 1000--seem to me to have special significance. Above this, some numbers are needed to attack his forces, to reduce the weight of his attack on our cities, and the like, but there is a point where the value of further weapons becomes small. A great deal of the analysis and debate that goes on in the Pentagon goes into finding sound levels

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for each of these.

4. I then reviewed specific US and USSR weapons figures, actual and projected, extending generally from 1964 to 1967. Key points included the rise in US ICBM and Polaris missiles from about 1000 in 1964 to some 1500 in 1967 (1700 total), then staying generally level till 1976. On the Russian side, the increase there is from about 300 in 1964 to nearly 600 in 1967 and 900 in 1968 with a further estimated increase to 1500-2100 in 1976 (400-500 of the increase being in submarine-launched ballistic missiles. The rapid rise in 1967 and 1968 is in hardened sites for 2 missiles of a recent generation (SS9 and SS11). The increase will apparently slow down in the coming year, since the number of these sites still under construction is much less than a year ago. Consistent with the rapid rise that has already occurred, current estimates for 1970 and 1974 have been substantially upped over those made two years ago (for 1970, 1200 vs. 800; for 1974, 1700 vs. 1000). The Soviets may also begin to introduce a smaller, cheaper, solid-fueled missile within the next year or two.

5. I next gave the figures for 1967, 1969 and 1972 for US intercontinental bombers and for Soviet intercontinental bombers, medium range bombers, submarine-launched cruise missiles, and intermediate or medium range strategic missiles aimed at targets in Europe and Asia. (I pointed out that no one can state with certainty just how the latter categories relate to US strategic missile power in all circumstances.) I then covered "megatonnage" figures for 1964 through 1976, first taking up US and USSR in comparison in the ICBM/SLBM category (US at approximately 2000 MT through 1970, then dropping to 1400; USSR rising from 700 in 1964 to 4500 in 1968 and 5000-9000 in 1976). Next I gave total loadings for ICBMs, SLBMs, and intercontinental bombers for 1967, 1969 and 1972 (US declining from 9000 to 4000; USSR rising from 4500 to 5600-8400). Finally, I pointed out that if the weapons were converted to 1 MT equivalents the US would go from 5700 in 1967 to 3700 in 1972, and the USSR from 1800 in 1967 to 2300-3200 in 1972. After having described the MIRV system earlier, I pointed out that our MIRV program, which is being initiated with 10 missiles in mid-1970, will give us a weapon which offers a vast increase in effectiveness; each missile equipped with MIRV's will outmatch much greater USSR "megatonnage".

6. As to production of nuclear materials, I summarized

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that USSR capacity and annual rates of production are now leveling off, since construction consists of completing existing facilities, not in starting new ones. It is estimated that the Soviets will have enough material to provide for the weapons now forecast and to fill their other requirements as well.

7. General Eisenhower emphasized the futility of simple increases in missile numbers or in megatons, stressing the need for efficiency and other advances. During discussion, he made the following three suggestions for consideration:

a. The desirability of having a limited number of large-yield missiles--perhaps 20 or more--having a yield of 20 to 30 MT. (I had mentioned that the Soviet SS9 war head yield is estimated in the range of 12-25 MT, and also that some of our airborne weapons are in the 20 megaton category). He would have such weapons largely for psychological and deterrent effect, and to make clear that the Soviets do not "outmatch" us.

b. A modest Polaris submarine replacement and reinforcement program--perhaps 3 to 5 boats a year, to keep up technological progress and construction capability.

c. Avoidance of rigidity in total numbers of missiles projected for the United States in the future. A figure of 1500 or 1700 should never be regarded as holy; it cannot be that exact.

8. Having made these points, General Eisenhower indicated that he did not feel concerned about the trends and changes in the figures I had presented.

9. I next took up the TET attacks in South Vietnam beginning with the location, scale and nature of the attacks. Five major cities, 35 of 44 province capitals, 36 district towns, many villages and hamlets and 24 airfields were hit. Over 50,000 enemy troops were used, mostly VC, amounting to perhaps half the total VC unit strength. The attacks were directed against population centers, attacking whatever targets were available within them. There seem to have been no set withdrawal plans; instead there were orders to enemy units to "fight to victory". There is some evidence of a hope to bring large parts of the population over to the VC side and to seize and hold control of several large population centers.

10. As to the condition of ARVN units, and their response, both the military and the police were engaged in TET when the attacks occurred and had half or more of their strength away. Nearly all Arvn and US forces were involved in the initial counteraction except for US forces in Northern I Corps. Within a short time, however, US forces were engaged only in six cities. ARVN forces bore the brunt of the attack and acquitted themselves well, defeating the VC in nearly all cases without requiring diversion of US forces.

11. As to the present situation, the VC are now out of the cities and towns except for remnants of their forces and snipers. Some VC actions continue near the outskirts of towns and cities, and other VC units are occasionally in heavy contact with ARVN units. No clear pattern of VC withdrawal is in evidence. Moreover, the VC retain the capability for renewing the attack with the substantial forces not yet committed. The status of nearly half of the GVN Revolutionary Development teams is not known.

12. Concerning losses and results of the attacks, up to 6 February the US had lost 670 KIA, ARVN 1294, others 44, and the enemy 24,199 KIA, plus 5007 detained. Over 6000 enemy weapons were captured. Civilian losses have been high and damage great, but figures are not yet available.

13. As to major effects, it is still too early to give a full assessment. The VC have suffered a severe military defeat, with tremendous losses, half of the committed force, perhaps a quarter of their whole regular force. They were not able to bring about the diversion of major US forces from Khe Sanh or elsewhere. However, the psychological impact has been great. Immediate critical reaction was strong in the US and elsewhere in the world. The VC have demonstrated a capability to enter and attack cities and towns and a technique for doing vast damage with widespread terrorism. The reaction of the SVN people is not yet fully evident. However, they did not turn against the government and there was no general uprising nor did the government or military go to pieces. While some comment seems to envisage more "fence-straddling", I commented that these attacks may bring the war, and the VC ruthlessness, home to the people of the cities who have been relatively secure and not personally engaged until now. I pointed out that it is early to judge the caliber of the government's response to the tasks that now confront them, but that they seem to be making

an effective beginning. Finally, there is bound to be a profound impact on VC morale, particularly in those units which bore the brunt of the fight.

14. General Eisenhower commented that he agreed with this last point. He added that for the VC to commit their remaining forces in a new attack now would be to reinforce failure, which seems open to doubt. He asked whether it is possible to identify who is VC and who is a loyal citizen. I described some of the screening techniques that are being used.

15. Finally, I covered the Pueblo seizure, beginning with what happened at the time, according to messages received and monitored. As to location, it seems certain that the ship was in international waters when seized. In addition, there had been no information at any time suggesting that the ship had violated territorial waters. The orders to the ship expressly required that it stay outside. As to destruction of classified material and documents, full information was not received from the ship. It appears, however, that much, but perhaps not all, of the sensitive equipment was destroyed, and much of the rest may have been damaged to some degree. Diplomatic efforts are still being pursued. The South Koreans are very exercised and upset and we are trying to settle them down.

16. General Eisenhower had no major comment other than that the Liberty incident and this one should cause us to establish adequate plans and preparations for destruction of equipment and documents. He commented that, from his own experience, these preparations have sometimes been inadequately made. He asked whether the ship was under control in naval operational channels, and I told him that it was, as evidenced by messages between the ship and the naval station in Japan. He reiterated that this incident, like that of the Liberty, should alert and warn us.

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