

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM WALT ROSTOW

The following had lunch today to consider the tentative proposals of General Westmoreland and General Wheeler for additional troops: Secretary Rusk, Secretary McNamara, Mr. Clifford, Under Secretary Katzenbach, W. Bundy, H. McPherson, J. Califano, and myself.

Although we had a fresh McPherson draft of a speech available, the lunch was taken up with an extended substantive discussion of the troop issue itself.

The following key questions were raised:

- the military strategy and tactics underlying the troop requests;
- the budgetary and balance of payments problems that would be raised;
- the rationale for public presentation in the U. S.;
- reactions in Europe, as well as reactions in Moscow, Peiping and Hanoi;
- what sort of peace proposals, if any, should be included in the Presidential statement;
- the state of the GVN and its capacity to carry the lead in the days ahead;
- the state of the ARVN as well as regional and popular forces: an assessment is promised us from Saigon on Feb. 29, although Bus Wheeler may be bringing back such a detailed assessment.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority CSO 10/11/78; NSC 8/12/80

BS/Map, NARA, Date 4/16/96

A wide range of views were stated and explored. The only firm agreement among Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, Katzenbach, and Clifford was this: the troop issue raises many questions to which you ought to have clear answers before making a final decision. Therefore, it is recommended that you not make a final decision at breakfast tomorrow but, after listening to General Wheeler, order a team to go to work full time to staff out the alternatives and their implications (perhaps Clark Clifford could chair this intensive working group). They ought to report in a very few days.

I will have waiting for you on your return tonight an agenda and set of questions for the breakfast meeting tomorrow morning.

###