

TO: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JIM JONES

*Report on views of JFH (Nov. 2, 1967)
Wess Mea - all say Stay in (including Ball)
Bombing of dikes underway
All but Ball say continue the bombing*

Attached is the complete notes on the Cabinet Room meeting and the luncheon Thursday, November 2, with your foreign policy advisers.

Following is a summary of the views presented on the five questions you asked:

I. What about our course in South Vietnam?

All 10 who responded agreed there is great improvement and progress. The program in the south is in competent hands. The U. S., allied and Vietnamese troops are good and improving. The general feeling is to press forward with this program.

Douglas Dillon and McGeorge Bundy agreed that South Vietnam should and must do more. Walt Rostow said South Vietnam must improve administration, fight corruption and be more aggressive in pacification.

Henry Cabot Lodge made three recommendations: 1.) conduct independent audit of how the ARVN is going; 2.) reduce U.S. casualties by adopting a new military policy of "split up and keep off balance," instead of the "seek out and destroy" policy; 3.) bring about a "true revolution" by utilizing the private sector of Vietnam such as the Tenant Farmers Union.

Robert Murphy and Justice Abe Fortas agrees with Lodge. Fortas believes we should explore the greater use of smaller military units in the South.

General Maxwell Taylor expressed two reservations: 1.) the close defense of the frontier on the DMZ and in the highland area; 2.) no clearcut decision has been made on what we will offer the Viet Cong.

II. What about our course in North Vietnam? Should we continue as is; go further; moderate it; eliminate the bombing?

All but George Ball agreed the bombing should continue. Ball suggested a shifting of the bombing from the dikes and harbors to the DMZ.

Dean Acheson, McGeorge Bundy, Robert Murphy and Henry Cabot Lodge agreed that the bombing should continue, but the emphasis on the bombing is out of proportion to its importance. Acheson suggested the bombing is marginal and should be played down so that we could stop and start it in response to the Communists' cessation of hostilities along the DMZ.

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"No one in the group thinks we should get out," said George Ball, "and no one gives propriety to the Gavin or Galbraith enclave theory."

"The public would be outraged if we got out," said Fortas.

V. How do we unite the people and communicate better?

Dean Acheson -- Get a policy agreement and then all members of the Administration, including the Joint Chiefs, speak out uniformly on that policy. Also organize groups in every city (similar to the Citizens Committee on the Marshall Plan) to speak to clubs and organizations.

McGeorge Bundy -- Don't let the communications people in New York set the tone of the debate. Emphasize the 'light at the end of the tunnel' instead of the battles, deaths and danger.

Douglas Dillon -- Emphasis should be shifted from how we got there to what are we doing. Dillon agrees with Bundy that more progress must be shown instead of portraying a long and hopeless situation. Bunker should come back and report. President should have briefing for top educators (college presidents and deans) and opinion makers.

Arthur Dean -- Someone should pull together why we are in Vietnam, what are we doing, value of the bombing, etc. to clarify popular confusion.

Henry Cabot Lodge -- Bunker should be well publicized when he returns.

Robert Murphy -- We need a hate complex directed at Ho Chi Minh similar to Hitler.

General Omar Bradley -- Our troubles can be blamed on the communications media. We need patriotic slogans -- perhaps "Patience."

General Maxwell Taylor -- Organize a nationwide campaign that will be continuous. Use television - perhaps a weekly program.

George Ball -- Quit arguing about how we got there, but instead what do we do about it now that we are there.

Justice Abe Fortas -- Let George Carver brief Members of Congress, the press and other opinion moulders. Bring Bunker back to brief.

Clark Clifford -- Expand the list of spokesmen in this country to include heads of State from Southeast Asia, Ambassadors, Asian government officials, heroes such as Robin Olds. Use television. But in final analysis realize the war will not be popular, but it is right.

General Taylor believes in a bombing pause only if there is quid pro quo. As an alternative, Taylor would accept Acheson's suggestion.

Bundy and Dillon said we should not go further in bombing the dikes and harbors.

General Omar Bradley said to bomb only military targets.

Murphy thinks the bombing should be left in the hands of the Joint Chiefs as much as possible because it is effective. Murphy also suggests the 303 Committee study the elimination of the men responsible in the North.

Fortas and Clark Clifford recommend continued bombing as we are doing.

III. Negotiations -- should we be more aggressive, more passive, or bow out?

Dean Acheson predicted there will not be negotiations because that's not how the Communists operate. Instead there will be a subsiding of hostilities when the Communists finally give up. McGeorge Bundy, Doug Dillon, Arthur Dean, Henry Cabot Lodge, Maxwell Taylor, Justice Fortas and Clark Clifford agreed with Acheson.

Acheson, General Omar Bradley, Justice Fortas and Clark Clifford stated that there should be less talk in the future about negotiations. We have made our willingness quite clear. Further talk of negotiations would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and would make the Communists believe they are winning the battle for public opinion.

Walt Rostow said not to discount negotiations because Hanoi may want to discuss bases in the south and the NLF.

IV. Should we get out of Vietnam?

There was unanimous agreement that we should not.

"Absolutely not," said Acheson.

"As impossible as it is undesirable," said Bundy.

"Definitely not," said Dillon.

"Unthinkable," said Lodge, "we are trying to divert a change in the balance of power."