

DRAFT, 9/19/63

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By MMK NLDDE Date 8/11/11

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE 0930, 19 September 1963



President Eisenhower
Mr. John McCone
Mr. John Eisenhower

Before coming ^{to} the main topic of conversation General Eisenhower asked Mr. McCone how the Test Ban Treaty ~~had come~~ ^{was coming, Jim}. McCone said the Treaty was O.K. The Government was committed to what the CIA and the Joint Chiefs had thought necessary by way of safeguards. AEC had shot a 250-Kiloton warhead underground the other day, ~~and in addition to~~ ^{the vitality} of the laboratories is being maintained and the proving ground in the Pacific will not be allowed to run down. There was some discussion as to whether the language of the Treaty excluded the use of atomic weapons during war but General Eisenhower did not push his concern in this matter. He said, rather, that his main worry now was that ^{development of} peaceful uses of atomic explosions ~~were now written off~~ ^{could no longer proceed. J}. Mr. McCone said that the purposes of the Treaty were to prevent proliferation of Atomic weapons ^{among} ~~in~~ smaller countries, in addition to the desire to make one small step in the development of mutual trust. We had striven for years to achieve a ~~treaty~~ ^{treaty} on Plowshare with the Soviets — with no results. As a result we decided that if ^{provisions for} the Plowshare were included in the Treaty, ^{they} ~~it~~ would negate the proliferation, ^{efforts to prevent} ~~aspect~~. After all, ~~under some~~ ^{or not} ~~circumstances~~, the firing of an atomic ~~warhead~~ ^{warhead} for peaceful purposes would at least indicate whether the warhead functioned. Another disadvantage to our cranking Plowshare into this Treaty is the fact that digging a canal by

use of atomic energy, for example, requires some of our most advanced

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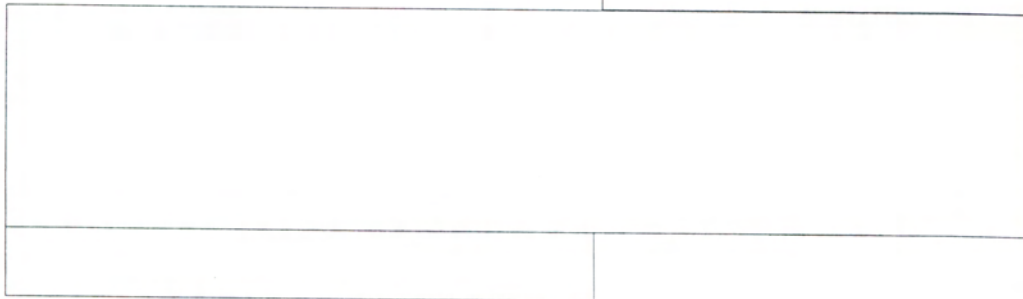


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in the effort
techniques to keep the ~~weapons~~ ^{*efficiency*} clean, but ~~still~~ effective. We were not anxious to allow others to look inside our weapons, something that would probably be necessary.

General Eisenhower said that another thing that concerns him over the Treaty is the fact that it ~~is~~ ^{*seems to create*} much froth over little accomplishment. Mr. McCone admitted this, saying that if China and France choose to ignore the Treaty, which they have ^{*so far, this fact will*} largely negated ^{*any effect in preventing*} the ~~prevention~~ of proliferation. The Soviets have cranked a reservation into the Treaty ^{*regarding*} on French activities.

~~We, of course, have a reservation on everyone~~



General Eisenhower inquired who had instigated this treaty and why ^{*was*} it necessary to go to Moscow to sign it. Mr. McCone did not know the answer to this. He stated his personal preference for Vienna as a place for ~~the~~ negotiation. ~~###~~ As background, Mr. Khrushchev had always refused any Treaty other than a comprehensive Test Ban Accord. This he had repeated to the Head of the British Labor Party, Harold Wilson, in May. The reason he had given was that ~~the U.S. wanted to test~~ ^{*testing favored the US in this*} underground because the type of weapons that lend themselves to underground testing ^{*as those that*} fit into the U.S. concepts ^{*for*} ~~of strategic in case of general war.~~ *In the meantime the U.S. was preparing*

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Proposals for

some atmospheric tests. Tests up to 60 megatons had been put forward, but Mr. McCone had ~~opposed them and~~ recommended to the President *instead* that the U. S. develop and make more efficient the weapons that can be carried by our missiles. This the President had approved.

Then out of the blue, Mr. McCone went on, President Kennedy made a speech at Georgetown proposing a ban on atmospheric testing, a speech that did not worry Mr. McCone ~~since~~ in the light of the Khrushchev statement to Mr. Wilson. *however,* Almost immediately, Mr. Khrushchev indicated he would accept such a ^{limited} test ban *if* such were linked to a non-aggression pact. Mr. Harriman was sent to ~~Moscow~~ Moscow where he was informed that little was expected by way of results. Three days later, however, the Soviets had changed their tune and agreed to the limited test ban treaty without the non-aggression pact. The whole thing is very puzzling.

then General Eisenhower told of ~~his~~ ^{own} experience at Freedoms Foundation *previously.* a couple of days ~~before.~~ A Mrs. Hood had quoted Senators Thurmond, Russell *in their opposition to the Treaty and had* and Stennis ~~and~~ urged him to withdraw his ^{own} support of the Test Ban Treaty. He had told Mrs. Hood that if circumstances had been different, ~~he~~ *to* if this test ban had been brought up to him in its embryo stages he might have refused. However, with ninety countries ^{ing} ~~having~~ signed the Treaty, *would now be almost* ~~all concerned over~~ *them all* ~~fall out propaganda,~~ it is impossible for the United States *by refusing ratification.* to ~~render a slap in the face to the rest of the world.~~ General Eisenhower

described the entire operation as a snow job on the Senate.

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in the whole matter that it

P Mr. McCone ~~had~~ said that his position had been the same as the Joint Chiefs

of Staff, although developed independently. He mentioned that Senator

Thurmond is so bitter over the integration issue that *he feels* everything ~~comes~~

does ~~(was)~~ Mr. Kennedy is wrong. He cited as an example his own experiences

with Senator Thurmond on the feasibility of an anti-intercontinental

D ballistic missile. The discussion then went on to the values of the ~~Net~~

~~E~~valuation Committee organized by General Eisenhower as President and

on the possible situation which would exist after an exchange of nuclear

stockpiles.

* * *



On General Eisenhower's request Mr. McCone *then* came to the

~~subject of his~~ - purpose of his visit, which turned out to be the situation

existing in South Vietnam: He began by giving the background as he saw

it.

F Mr. McCone had talked with President Diem a year ago this last

June and had also seen Mr. Nhu. Diem was concerned about the possibility

of a coup against his government, resulting from a growing dissatisfaction

in the people as a whole and, to some extent, *t* ~~although less so~~, within the

military. ~~This was particularly rampant in the cities.~~ Causes for the

dissatisfaction (which Mr. McCone *had* [^] duly reported) were the repressive

measures taken by the Diem regime and prevalent nepotism in his

holds in government
government. For example, Mr. Nhu ~~had~~ no official position but nevertheless

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has executed personally
~~has the responsibility for the execution of the strategic handling~~
"
hamlet program (which on the U. S. side was done by the CIA) .

Mr. McCone represented the strategic hamlet program as being

a success, although in the ~~South~~ - Mekong Delta ~~in~~ ^{to} the South only

50% of the villages were protected. *at this moment* ~~The reason for this is that~~

~~the villages were built on canals in vulnerable locations. In addition~~

~~there are many Viet Cong in that particular area~~

Up to May 8, Mr. McCone went on, the war was going better,

the strategic hamlet program was underway, and the only cloud on the

horizon was the deterioration ^{on} in the home front, largely on the part of

the intellectual elite.

The first open incident occurred on May 8th and resulted from

a Catholic priest's running up a Catholic flag over a church. The

Buddists had begun to riot and ~~some~~ some shooting resulted. There

is no indication that the Buddhists were Communist-infiltrated, but there

are indications ^{of movements} that there are political moves within that sect. Our govern-

ment attempted to pressure Diem into ^{subtly} less repressive measures, but to

⁹ no success. At that time our government had seen no alternative to Diem.

The situation was exacerbated, however, ~~when~~ ^{on that date} on August 21, which some

some of Diem's "Special Forces" ^{allegedly} cut loose and raided some Buddhist pagodas ~~which~~

suspected of ~~they said were~~ harboring subversives. Press criticism became very strong.

currently
of the Diem regime ~~and there are two~~ reporters in Saigon who are making

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major project

a ~~career~~ of trying to topple the Diem regime. Mr. McCone pointed
 (*with a straight face*)
 out that the present Administration listens to the press very carefully.

There

~~They~~ have now developed within the Administration two positions,

and others,

One, held by Mr. Harriman insists that Diem must go. Mr. McCone gave

the opinion somewhat sheepishly that Mr. Harriman is largely motivated

(*an irrational*)
 by ~~the~~ desire to undo ~~everything~~ that President Eisenhower and Secretary

Dulles ever did. General Eisenhower agreed readily and said that while

Harriman is pleasant to himself on the surface, he is undoubtedly attempting

to do this. He described Harriman as simply stupid.

Mr. McCone ~~then~~ - continued that the other group is lead by

Secretary McNamara, who has made a personal war of this Vietnamese

engagement. He feels that the government should go slow, *in trying to replace Diem,*

is going well, that we could not rebuild the government, *under present conditions,* and that any

political actions to overthrow the government should certainly wait until

the war is won.

~~General Eisenhower~~ - *referred* Mr. McCone then ~~turned~~ to the Lodge situation

and gave the Administration's side of the story of this appointment. Mr. Lodge

the Kennedy
 had apparently approached ~~this~~ Administration six months ago and had said

he would like to be of help in some capacity, *adding* ~~He~~ felt that his ^{greatest} opportunity

would lie in someplace like Vietnam. This was, at least, President Kennedy's

viewpoint as expressed to Mr. McCone. General Eisenhower became heated

over this allegation and said that this was a lie as far as Lodge's representations

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to him were concerned. He reiterated that Mr. Lodge had informed him of the words of President Kennedy, that Lodge was the only man in the United States ^{who} ~~that~~ could do this job. He admitted that his advice, ^{General Eisenhower} ~~which had been~~ of the President's ^{Lodge had not followed} ~~to Lodge to make this statement public was not followed~~ ~~in later~~

Mr. McCone later said that ^g he thought the two viewpoints were consistent ^{Possibly} ~~that~~ Mr. Lodge had made ~~an informal offer~~ his offer informally ^{after which} over a drink, ~~and that~~ the Administration, possibly at the instigation of Mr. Hilsman, had put the pressure on him.

At any rate, when Mr. Lodge went to Vietnam, ^{you} McCone had ^{had} been confident that he would approach his new tasks in a cold, unemotional manner. He had been extensively briefed by the CIA and ~~would have~~ a talk with Admiral Felt in Honolulu. In Tokyo, however, he had talked with State Department officials who are highly anti-Diem and he has at his right hand now in Saigon a man who has been dedicated to "getting" Diem ever since the latter came to power. At any rate, Ambassador Lodge has taken highly subjective and emotional approach in his dealings in Saigon.

One of the ^{governments'} greatest errors, in Mr. McCone's opinion, consisted ^{which was} of a telegram ~~being~~ sent by the State Department to Mr. Lodge on August 24th. This cable had ~~not~~ ^{neither} been coordinated with ^{nor the} the Department of Defense ~~so with~~ CIA, ^{(ot} ~~and~~ had been read over the telephone to Mr. Kennedy at Hyannisport, but ^{had} the text ^{the} not studied by him. The cable ~~had~~ said that Diem ~~was now sinking~~ ^{now} regime should be knocked over. Mr. McCone was on leave at the time,

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but when it was sent - 8 -

and all of Washington ^{became} alerted and the atmosphere ^{became} electric.
 returned to Washington and urged that the Administration
 He came back and advocated an approach to go slow. He had instigated
 on the part of CIA
 an investigation to determine whether there was sufficient support in the

Vietnamese military and the public to engineer a bloodless coup without
 degenerating into Civil War. ^{result of the} The survey indicated that, like the situation
 with Sukarno in 1958, there was not enough dissatisfaction for this to
 come about. Gradually things have cooled off in Washington but the cleavage

between those who feel that Diem must go and those who feel that Diem
 should
 must stay is still strong. He added humorously that the Potomac River
 is supposed to be the dividing line, since Defense and CIA on the ^{Virginia} South side
 are the ones who feel he should be retained. Mr. McCone said that this
 is not entirely accurate since the CIA has not taken a definite position.

Again General Eisenhower became highly irritated and said this
 is what an NSC is for. He could not understand how such a cable could be
 sent by State and asked if this had gone over Rusk's signature. Mr. McCone
 Secretary
 said that Rusk had been on leave and this was obviously a machination of Mr.
 Harriman and Mr. Hilsman. Some ^{misrepresentations} falsehoods were involved; State Department,
 for example, claimed that they ^{had} attempted to staff the message ~~out~~ with CIA
 but that Mr. McCone's deputy ^{had been} was playing golf, an activity he has not indulged
 in for two years. Furthermore, they claim that both General Taylor and
 Secretary McNamara were unavailable. They had made no further attempt
 to coordinate the telegram apparently and the cable was simply sent.

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*Ambassador*

More recently, Lodge, in Vietnam, has sent an hysterical telegram, saying that the ^{*Diem*} Regime is sinking and we must find a substitute for it.

Mr McCone said,

Through it all President Kennedy has been more inclined to caution that anyone else. At this point, I mentioned some statements that President Kennedy had made ^{*to the effect*} that the Diem regime ^{*has become*} was out of contact with the people.

General Eisenhower added emphatically that the President ^{*has*} had been no help *in his public utterances.*

~~and~~ Mr. McCone admitted all this, but insisted that President Kennedy has

been more moderate than his advisors. He ^{*has*} had been very much torn, ~~(end of tape)~~ *and* ^{*in his government*} he has, after all, ~~on his side~~ to contend with the ADA liberals who want

to reform every country. General Eisenhower ~~responded more vehemently~~ ^{*asked sharply*} ~~and demanded to know~~ who had appointed all of these liberals who surrounded

the President. He said he felt that Mr. Kennedy was afflicted with some of the same difficulty that Harriman had, that of trying to act as if everything ^{*our*} his Administration had done was wrong, ^{*he concluded*} and that the watchword of this administration was simply immaturity.

Mr. McCone ~~made no comment but~~ went back to the Lodge situation, saying he was sorry Mr. Lodge had gotten himself on this peg. President

Eisenhower went on to describe ^{*(the strong inclinations of)*} ~~his experience with~~ the Buddhists ~~to be~~

~~and the fact that they were strongly inclined as~~ pacifists. He mentioned,

as an example, the fact that ~~their Premier-~~ the Burmese Premier, a Buddhist

named U Nu, in complaining to him about the disrupting effect of U.S. ^{*back in 1958*} wheat

shipments on the Burmese rice market, had ~~pointed out~~ cited his own

~~religion as almost forbidding~~ such a complaint. Mr. McCone said that the

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the Catholics and Buddhists were the groups most impregnable against the Communists in Vietnam, but that only 10% of the population are Catholic and of the 70% who claim to be Buddhists, only very few are real practicing members of the sect.

General Eisenhower asked if Ambassador Lodge is to be replaced. *It was not; rather* to which Mr. McCone said, ~~that~~ they were going to try to persuade Diem to make reforms and perhaps ^{to} remove Nhu. To President Eisenhower's question he said the Madame Nhu was completely impossible.

General Eisenhower said there is nothing to be accomplished by violence in this situation. If these events were occurring on an island without outside pressure, such might be the case but it is not. Military forces in Vietnam must be made to realize that under present conditions civil war would destroy their country. He further said that somebody should write Lodge *advising* ~~instructing~~ him to be less emotional *at this point*. As an aside, General Eisenhower said that Lodge was an ace in his only other *(that of US delegate to)* diplomatic experience, the United Nations. He was quick, agile and emotional, hitting back at the Soviet delegate whenever an accusation was made, thus denying the Soviets the exclusive headlines for the day. On the other hand, he tends to ~~think his solution~~ *mentally* become fixed on a certain eventualities ^{an} or course of action. As/example, during the 1952 campaign, Mr. Lodge had come and told him that he would lose the election if he did not come out for

^{federal} a/FEPC of this he had refused to do. General Eisenhower did not believe in

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a federal FEPC as a way to solve the integration problem then or now.

Mr. Lodge had, of course, been delighted with the outcome of the Presidential campaign that year but had certainly been a victim of his own fixations while the campaign was in progress.

As to future moves, Mr. McCone reiterated that President Kennedy wants to persuade Diem to take some 18 or 20 reforms to maintain his regime.

In time a coup may be in order, similar to one promulgated in Ecuador, and Diem ~~Diem~~ might be sent back off to a monastery. But this is not the time.

2 There is evidence, Mr. McCone said, that Nhu is in contact with Hanoi, an eventuality that puts new light on things. Ho Chi Minh ~~Ho Chi Minh~~ would certainly pay anything to Diem to ~~###~~ obtain access to some of the rice in the Mekong Delta and also to get the United States ^g forces out of South Vietnam. President Eisenhower agreed but said that the military should certainly want us to stay.

At this time, Mr. McCone ^g went on, things are at somewhat of an impasse in Saigon. Ambassador Lodge has had one talk ^{only with Diem. This conference lasted} of ~~duration~~ 1 hour and 45 minutes ^{and} ~~which~~ was totally unproductive. ^{Lodge} ~~he~~ said at ^{the end of the session that} ~~that time~~ he had nothing further to say. He advised Washington that his tactic was to remain completely aloof, and he feels it is having some results.

President Eisenhower said he felt that Diem could certainly throw out the two reporters who had launched a vendetta against him. He cited the role of American public opinion, led by the press, in the Cuban situation which ^g resulted in ~~Castro's~~ taking power. He emphasized strongly that State ^g

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Department should be kept out of the business of engineering coups. The role of the State Department should be to show the might and the position of the United States and that CIA should do the clandestine work. Our U. S. personnel within Vietnam should make every effort to develop good relations with the military.

Mr. McCone agreed and said that CIA ~~should~~ ^{must} keep the details of their clandestine activities to themselves. Certainly the details cannot be worked out in the National Security Council and anything he tells the State Department appears in the New York Times the next morning.

President Kennedy has shown his concern with the situation by having several meetings of the Executive Committee of the NSC. ~~However,~~

but whose position as a statistician makes his attendance mandatory.
There is one man on the NSC who should not be there. Again General

Eisenhower ~~got~~ ^{much} became perturbed and expressed ~~much~~ concern over the future of the United States. ^{recent} Mr. McCone humorously mentioned the ^{Gallup} poll

~~which had been taken recently~~ which indicated that General Eisenhower could still be returned to office in 1964 by a vote of 53%. He mentioned that Mr. Kennedy had called him up about that and asked if the General would like his job back. Mr. Kennedy is apparently quite sensitive about this poll.

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~~The conversation~~

Mr. McCone then said that the rest of the world is fairly quiet. he mentioned some difficulties that Nasser is encountering and General Eisenhower mentioned that Brazil is a place that concerns him very much.

The conversation then turned to personal matters such as plans for the winter in California and the like. I left the meeting at this point.

J. S. D. E.

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