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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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By isa, Date 5-14-84

Thursday, August 5, 1965, 2:45 PM

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Agenda for the 5:45 Meeting

You have said that the main item on your mind is the Goldberg suggestion of a pause, but before you come to it, you may wish to have brief reports from Dean Rusk and Bob McNamara on their testimony and Congressional reaction this week. You may also want to have a report from General Taylor, as we said yesterday we would. So I suggest an order somewhat like this:

1. Brief report by Dean Rusk.
2. Brief report by Bob McNamara.
3. Final report by Max Taylor.
4. Discussion led by the President on the possibility of a bombing pause. In this discussion, the following would be important commentators:

Goldberg - (pro) Arthur can make his own case better than anyone else, if not more briefly. It is surely important that everyone understand the fact that it is the bombing which is now the target of international pressure. Some, but not all, of this pressure is orchestrated from Moscow. Interestingly enough, the bombing is not the centerpiece of propaganda from Hanoi or Peiping, nor is there any indication from either of these Asian capitals that a pause in the bombing would have any effect whatever.

McNamara - (con for now) While Bob believes strongly that at some point a substantial pause may be an important diplomatic card, he would not play the card at a time when it might be thought to come from weakness. He would prefer a sustained pause at a somewhat later stage, after we have shown that we can hold our own, and perhaps even make some money in the South.

Marks - I think Leonard should be asked for comment on the world opinion aspect of this matter. I do not know his current judgment.

Wheeler - if you call on him -- will surely go very hard on the military advantages of continuous bombing. Even if he does not make the argument explicitly, he will remind those present that many Americans will find it odd to pause in the bombing that is supposed to restrict aggression just at the time when we are sending ground forces to take casualties in resisting that same aggression.

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Rusk - (pretty much con) Dean is inclined to think that we ought not to have a pause until there is some clear signal that it would be matched in some way by the other side. You may wish to ask him what specific matching action we would find acceptable. We need to have a more solid opinion on this point than we have now. (My own judgment is that it will be hard to find a realistic short-term matching action, because such action needs to be visible and provable in order to be acceptable to us, and the only visible actions are in South Vietnam, where the people in Hanoi have to maintain that they have no influence. This is one reason why a long pause at a time of relative U. S. strength seems to me more sensible than a short one now. From a position of strength, we would not have to insist upon public and prompt matching action; we could simply let matters develop for a while with the diplomatic pressure on the other side.)

Just as a checklist, I list the following set of pros and cons:

- Pro
1. Pause will sustain peaceful momentum of press conference.
 2. Pause will help our allies deal with domestic pressure, especially Japanese.
 3. Pause will reassert our flexibility and give us leeway to move up and down in future.
 4. Pause will please domestic peacemakers.
 5. Pause may put some diplomatic pressure on Hanoi, during Nkrumah visit.
- Con
1. Pause may arouse apprehension in South Vietnam.
 2. Pause will give real military advantage to Hanoi.
 3. Pause may seem sign of weakness to the Communists -- or even a reward for propaganda pressure.
 4. Pause may be sharply criticized by Republicans and other hardliners.
 5. Pause will do no real good diplomatically.

I am afraid this memorandum is not as evenly balanced as I would like, but that defect at least shows you where I myself come out.

m.f.s.
McG. B.