



Telcon
 Prof. Rostow (Walt)
 4/11/70
 9:55 a.m.

K: Sorry I haven't had a chance to get back to you. President Johnson behaved like a gentleman and a patriot.

R: All I wanted to tell you was the message was delivered.

K: He did it with such skill. Brought it up in such a really beautiful way. Only a President knows what really bugs another President.

R: He is a strongly sensitive man which is so different from the image. I hope it went well.

K: He did it beautifully and it came at a crucial moment. . Walt, when you come up I will fill you in on it. I think we are within months of some major decision on their part.

R: I believe that. As I look at it, one, they don't like the casualties they are taking. They are feeding in new bodies reluctantly - some sort of pressure back home. They are getting tired of being a footstool. It is beginning to strain them. Second, Cambodia is a mortal matter for them. Third, unless they go all the way to Vientiane and Mekong, their horsing around in Laos is something they can only use for negotiating purposes.

K: They know they have to launch a major campaign.

R: And they have to feel that if they go to the Mekong you have something up your sleeve.

K: That message has gotten across.

R: What Hanoi is doing in Southeast Asia is creating out of that area in Cambodia and Laos an ethnic nationalism.

K: I have been considering taking Marshal Wright on my staff. Would that be a good decision?

R: I found him bright and courageous. The first sign I ever had of him was when we were visiting Thailand and he stood up against the Ambassador for a certain line Johnson took in a speech. He is a rare Foreign Service officer because he combined professionalism with guts and discretion.

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E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NLN 07-31/14 Per Sec 3.3(b)(1) 3.5(c) Per Ltr March 11, 2009

By PGH NARA, Date 4-3-09

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K: With analytical knowledge?

R: Yes.

K: What I have in mind - I find [redacted] very difficult. He is an all-out Arabist and I can't get him to present a fair picture to the President. I am not asking him to present a pro-Israeli one, I just don't want every memo loaded in one direction. If the President wants to give arms to Pakistan I don't want that shuttled around the bureaucracy for months. I have been thinking of sending him back [redacted] What do you think?

R: I didn't find working with him that bad. I would not have described [redacted] as a pro-Arabist. Things may have happened and only you can make the judgment. I think that as a professional Foreign Service officer Marshal could pick up the account and rise to it. That is fundamental, you have got to be comfortable in your people.

K: I just don't know whether Wright can pick him up.

R: I regard him as a very bright officer. I think he will pick things up fast. His ties have been with the Far East.

K: Right now [redacted] serves my purpose, but for the wrong reasons.

R: Let me ask you just one question. What I found in dealing with [redacted] I found [redacted] a man of very fine character and loyalty. Therefore when President Johnson took a certain view, I would say this is the way the President wants it. Have you had a chance to talk to [redacted] and tell him what you want?

K: Yes, and we have some copies of memos of very high classification that he ~~xx~~ has been passing to people.

R: If he has come into that relationship with you whom he must serve, you must get rid of him. Marshal Wright is a fellow of integrity, experience, skill, who can pick up the accounting fast. So I wouldn't worry about that. Have you had a chance to talk to Marshal?

K: Yes.

R: If you are comfortable with him it may be a good idea to take a fresh man into the Middle East.

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Per Sec. 3.3(b)(1)

[NLN 07-31/14: p 2062]