

Telecon
The President
7:30 p.m. 10/10/69

K said he had just talked with Ben Reed. Reed said that Humphrey is taking a terrible time about his statement today. Said it's as bad as during the campaign. P said "You mean they're getting after Humphrey?" And then the P asked if H was sorry. K said no, he was asked about it at a later press conference, and his answers shouldn't cause any trouble. P said "they made him trim?" K said yes. K said the response was bad from the press and the left wingers. P said, well, the H move is very important, very helpful to us. K asked the P if he had asked H to speak. President said no, he's a decent human being. Says he flops around, but he's a decent man. P said, of course, this drives the press right up the wall; the tide is good; the democratic leadership is not against us.

K said he had just seen some Newsweek people and had a feeling that they were a little bit shaken. Said he felt they thought the peace demonstration had gotten out of hand. P asked in what way. K pointed out that all the people getting into the scene were forcing, or trying to force, a government of confrontation. He said all of the American ideas aren't going to mean a damn if confrontation becomes our national style of politics. He said Newsweek is usually against us, and it's possible that these men were just baiting him, and warned the P not to expect the Newsweek piece to be friendly. The P said no, but we don't care, we've just got to try

K said he is drafting a statement. The P said he was seeing Lodge at 3:00 Monday and he thinks he should make a statement after seeing Lodge. K said it should hit the papers Tuesday; confuse people. K said that Newsweek people said it was a very good day for us, Hershey and Humphrey. P said he hated to throw the old man out just as a sop to the students, but that Humphrey, of course, was a good move.

The P said, by 72 the war is going to be over, and he is going to be the man who ended it. If we do it--put it right to the bastards--after all we're in the they're not. There's a lot of rough stuff coming up but the thing to do is to sail along. K said what the P must is keep giving them a dignified manner. (P said oh of course.) K said no asking for sympathy. P said 'God no'. K says for him to point out that he was elected and because of this he has responsibility for the country.

P said it isn't just this issue, but the next one and the next one that comes up. What about Korea? What about Berlin? K said he is convinced that if we yield on this one we're just inviting the Soviets into a confrontation.

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P said it's like Acheson's statement about where is the line of demarcation/
K said yes, but it's different because here there is no line of demarcation
if we yield. P said we won't yield. P said he doesn't want the enemy to
think that we are affected by them [the protesters]. He had said he would
not be affected by such things and he's not going to be. K said it is sure
they were just feeling us out, that we must show that there will be no
policy by confrontation.

P asked again about Humphrey; asked if Humphrey's man had said it was
worse than before. P said those sons of bitches were playing a partisan
line, that they were now out to destroy Humphrey. K said people were
saying that the P is like Johnson; said they just want the P to be another
Johnson. P said but Johnson was so inept with his hardness, that we are
not going to fool around.

K said the November 3 speech should be a factual listing of what the
President has done. K said that was very impressive. P said he's not
going to restate all that on television. He said we would put that out, but
he'll be speaking to two audiences: home and abroad. He said for the
home audience he simply wanted a simple, uncomplicated and very brief
statement, not a long restatement of what he's done. K said, but make
the public understand that you offered to send emissaries. The P said,
and we received their emissaries. K said the P had made two overtures
before the inauguration--that would be very impressive to the people.
P said he would mention that for the first time he revealed what had
before been diplomatically classified material; that he wanted the people
to know. P said to K that he wanted him to get all the Rogers and Lodge
contacts so that we could put that in. K pointed out that Lodge, Habib,
and Rodgers had had many meetings and he (K) had also--that that should
be mentioned, and then the P should list all the things he did. K can list
secret contacts.

P said in the Joint Chiefs meeting on Saturday [Oct. 11] he was going to
let Wheeler give a report; said he was going to force them to talk about
Vietnam. He wants the discussion to be about that. K said Wheeler should
give about 10 minutes on Vietnam, and the P said then he would ask them
what to do about Vietnam. P said they would probably give ~~the~~ him the
standard answers about the 42-month plan, and he would say that was no good.
K said they should believe that P is serious about the November 1 plan;
if not, they won't give him any planning cooperation. Must be careful about

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telling them it's inadequate; they're terribly sensitive.

K said he thinks they really by November we ought to be in as good shape as possible. P said yes, it's got to be ready. P said whether the United States will be able to see this thing through at the present level is a question, but if they escalate, we have got to respond. K said if we can keep casualties down over the next four weeks it will be good. But if they go up dramatically, we have an excuse for what we are ~~going~~ planning to do.

P said Laird put out the word--that he had changed the orders--thank God that he did. I told _____ that I changed them when I talked to Abrams--I am not going to let Rogers get credit for what we thought up. We changed the orders. K said yes, the P did it on the plane to Saigon.

P said the best news all day is the Cambodian strike. He said he is convinced--he knows K disagrees with him on this--but he is convinced that this is more important than anything else. P said bombing in the North was _____. Here we are hitting them and hurting them and they don't get anything out of it. K said that they had found a new area, just north. Same rate of explosion, something like 70 secondaries. P said "suppose it blows in Cambodia." P said, we could just say we were just hitting areas on the boarder. K said we can stop it at any time. P said should we; K said I don't think we should. P said it indicates a certain toughness to them. K said we might stop it as we get closer to the first [of November]. P said why not stand down everything. K said you get into the same flap that you did last time. P: this time just stand down and don't say why. K said I think the best thing on the third is just to give a straight account. It's a damned impressive record.