

Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
Folder List

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>No Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
48	35	6/29/1971	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Buchanan to Kemp RE: Briefing Memo for use in Facing McCloskey regarding Vietnam. 22 pgs.

HW 01

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING
E.O. 12065, Section 6-102

By _____ NARS, Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM TO JACK KEMP

FROM: Pat Buchanan

June 29, 1971

Having witnessed your appearance with McCloskey on the Cavett show -- where the host was sycophantic in his introduction of your opponent -- the following observations I think are in order.

First, suggest strongly that there be less agreement with McCloskey, and more probing, challenging of his positions, with questions thrown back at him. There needs to be more of an adversary proceeding -- gentlemanly contentiousness.

Secondly, suggest making the thrusts shorter and sharper -- and force him to respond. Example:

#

Now, Pete, you just accused the United States of waging war against the people of Laos, against the people of Cambodia, against the people of Vietnam. Now, that's false, Pete and you know it. Both the legitimate government and the people of Cambodia are fighting for their lives against external North Vietnamese aggression -- and they have welcomed American assistance. In fact they have asked for more. The government of Laos fully approves of what the United States is doing in that country; they are asking for our assistance -- because they know that the one existing threat to their national independence and their freedom

does not come from the Americans ten thousand miles away -- it comes from the North Vietnamese, their historic enemies, who have thousands of ground troops occupying their country and attempting to overthrow their government.

The truth is peace that everyone in Southeast Asia wants peace -- except the North Vietnamese. Every nation in Southeast Asia is fighting to defend its homeland -- except the North Vietnamese.

The Laotian Government has asked for American military assistance; the Cambodian Government wants American military assistance; the South Vietnamese Government has asked for American assistance -- that is why it is being given. No one, Pete, has asked for North Vietnamese troops to come into their country -- and because they are there, on wars of aggression -- that is why the fighting continues in Southeast Asia.

American pilots are not fighting for conquest -- Pete -- they're fighting to prevent it -- and you know it.

#

The Americans are trying to "save face."

We're not trying to "save face," Pete; we're trying to do what we did in Korea where you fought -- save freedom from Asian communist aggression.

#

The soldiers on the other side are fighting with more courage and capacity than the South Vietnamese.

Just a minute, Pete. You and I know they have found Viet Cong boys of fifteen chained to their machine guns. Some of those tanks that went into battle in Laos for the enemy were sealed -- from the outside. North Vietnamese troops are given rice wine to get drunk before battles.

Sure, they have fought with courage. But the South Vietnamese have fought with great courage as well. You seem to forget that for every American killed in action -- three South Vietnamese have died. You forget that they have been fighting and dying for ten years. That is a terrible injustice to say, after all their suffering, they don't care about freedom. Brown people care about freedom just as much as white people.

And we don't judge the merit of a cause on whether it produces better soldiers. The Germans were the best soldiers in Europe, the Japanese soldiers were courageous and brave -- so were the North Koreans.

But the quality of the German, Japanese and North Korean soldier does not make fascism right. It does not make Japanese Imperialism right. It does not make Asian communism right.

As for the South Vietnamese troops -- they are being called cowardly by the same kind of people who used to say that black

Americans didn't make good soldiers, that South Koreans could never be taught to fight -- we now find that American blacks are among the best soldiers in Vietnam; and that the South Koreans have become among the best soldiers in Asia -- and the South Vietnamese are becoming fine soldiers in their own right. That is why the military situation today -- with 250,000 Americans in Vietnam is even better than it was three years ago -- when five hundred and fifty thousand Americans were in Vietnam. Your slurs about the South Vietnamese, Pete, are unjust and unfair to those people, and their army.

#

They have destroyed some 307 villages in I Corps area --
this is the sort of thing for which General Jodl was hung, after he did this to Norway.

Pete, for you to compare the conduct of American Army in Vietnam with that of Nazi General Staff is really a moral outrage, an unpardonable slander. I Corps is not some remote area of the South Vietnam. It is where the DMZ is located; it is the home of A Shau Valley, the main invasion route. It contains Khe Sanh and the jump-off point into Laos; it is at the outlet of the Ho Chi Minh Trail -- in short, it is perhaps the major battlefield of South Vietnam today and in the future.

If the Americans have moved those villagers out of their villages -- then it might be because that is necessary for their own safety. To shift people out of a battle area is different

than moving them into slave labor camps. Let me quote you Secretary General U Thant, who called on all belligerents less than a year ago (Sept. 1970)

"to ensure that civilians are removed from or kept out of areas, likely to place them in jeopardy or to expose them to the hazards of warfare."

That was the Secretary General. Pete, you're trying to have it both ways. First, you condemn American pilots when a village is damaged by American air power -- then you condemn Americans when they relocate the villagers out of the battle zones. Under your rules, America could never fight and win a war.

Even in Korea, Pete, where you served -- there were two million, that's right, two million civilian casualties -- and millions upon millions of refugees. These are inevitable in wartime.

#

In the last show McCloskey said that we are going to continue the bombing to "force them to submit." If he uses this again, simple response:

Pete, no one is trying to force North Vietnam to submit to anything -- we are trying to prevent them from forcing South Vietnam to submit to a communism they don't want; that's what this war is all about. No one is trying to overthrow Hanoi's Government -- they're trying to overthrow the Laotian Government, Cambodian Government, the South Vietnamese Government. It is not the Laotians, Cambodians and South Vietnamese who

are sending massive invasion armies into the North -- the armies of invasion are coming out of the North into the South. Submission is what the North is after -- free and open elections, free from submission, is what America is fighting for -- and you know that as well as I.

#

AUTHORITY ON THE WAR

McCloskey repeatedly says that the President is waging an illegal war because the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution has been repealed -- that there is no constitutionality for what he is doing.

When RN took office there were 550,000 Americans in Vietnam; when that Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was repealed there were still hundreds of thousands of Americans in Vietnam. The President is bringing them out on his timetable -- and Congressional approval for that is inherent in the fact that Congress continues to vote him every single dollar he needs to do so. If Congress wants all American activity halted in Southeast Asia -- let Congress cut off all funds for Southeast Asia -- but Congress has refused to do that -- it has been giving the President the dollars he needs, and in giving the dollars, they are giving him their approval in the most meaningful way that approval can possibly be given. That is where the President continues to get his authority.

Pete, you ought to know about undeclared limited wars -- you fought in one in Korea.

#

DON RIEGLE

McCloskey quotes Riegle repeatedly to the effect that the President allegedly told Riegle that following his election he would end the war in six months.

The ridiculousness of this is apparent. First, the President said no such thing. And if he had, he would have said it to his personal family, his closest advisers, his ~~White House~~ staff, or his closest colleagues in the Congress -- not to an ~~Administra-~~^{Campaign}~~tion~~ outsider, and junior Congressman like Mr. Riegle. ~~The likelihood is far less that the President would confide this incredible secret to an obscure Congressional dove -- than that Congressman Riegle has been smoking something lately.~~

UNCLE HO, THE PATRIOT

Ho Chi Minh has been described by McCloskey as a great national patriot and hero, trying to bring all his people under single rule. But in that sense Adolph Hitler was a great German patriot and hero, for he too tried to bring all the German people -- in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Poland and the Rhineland -- under Berlin's domination.

But we judge people not just on their nationalism -- Ho was a nationalist and Hitler was a nationalist. But on their objectives -- Nazism in one case and Communism in the other -- and on their means -- atrocity and aggression in both cases. What Hitler did to the Jews is precisely what Ho would have done to the Catholics had they not fled into the South by the hundreds of thousands. As it was, thousands died in Uncle Ho's agrarian reform -- after his victory over the French. And while the Communist revolutionaries are in power in Hanoi, what happened

to the anti-communist Vietnamese revolutionaries who fought against the French?

McCLOSKEY IN KOREA

In the Korean War at times there were orders to shoot anyone in civilian clothes found wandering around at night.

He may remember the anti-guerrilla operation effort that was tagged Operation Ratkiller in those less euphemistic times.

In the Korean War, nearly two million civilian casualties were recorded. God only knows how many Koreans, North and South, were made homeless. The point is, Pete, that in any war, there are refugees and in modern wars, they are inevitable.

But to suggest that America in this war, or in that Korean War, deliberately sought to create those refugees is false and malicious.

Let me add another point. You indicate that America has used more bombs in Southeast Asia than in all the Second World War. To me this is proof itself that America is deliberately avoiding civilian targets -- taking special precautions to avoid wounding or injuring the innocent. In one attack American and British bombers killed hundreds of thousands of Germans in Dresden, in the great fire raid. It is a testament to the fact that we are fighting a limited war that we have deliberately held back from such bombing against Hanoi and Haiphong -- that we have not destroyed the dikes in North Vietnam, as we did not destroy the dams in North Korea.

MCCLOSKEY IN LAOS

Pete came back home telling us that the Ambassador had lied to him, that the Deputy Chief of Mission had lied to him, the military lied to him, the State Department lied to him, the Catholic priest who was his interpreter had not told him the truth. It seems, Pete, that the only people who supposedly told you the truth are the ones who made statements supporting the conclusions you went over there with. After all, didn't you announce as hard fact that we were following a policy of bombing villages -- even before you went over to investigate for yourself. Isn't it a fact that you heard a great deal while in Laos contradicting your views -- but have refused to relay those thoughts to the American people -- for fear it would weaken your case. In short, isn't it true that you haven't told us the whole truth?

Questions:

Pete, while in Laos, I understand high Laotian officials told you they supported the American bombing policy, that they needed and they wanted it continued. That, if it stopped, NVN would overrun the country. Weren't you deceiving the American people, when you failed to come home and relay that message to the American people? Why didn't you mention this critical factor?

You have stated that when Ambassador Sullivan was replaced by Ambassador Godley -- our policy on bombing was changed, and bombing became indiscriminate. How can you say this when Ambassador Sullivan himself -- in testimony to Congress -- has denied it? How can you categorically accuse of falsehood an Ambassador, a DCM, the State Department, the military and a President who has been there 15 years -- when you were only in Laos forty-eight hours?

NOTES

Pete McCloskey was in favor of declaring war against Korea if Korea didn't return the Pueblo and the crew of the Pueblo.

Yes, occasionally, American bombs have fallen by mistake upon innocent civilians -- but they have also fallen by mistake upon South Vietnamese and American troops. The inevitable errors of combat do not constitute a policy of atrocity such as that practiced by the enemy and employed in the massacre of five thousand people in cold blood in the city of Hue.

The President is de-escalating in two years what the Democrats escalated for five.

This is not Nixon's War -- but it will be Nixon's Peace.

WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

We were told that meaningful negotiations would follow if we had a bombing halt.

We were told that meaningful negotiations would follow if we would admit the VC to the conference table.

We were told that meaningful negotiations would follow if we announced unilateral withdrawal of American troops.

We were lied to, misled all three times by the enemy.

And we should take no more on faith from an enemy in whom no sane man would place his faith.

If the enemy wants to show good faith -- why don't they start treating American prisoners of war like human beings instead of pawns in a game.

Why do they refuse to release the sick and wounded?

Hanoi is the kind of regime even its sick and wounded soldiers apparently don't want to go home to.

DECEPTION

One of McCloskey's repeated charges is that the Administration "deceives" the American people, that it "has now perfected the art of keeping information from the people and their elected representatives."

This can be turned into a direct attack on McCloskey himself. First, a simple statement that, the five times the President has pledged to bring home thousands of American troops, these troops have come home. When he went into Cambodia he told the American people he would be out in sixty days, he was out in sixty days. He told the American people he had a plan to end American involvement in this war -- and that is precisely what he has accomplished. Since he took office, three hundred thousand American troops have been removed from the Vietnam War. American war dead is down to around ten percent of what it was when he took office -- that is what I call keeping your commitments.

But, since we are talking about deception -- let's bring up your own visit to Laos and Southeast Asia. When you came back, you reported on one refugee survey you had found, you

failed to mention that there were two others that gave a different view. You failed to mention that these surveys also reported that 95 percent of the Laotian refugees would not return to their homes under Communist rule -- even if peace came. You failed to indicate that while in Laos you told the American Ambassador you were satisfied that it was not American policy to bomb villages -- and then you went to a press conference and said precisely the opposite. Further, you attempted to disguise a Life photographer and members of your private press entourage as "staff members." In other words, Pete, from the record you are guilty of the very lying and deception which you have charged to the United States Government. How can we believe you when you came back and reported only those facts and figures and arguments which tended to support your view -- and ignored the massive evidence there was that refuted all you had to say.

CORRUPT GOVERNMENT ARGUMENT

The United States is fighting to keep in power a corrupt regime of Thieu-Ky which is no better than Hanoi's, which shuts down newspapers and locks up political prisoners.

Abraham Lincoln imposed censorship on American papers in the Civil War, this is no argument. In Great Britain in World War II, there was a suspension of elections. What we are dealing with here is a nation without democratic traditions that has developed these decisions even during a war against both internal and external aggression.

Yes, papers have been censored in the South; but in the North, there is no free press whatsoever. In the South, there is freedom of religion for Catholics and Buddhists alike. In the North there is no freedom of religion. In the South, there are village elections, there are provincial elections, there are presidential elections. President Thieu was elected over eight other candidates in the only free national election ever held in that part of the world. By the way, Pete, who elected Pham Van Dong? In the South, there are many opposition parties; in the North there is none.

Nine hundred thousand refugees fled from the rule of Ho Chi Minh when he took power in 1954 -- you find thousands who have fled south -- how many Vietnamese have fled into Communist country -- even their own prisoners of war are too terrified to return home. That is the worst indictment of a regime I have ever seen. Can you imagine all but five of the American prisoners refusing repatriation if they had the chance.

"Can we honestly say today that the Thieu-Ky regime, with its seizure of newspapers, its number two presidential candidate in jail, its repression of dissent -- represents a higher order of freedom for the South Vietnamese than would government from Hanoi?" -- McCloskey, Washington Monthly, April, 1971.

McCLOSKEY ON REFUGEES

(a) Eighty percent of all bombing in Laos is done against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, where no one lives -- and where the only casualties are enemy troops and engineers who are moving supplies to kill American men.

(b) Even Mr. Harriman will concede that in Laos, the war there is one of aggression by the North Vietnamese who violated the Geneva Accords the day they signed it.

(c) All American air support is being done not to wage war against Laos, but to wage war against those committing aggression against Laos, against Cambodia, against South Vietnam, and against the remaining American troops in Southeast Asia.

(d) Eighty-five percent of the enemy troops in Laos are North Vietnamese -- if there were no Communist ground forces rampaging through Northern Laos, and using Southern Laos as an avenue of aggression -- there would be no American planes overflying the country. Pete, instead of making demand after demand on the American Government, attack after attack on the American President -- why don't you devote just one speech to the people really responsible for this war and its continuation to the aggressors in Hanoi.

(e) What of the 20 percent of the bombs used in Northern Laos -- where the only American in danger of being killed is a CIA agent.

First, the main targets in the North are roadway and storage areas -- they are not villages. These are hill people; and their villages are on the hillsides; and the American attacks are directed against road targets.

Secondly, there is a standing rule that American bombers without explicit permission do not bomb within five hundred yards of any individual village.

Third, McCloskey says that most of the villagers left in 1968 and 1969 -- yet Mr. Nixon was not even President in 1968, and in 1969 until July 12 -- two years ago -- Mr. Godley did not become the Ambassador. Mr. Sullivan was.

Fourth, I read you the testimony of Mr. Sullivan himself on American policy -- and Mr. McCloskey I want to know if you think he is a liar -- as you have implied most of the other American officials are serving in that outpost in Laos.

(attached)

Fifth, McCloskey only interviewed a handful (16 at most) of the refugees, from a single area where battles had raged back and forth -- and from this he extrapolated war crimes against the American air force -- and he has nothing to back those outrageous charges.

Sixth, his colleague, Rep. Waldie, indicated that the refugee camps he saw were remarkably well run; and that casualties and fatalities seemed at a minimum -- why did Mr. McCloskey see fit to ignore this bit of evidence when he brought home his testimony.

Seventh, can you tell us, Pete, why you announced your verdict to the New York Times about American actions in Laos before you went there for forty-eight hours, and came racing home to be on Sunday television to announce your findings -- Do you think the country can believe you went to Vietnam with an open mind?

CIVIL WAR ARGUMENT

One of McCloskey's repeated arguments is that the war in Vietnam is a "Civil War" like the American Civil War, that "in both conflicts the South broke away and the North fought to reunite a country that essentially belongs to them."

Counter Arguments:

1. "Pete, the difference between the two is basically this. In our Civil War, one of the goals of the North was to put an end to the slavery of 3 million black Americans. In the Vietnamese Civil War, the North is attempting to impose political slavery upon 17 million people who have fought ten years to prevent it."

2. If the Communist North has a right to "re-unite" the country under Hanoi's domination -- then Saigon has the same right to re-unite the country under non-communist rule. Would you agree to that?

3. If Hanoi has the right to use force to unite the nation under Hanoi's rule -- then, by God, Saigon has the right to use military force to defend itself.

4. If Hanoi is right in using force to bring the South under Communist control -- then North Korea had the right to

use force to bring South Korea under Communist rule -- yet, Mr. McCloskey, you were part of the American military force sent to South Korea to prevent precisely that unification under militant Communist rule. What you are condemning in 1971 is the same thing you and hundreds of thousands of Americans fought to prevent in 1951 -- the aggression of an Asian Communist power, against an Asian people that wants no part of Communist.

5. Hanoi has no more right to use force to bring the people of South Vietnam under its power than does East Germany have a right to use military force to bring West Germany under its power.

PHOTOGRAPHS

McCloskey says he was denied photographs of any villages standing in Laos behind Pathet Lao lines.

Facts: US Embassy offered to provide him with photographs. McCloskey offered a flight north of the Plain of Jars in the site 50 and 32 -- and to Luang Prabang to interview refugees. He was offered the opportunity to overfly the enemy held city of Attapeu in Southern Laos, in enemy hands for more than a year. All these were designed to show him that there were many villages and towns in enemy territory not destroyed. He turned down all offers.

Reason he did not see villages along roads in Northern Laos is that rarely have there been any -- Northern Laotian people live on hills and mountains -- do not make their villages in the valleys where the roads run.

THE SURVEYS

The surveys McCloskey got said several things:

The first dealing with people displaced by the combat on the Plain of Jars says 49 percent of the people there left their homes for fear of bombing -- 51 percent for other reasons, including dislike of NVN/PL.

The second in the Ban Xon area found 28 percent attributed their status to fear of bombing. Seven percent to fear of death by bombing -- fifty percent said they left because they did not like the Pathet Lao.

Query? Why did McCloskey not make public the second survey as well as the first?

Also, there are not seven hundred thousand refugees in Laos that is the number of people who have had to move once -- there are three hundred thousand, and the primary reason that they are refugees is the military action of the enemy -- according to Ambassador Sullivan.

No substantive change in rules has taken place since Amb. Sullivan was replaced by Ambassador Godley -- that is the testimony of both men.

McCloskey talks of the horrors of cluster bombs and white phosphorous. Horrible weapons -- like most weapons of modern war. But what he does not state is what was included in the survey he mentioned that the number of civilians actually killed by such weapons in Laos is "extremely low."

The Ambassador's guiding rule -- and both he and the Air Force concur -- is that before any village can be destroyed they have to have convincing aerial photography that it is no longer inhabited.

McCloskey says we are destroying their food supplies by bombing the villages -- but a major food supply area is the enemy held Attapeu and that has not been destroyed -- and McCloskey refused to overfly the area.

HAVE WE A RIGHT TO HIT A NEUTRAL COUNTRY

North Africa was neutral in World War II -- we invaded there. Occupied France was neutral; we invaded there. Belgium declared its neutrality. We invaded there.

There is no obligation in international law for American troops to sit in their bunkers as clay pigeons while enemy units prepare an assault from privileged sanctuary -- and after such assault, return to their immune provinces. We did not attack Cambodia -- we attacked enemy forces, illegally occupying Cambodian terrain as staging areas for attacks on American men. Nothing in international law requires Americans or South Vietnamese to grant privileged sanctuary to enemy forces surrounding it and attacking it from three frontiers.

NEW YORK TIMES CONTROVERSY

Here as in his continued insistence on an honorable end to Vietnam -- what the President has done is not the popular thing but the right thing, the presidential thing.

The Government could not sit back and wait until the New York Times decided for itself what top-secret document should be made public, and what not. The law appeared violated; and the government -- whether it is popular or not -- had to move to enforce the law. Nixon could only have been helped politically by what was revealed; he acted not in his political interest -- but the national interest.

The policies of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations are policies of escalation -- the President is the reverse -- de-escalation, getting out of war we entered when Democrats controlled the White House, the Departments and both Houses of Congress by huge margins. This is not Nixon's war -- but it will be Nixon's peace.

The deception charged against the Johnson Administration is something for which they must answer -- as for the President he has kept every pledge of withdrawal; he came out of Cambodia when he said he would come out; he is implementing his plan for peace as he promised in 1968. The proof is in the pudding. The President has done what he promised. Let others answer for their own record.

What About Freedom of ^{Press} President to Publish.

First Amendment has limits. No right to publish information that would cost the lives of American men -- such as Cambodian invasion plans or information on American Polaris deployment. Surely, it would have been wrong had the New York Times taken the atomic secrets of the Rosenbergs and published them on the

front page -- where the limit lies, let's leave it -- as the President has -- with the Supreme Court.

TWO FINAL POINTS

If McCloskey brings up the "horrors" of this war theme, suggest the following:

Sure, war is hell. We knew that a century ago. But far fewer have died in the bombing in Asia, than in the last war. Mr. Frost will recall the British fire-bombing of the city of Dresden which killed two hundred thousand Germans in a matter of days if not hours. Nothing like that has been attributed to the Americans in Vietnam. The cities of Hanoi and Haiphong have not been destroyed. Enormous tonnage has been dropped -- but millions have not died, because the Americans are not deliberately killing civilians; they have sought to reduce civilian casualties to the minimum. And for all the horrors of war, we know there is something worse, and that is the loss of freedom -- perhaps forever; and that is why the South Vietnamese are fighting on; and that is why we are helping them. When Mr. McCloskey says, it isn't worth it -- he means the freedom of the people of South Vietnam, of Cambodia, of Laos, isn't worth it to him -- maybe, Pete, they would rather make that decision themselves. And they have made it with their courage.

Finally, Pete, though I respect you I must say this:

With your charges that the American diplomats in Laos -- who cannot defend themselves here -- have all lied and deceived you and the American people. With your allegation of war crimes

to American officers in Vietnam. With your charges of deception, and in effect war-mongering for political purposes by a President who has brought a detente to the Middle East, opened the door to China, initiated SALT negotiations with the Russians, brought half our men home -- and cut our casualties by almost ninety percent -- I think you are guilty of demagoguery; you are guilty I believe of that smear tactic long associated with the name of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Patrick J. Buchanan