

~~SECRET~~

January 23, 1969

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT - Evening Report

1. Canadian and Italian Recognition of Communist China - Within the last 24 hours the Canadians have informed us that Ottawa has decided to open discussions with Peking on the possibility of establishment of diplomatic relations, and the Italians have advised us that Foreign Minister Nenni will announce publicly within the next two days his government's intention to explore establishing relations. I have authorized Bill Bundy to talk to the Italian Ambassador tomorrow to stress our concern for the timing and implications of the Italian move, and will make a similar approach to the Canadian Ambassador. While both moves are probably irrevocable, we need to make these representations to satisfy the Nationalists and to strengthen us in our arguments with them not to break relations with Italy and Canada. While officials of both Italy and Canada have expressed to us an interest in continuing diplomatic ties with the Republic of China, our Ambassador in Taipei has been told that the ROC would stick to its policy of breaking relations if Communist China is recognized.
2. Harriman Report on Paris Negotiations - Governor Harriman today briefed the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on National Security on the current status of the Paris negotiations and the issues involved. He indicated frustration at the slow pace of negotiations to date but said his private talks with the Hanoi delegation encouraged him to believe that they sincerely want to reach a settlement of the war. He cautioned the Members of the difficulties ahead and stated his willingness to assist the Administration in any way possible -- as he has in private conversations with me and Elliot Richardson. The Members expressed no basic disagreement with the course of action now being taken.
3. Bunker Kathmandu Visit (Jan. 25-31) - I have authorized Ambassador Bunker to take a short vacation with his wife in Kathmandu -- a visit break he postponed until after the inauguration because of reports that the North Vietnamese might launch intensive military attacks. The Ambassador will leave Saigon on Saturday and return the following Friday. Deputy Chief of Mission Berger will be in charge. Bunker will have received the NSC papers on which we wish his comments before leaving, so the work can be undertaken immediately and reviewed when he returns without stretching our deadlines.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Section 3.5

DLND 07-19/14950 Re-Auth: 4/23/2015
By RM NARA, Date 6/27/2016

[1 of 2]

4. Czech Crisis - Our latest reports reflect that Czechoslovakia is experiencing the most serious and ominous crisis since the Soviet-led invasion of that country on August 20-21. There have been unconfirmed rumors that Warsaw Pact troops will hold exercises in Czechoslovakia during April. Throughout the country the public is demonstrating in support of student, intellectual, and trade union demands that media censorship cease, elections be held, and the distribution of the Soviet-controlled Zpravy newspaper be stopped. The demonstrations are centered around the politically-motivated self-immolation on January 16 of Jan Palach, a young Prague student. Government and Party leaders have warned the people that if anarchy prevails the pro-Soviet communists will take over. We are preparing contingency plans which will include, among other things, a suggested statement to the press, possible UN actions, instructions to our NATO representative and talking points with Soviet officials.

5. Guyana/Venezuela Border Problem - I talked today with our Ambassador to Venezuela, Maurice Bernbaum, and told him to make sure that the Venezuelans are under no mistaken impression of our negative view toward any breach of peace resulting from Venezuela's claim to Guyana territory.

6. Richardson and Pedersen Confirmed - The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Elliot Richardson and Dick Pedersen today. They will be sworn in tomorrow afternoon.


William P. Rogers