

TELCON

President/Kissinger

8:07 pm 3/17/70

P: On this Israeli thing, I think you should play it that this is a damn good deal and we will play ourselves to the hilt and we want them to play theirs. I will re-assure them.

K: If they don't get a reassurance on the 8 & 20 they will kick over the whole deal.

P: I will assure them of the 8 & 20.

K: They don't want to be in a endless negotiation. That's my guess. I put it to Rabin very strongly after our talk at lunch and he seemed extremely disturbed.

P: The 8 & 20 -- I will back it up to the bureaucracy. Let him play our game. It's very important.

K: Right.

P: The other thing is that it's a pretty cheap shot to allow the generals to be put on the rack for the delay business. It was covered up because it was in the interest of the country.

K: My first instinct was the same but some of the stories are awful. ~~4~~ 400 people were killed there and it on for days. Laird could have sat on the same thing.

P: Peers is goddam is trying to make himself look good while he kicks his colleagues around.

K: The only way you could have stopped it -- Laird bucked it over here. You couldn't have stopped it.

P: What does Wheeler think?

K: He has no guts. It goes against my grain. I don't think the public likes it.

P: We know why it was done. These boys being killed ~~with~~ by women carrying that stuff in their satchels. What does Haig think?

K: Haig said somebody had to go and this is a good way of getting rid of it.

P: Let's get it out of the way. Tell Zeigler not to comment on it. Did you do a briefing tonight on Laos?

K: No, I'm going to do it tomorrow at 11:00.

P: The question here is do you want Americans by the thousands killed. The

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P (cont.): game is to stop them.

K: That's right. Its the big came that I'm engaged in. I can't tell them that. They are on the verge of a big (decision). It won't take much for them to back off and they might but they are closer now than they have ever been and I think they will do it soon.

P: Call Wheeler every day -- tell Haig to do it -- and find out what we can hit.

K: That's right. I ~~don't~~ wouldn't hit in NVN without provocation but if they provoke ~~me~~, I would.

P: That;s what I meant.

K: It's best to err on the side of strength.

P: When are we meeting with Rabin again?

K: I don't have a time from Chapin -- I can't do it before 11:30 and he can't do it before 10:00. I think he has gone back for new instructions.

P: I have a Cabinet meeting at 10:00. How about 1:00?

K: We will make it at 1:00. I will have him see me at 12:30.

P: I will keep 1:00 free.