

ORK TIMES, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1966.

nce by President, McNamara and Gen. Wheeler



Associated Press Wirephoto

ITS OF ELECTION: President Johnson at his news conference said he was not altogether unhappy with election's outcome.

months of August of between 37,000 represents, therefore,

an Army outfit managed to defeat and seriously damage a North Vietnamese force.

Successful Operations

Today, the Operation Attleboro, in Tainan Province, near the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon, General Bill Depew and troops of the First Infantry Division, the First Cavalry Division and the 25th Infantry Division have been engaging in very successful operations against the North Vietnamese troops.

I was able to report to the President that the war in my judgment continues in a very favorable fashion. General Westmoreland retains the initiative and in every operation to date, he has managed to defeat the enemy. I also commented on the very satisfactory logistic build-up which we checked into during our visit to Vietnam. I believe that the logisticians, the engineers, the ordnance types, the quartermasters, and so on, are perhaps the unsung heroes of this particular war.

I would recommend to any of you who would like to check my words to visit Cameron Bay, among other places. In brief, then, I was able to report to the President my satisfaction from a military point of view as to the progress of the war. I also told him something that he, of course, saw for himself during his visit to South Vietnam, and that is the outstanding morale, the outstanding dedication and determination

House somewhat exceeded what our better people who had reports on it would indicate, although I was clear to point out that they received the reports from the candidates themselves.

The margin was some five to 10 more than the total amount that we had anticipated, as I told you in a press conference the other day and as I told you at Johnson City.

A 2-Party System

There are some things that I think we ought to observe. First, as a good American, I think we are all glad to see a healthy and competent existence of the two-party system. I think there is no question but what the other party strengthened its position.

Second, I believe, as the leadership of the Republican party, President Eisenhower, Senator Dirksen and others believe, that it will not in any way change our course of action in connection with security matters.

I have had rather good cooperation from the opposition party, as I have stated on a good many occasions on all matters affecting the security of this nation, and I expect to continue to have that.

Third, while you regret to see some effective Congressmen—and certainly Senator Douglas, an effective Senator—leave Washington, not many Presidents have been President for very long with 248, 249 or 250 members of the House and 64 members of the Senate.

As I said to Mrs. Johnson last night, it just looks like we will have to get by with a 248 margin, which will be some 63 margin, and in the Senate almost two to one.

I hope what we propose will be sufficiently meritorious to command a majority vote.

Recalls Senate Days

The most effective Democratic operation that I experienced in the days I served there was when we only had a one-man margin in the Senate. There were less absentees and more people there.

Of course, anyone would rather have 67 on his side than 64. But I would rather have 64 than 36. I would rather have 248 than 145.

I would be less than frank if I didn't tell you that I am sorry we lost any Democratic seats. But I would also tell you that over a period of years the American people have a way, I guess, of balancing things.

When the pendulum swings one way, as it did in 1964 pretty strongly, it has a tendency to swing back and somewhat balance it, as it did in 1938 when we had an unprecedented majority of Democrats, and in 1938 it swung back.

So while we were disappointed to see some of our friends lose, I can't think a President should be too unhappy after he had had the results that we have had in 1963, 1964, 1965 and 1966. We have had a reasonably good time to make our recommendations and to get most of them acted upon.

It may be pertinent to observe that when I became President in 1963 we had about 256 members of the House. We will probably have five, six or seven less now. We had a reasonably good program, as you will remember, in 1963 and 1964.

I would expect that we will have our recommendations favorably acted upon in most instances, where they are deserving.

I would like to point out one other

In our state we lost two, in Virginia we lost two, in Wisconsin we lost two.

But as I have observed to you before, The Christian Science Monitor made a study of this question.

Saville Davis came to my office and brought me the results of some of his studies. He carried them back to 1840. They showed an average of 41 per year. Some of the high years were with President Roosevelt, when he carried every state of the union, except Maine and Vermont, in 1936. I believe he lost 86 votes in 1938. That was about the time I came into Congress. I remember that very clearly.

On other occasions they have posted 60. President Eisenhower served only two years before he lost the Congress entirely.

As a matter of fact, a fellow working for me the other morning, after listening the night before, thought we had lost the Congress entirely. As a matter of fact, he thought all Democrats were gone.

I asked him what he thought about the election, and he said, "I am sure sorry to see them take the House of Representatives and the Senate."

Well, we still have 248 or 250 members. That is something to bear in mind. They may have to be a little closer knit. They may have to have fewer absentees and things.

But a President that can't lead with a 250-85 would have his problems with 260 or 270. I am hopeful that most of our legislation that we recommended has been acted upon reasonably bipartisan. I have no reason to think it won't be next year.

13. Time of Surgery

Q. Mr. President, is there anything further you can tell us at this time about when and where your surgery will take place?

A. No. It will take place next week. So you don't have to worry about this week.

Where, the doctors have not decided yet. We have several doctors living in various places that will need to be here. Mr. Burkley is now conferring with them and talking to them, trying to get their schedule on a date that they can agree on, sometime, we hope, in less than the 15- to 20-day period that we originally thought.

Just what day it will be, we don't know. I think you can be comfortable over the weekend here, at least through Sunday. But we don't know whether you will be busy at a hospital in the early part of the week right now or not. Just as soon as we do, we will tell you. We will give you ample notice.

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us something about your physical comfort now? Are you feeling well?

A. Yes, I feel fine. I still have the same problems. This would just be a repeat. If you look at the last transcript, we have a little huskiness in the voice you may be able to observe and a little pulling on the side, the protrusion.

It is actually a pull on the inner wall where the incision was made. It is like you have a little weight on your arm. In carrying it around, it pulls on you, and sometimes when you get up it bothers you.

I have not been wearing a back rest for the last two or three days. It is a little more comfortable. I forgot to put it on. If I had known you were going to be here on this occasion this morning, I could have dressed for it. But it is more comfortable when you don't wear it.

14. New Programs

against the Soviet offensive systems as well. We concluded that it is much too early to make a decision for deployment against the Chinese. The decision has not arrived at a decision on any other deployment. We will continue our discussions on this subject in the weeks to come.

The Poseidon Missile

Secondly, we discussed the possible production of the Poseidon missile. You may recall that this is a new missile for deployment at sea, the development of which we initiated as part of the fiscal 1967 budget as an insurance program. We estimated at the time this program was presented last year that it would require almost \$2-billion to develop, and several additional billions to deploy.

We recommended, and I believe will present to the Congress, a proposal to produce and deploy that system. This will require a complete refitting of most of our Polaris submarines at a cost somewhat in excess of 60 per cent of the initial cost of those Polaris subs.

Desirable Construction

We then considered the supplement to the 1967 defense budget. As the President reported to you last Saturday, it will be necessary to have such a supplement. The production of aircraft, helicopters, ground ordnance and air ordnance has exceeded our expectation. The combined team of American management and American labor has actually accomplished miracles in the last several months.

That, plus the necessity to consider financing operations in Southeast Asia beyond June 30, 1967, which was the foundation of the 1967 program, will quite clearly require a supplement to the defense budget. We reviewed certain aspects of that.

Finally, we considered the basic policy which we will follow as a foundation for the defense program in fiscal 1968, and upon the President's instructions will defer every possible element of the defense program that can be deferred without adversely affecting our security. This is in order to soften the transition following the termination of hostilities in Southeast Asia, the transition to our peacetime economy.

We will follow, therefore, the same policy in 1968 that we have to some degree to the present. You will remember that in 1966 we were authorized a military construction program of about \$1.2-billion, and have deferred for future start about \$600-million of that.

This represents construction which is desirable, which we need for defense, but which is not required at the moment. We believe that considering the shortage of construction labor and the shortage of construction materials, we are well advised to defer the start of that construction until such time as our economy can both absorb it and benefit from it. We will follow a similar policy in developing the 1968 program.

I think this will mean that, for example, we will defer building up certain inventories of munitions and other equipment, equipment that we don't need at present, that we won't need next year, but which we will require at some time in the future, production of which we can use as a means of softening the impact of the termination of hostilities in Southeast Asia.

I will be very happy to take your questions on anything I have said today or on any other aspect of the defense program.

QUESTIONS

1. Soviet Missile System

Q. Mr. Secretary, did you say that the Soviets were deploying an antibal-

Q. What do you mean by deploying units in the United States.

5. Chinese Threat

Q. How long do you think it would be before you could fully deploy it?

A. Any deployment of such a system would take place over several years. One point I would like to stress to you is that the length of time required to deploy such a system is less than the length of time required for the Chinese Communists to develop nuclear weapons that conceivably could threaten this nation. Therefore, it is not timely to at this time make a decision to deploy such a system to defend against the Chinese Communist threat.

Q. Does Red China have a nuclear antiballistic system?

A. No. The Communist Chinese, as you know, are just in the early stages of the development of nuclear weapons and, so far as we know, and I believe we do know, they have not begun to develop an antiballistic missile system.

6. War in Vietnam

Q. Does this affect the war in Vietnam? A. No, not in the slightest degree.

7. Draft Cutbacks

Q. Mr. Secretary, what effect will your announced draft cutbacks have on our manpower situation other than Vietnam? I am thinking in terms of Europe particularly.

A. We will keep our European forces, and be prepared to keep them, at current levels. Early this year we announced that we were temporarily utilizing 15,000 men from our European forces in the training of the expanded Army in this country.

At the beginning of the year, we had something on the order of 225,000 men in our Army forces in Western Europe. I stated we would draw them down by about 15,000 and replace those men by the end of this year. We are well on the way to doing something.

I have forgotten the exact strength in Western Europe today, but I would think it was on the order of 218,000. By the end of this year, it will be 223,000 or 224,000. We will plan to be prepared to maintain it at that throughout the coming year.

I noticed in the press that I was accused of playing politics by announcing the cut in the draft call last Saturday. I think some might have accused me by playing reverse politics because, of course, what it meant was that we had for the month of November announced a rather heavy draft call in September, and it is not until after the election that we will be cutting the draft as much as we are.

It is customary to announce the draft calls to the Selective Service System by a letter from my office to General Hershey, in the first week of the second preceding month, which meant, of course, that we should have sent the letter to General Hershey on last Saturday or earlier for the month of January.

Actually, because General Wheeler and I had not had an opportunity to discuss this subject with the President, because its size depended in part upon decisions we had not yet had an opportunity to make with respect to possible deployments to South Vietnam in 1967, we deferred that January call until Monday in order that we might complete our discussions with the President on Saturday.

We did so, and we transmitted the letter to General Hershey on Monday. It was for a call of 27,000 for the month of January. That compares with

In total, they would add to December and January an amount sufficient to bring the four-month total to about 162,000, a very substantial reduction.

8. Soviet Capacity

Q. Mr. Secretary, just one more question, if you please, on the ballistic missile system. A. Surely.

Q. In layman's language, does this mean that the Russians now have the capacity to knock down American ballistic missiles but we do not?

A. Certainly not. There is absolutely no question about our capability of penetrating the Soviet defenses with both our missiles and aircraft. There has been no question about that at any time during the past 15 years and there is no question about it now.

There was not any question about it when they erected the anti-aircraft defenses and intended to prevent our bomber aircraft from penetrating. At that time, we had a capability of assuring bomber penetration. There is no question about it now when they are similarly trying to defend against intercontinental ballistic missiles.

9. Manned Bombers

Q. Mr. Secretary, in your summary you did not mention manned bombers and plans for next year's defense budget. What are the plans?

A. No, we did not mention that because we did not discuss that with the President this morning. I have just received within the past two days or three days a report on this subject from the Secretary of the Air Force. We have not had an opportunity yet to analyze it fully in my office and we did not have that on our agenda this morning. This meeting today, which as I say is the third with the President on the subject of the fiscal 1968 program, is but one of several.

I am sure we will request an opportunity to meet on future occasions. Among the subjects we will discuss at that time will, of course, be the possibility of an advanced manned bomber.

If there are no more questions, General Wheeler will comment upon South Vietnam.

WHEELER STATEMENT

As the President mentioned, I discussed with him this morning the progress of the war in South Vietnam. It is interesting to note that it is just about a year ago in a series of battles in the Anbrang Valley near the Cambodian border, General Westmoreland's troops, in this case the First Cavalry Division, defeated, with substantial losses, the North Vietnamese Army, 325th Infantry Division.

Since that time, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong have made a number of efforts to seize the initiative from General Westmoreland's forces. When I say his forces, I am speaking not only of Americans, but also the Australians, the New Zealanders, the Republic of Korea forces and the Republic of Vietnam forces.

In a series of quite extensive battles, Hastings, which took place near the demilitarized zone starting in April, Operation Prairie, which, again, took place and is taking place today, near the demilitarized zone, the Third Marines have managed to frustrate and defeat an attempt at an invasion from North Vietnam into South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese Army forces.

While we were in Vietnam a couple of weeks ago, we visited operations in the vicinity of Phu Kok, where the First Armored Division, a ROK outfit and

that the war is in a very favorable Westmoreland in every operation aged to defeat mented on the build-up which our visit to Westmoreland, the types, the quantities perhaps the particular war.

I would like to visit Cameron in brief, then, the President's military point of view of the war. I think that he, of course, during his visit that is the outstanding dedication of the American of all ranks, from to the G.I.'s, in war.

I think that mally. I will have any questions.

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Q. General, reports today, believe, used no time against special significance.

A. I don't know have to remember in a rating and when mand center of such report. It represents a conventional sophistication responding to them.

Q. Thank you

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I think that is all I have to say formally. I will be glad to try to answer any questions.

10. Use of Gas

Q. General, according to the news reports today, the Vietcong have, I believe, used nonlethal gas for the first time against our troops. Is there any special significance on that action?

A. I don't know that this is true. You have to remember that we left Washington at a rather early hour this morning and when I checked with the command center before I left, I received no such report. If it is true, I would say it represents a certain sophistication, additional sophistication, of their efforts in responding to our offensive against them.

Q. Thank you.

Request by Johnson

THE PRESIDENT: I will be glad to take some questions. I would like to ask the network people or the broadcasting people, if they want to originate some back there in the back. Then I will meet with all of you for extended visits, such visits as you want.

11. Effect of Elections

Q. Mr. President, now that you have had a chance to further evaluate the election returns, how do you see the chances of keeping your Great Society legislation going in the Congress next year?

A. I think it will be more difficult for any new legislation we might propose. I think it is very clear that a House with 295 to 300 Democrats is more likely to approve Democratic recommendations than a House with 245 to 250.

While I don't think it would make any great difference in the Senate, you do have a Senate that is reduced from 67 to 64.

I told Mr. Christian when he asked me yesterday about the election that I thought we lost more seats in the Senate than we had anticipated.

Very frankly, I don't like to ever recommend that we lose any, but I had anticipated a loss of not over one in the Senate, and we lost three, although only one was an incumbent, Senator Douglas.

The Oregon seat was a replacement for Senator Neuberger. The Tennessee seat was a replacement for Senator Bass.

We thought we would lose one, but we lost three. It is pretty difficult to guess when they are voting on 435 people in 50 states what the result will be. But the number of losses in the

what balance it, as it did in 1936 when we had an unprecedented majority of Democrats, and in 1938 it swung back. Some of our friends lose, I can't think a President should be too unhappy after he had had the results that we have had in 1963, 1964, 1965 and 1966. We have had a reasonably good time to make our recommendations and to get most of them acted upon.

It may be pertinent to observe that when I became President in 1963 we had about 256 members of the House. We will probably have five, six or seven less now. We had a reasonably good program, as you will remember, in 1963 and 1964.

I would expect that we will have our recommendations favorably acted upon in most instances, where they are deserving.

I would like to point out one other thing, that on most of the roll-calls on passage of what you would call Great Society bills, we had a good many members of the other party. I expect, if our recommendations are meritorious, that they will command support from some of them in the days ahead.

12. Backlash Vote

Q. Mr. President, on Sunday you made an appeal for the voters to repudiate the white backlash in the election. Could you tell us to what extent you think the backlash did play a part in the voting?

A. That is a little bit difficult to appraise. I don't think I am really in a position to be an authority on just what the result of my appeal was, or the expression of the voters in each of the states.

I just don't have the answer to it. I don't know.

I would say that you could look at the states where you had some problems of that kind and see the action taken. Without getting specific, I think it did play some part, but I wouldn't say it was the only factor at all.

There were a good many factors, if you will look over the list. I think it is only fair to say that the substantial reductions of Democratic Congressmen occurred in states where they had a popular leader of the Republican party.

In Ohio, Governor Rhodes had a great majority and has been a very effective leader of the Republican party, a very popular one and very cooperative with our Administration and with me personally. He made the motion, you will remember, on Vietnam at the Governors' Conference, and things of that kind.

We lost five seats there because he ran hundreds of thousands ahead of his opponent.

The same thing was true in California, where we lost. I believe, three seats because Governor Reagan had a substantial majority in his election.

In Michigan, Governor Romney got almost 60 per cent of the votes.

What happened in the state this time was what happened in the nation when the head of the ticket has a commanding lead. The other men on the ticket sometimes benefit from it.

I am not commenting on the quality of the five Republicans elected, but I don't think they were hurt by the fact that Governor Romney had a 59 or 60 per cent vote.

So Reagan, Rhodes and Romney account for 25 or 30 per cent of the total.

Causes of Vacancies

In other instances you had vacancies and you had men dying before their election. You had men after they had gotten their nomination not running it out — things of that kind, one or two.

now? Are you feeling well?
A. Yes, I feel fine. I still have the same problems. This would just be a repeat. If you look at the last transcript, we have a little huskiness in the voice you may be able to observe and a little pulling on the side, the protrusion.

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I have not been wearing a back rest for the last two or three days. It is a little more comfortable. I forgot to put it on. If I had known you were going to be here on this occasion this morning, I would have dressed for it. But it is more comfortable when you don't wear it.

14. New Programs

Q. In terms of your Great Society program, when the 90th Congress meets, do you think you will have a lot of new programs or are you looking to the future with plans of adding on and expanding the programs that you have had in the last couple of years?

A. We will have recommendations in our State of the Union Message that will expand and enlarge some of the recommendations we have previously made.

Unquestionably, some of them will be new recommendations. I think my principal job right at the moment is to try to find a way to fund the programs we have authorized.

As I said to you in Fredericksburg the other day, we have authorized some 40 new health and education programs. We have quite a problem in funding that many.

We will not fund most of the programs at the amount authorized because we are very anxious to begin slowly and carefully, and form the proper kind of organization before we go the limit, as already approved by the Congress.

I would think that the recommendations this year will be less than the ones of last year, as the ones last year were less than the year before.

But we will have new recommendations. We will be briefing the members of Congress on them from time to time.

I hope to have a chance to visit with most of the new members in the early days of the session, certainly with the leadership of both parties.

I don't anticipate that we are going to have any great trouble. A 65 majority in the House and a 30 majority in the Senate is a reasonable working majority.

As I told you, in six of the eight years the Republicans served, they had a minority in both houses. The Speakers and a the organization and committee chairmen.

So while I must be frank, I would have liked to have seen every Democrat elected but we only lost one incumbent in the Senate. I expect the Senate will get along reasonably well with 64 instead of 67.

I hope the House will be able to. We lost two committee chairmen. We will have a freshman Republican succeeding Judge Smith and a freshman Republican succeeding Mr. Cooley.

But I believe with 250 members, Speaker McCormack, Mr. Albert and Mr. Boggs will be able to get adequate and fair consideration for the President's recommendations.

I think they will be duly acted upon.

15. Move Into Delta

Q. Mr. President, this is not a military question. Would you comment on the reports that American forces may move into the delta? A. No. I don't have anything to speculate on about when, what, or where our forces might move.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.