

SECRET

21 January 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Rostow Luncheon -- Thursday, 30 December 1965

PERSONS PRESENT:

Mr. Walt W. Rostow
Mr. Alain Enthoven, DoD
Mr. Adam Yarmolinsky, DoD
Mr. Fred Wyle, DoD
Mr. Desmond FitzGerald, CIA
Mr. George A. Carver, Jr., CIA
General Goodpaster, JCS
General Lansdale
Mr. U. Alexis Johnson, State
Cdr. Jean Fitzgerald, DoD
Mr. Harold Saunders, NSC Staff
Mr. Leonard Unger, State
Mr. Samuel Berger, State
Col. Robert Ginsburgh, State
Mr. Robert Johnson, State

1. At the discussion session which preceded the actual luncheon, Mr. Rostow developed the thesis which he subsequently wrote up and circulated as a memorandum entitled "Summary of Statement on Politics of Development and Vietnam," 3 January 1966. His essential argument is that, in broad operational terms, the most promising general remedy for the political problems of underdeveloped countries is to be found in the creation of a "big, national -- but not monopolistic -- political party;" that this is particularly true in the case of Vietnam; and that the Vietnam situation has a number of parallels to the situation existing in Korea, from which profitable lessons can be learned.

2. The general discussion following Mr. Rostow's presentation picked up, amplified, and batted about various detailed points in his argument. His general thesis was not severely attacked, but then it hardly classes as a revolutionary new idea. It was pointed out that a distinction needs to be drawn between a mass political organization and an actual political party, the latter requiring a certain legal and institutional framework within which to operate -- a framework which does not now exist in Vietnam. There were

some reservations taken about the direct applicability of certain Latin American examples cited by Mr. Rostow, but on the whole such criticism as was voiced against him was directed largely at points of detail. Ambassador Berger took the floor and gave a lucid resume of the Korean experience in political development over the past five years calling attention to those aspects which were and those which were not directly relevant to the situation in South Vietnam.

3. After the general discussion the meeting broke up for a luncheon which was hosted by Mr. Rostow and attended by Undersecretary Johnson, Ambassador Unger, General Lansdale, General Goodpaster, Mr. FitzGerald, and Mr. Carver. The luncheon conversation was highly informal and devoted primarily to questioning General Lansdale about his assessment of the current political scene in South Vietnam. He was, on the whole, extremely optimistic, somewhat more so than I would consider warranted by the actual situation. He had high praise for General Ky and for General Thang, describing the former as a born politician and natural leader and the latter as a very promising head of the GVN's pacification effort.

GEORGE A. CARVER, JR.
Vietnamese Affairs Staff

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