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McGEORGE BUNDY  
PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Through: Mr. Walt W. Rostow

Subject: Future of Okinawa

The relations between the United States and Japan are currently very good indeed. The Japanese officials like to worry about Vietnam, but in fact they are substantially less troubled about it than they were a year ago. It is true that Vietnam gives the Socialists an easy stick with which to beat the United States, but members of the government respond quite well to a reminder that the United States cannot be expected to engage in appeasement or surrender simply in order to solve political problems which the Japanese themselves ought to handle.

Okinawa is a different matter. For the immediate future, there is no urgent problem and I do not think a single Japanese newspaperman or public official asked me one question about our base there or the treatment of the Okinawans, but between now and 1968 the situation is sure to change. We have about six months in which to frame a careful and forward-looking policy which will allow us to trade with the Japanese effectively.

In essence, the desirable trade would be one which restored Japanese civil government in Okinawa while insuring explicit Japanese acceptance of whatever military rights we need there. The trick here is that we need nuclear rights in Okinawa and that it will be hard for the Japanese to grant them explicitly. (Right now the question does not arise simply because our military rights are unlimited under the terms of the peace treaty.)

Both the Okinawans and the Japanese will be pressing for full civil government, but as of 1966 it would be very difficult for the authorities in Tokyo to admit that they were accepting nuclear weapons on Japanese soil by their own free choice.

Ambassador Reischauer believes that this circle can be squared if we give the Japanese time and if as a government we are ready with our own position ahead of time. As I understand it, there is agreement already that State and Defense will be working on a new Okinawan policy in the coming months. But over the years experience has shown that State and Defense alone do not do a very good job on Okinawa. The problem tends to

remain at a low level in both departments, and at this low level the desires of the diplomats and the military tend to clash with the result that no new agreed policy gets formulated. Like Panama and NATO, Okinawa by its very nature needs to have a White House push.

So I venture to suggest that you might wish to tell Walt Rostow to get his fingers into this one and make sure that you get current and timely information on the progress of the deliberations. There is an additional reason for Presidential interest here because timing may be a quite critical factor in any new decisions on Okinawa, and neither State nor Defense is set up to make the kind of political judgment that a question of timing always presents.

*McG. B. -*

McGeorge Bundy