

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT:

Meeting with John O'Neill,
Vietnam Veterans for a Just Peace
June 16, 1971
4:00 p. m. (10 minutes)

- I. PURPOSE: To congratulate and encourage O'Neill.
- II. BACKGROUND: O'Neill came to Washington two weeks ago to announce the formation of the Vietnam Veterans for a Just Peace -- an organization specifically set up to counter Kerry. O'Neill did a magnificent job, got on all three networks extensively, was on "Face the Nation" June 6th and then withstood a terrific barrage from a hostile crowd on the Cavett Show Thursday and Friday nights. In every TV appearance he strongly defends Vietnam veterans, your Vietnamization policy and has been consistently challenging Kerry to a debate. Kerry has yet to agree.

At the moment O'Neill is very discouraged by the attitudes he has encountered particularly on the Cavett Show last week. He feels that he has done his job and wants to go home to Texas and get away from the eastern establishment. O'Neill plans to start law school at the University of Texas on August 15th. We are trying very hard to keep him fighting because we can continue to keep him out front on TV through the summer months. He has a strong sense of duty and will continue if he feels it is important to you and the country.

O'Neill graduated from the Naval Academy in 1967. He spent four years in the Navy, June 1967 to June 1, 1971, and spent almost three years in the Southeast Asia combat zone receiving two bronze stars for his service there. His father is a retired Rear Admiral.

PARTICIPANTS: John O'Neill and Charles Colson

PRESS PLAN: Ollie Atkins

III. RECOMMENDED TALKING POINTS:

- 1. You have been very impressed with what you have heard of his activities over the past two weeks and you are most appreciative of his very articulate and effective support.**
- 2. He is doing a good job and shouldn't get discouraged. He is performing a great service to other veterans who share his views but have not had the forum to speak out. He is going to run into tough situations but he should keep going because what he is doing is very important for the country and for veterans.**
- 3. You are confident that he, O'Neill, speaks for the veterans; Kerry does not.**
- 4. O'Neill may bring up the importance of establishing a new veterans benefit and education package. He is extremely concerned about the need to get veterans off the unemployment rolls and into schools.**

**RR: You should indicate that you are aware of the problem
and at the present time several plans are being studied.**

Charles W. Colson