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October 20, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE JACK VAUGHN

I had a long talk with Mr. Russell Davis last week, and I have since talked with John Gardner and Frank Keppel about his qualifications. Both Gardner and Keppel gave him high marks as the best operator known to them in the field of American assistance to Latin American education.

Davis is clearly a strong and able man, with a lot of useful experience in the Caribbean. I liked his clarity and common sense, and I think he would be able to work effectively with all kinds of Dominicans -- a qualification which I think highly important. He is a straightforward, shirt-sleeve American. He currently holds a very important appointment at Harvard in the field of Latin American education, but he spends more time in the field than he does at his desk. He is fundamentally a two-fisted Irishman.

My one reservation about Davis is that he has never held a diplomatic appointment. While I think his fundamental sense of the problem of the Dominican Republic is good and right, we do not have proof that he would be able to act coolly and with restraint in every one of the numerous tense moments that the American Ambassador in Santo Domingo must deal with. If we choose Davis over John Crimmins or Tony Freeman, I think we should be sure to find a DCM who would be a strong complement to him in terms of professional diplomatic experience. Fortunately, younger men of this kind do exist in some numbers.

I should perhaps add that on the most important point of all -- a clear understanding of the problem of Communism and of the vital U. S. interest in this matter -- I found Mr. Davis just as clear as he could be. He is also clear and good on the basic reasons for U. S. intervention last April.

McGeorge Bundy