

RELEASE IN FULL

CONFIDENTIAL

June 22, 2010

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: McChrystal, like a rolling stone

For what it's worth, my two bits on the choices:

Option 1. Unless McChrystal is being retained there is nothing good that can come of having him return to Washington to see the President. A personal confrontation humiliates McChrystal—and will be taken as a staged humiliation by those in the military who share his denigrating attitudes. McChrystal retained becomes the indispensable man; Obama becomes his hostage. McChrystal rebuked will be silent in the future, but the Afghanistan operation will be personalized: McChrystal will become the crucial theoretician, general, and receive either credit or blame. If there are shortcomings he and his epigones will attribute it to the slightest deviation from his prescriptions and resentment will spread against those who supposedly stabbed the military in the back—the *Dolchstosslegende*, a poisonous myth used by the right-wing in Germany after World War I—and then in France against DeGaulle on Algeria (See: “Day of the Jackal”) to the U.S. in the McCarthy era and post-Vietnam. That is the turf McChrystal is treading with his insubordinate comments.

Option 2. On the other hand, if he is replaced, he should not see the president in person. Petraeus should summon him in that case and relieve him. That is the proper chain of command. Petraeus should recommend replacements. Instead of Obama appearing with McChrystal (optics: photographed going in and out of the White House), he should appear with his replacement and Petraeus. The President is the commander-in-chief. This is his policy. McChrystal failed to implement it: he diverted himself into friction with civilians rather than devoting himself entirely to the task decided and assigned by the President.

What would Truman do?