

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

It should have been a late morning because it was a very late night, last night.

After the guests from the Lost Colony reception and the North Carolina reception had departed, about two hours of work, restlessly, I went over to Lyndon's office, hoping to jar him loose, and bring him home. I found him in the little room, with Larry O'Brien, Dick Goodwin, Walter, Jack and Bill Moyers.

There was an air of excitement and I could tell that something on the Hill was coming to a boil. It was the Farm Bill, it was a cliff hanger, the food stamp plan was tied up in it, and it had almost been given up as lost by the newspaper people, by Larry - I rather think, by everybody. Except Lyndon.

I sat there for about an hour and a half or possibly two hours, while Larry, with his long list of house members in hand, those committed as being safe for the bill, those as irrevocably against it, those that were shaky and could possibly be persuaded, those that were absent and might pair, if you got to them and you could find them a pair,

And Lyndon made call, after call, after call. It was an interesting performance!

Larry kept on checking off those on our side or against us, and adding one more on the side for us, or that might possibly be on the side for us, until we thought that we just, by an eyelash, had it.

And then, I succeeded in bringing them all home for dinner, all that

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

Page 2

is except Bill, who had sensibly vanished a little earlier in the evening, in order to get home to his pregnant wife who, after all, does need a little companionship.

So this morning began without too much sleep. It consisted of work with Bess in regard to my luncheon, ^{later} in the month. . .

A talk with Mr. West about household problems.,

And then, at 1:30 the major event of the day. Washington's goodbye and our own goodbye to one of America's great heroes, General Douglas MacArthur.

Lyndon and I, Lynda Bird and Warrie Lynn, drove down to Union Station and there we boarded the train, greeted and paid respects to Mrs. MacArthur, a slight woman, gracious, gentle -voiced but assured. Their son, Arthur MacArthur, Mrs. MacArthur's brother-in-law, Colonel Smith and his wife, Ambassador Douglas MacArthur, ^{whom} we had recently seen in Belgium, and the General's aide, Major General Whitney and Mrs. Whitney. And a very solemn-looking oriental Miss Ochu, who had been young Arthur MacArthur's nurse, and who was now, I gathered, the Helen Williams and Zephyr Wright of their family, all rolled into one.

And a whole traincar full of relatives and friends, including General Carlos Romulo, and what memories of General MacArthur's great days ride along with him!

After we emerged from the train, we lined up in a solemn single file. Lyndon was on my right, and on my left I found the Attorney General.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

Page 3

He looked tanned, healthier, more relaxed, ^gthan I had seen him. And as we stood there, with the skies weeping outside [—] it was the third rainy day in a row [—] a cordon of troops came to attention, flags at half mast everywhere, and in the distance, the roll of drums. He said something that I was certainly thinking, but have bitten off my tongue before it was said. He said, "We seem always to be meeting at funerals." I said, "Yes." He said, "There've been a lot of them these last four months."

And as the casket came by, flag draped, carried by eight men, from the different services, I felt the next two hours were an echo of the November days of President Kennedy's funeral.

At 16th and Constitution, the casket was transferred from a hearse to a caisson, drawn by six dapple-gray horses. Immediately after it, ^gwas a great red flag, ^gwith five white stars, and as we rode along Constitution Avenue, General Clifton told us ^gof how, during the last World War, five ^{above} star Generals came into being. It was either advance the rank ~~for~~ four star generals, or have what ^gin other countries ^gis called Field Marshalls.

And General George Marshall said, "I'll be darned if I will have people calling me Marshall, Marshall. Nope we'll just have five star generals, and ^gno, we won't have any six star Generals either." So General Marshall chopped off the rank at five stars.

And there was another familiar figure. I think perhaps he was the very same [—] a beautiful, spirited, ^gblack horse, riderless, with black boots pointed backward. Once more an echo of a November day.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

Page 4

I thought of what Bobby Kennedy had said, ^eas I stood next to him. He said, "You're doing a wonderful job, everybody says so." And then, after a noticeable pause, almost as with an effort, "...and so is your husband." I appreciated that, very much.

One difference about today, is that the crowds that line Constitution Avenue, ^ewere without emotion. No one was crying, after all, General MacArthur was 86, but there they were, under a sea of black umbrellas, silent, to say goodbye to one of the most dramatic figures that ever filled the American stage.

The five joint chiefs of staff, ^ewere supposed to walk from 16th and Constitution up to the Capitol. I kept on hoping they didn't or else we might have one or two less, from pneumonia.

At the Capitol steps, we got out and stood beside Mrs. MacArthur while the Army band played "Ruffles and Flourishes" and then a hymn and then the casket was borne up the long steps, by the servicemen, into the rotunda of the capitol where it was to lie in state.

The House and Senate had adjourned. The Rotunda was thronged with all the Senators and Congressmen, and many military. The House Chaplain and then the Senate Chaplain gave a prayer, and then Lyndon placed an enormous red, white and blue wreath at the foot of the casket.

I had asked Mrs. MacArthur and her son, and the Ambassador and all the kinfolks that came there to, to stop by the White House after the services were over, to warm up and have a cup of tea.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

Page 5

Mrs. MacArthur had assured me they would be glad to, and so when the services were ended, Lyndon and I departed at once, he to his office and I to the second floor.

Presently they arrived, and Mrs. MacArthur, controlled, gracious manner, reminded me of the General's phrase about her, calling her "his finest soldier."

Arthur MacArthur, ⁹is remarkably young for his 26 years. A journalism graduate of Columbia, and now studying for the theatre, I was told. It must be hard, indeed, to be the son of such a lordly, domineering man, ^{as} General MacArthur. He told me that he had been very close to his father, and that he had stayed out of his courses during the last few months because he realized his father's health was rapidly failing, in order to be with him.

We all reminisced about that great day when General MacArthur rose to the rostrum in the House chamber and made the address to the Joint Session. That was one day I wouldn't have given up my ticket in the gallery to any constituent! And it was easy to see, in every gesture of the General's life, how a son of his could like the theatre.

Ambassador Douglas MacArthur, ⁹is a very attractive man, suave, intelligent, a very perfect model of an ambassador. We talked about the young Curtis Barnes, who was soon to come to his Embassy, as an economic aide.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

Page 6

The sun came out and lit up the Yellow Oval Room with full glory.

I had the feeling that it was the right thing, the appropriate thing, having them there, although I hadn't known them well. But the whole country had really known him well.

And this had been a very dignified departure from life, a most respectful goodbye.

When they were gone, Esther Provenson came to see me, and we had about two hours of hard work on my speech, for the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial luncheon in New York.

I always feel good when I'm doing what I ought to do and these hours certainly assured me that the speech was going to turn out better than it would have. Homework always helps.

Then, I curled up in bed and watched Walter Lippmann. He was on for an hour and never a dull moment. What he said about foreign aid certainly isn't going to make it any easier to get a Foreign Aid Bill passed. And really gave ammunition to all those who are against it for good or bad reasons, or who have come, within the last year or two, to have their doubts about it.

What he said about Lyndon couldn't be better. He virtually said it didn't make any difference who he asked to be his Vice President, because he didn't need the help.

When the commentator asked him about the possibility of McNamara, and pointed out the fact that he had been a registered Republican at one

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, April 8, 1964

Page 7

time, Lippmann rather washed that out, somehow, and made it sound possible that he might be the nominee.

I think this is the first time I have ever thought of it as an actual possibility.

It had been an exhausting day so I just simply stayed in bed and had my dinner, and let Lyndon have his with Jack and Mary Margaret, very late indeed, I think about 11:00, because I was very near the borders of sleep when they came upstairs from the office.

Lyndon's endurance is simply fantastic and mine is not.