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Initials

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, September 14, 1965

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It was a day of work and two glittering events. I had breakfast with Lyndon, worked with Bess on invitations, and then to Lyndon's office to greet the Astronauts -- Conrad and Cooper -- who up until now have made the longest flight of anyone in space.

The Conrads had four little boys who stole the show, from Chris 4 to Peter 10 who lined up behind Lyndon's desk, much more interested in the paraphernalia on it than in the fact that their father and Gordon Cooper were receiving the Exceptional Service Medals from Lyndon and about 30 or 40 press people, mostly camera men, were shooting a barrage of pictures.

The Gordon Coopers I had met before. They have two girls -- Cam and Jan -- attractive and polite. They were leaving with them right away and the Conrads, but not their little boys, to visit six countries on good will tours for the United States.

But the star portion of the day was brief, and then back for a session of fittings with Lucinda and then to the dentist in the basement for a long hour and a half.

Then Lynda Bird came in for lunch. I am treasuring my time with her because a week from now she will be gone. Yesterday we had three games of bowling, and I got 146 -- the best score, save one, I've ever had.

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I talked with Mr. Williams about the grass. I am trying to remember A. W.'s philosophy that the best fertilizer for any man's ranch is the footsteps of the owner. And though I am tenant and not owner I must at least behave like vigilant guardian. We are going to give up trying to have the pure marion and have a mixture of the Kentucky blue grass <sup>out Fescue</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>and</sup> ready for this Fall, some rye.

I talked with Dale Malechek about getting the bluebonnet seeds in and A. W. about Mariallen who is not doing well. And about the bid I had had on getting some surveying of the main yard -- the grove and surrounding area -- at the Ranch so that we could revise the overall landscaping. He thought it was too high. He would try for another bid -- a local one -- all small necessary pieces of work that amount to little individually but must be done if the whole is to be a pretty picture.

Lyndon has come from 226 pounds to 208. He tries to assuage his own desire for something really good to eat by teasing and goading me, having decided that I should loose 1 pound for every two he loses and <sup>says</sup> that sometime I promised I would do that. I cannot remember when. He said, "You and Zephyr can give more advice and take less."

At 4:00 was the other important meeting of the day -- tea with Madame Chiang. I met her at the entrance of the Diplomatic Reception Room where pictures were made. And then we went up to the Yellow Room

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accompanied by the other guests -- the Chinese Ambassador and Mrs. Chow, Virginia Rusk, Ann and Lloyd Hand, and Mrs. Chiang's nephew, Mr. L. K. Kong. Mrs. John Foster Dulles was the only other guest.

This was a decision of the State Department that it should be a personal, informal tea -- a sort of a low-key visit rather than assuming in any way the flavor of a State visit. And how could I possibly evaluate the various sensitive <sup>h</sup> cords in today's international picture and the fact that also of course Madame Chiang is not a Chief of State but the wife of one -- influential though she is. But I remembered our wonderful visit to Taiwan in 1961 with all its pomp and display and tried to be just as warm and friendly as I could which wasn't enough because the press was lying in wait to write a snide story. Could it be because none of them were invited to the tea and it was a private tea?

Poor Simone was left to brief the press afterward on what took place because Liz is in Texas making a speech. And she really had a baptism of fire.

Lloyd Hand took notes on what was discussed, a little too honest notes I am afraid, because at one point in remembering how marvelously industrious the people of Taiwan were -- they used every inch of soil -- I commented on the fact that between the rice paddies in the little trench

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of water I had heard they raised frogs for frog legs. And was that true? Mrs. Chiang told me that it was, that they were very good -- they were quite a delicacy and were raised commercially, fit to sell, in that fashion. And the reporting on this added just the nutty touch to the stories that were already, I expect, going to be rather venomous.

The conversation was innocuous tea table talk -- Madame Chiang's painting. Yes, she still was. In fact she's started in a new direction -- in water colors in addition to her long loved pen and ink sketches. My ride in the <sup>taxi</sup> cab with Mrs. Ching, the wife of the Vice President, and our pied pieper following, the bustling air of activity I had encountered everywhere in Taiwan and how much I had admired it, Ambassador Chow's recent trip down to Freeport, Texas to see the desalinization plant, personal talk about friends with Mrs. Dulles whom she had known for many years.

But alas the frog legs and the naivete of me and of Lloyd for giving firewood to the press to roast us in.

Lyndon came in during the tea and took Madam Chiang out on the Truman Balcony. And then a moment later, down to see the Lincoln Room and the Treaty Room. What they talked about I have no idea. But he was warm and friendly and genuine enough I believe to take a little bit of the sting out of the stories that she read later.

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Then after he left, we went downstairs, and because she is an artist I thought she might like to go through the State Dining Room and the Red Room and the Blue Room and the Green Room and the East Room and see the collection of paintings so greatly expanded since the times that she was here because of Mrs. Kennedy's work.

On the way to the North Portico to say goodbye, she told me that she remembered how nice I had looked in yellow and that she had brought me some yellow silk and an old jade mirror. She said they do not make them like that any more.

I really enjoyed the hour I spent with her, and yet as she left I felt wistful, admiring -- she is so intelligent and has lived through so much -- sorry, wishing that I could have done more -- but what? In all, dissatisfied.

*Close  
for 25  
years  
Q19*

**SANTIZED**

Then I drove home with Tony out to Diana's house as she was having a small dinner party for George Reedy, for her boss, Mr. Wiggins of the Peace Corps, and three or four guests.

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Diana is furnishing her house slowly -- some Spanish furniture, some things from Tony. And I was touched to see a few very modest things that I had given her long ago and thought she must have discarded.

Lisa and Alexander looked wonderful -- handsome and healthy and tall and slim.

But I hurried back to the White House to have dinner with Lyndon a little past 9:00. And then my exercises which I am determined to be vigorous about. I can at least match Lyndon in losing a few inches if not pounds.