

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Wednesday, November 29, 1967

Page 1

Wednesday, November 29th, was a strange day.

To begin with, I woke up at 10:20 in the morning -- the best night's sleep I've had in ages. 10 solid hours. I had been in bed with a cold the day before. Thank heavens, I've hardly lost four days from illness in these four years in the White House. Today, it wasn't any better, but I was rested. So I spent a long, quiet day working in bed doing interminable autographing of Christmas presents -- family pictures, engravings of the White House, copies of the "Living White House", sometimes more personal pictures.

It began to feel very dull and stupid. And then I thought of that one picture that Lyndon has of FDR autographed to him, and how much it has meant to us for thirty years. And if just conceivably three of these 300 or more that I am doing mean that much to somebody, it will be worth it.

<sup>2</sup>  
Lyn and I had lunch on a tray in my room. I did some desk work with Liz and Neta Brown.

Over the whole day hung a pall -- the departure of Bob McNamara from the Secretary of Defense to become the head of the World Bank. The 106 member countries will vote today. But that decision is almost foregone. But we are tied -- he is tied -- until they decide and make a selection known. And meanwhile for two days now, the press has been having a field day speculating that his departure means that the hawks will take over, there's a rift between him and Lyndon, that the whole Cabinet is crumbling, rumors of so and so and so and so who will leave next. A sort of poison that would

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, November 29, 1967

Page 2

go by osmosis through the body of the government, spreading suspicion and distrust and paralyzing vigorous, constructive action. I feel actually physically lonesome when I think of him going. When things are at their worst, I always took a sort of comfort in knowing that he's there. One of the troops. And a very small band we get to be sometimes -- or so we feel. And I have confidence that he'll think of something. He's looked worn and ~~thick~~ thin and running on sheer spirit for a long time now, and I know it will be good for him and for Margy, which does not minimize our crucial loss.

And then on top of that, his very departure is being maneuvered, manipulated, into a weapon to flay Lyndon with.

Finally at 5:30, I had an appointment with Louise Hutchinson of the Chicago Tribune. Feminine talk about how I feel now that my second child is getting married.

Then a quick shampoo and set.

And then I went upstairs to the solarium to play bridge with Lynda and Warrie Lynn and Chuck. Willie Day came and we cut in and out. I had a drink.

And it was a very pleasant evening, quietly with good friends and the glorious backdrop of the Washington Monument.

It was about 10:20 when Lyndon's office called. He was on his way. I joined him quickly at the dinner table with George Christian and Tom Johnson. And to my surprise and great relief, he was in high spirits, full of good stories and laughter.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Wednesday, November 29, 1967 WASHINGTON

Page 3

The member nations had made their decision on McNamara, and a statement had been issued. He showed me a copy of his statement and of McNamara's. Both excellent. If the papers and the columnists read them and use them, the ugly mood created in the last two days will be dispersed.

Before we had finished, I got word from the Usher -- I had asked him to call me at once -- that Governor and Mrs. Connally had arrived with the Julian Reids and Mike Myers, his Executive Assistant. They had been shown to their room and were on their way to the dining room to join us.

There was great hugging and kissing. We took our second cups of coffee into the West Hall and settled for what turned out to be a long talk until nearly 2:00. [Nellie was as full of spirit as ever. The scar, however, is deep. But skillfully placed and not obtrusive. But she does not yet have complete control of her facial muscles.]

Lyndon talked of McNamara's leaving, relayed the sequence of events from the beginning -- in August, I think it was, -- the McNamara's stayed behind after a meeting and said, "I want to talk to you about a personal, personnel matter." And then he told him that in the years he had been here he had about 20 offers of jobs -- some of them for fabulous salaries. He had told all of them that he was going to continue to serve the President as long as he wanted him. But, that now that the head of the World Bank was going to become vacant, and he wanted the President to know that that was one job that he was interested in. He also thought that it might well be that the job at Defense, the administration, would benefit from a fresh person.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, November 29, 1967

Page 4

Lyndon listened and said nothing.

He went on through it all until his last conversation with Bob just an hour or so ago. Bob was at home. He wanted Lyndon to know how horrid it had all been. Lyndon said he sounded like he was almost in tears.

And then Lyndon told us, "except for one, this is the hardest day I have ~~spent~~ spent in this job."

I have seldom felt as sorry for him. The sense of loneliness and separation is deep. But it was comforting to be with Nellie and John.

We did laugh, and we told them we hoped they would eat light and not buy anything bigger than a post card while they were in France.

But nearly 2:00, I slipped away, and Nellie did, and we left the men until I do not know how late.