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THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

The city was in a state of tension that had been mounting ever since Monday when North Korea had seized our ship, the Pueblo. Nevertheless, my first appointment of the day was a happy one. I called Beth Porter Perminer who I had run into the day before at the opening of the Woman's National Democratic Club and asked her and her husband to come by and have coffee with me. We met in the West Hall at 2:30 and it was just as though we had said goodbye the day before. We hadn't even come to a period or comma because we were both full of questions about each other's children and friends. Lynda had stayed with her in Jacksonville when she was courting Bernie. She looked prettier and happier than she did ten years ago and it is such a pleasure to be able to say that. We chatted for nearly an hour and then I worked with Ashton and Marilyn. Bess came over and we worked on guest lists, having lunch on trays.

Somewhere in the morning the news came to me that Lyndon had called up the Reservists, Air Force and Navy-- about fourteen thousand of them-- for active duty, an answer partial to the North Koreans seizing our ship. Lynda breezed through the room saying, "Well, I just asked Chuck if he wanted me to pack warm clothes for Vietnam or cold clothes for Korea?" If she could just maintain that

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brave front for a year. I would be as relieved as every mother of a serviceman.

At one, I went over to the swearing in in the Cabinet Room of Jerre Williams as Chairman of the Administrative Conference. Mary Pearl is prettier than ever, very blonde now. I welcomed them aboard and what a day to be joining the Government. I told them someone had dropped out because of illness on the dinner for tonight and would they like to come. They would.

Back on the second floor I talked with Lynda about the repairs we are doing to the children's bath at the ranch. How my heart does turn there. Then I worked with Ashton. And Liz came over looking like the sky had fallen in. Secretary Gardner's resignation had been announced and the Viet Cong were attacking at Khesanh in what looked like might be a major offensive. We were badly outnumbered there. What a day! Of course, I had had five days to absorb the shock and pain of Gardner's resignation.

When we finished with letters and invitations and answers to little pieces of paper, I shoved back from my desk and went over to the EOB for two fast hard games of bowling. They do help. Back upstairs. Jean Louis gave me a very fancy up hairdo and I put on a gold ^{lame} ~~same~~ dress brought to me by Chief of State, made up by Adele Simpson, and fared forth to the first big dinner of 1968, with I hope,

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a brave front with a sinking heart on an un auspicious evening as could be. First, I did a few pictures. I shall do this before each major dinner so if, just by chance, I should get one or two of the evening dress pictures with which to answer requests, rather than sending out such old ones. And then into the Yellow Room to meet the honor guest, Hubert and Muriel, the Speaker and Miss Harriet, and the Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren. I always think of this as a sort of family party and how easy it is to forget that the Chief Justice is a member of the other Political Party. This dinner has a very different feel from one honoring the Chief of State. The honor guests upstairs were members of their families-- Hubert and Muriel's four children and their spouses, Skip and Nancy Lee, Bob and Donna, Nancy and Bruce, who has lost some great amount since our visit out there in September and looks just great and cute little Doug Humphrey and his date Jan Thompson, whose black eyes were dancing the whole evening. For the Speaker and Mrs. McCormack, there was his handsome nephew, Ed McCormack, Jr., and his pretty wife. Miss Harriet is so much more feeble than I have ever noticed her before. The Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren, had their children, Dorothy, and Mr. and Mrs. Dailey.

I found myself talking too fast and too much in a sort of attempt to combat the gloom that the troubles of the day brought

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down. When the Honor Guard came in, and this is the first time I can remember that it has not been led by Chuck, I missed him-- moved less skillfully. There was something less than that ballet precision. We followed them downstairs, I, going with my husband this time, with the Speaker and Miss Harriet using the elevator, but joining us at the foot of the steps for pictures. And then we marched on in and just as we reached the door an unprecedented thing happened. The room burst into spontaneous applause. Never before has it happened that I can remember, either to us or any other President within my knowledge.

We stood in line-- this time in the middle of the room in front of the stage-- and the guests, nearly 190, filed by, all chosen to do honor to our three honorees. The whole Court, and retired Justices Reed and Clark were invited because this was a special night for their Chief and for the Vice President. The whole Cabinet was invited. The Gardners had regretted early, even before he had talked to Lyndon. And the Udalls regretted. I wondered if it were significant. Someone told me that he was doing a tape for a Johnny Carson show and Lynda said he was on the program to pass out the awards at a YMCA dinner she was attending. Nancy Trowbridge had called late in the day to regret for both of them. He had been hospitalized with chest pains. Your mind leaps to a heart attack

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and you do not know how serious. That is another black note of this black day.

From the Senate there was Milton Young and Margaret Chase Smith looking composed and serene, as always, and the Phil Harts of Michigan. But there were a lot of regrets from the Senate. There were two Governors -- Hughes of New Jersey (they were our house guests) and the Kings of New Hampshire. She never loses an opportunity to say something nice to me about how much her husband thinks of my husband. Also among the Governors there had been several regrets.

As the guests went down the line I sensed something of what I suppose is the feeling of the country. One pressed my hand. Another murmured "we are praying for you." Another I think tried to convey sympathy and understanding with a look. I do not think it had any particular reference to Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson. I think it simply meant that you are the President and we know it is tough and we are in it with you.

The House of Representatives was here in some force, the Speaker's leaders Carl Albert and Hale Boggs and the opposition leader Jerry Ford-- Betty looking very pretty, the Heads of Committees like George Mahon and Mendel Rivers, Wilbur Mills had regretted, a sizeable contingent of those with seniority, such as

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Wright Patman. I had invited his sister to come with him and she and Wright were, I think, the two happiest people in the room, which pleased me very much to make possible. Some Government -- there were the Lawson Knotts and the Arthur Okuns. He is to be the new head of the Council of Economic Advisers. And from Labor, I. W. Abel of the Steelworkers and Joseph Keenan and ubiquitous George Meany and Mrs. Meany and the James Suffridges. The most regal light of the entertainment world-- Helen Hayes was there. I put her at my table and David Merrick and Alexander Schneider, the concert violinist. Two of the most attractive men were Edwin Etherington, the President of Wesleyan University, and Edward Bennett Williams.

There was quite a press contingent, the William Randolph Hursts, our old friends the Marshall McNeils, our old friend and oft-times critic, Drew Pearson and Luvie, Victor Reisel with his dark glasses leaning on his wife's arm, the Walker Trohans and I got to tell his wife face to face what he had said about being married for forty years. That was at the Press dinner at Williamsburg and an accolade for any woman. The Bill Whites were there, our old friends the Hunter McLeans, from Texas, and several both from high positions and staff that we had asked the last minute when people

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had dropped out because of illness-- the Clark Cliffords, the Ernie Goldsteins, the John Crookers, the Jim Rows. I think Betty Beale's estimate was fair. The mood was warm and friendly, but not gay. I found myself pushing against the wall of gloom hoping that I could reassure, help make it a good evening. Of course, I was lucky at my table. The Vice President always sits at my right there and he has that golden gift of happiness and in making those around him happy, Mrs. King, the wife of the Governor, was next and then the Chief Justice and Helen Hayes and Mr. Schneider and then Mrs. Hurst, very slim and very elegantly dressed and Jim Rowe and then Mrs. McCormack and the Speaker. It was a good table for talk. Stars though they were-- Heley Hayes and Mr. Schneider, really had to bow to Hubert this evening. He was telling tales of the stage that had been begun on their side of the table about his father in the little town of Huron, South Dakota, I believe it is, where he was born and raised. He used to buy time on the radio to read poetry. His wife would fuss at him for wasting the family's money which wasn't plentiful and he would say, "but they need it." The tales of how he would go once a year to Chicago or New York to hear grand opera or concerts, of how the whole family would be called on to give their opinions on some public issue. We all mourned the passing of real

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conversation and was it TV that killed it or what happened to family life. It was a lively fun evening.

Lyndon made the first toast paying tribute to the American system of checks and balances. He said there have been times in our history when check and balance really meant stop and freeze and then went on to say that after the strong opinions have been aired, people want progress. They want checks and balances and then they want forward movement. Hubert's toast, seemed to me-- and I was right by him-- was completely without notes and the warmest and personal one end with asking us to raise our glasses in tribute to a man who is firm and resolute, strong and kind, and governs with compassion. As always, when the Speaker rose I was surprised. From that frail and aging body, hollow-eyed gray-thatched head, there emerged this strong, powerful, sure voice. He is truly a professional and he generously included all of Lyndon's family in his toast. The Chief Justice's theme was unity in perilous times. And then we were off to the Red Room or the hall or the Green Room for coffee and liqueurs and very shortly into the East Room. I had already gotten two looks from Lyndon that said hurry. I introduced the entertainment for the evening, rather lamely, and we launched into about thirty minutes of "I Do, I Do" - Gordon MacRae and Carol Lawrence that ranks among the best entertainment we

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have had in the White House. Regrettably, however, you cannot excerpt thirty minutes from this play that lasts well over two hours and retain the full exquisite balance of happiness and fussing. Tonight it was a trifle heavy on the fussing side. Even so, it was a good anecdote for the day, a far cry from all the worries that these men had brought into that room.

The Speaker and Miss Harriet began an exodus as soon as the entertainment was over and Lyndon went upstairs a little before twelve. I think everybody could understand because he did look gray and weary. He had had hardly any sleep for two nights before, but there was one light touch to the evening though. Abe and Alexander Schneider took two violins from the Marine Orchestra and began to play a bit of Mozart. Lyndon, about to depart, leaned over to George Meany and said, "Do you reckon Abe has a Union card?"

Lynda and Chuck came from the YMCA dinner where it turned out Chuck had to present the award. Others expected to didn't show. I, too, left a little past twelve and found Lyndon and the Hughes having a night cap in the West Hall. I sat down with them. Lyndon disappeared soon but I stayed and we talked until nearly one. I am so glad to have people of that calibre and skill in the political field. And humor and good common sense are high on the list of their

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characteristics, to my thinking. They seemed really pleased to be in the Queen's Room. I suggested that the Governor might step across the hall into the Lincoln Room, if he wished. Then I bid them goodnight and called it an end to this tough day.