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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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Wednesday, May 8, 1968

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Wednesday, May 8th, was one of those days full enough to be a week. Some recording and desk work in the morning.

The headlines read: "RFK Takes Indiana - Leads Here"

I got into my yellow ~~att~~oman coat and dress to go down on the South grounds at 11:30 for the arrival ceremony of Prime Minister Kittikachorn and his wife.

Several things make this visit different. First, that we have seen so much of the ties in the last few years. The visit of '61, the King and Queen's trip here. And then that never to be equalled meeting of six Chiefs of State, Kittikachorn was one, and the Philippines, followed immediately by our trip to Thailand.

And so I really feel that we know them, and I like them very much.

But another thing made it different. Grandchildren. One of the Prime Minister's daughters lives in Washington -- her husband is in the Embassy -- and they have two little children that the Kittikachorn's had not seen. A little boy two, who stole the show, and a little baby girl in arms.

The big, black car rolled up and out stepped the Kittikachorn -- familiar smiling face, at ease, inspiring confidence, his pleasant, plump little wife wearing the Thai costume -- beautifully patterned with an elaborate belt.

The press found the two-year old grandson almost as interesting as the two Chiefs of State. At one time he stood grave, sober and waving a Thai flag in one hand and a U.S. flag in the other. Lyndon did not fail to point that out. At another, he leaned over and squatted down and examined the brightly

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shined shoes of one of the members of the Honor Guard who stood unperturbed, a test of his poise. I wondered if the little boy was seeing his reflection.

The White House grounds were well lined with guests. They are doing a better job these days of inviting people from the Departments, from the Embassy concerned -- some from schools -- and especially our House guests and even dinner guests whom we think would enjoy the ceremony.

With the speeches over, we filed into the Diplomatic ~~Reception~~ Reception Room for the few moments of handshaking with the whole party.

Mrs. Kittikachorn speaks little English, but her willingness to try is a pleasant compliment.

And then we went upstairs and I had just time to call Lynda and simply apologize to her for having practically pushed her out of the room early this morning when ~~she~~ she had come into see me to talk. But so often lately when she comes in I am obviously hurried, almost tapping my foot because that inferious monster, my desk, of those lists, of those unreturned phone calls will not let me be at peace.

And the same is true about Lyndon. I know he simply likes me to go in and sit with him while he is having his lunch, even if I don't say a word. He likes the quiet velvet from a pleasant, familiar person so he can talk if he wants to.

I'm getting my values mixed up these last few weeks. But I keep on saying to myself, "One week more -- two weeks more -- I'll be on top of it."

This particular morning, Lyndon had turned to me and said, "I don't know how you are going to work it out, but I know you can. Mrs. Vance has gone up

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to New York, I think, to get their children and to bring them back down here, and their daddy's leaving tomorrow for these negotiations and I want the Vance's to come to the dinner tonight. And you just work it out for the children to spend the night here." "How many children?" "I don't know -- three or four." "What are they, boys or girls? And what ages?" He wasn't quite sure, but it was one of Ed's birthday, and could we get a cake.

And so, with the guest rooms already pretty well committed, the Ed Weisl's in the Queens' Room, Isabelle Mathis in 301, and the Walter Hall's in 327, and the Earl Perdolniks somewhere. And of course the Vance's themselves in the Lincoln Room. I simply walked out before I said anything and into my room to think it out. And it was ~~at~~ at that precise moment that Lynda arrived for a quiet chummy talk. Well, I did get it figured out. The Vance's invited and Gay called to be assured that we really wanted them to come. And I did. But it was no trouble really. We put one Vance child in the Lincoln Sitting Room on the Sofa which is really a slea bed, and with a little shifting, two Vance daughters, the oldest ones, in 303 and another child in the adjoining sitting room, ordered the cake and a movie for the children while we had dinner and sent them word to be sure and watch the fire works -- the after-dinner entertainment.

What it takes really is not being flustered and being willing to treat people like homefolk. And when you think what Cy Vance is doing for this country -- has done, over and over again, with his bad back -- how could you possibly match it? So feeling rather satisfied, I left for Mr. Per's a little after noon. Had a cheeseburger and a coke under the dryer, went over the guest and tried

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to learn how to say "Ton puing chan call" instead of Mrs. Kittikachorn, but gave up on saying "Mrs. Non ung Jeri pong si" -- a miss Song Su Kittikachorn. I even kept it in Mrs. Super Gartisini -- thank heavens for Your Excellency.

I thought of what Cy had said earlier in Lyndon's ~~back~~ bedroom. "I anticipate that the first week or two will be a record playing over and over of all the alleged misdoings of the United States. And that the opposite ~~numbers~~ members were bright and tough and one of them a superb propagandist."

Back at the White House I barely had time to change for the first event of the afternoon, tea in the Green Room, for the fascinating Colonel Michael Paul, whom I had met at Palm Beach, and Alan Drury, an old friend of Senate days, author of Advice and Consent, A Shade of Difference and several others, Isabelle Mathis, who never looked prettier, Bess and Liz.

It was a bright hour. ~~Colonel~~ Colonel Paul was a star describing his party for Mrs. Post which is sort of a celebration of Russian Easter, I gathered, an annual affair, where exiled Russian nobility and adventurers get together and tell tales. At one point when we were talking about art, he said that he had a Rembrandt, port hole portrait of Washington and he wanted to leave it to the White House. I stood there mute, not really knowing whether he meant it, seeing in my mind's eye the White House's own Rembrandt peel port-hole portrait of Washington hanging right above me in the Yellow Room, daring to wish that it might some how come to the Lyndon Johnson Library. And so a miserable performance ended by saying lamely something like, "how generous, how

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wonderful."

Isabelle, who has recently gotten a divorce, and that's one reason why I wanted her especially now. Perhaps she is lonesome -- they had many friends here. The change might be good. It was a charming mixture of animation and serenity.

In my remaining months here, I shall make it a point to know better the children of my friends.

So, it was a good hour and then I went in another direction for another tea. This time to the Library where I met the Steinakers -- he is the President of Sinclair Oil -- Karen Frances, and another gentleman from his company. And they presented me with an album of Sinclair's efforts in the conservation, beautification field. And he struck another blow for my favorite subject with a man who can do something about it.

And then I was back upstairs to work with Liz and Erv in the West hall on my speech for the Mary Laska Awards only two days away.

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We got the speech pretty well in order -- a feeling of great gratification. And I had a short while to stretch out and rest and call my house guests to welcome them before Mr. Per came for a comb-out. And then into my yellow flowing chiffon, and then those harrowing few minutes while Lyndon is late and then dashes into his room and then in an incredible few minutes is dressed and Bess is on the phone timing that so-brief ride from Blair House and our descent in the elevator and out to the North Portico so that we arrive just as the last rifle butts are clicking on the driveway and once more the big black car rolls up.

This time it really was a family affair upstairs in the Yellow Room with "Ton puing chong call" -- I have mastered it -- and the Prime Minister and three daughters. There was plenty of talk about our grandchildren. And Hubert without Muriel. He said she was recuperating well. And Dean and Virginia and the Ungers and Angie and Robin.

Among our gifts to them, and the best I thought, was a cute picture of their grandchildren obtained by some cooperation and pre-planning, attractively framed. And ~~their~~^{Theirs} to us, a very elaborate wooden screen.

We marched downstairs. This time I was with Hubert, and in the East Room took our places to meet the 140 odd guests. The Clark Cliffords from the Cabinet. Our military relation with the Thai's is pretty marked. And from the Senate, the Sam Ervins and the Alan Bibles, the Caleb Boggs

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and the Birch Bayhs -- Marvella always one of our best guests. And there was the Governor of West Virginia and Mrs. Hulett Smith. And former Governor John Dalton of Missouri. A sizeable contingent from the House -- Barefoot Sanders always takes care of his own -- Hale Boggs heading the list.

From the entertainment world there were the Bob Hopes -- he was followed all evening by the press listening for every word. How tiring that must be -- for him I mean. And the James Browns -- he's a Negro singer who in the recent riots took to the streets in a sound truck calling on the young folks -- his own constituencies and admirers -- to "cool it". Bess put him at Lyndon's table.

Two couples who knew Thailand well, the Maxwell Taylors and the Graham Martins -- the Ambassador when we were there.

From the press the Walter Annenbergs -- and I had time to murmur as they went down the line. Every day I loved and adored the Benjamin Franklin in the Green Room. Isabelle Shelton. Bob Thompsons. Earl Wilsons.

From business the Howard Rambins, who is head of Texaco. and the Franco Scalamandres. He makes some of the most beautiful silk in our country, and would, I thought, be interested to meet other famous silk makers of the world.

There was General and Mrs. Leonard Chapman -- their own are entertaining tonight -- the Marines.

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From the staff there was Larry Temple and Juanita Roberts.

The Edward Bennett Williams -- he's a fascinating man to me. And our host of house guests -- the Reverend Franklin~~J~~ Jackson pressed my hand when he passed and said, "We tried hard but we didn't make it." He had been leading the forces for Hubert here in the District of Columbia.

I had Mrs. ^{Gene}~~Jean~~ Rostow on the Prime Minister's right -- a good guest who kept the talk going.

The Prime Minister and I talked about the Mekong Delta River project and what it could mean to his area, of the King and the Queen and our wonderful visit. I gave myself only about a C-plus for sparking the most interesting conversation with either of my partners -- the Prime Minister or Thanat Khoman, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. But the toasts were actually some of the best I remember, both personal and substantive. Lyndon spoke of his sons-in-law and the son of the Prime Minister who are all fighting in Viet-Nam. He closed with a toast to the U. S. delegation on the eve of its departure for the conference table where we will negotiate in good faith and a reassurance to our Asian alliance in the room. We will never abandon our commitment or compromise the future of Asia at the negotiating table. And Kittikachorn answered in the same vein, warning that grave problems lie ahead in preventing Communist forces from reaping at the conference table the victory they could not achieve in the battlefield. He said, "The seeds of a wider

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conflict would be sewn if aggression is allowed to succeed and smaller nations are toppled by terror, subversion and sheer force."

After dinner while coffee and liqueurs were being served, Lyndon and the Prime Minister went upstairs to the Treaty Room and inaugurated a direct telephone service via Comsat satellite between the U. S. and Thailand. When I first heard that they were going to do it, my immediate thought was whether they were going to use that ancient telephone, Circa 1900, a chief conversation piece of the Treaty Room. But no, two matching brand new ones were in so that they could both sit at the Treaty Table and talk and listen simultaneously. The Treaty Room was chosen because it was here around 1877 that the first telephone was installed in the White House. The press trooped in with them and reported a very good connection, but not a very substantive conversation. And then we all filed out onto the balcony -- Lyndon and Mrs. Kittikachorn and the Prime Minister and I and a large assemblage of guests out onto the Truman Balcony -- the rest off the Blue Room below us -- for a unique, first-time entertainment here at the White House. The U. S. Marine Corps in their evening parade against the backdrop of the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial and a full moon. And there must have been a lump in a lot of watchers' throats. I thought of Lynda. She had come out on the porch with us wearing the pale pink dress that she had worn at Luci's wedding, and of all the Friday nights that she had watched this parade

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with Chuck, and how it took me a good many Friday nights to realize that she was interested in something more than parades. He had been the Commander. It was impressive, thrilling -- the silent drill platoon with most marvelous precision. The drum and bugle corps. Captain Barry Beck was the Company Commander. And then the whole evening erupted into a display of fireworks that soared and burst and lit up the sky -- ~~amazing~~ magnificent sight, but I wondered what the folks in the suburbs were thinking -- whether the National Airport was under attack or whether the rioters were really here in force. Fireworks as entertainment began with President John Adams who suggested them as the right way to celebrate Independence Day from one end of the continent to the other. From this time forward and forever more. Well, in our four and a half years here we've pretty well run the gamut of entertainment from Grand Opera singers to Indian dancers. But tonight was indeed a first.

Champagne was passed after the last great chrysanthemum of ~~fiery~~ blossom exploded in the air. And very soon the Prime Minister and Mrs. Kittikachorn made their departure, and Lyndon and I mingled with the guests for a considerable time. He looked happy tonight -- relaxed and not as tired ~~as~~ he has.

I went upstairs with Lynda a little past 12:00.