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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 27, 1968

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Again with rain, alas, because the greetings on the South Lawn are always so colorful and dramatic, and I hate to miss them even if it is the 80th time or whatever that I've participated in it.

I worked at my desk with Marilyn, and then at 11:30 Lyndon and I went down to the North Portico -- the rain still dripping -- and received the Prime Minister of Australia and Mrs. Gorton. In the most surprising and unorthodox manner we had gotten to know them the night before. We had been out on the boat, Lyndon had gotten the word that they had arrived at Blair House, he sent in a message, why didn't they join us for dinner on the boat. And so in defiance of any protocol they had.

Because the Harold Holts had been almost our favorite Chiefs of State -- the most real friends we had made I thought among all our visitors from around the world -- immediately and inevitably comparisons began. And yet if there is anybody who ought to know that comparisons are not the best approach to judging somebody, it is us. And so I consciously tried to refrain from comparing and just to see simply what manner of man this new Prime Minister was. He had a rather pixie look -- slim, gangling, rather freckled and sandy haired and the most extraordinarily pluckish nose -- turned up.

I learned later, and somewhat abashed, that he had had some plastic surgery on it as a result of war wounds.

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Like nearly all of the Australians I have met, he was friendly and outgoing, spoke frankly and was informal. Before the day was over he was calling Lyndon and me both by our first names. But that rare and genuine warmth that emanated from Harold Holt I did not find, nor the bubbling exuberance of Sarah.

Mrs. Gorton is the only First Lady I have ever met who had dual citizenship in another country. She had been born in America in Maine and still traveled with an American passport, though she had been living in Australia for over 30 years. She looked very young despite her gray hair, but she didn't look very happy.

We had the greeting ceremony on the stage in the East Room. The White House was packed. Everybody wants to meet the Australians. And then the receiving line in the Blue Room. And it was quickly over, and I went upstairs to have coffee with some of the guests I had invited to dinner and with whom I wanted to spend a little extra time. I was using the occasion of a State Dinner once more to provide a really intimate, happy, to-be-remembered occasion for as many old friends and interesting new people as I could. And the house was bursting. The Bob Phinneys, the Clint Murchisons, the Carl Phinneys, the Jack Joseys, the B. K. Johnsons, were packed into all the rooms where we usually have guests. And the Gus Worthams I had put in the Lincoln Room where we have had only a few guests.

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And then when Lyndon told me that the Cy Vances were going to be in town -- he's reporting to Lyndon in the morning -- and that he wanted to ask them to spend the night, there was nothing left but Luci's room.

I had asked the Worthams and the Joseys and the Benno Schmidts and the Ed Clarks to linger after the welcoming ceremony and come up to the Yellow Oval Room. We had coffee, and nearly an hour of good quiet conversation. ^{Lyndell?} Lyndo Wortham has written a book, and it is going to be published by the Texas University Press. She was full of excitement about it. The Jack Joseys and I talked "University and Library". And the Ed Clarks "HemisFair". And the Benno Schmidts, our long-ago stay together at the University in the early '30's -- he's a New York ^{Financeer} ~~Finner-Sear~~ now I gather and interested in Australia with so many business ties. I gave them my loving description of the Yellow Oval Room and had a guide standing by who continued on the tour with them -- that is as many of the rooms as are open to view.

Then I had lunch on a tray and worked at my desk and had a bit of rest. And then it was time for the next group of State Dinner guests that I had invited for tea -- the J. R. Taylors (J. Taylor's children), and J. Waddy Bullion with his new wife. It's quite a triumph to get them. And Mrs. W. T. Wynn from Greenville, Mississippi. I always add extra warmth when I have guests from Mississippi or Alabama because

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I figure there are not too many places around Washington where they get it. And I think a lot of the so-called intellectuals and writers have tried them out of the Union, very unwisely. And her friend Mrs. Beltzhoozer. And Ann Clark.

We had a happy little visit. And then when they left Mrs. Provenson came, and I worked for an hour on my speeches in Arizona. I will leave in the morning at 6:45, and I am always better prepared when I have done my homework.

And then an up-hair-do with Jean Louis, and into one of my prettiest Stavropolous chiffons -- it would make a clod feel like a lady. And then the traumatic minutes when we are trying to get Lyndon into a tux, and both of us down to the North Portico at the precise moment that the big black limousine comes rolling up the drive.

If I ever have ulcers, it is these moments which will be in part responsible -- messages come over from the Situation Room, they have to be read, and sometimes acted upon. Lyndon has the phone to one ear while he is buttoning his shirt. He is the fastest ~~dresser~~ ^{dresser} I ever saw. He has needed that facility. This time the message was bad. We have a submarine that is overdue -- it may be lost -- the outlook is grim. A little past 8:15, we were down under the North Portico -- once more greeting the Grottons to the flashing of camera bulbs, and back up to the Yellow Oval Room where we were joined by the Wallers -- two of my

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all-time favorites in the Diplomatic Corps. And the Katzenbachs in Secretary Rusk's absence. And Angie without Robin. And I think both the Ed Clarks and the Bill Crooks were with us.

There were the usual gifts on our part -- acetron clocks, a vermeil box, a family photo. And then a couple of unusual ones -- a replica of a George Washington reading lamp for the Prime Minister and a tiny IBM dictaphone that he can practically carry in his pocket. And for Mrs. Gorton a specially bound book on Indonesia. We had found that she's a student of that country.

And then down the stairs to "Hail to the Chief", and into the Yellow Room for the receiving line to greet our approximately 140 guests.

From the Cabinet there were the Fowlers and Marny Clifford -- Clark was having a dinner for the Korea Secretary of Defense. And from the Senate the Ralph Yarboroughs and the Frank Mosses and the Len Jordans, who we had heard were special friends of the Prime Minister. We always look for this sort of thing. And Senator John Stennis alone. And my always favorites the Mike Monroneys. And General Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his wife. And the Solicitor General with Mrs. Griswold smiling in a wheelchair.

From business the Roger Bloughs and George Champions and Harold Grays.

From Government, the Sheldon Cohens and Price Daniels.

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As my eye roved the room I thought of all the cross-currents here -- the bitter fight between Senator Yarborough and Price Daniel, the sense of change when Anne Leinsdorf came down the line. I had heard just the day before that she and Erich were getting a divorce. The excruciating mixup about inviting the Bob Phinneys. And then when it came time to ask them to be house guests, some one made the mistake of phoning the Carl Phinneys instead.

From the staff, there were Liz and Les Carpenter and Ashton and John.

And from the entertainment world, a rather star-studded group -- Lucia Chase of the American Ballet Theatre. And handsome Charlton Heston, taller than anybody, but easy to find because he was always surrounded by a bevy of press women. The Art Linkletters.

And two figures from the world of art, and very special friends of mine, Mary Lasker and the Joseph Hirshhorns.

From the press there were the Forrest Boyds and the Max Frankels and Frances Lewine. And at last the Barnet Novers.

A good many of the guests had special ties to Australia, and as they went down the lines there were warm greetings and reminiscences and "how is sox and so?" Jean Englehard's sister -- Mrs. Rupert Gerard -- was one of those. And also the Benno Schmidts and B. K. Johnsons. And of course the line came to a stop when Ed Clark reached us. And

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Lyndon introduced the Crooks -- the next Ambassador -- in a very warm fashion. And there was the American brother of Mrs. Gorton, Dr. Arthur Brown, whom she had not seen in 20 years.

When the line was over we went into the State Dining room for a very good dinner, topped off with chocolate mint batina. We frequently name the desert after even the lady whom we are honoring of some special place in our guests' country. Menus went round the table, and Prime Minister Gorton signed his to me with memories of a happy dinner and a quite legible signature.

Bess usually tries to plan our tables with due regard for both rank and being interesting dinner companions -- especially with Lyndon. She searches for some of the most attractive women.

It was a pleasant night, though a serious one. In Lyndon's toast he said that this country will remain patient but firm in the quest for an honorable peace. He noted that Cy Vance was going to report to him in the morning on the progress of the Paris talks. He spoke of the fact that the enemy were pouring men and supplies into South Viet-Nam at an unprecedented rate. He said he knew there were some in Asia and elsewhere who are wondering ~~tonight~~ tonight whether the United States will maintain its commitments in Asia, who are wondering tonight whether the strains of the struggle would lead us to withdraw, and leave two-thirds of humanity to its fate without American assistance or

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American support. He could not speak for his successor, but for ourself the answer is "no". We will not withdraw until there is an honorable peace.

The Prime Minister likened Lyndon's stand to that of President Lincoln. He said that Australians recognize that they had been protected and shielded by a greater power -- the United States -- and will therefore give greater leadership in the future because of this.

We had coffee and liqueurs in the Hall and the Red Room and the Blue Room. And then we went in for one of the most beautiful evenings of ballet I have seen here at the White House. I introduced it briefly. It was the American Ballet Theatre doing excerpts from Ramonda with Luppy Serano and Fernandez.

The Gortons lingered nearly an hour after the entertainment was over. They seemed really to be enjoying themselves.

Lyndon and I went upstairs right after they had left -- it must have been about 12:40. Of course I was going to leave so early the next morning for Arizona I did not try to arrange one of our night-cap sessions with guests.

It had been a pleasant-sad evening -- inevitably one remembers the Holts. This whole incredible Spring has been so full of turmoil. Was there ever another to match. At least to the French it seems to be easing up. The headlines say, "Solution Near on French Crisis", but I find myself after an initial feeling of comfortable glee rather relieved and glad for them. It is not wise to enjoy your neighbor's troubles -- those things have a way of spreading.