

MEMORANDUM

31  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 20, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: **Tom**  
Tom Johnson

Here are the notes of your meeting with Ken Crawford on  
July 19.

Meeting began: 7:15 p.m.  
Meeting ended: 7:56 p.m.

1a

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH KENNETH CRAWFORD, NEWSWEEK

In the President's Office  
July 19, 1967

Mr. Crawford asked the President's impression of Chairman Kosygin.

The President said that he was quite favorably impressed by Kosygin. "If I were a Soviet citizen I would feel I have a very competent and articulate spokesman in Chairman Kosygin. I doubt that he would have put the missiles in Cuba, but once he got them in, he wouldn't take them out."

The President said that Kosygin was constrained by restrictions which had been placed on him by his associates in Moscow. The President said neither he nor Kosygin were ill at ease or afraid of the other. The President said intelligence information indicated that the Soviets thought the U.S. got the best of the Friday meeting. Kosygin was tougher on Sunday.

The President said that neither man had notes or documents in the meeting, nor were there any advisors. The President said there is no reason why we cannot improve relations between the two countries. The President said that if he were in Mr. Crawford's position, he would take a line that the reason the President did not jump quickly into a conference with Kosygin was that the President did not want to get hopes up in this country or have talks which were not substantive. The President said "we wanted no shoe pounding."

The President said it has never been published but it was the Soviets who insisted on the meeting because they needed it as a face-saving device.

The President said Secretary Rusk and Foreign Minister Gromyko talked on the subjects to be discussed prior to the meeting. The President said we did not want any horseplay. The President said he believed the meeting came out as a warm hospitable conference.

The President said it would be good for Mr. Crawford to say that Brezhnev would be welcome in this country. The President said



we may try to get Brezhnev. Intelligence information indicates that it is he who needs to discuss with us some of our mutual problems.

The President said he believed he made progress with Kosygin on problems in Latin America. The President said he told Kosygin that the export of Cuban Communists into other Latin American countries would not be acceptable to the United States. The President said he told Kosygin to advise Castro to stop exporting revolutionaries into other Latin American countries.

Mr. Crawford said all reports he has received indicate that Kosygin did tell Castro just that.

The President said Kosygin thought Secretary McNamara was a very tough man. "I tried to change his mind on that." Kosygin told McNamara: "You are strictly commercial." The President said Kosygin later told his people that he had misjudged Secretary McNamara.

The President said that Kosygin did not promise anything and did not agree to anything on the Middle East. "He wants us to withdraw to pre-war lines. Then Kosygin says he would be for maritime passage and territorial integrity."

The President said Kosygin lost face at the UN and lost billions of dollars in the Middle East.

The President said "if nothing came out of this meeting but the smiling faces and warm reception that the people of Glassboro gave to Kosygin, that is something that we haven't had since World War II."

Mr. Crawford told the President that Arthur Schlesinger is out to help the doves in the Kremlin by seeking to get Svetlana Stalin's book postponed. He asked if the President had heard of this. The President said no he had not.

The President then told Mr. Crawford of a report he had that Richard Goodwin, Arthur Schlesinger and Blair Clark have undertaken an effort to get Secretary McNamara to resign in protest to the handling of the Vietnam War.

The President said the Congo has cooled off considerably. "We are heroes out there now because we helped put down white mercenaries who were out to overturn the leadership of the country."

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~~Holder: W. Thomas Johnson~~

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The President read a letter to Mr. Crawford on the effectiveness of our bombing in North Vietnam by one of the air commanders, General Momyer. The President said that Secretary McNamara was more impressed by this man than by any other gentleman he met on his trip. The President said that we would stop our bombing anytime they are willing to stop their aggression.

The President said he did not intend to get out and politic. He said "I want to be an adequate and competent trustee for the American people. "All I want is for my grandchildren to be able to say, 'The old man did a pretty good job after all.' "

On the matter of recent riots in Newark and in other U.S. cities, the President said he had asked the Congress to give him some help with programs which are designed to prevent such outbreaks. The President mentioned the Model Cities Proposal and the Rent Supplement Program, both of which were cut back severely by the Congress.

The President said he talked today with Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young. They reported concern about the young people whom they cannot control. The President said, "We must be tolerant and understanding, but we must control crime."

The President said that the school systems of this country have failed. He said this was evidenced by the fact that so many of the people who are rioting aren't prepared for jobs. He said that they were unable to get jobs because they weren't permitted to join labor unions.

The President said that there would be a deficit of between \$25 and \$30 billion dollars this year "if everything goes bad." The President said that his advisors suggest that the government should try to raise all it can through a tax bill. The President read a letter from Secretary of Commerce Trowbridge on businessmen's reaction to the tax increase. Most of them favored one. The President said that the decision on the tax increase would probably come the end of next week.

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~~Holder: W. Thomas Johnson~~

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 5, 1967  
12:30 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup> Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with Peter  
Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News.

The meeting started at 6:59 p. m. The meeting ended  
at 8:30 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL

Information of the  
administration's meeting  
By DCH 8-20-81

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
PETER LISAGOR  
of the  
Chicago Daily News

on August 4, 1967

Lisagor: What has been the reaction to the riots in the cities?

President: It's number one domestic issue, according to Congressmen, as indicated by the White House mail, and in the minds of most of the people with whom I talk.

Poll in the 50 states shows this as the number one domestic problem.

Wires come in by the bushels. Ninety-five percent of them are worried about the riots.

The Negroes are really concerned. They say don't blame 98% for what 2% do.

I sent staff into many cities. Discussed Markman report and the letters from Stewart Alsop with two letters from militant Negroes.

Lisagor: What do you think ought to be done about it?

President: All the people need is a good teacher. Need teachers in the slum areas to provide personal leadership, magnetism, inspiration. Job Corps and other programs can do some of this. So can Model Cities and Poverty Program.

President read memo from Jim Rowe on the 1943 riots and cited similarities between 1943 and 1967 situation in Detroit.

The 50 governors still don't know what it takes to get troops. Had best constitutional lawyer in the country write that statement for TV last Monday night.

I've concluded that the situation throughout the country is like a steaming pot. You can keep the lid on only by letting a little steam out.

Lisagor: Do you foresee any major problems with the legislation because of the riots.

President: No, I don't expect any major resentment to the program. It may loosen the Congress up a bit on some of these programs.

Lisagor: Would you care to discuss reports of the increased effectiveness of bombing in North Vietnam?

President: There are a lot of fringe benefits to the bombing. Our men are becoming much better trained. They are bombing with precision never before known to warfare.

As a matter of fact, we do have circles around Hanoi and Haiphong in hope that if they (the North Vietnamese) will give us any cooperation we will in return cooperate with them.

There are no big decisions looming. The problem is how to get free and honest elections and not have a coup.

Ky denies he said some of the things he has been reported as saying during the last few weeks. Bunker says Ky didn't say them. The problem is with 500 press, some of whom are new men, and with the fact that Ky doesn't speak the best English.

When they have that election, that's when South Vietnam stops crawling and begins to walk -- when they get a Democratic government.

The biggest danger isn't military -- it's political.

But there are no big new decisions in the works.

Remember that we have weathered many problems in the last few months. We have gone through Glassboro, Middle East, the Congo, Vietnam, a national rail strike, and the Detroit riots.

Right now, we're waiting on the Vietnamese elections. They can't announce any troop buildup until after the elections.

And it's difficult for us to tell others what they should be doing -- every little country hates to have a big country like us dictating to them.

I received a message today from Prime Minister Holt. He received the Taylor-Clark mission well. He enjoyed meeting with them and thought it was a good visit.

We're going to put troops in. It's a question for the other countries about their share of the burden.

Ky is lowering his draft age and will be putting in 65,000 more troops. We have to move to eliminate corruption, to develop land reform, and to clean out some of the bad generals. But we can't now. How would you like it if your organization heard you were being checked for corruption just as they were considering you for a job. That's what we have to watch with Ky and the elections.

The biggest danger is that the elections may be improperly held and the results are that of a dictator or a Communist election. We want it to be fair and Democratic.

Lisagor: Frankly, I don't see how you can impose democracy on a country which is at war.

(There was a discussion of the definition of pullout after six months of the halt of hostilities and infiltration.)

President: Pull out could mean that we go to Thailand or into the Gulf of Tonkin. Doesn't mean we leave Southeast Asia.

Lisagor: If the new government wants to try its hand at reconciliation with the Vietcong, would we go along.

President: Confidentially, if that were to be the case, we would encourage it. Ambassador Bunker is there to find the ways and means to get peace.

Generally, I'd say that we are gradually going up in Vietnam and they are gradually going down.

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A Japanese businessman reported that there are hardly any lights in Hanoi. Trucks are being repaired under trees. Only old women and men remain in the city. The destruction has been very accurate.

But it's still going to take time.

We've got the logistical base now -- we've begun to turn defeat into victory.

I'm not distressed. There is no truth in the stalemate theory.

The McNamara report this time was the best one of his nine.

The President then reviewed the domestic tax picture, pointing out that in all the radio-TV coverage there has been not one pro-tax statement.

We've got to do something to get these appropriations bills passed. Then we can see what we can cut. But the picture looks like this. We expect to be able to cut \$7 1/2 billion, tax \$7 1/2 billion and borrow \$15 billion. That's 25% cut, 25% tax and 50% borrow.

President: Told Tom Johnson to let Lisagor read the Markman report and the letters which were sent by Stewart Alsop.

# # #

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 8, 1967

1 p.m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT

*Tom*

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes taken of your meeting with Lloyd Shearer of Parade Magazine.

The meeting began at 1:51 p.m. The meeting ended at 2:12 p.m.

Attachment



Meeting began: 1:51 p.m.  
Meeting ended: 2:12 p.m.

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
LLOYD SHEARER  
of  
Parade Magazine

August 7, 1967

Shearer: What adjectives would you use to describe George Christian?

President: Honest, fair, friendly, sturdy, dependable, unflappable.

Shearer: Would you compare Bill Moyers with George Christian?

President: No, I do not want to get into that.

Shearer: Can a Press Secretary make a President's image?

President: No, but I do think that a Press Secretary can ruin a President. The people see you through the eyes and words of your Press Secretary. If they are not imaginative and have initiative, then they can ruin you.

Shearer: What are other virtues you find in George?

President: Devotion to duty, and this includes devotion to two Texas governors and to the President. I hired George strictly on the basis of his professional reputation ... I never knew him well personally before he joined the staff... When it was known that Bill would be leaving the staff for personal, financial reasons, we brought George aboard about six months before Bill departed. He received a good deal of foreign policy experience while working with Walt Rostow, my foreign affairs staff adviser.

George had a good reputation in Texas. The press liked him there, and they do here, too.

Everybody thought him to be a sturdy, able, unexcitable man. He works well with the press and tries to help them.

He doesn't try to be a hero and make his boss out to be a heel. He was highly recommended by my staff. Bill Moyers strongly recommended George as his replacement.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 14, 1967, Monday

2:30 p.m.

*[Handwritten signature]*

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup> Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of the President's meeting with Mr. Robert Lucas, Scripps Howard.

SECRET

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH BOB LUCAS  
AUGUST 14, 1967

Lucas: I returned from Vietnam Wednesday night. I had a very good session with William Leonhardt. In my opinion, we need to keep the pressure on; with a little more pressure, I think that will do it. The boys who are fighting for them are hurting; perhaps the leaders in Hanoi aren't as bad as their troops are.

President: There's now a campaign on in Vietnam to attack Thieu and Ky and an attempt to discredit the elections. The Viet Cong killed 100 civilians last week to try to stop the elections.

Lucas: At times I have become very discouraged about the war. It tears your heart out to see our boys waiting out there on the DMZ for those guys to come pouring across and yet the rules prohibit our men from going across to get the enemy. But the morale of the men is good. I agree with the bombing policies.

President: We have many more targets authorized than have been hit. The ones which have not been authorized are delicate and dangerous. There are two reasons they are delicate and dangerous:

1. Hitting them might result in the possible involvement of China and the Soviet Union.
2. There could be more loss of lives and aircraft involved than the destruction of the targets would gain.

There are four places where these off-limit targets are located:

1. In the buffer zone between Vietnam and China.
2. Haiphong
3. Hanoi (populated areas)
4. Mining operations and Ports

President: We cannot see that hitting any of the targets which now are not authorized would stop the war. But our bombing is our best trading point. It keeps 700,000 of them tied down. The Hanoi situation is bad. They are constantly repairing their equipment, rebuilding their bridges, and restoring power. Hanoi looks like a dead city, a report from a Japanese businessman said.

We think they will come to their senses as a result of this, but we do not know when. Our biggest problem is not with Ho and with the fighting out there. It's with our situation here. It is leading the enemy to believe we might quit. They are gasping now.

If all these people (Bishop Sheen, Fulbright, other Members of Congress) wanted to help their President they would come in here and say to me privately what they are saying to the press. It looks as though they are talking to Ho now, not to me.

The President then outlined the past week as described in the New York Times. He said that the final paragraph was best. It said the President listens to all these critics but then he decides what is right.

The President said that is true. The President rides on his own judgment.

~~Tom~~

Tom Johnson

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH ~~Jim~~ LUCAS  
AUGUST 14, 1967

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Tom Johnson

WTJ:ejf

SERIAL 1000

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 14, 1967

4:25 P.M.

*rec'd & signed*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

**Tom**

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of the President's  
meeting with Harry Reasoner of CBS.

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH HARRY REASONER, CBS

Reasoner is about to depart for Saigon for a three-week period as Senior CBS correspondent in Vietnam. The President explained that he had seen Reasoner on the 11 p.m. CBS News show Sunday night and wanted him to stop by to get some background before Reasoner left.

During the talks, the President instructed Tom Johnson to have cables drafted to Ambassadors Bunker, Locke, and Komer advising them of Reasoner's trip and requesting that the ambassadors see Reasoner. In addition, the President called Secretary McNamara personally to request that Reasoner see him. The Secretary agreed to a 2:15 meeting.

THE PRESIDENT:

1. We are in a very critical period in Vietnam. It could be the turning point in the whole "disturbance."
2. The process started out in Honolulu when we made our first try to get a transformation in Vietnam with a government which had some stability.
3. We told Ky and Thieu then, and we have often repeated it since, that we want free and honest elections.
4. From that point, the government progressed. A constituent assembly was selected. It wrote a reasonably good constitution.
5. Then, we went to Manila. It was there that we asked them to accelerate the rate on their constitution.
6. At Guam, we met again. For all practical purposes, they delivered the constitution then.
7. Now the election is coming up in September. For the next few weeks we are in for two things:
  - a. Efforts to prevent the elections.
  - b. Efforts to discredit the elections.



8. We face a long, uphill fight. There are 500 journalists out there, most of whom are cynical about the elections. The North Vietnamese, the Communists, and the Viet Cong are doing all they can to prevent the elections. They killed 100 civilians last week.

9. When you lift the curtain of censorship and sponsor your opposition as Thieu and Ky have been doing (providing transportation, printing campaign literature, providing funds) then you know you are not going to hear anything but opposition to them.

10. I am going to have general discontent in this country. The greatest deterrent between us and the conference table is anticipation in Hanoi that we won't be able to hold out in America.

11. If we get through the Vietnamese elections, then steps can be taken to pull things together.

12. There is no stalemate. There is no failure militarily in Vietnam.

13. Bunker is the best we have. We do not know anybody better than Thieu and Ky.

14. We have the very best people we know out in Saigon: Westmoreland, Porter, Abrams, Palmer on the military side; Bunker, Locke, Komer on diplomatic side.

15. Both Secretary McNamara and the Taylor-Clifford mission told Ky and Thieu that the elections must be honest.

16. Ho wonders if we are going to stay. As long as I am President, we are not going to walk out and let the North Vietnamese take over.

17. I do not think that any other candidate or a Republican election winner could sell out in Vietnam as soon as he gets in either.

18. I do think we can build a nation. Korea did it. I think that South Vietnam is doing it now.

19. I want so badly to sit down and talk. We'll stop the bombing tomorrow if they will not take advantage of the halt. If they won't use the pause as they have in the past, then we'll stop.

20. I get the feeling that Kosygin is trying to help.

21. After the elections, I expect the government will try to clean up the army. They will undertake a gigantic land reform. They will move out in a greater diplomatic and propaganda way.

22. They may say to the Viet Cong that they can vote and participate. Their attitude may become "Let's talk it out rather than shoot it out."

23. We do not want to conquer Vietnam. All we want to do is to prevent them from taking South Vietnam by force. If they take it by votes, that's a different matter, okay.

24. When infiltration and violence ceases, we will get out. We may go to Thailand or to the Philippines, but we will get out. I told Kosygin that.

25. It's a long, rough road. Our problem now is the election. That's the hurdle.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 26, 1967, Saturday  
2:00 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup> Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of the President's meeting August 24, with Tom Wicker, The New York Times, Bob Lucas, Gannett Newspapers, Sid Davis, Westinghouse Broadcasting, Dean Reed, Newhouse, Don Larrabee, Griffin-Larrabee News Bureau, and Bob Thompson, Hearst Newspapers.

The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. The meeting ended at 10:45 p.m.

SERVICE SET

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH BUREAU CHIEFS  
IN THE YELLOW OVAL ROOM

Question: Mr. President, as you approach your 59th birthday, how do you feel? How do you assess world conditions?

President: Physically, I feel fine. My blood pressure is good. I've never felt better.

As for the current situation:

- We're in a difficult period.
- We have had a tough period just behind us
  - the rail strike and legislation
  - the U.N. debate on the Mideast
  - The hotline exchange
  - The decision on more troops
  - Newark and Detroit, and the riots
  - Aircraft sent into the Congo
  - Glassboro and the Kosygin talks
  - The Tax Message, and the decision on that
- There may be tough times ahead
  - In Vietnam
  - In getting my Tax Increase

But we have had all the Democratic leaders in, all the freshmen Democrats, all the Republican leaders, all the Republican freshmen. The bill has not moved as fast as I would like.

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But even given all this, things are going well generally. Yesterday we tabled a non-proliferation treaty with the Soviets at Geneva -- the same day that Ted Sorenson reported from Moscow that relations between the two countries were poor.

And I've studied comments which Fulbright made about other Presidents. He has been better to me than to them. I gather from all this that other Presidents go through it as well.

As for the polls, sure we would like to see them higher. But look at Jack Kennedy -- his poll went up 10 points after the Bay of Pigs and dropped 12 points after everybody learned what had happened. Frankly, I do not have any objection to Romney staying where he is in the polls.

All of us would like to put more emphasis on helping the cities than we have, but you should look at the legislation which we have on the cities before the Congress now.

The Vietnamese may think that I will be forced out in 1969. They may think they will take South Vietnam if I am forced out. But if I am not, I will not permit them to take it. At the same time, I want to try to live up to our responsibilities here at home.

All in all, there is:

-- some criticism

-- low polls

But I do not know any President who has had it any better. We get into these types of things in time of war. When things go wrong, the American people traditionally have blamed it on the President. Some of it is not without justification, I guess.

I told some generals this afternoon that they had been advocating a "get it over" attitude. What I asked them to do was to tell me how to get it over any more quickly than we are.

I look at it rather philosophically. As somebody said years ago, it's better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all.

Tom Wicker: Do you think the man who would succeed you as President would yield to the North Vietnamese?

President: No, I think he would be stronger -- regardless of the winner.

Bob Thompson: Do you think Romney will be the candidate?

President: No, I do not. But that's not for me to say. But I feel that Romney would be a good candidate.

Tom Wicker: Do you have a new policy on what we demand in return for a halt in the bombing?

President: There is no new policy. We will not let anything come between us and conversations except this (North Vietnamese) using those conversations to kill our men.

We have reports that the guerilla infra-structure is on the verge of collapse.

Bob Lucas: What do you think about the reporting that we are getting from Vietnam? Why do you continue to say it is bad?

President: All I can say to that is that if there is a stalemate, as the press reports, then every single one of our men we have out there is wrong. Bunker and Westmoreland do not agree, nor does anybody else who works for us out there -- and they have no other purpose than to report the facts.

The reporting debate isn't one that I can win. Nobody reports we have a stalemate, but this is one where I do not want to win the argument and lose the sale.

I do believe in Bunker. Everybody writing out there ought to write as though he were inserting his name.

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I do believe that the press, like the Presidency, is used. I also notice that the ones who write with the most authority on me are the ones who haven't been around. I have no problems with the White House Press. You can take a columnist, say Jack Anderson. He writes on cool authority without knowing me. The ones who cover here -- I can't point to anything that I would object to greatly.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 26, 1967, Saturday  
10 a.m.

CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: **Tom**  
Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with Helen Thomas and Jack Horner in the President's Office August 25.

The meeting began at 2:05 p.m. The meeting ended at 3:20 p.m.

OCT 1 1967 12-20-81



## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Meeting began:

Meeting ended:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES:

PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH HELEN THOMAS AND JACK HORNER  
AUGUST 25, 1967.

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The two reporters had requested a session with the President to discuss the President's mood as his 59th Birthday approaches.

The President: Here is a letter from a friend of mine in Texas. It reads: "Call them like you see them, even if the stars fall." The President asked that copies of the letter be made available to the two correspondents.

In addition, the President gave Helen Thomas a folder of Happy Birthday letters which had been received in the White House mailroom. She took those letters with her, pledging to return after finishing her article.

Jack Horner: Mr. President, it must not be a very happy Birthday with all these problems in Vietnam and the problems at home.

The President: No, it's really no different this birthday from any of them. I see nothing particular which makes me sad.

I don't remember a time when we didn't have problems. It feels so good to have Newark and Detroit behind us, rail legislation enacted, no war in the Middle East, and I am glad that:

1. The tax bill has been sent up.
2. The troop decision has been made.
3. Our contacts with other nations have been made through Clark and Taylor.
4. The U. N. situation on the Middle East worked out real well.
5. There has been no change of force in the Western Hemisphere.
6. We had a good visit with Chancellor Kiesinger.
7. The foreign aid bill was cut less in the House than it was in the Senate.
8. I think I will get Model Cities in the Senate bill.

I do not think that I have done anything in the last 12 months which I would change. I have a good cabinet, a good staff, good leadership, and good programs. I sure would not trade places with Mrs. Ghandi, Kiesinger, or Prime Minister Wilson. All these attacks you have been hearing do have their effects, but it is something you expect.

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Thomas and Horner

-2-

Helen Thomas: It's what I would call an escalation of politics.

The President: I have much to be grateful for. Look at our success with the Soviet Union yesterday on tabling of the non-proliferation treaty. This was the same day that Ted Sorenson said that our relations were so bad.

Jack Horner: Mr. President, as you approach 59, has life been good to you?

The President: Yes, when I was a little boy coming along, I thought I had been denied a lot of things other people had. But I can never cease to be grateful enough and thankful enough.

I rarely ever have a pain. I have good eyes and can read a lot. I put in two schedules every day, rising about 6 and last night I worked until 2a.m., had roughly 100 decisions in night reading. They try to limit it to that.

No man who ever lived had a better family. I have never heard anything bad about my children. All do their work, pay their own taxes.

My job is excellent. I have 10-15 young people who work for me. They all are underpaid.

I have never seen a man with better character than Marvin Watson. People on my staff are excellent: Christian, Joe Califano, Cater, and McPherson. We have a younger group, Tom and Levinson, and Duggan and Jones, who are here at midnight. They all work like dogs. I am thankful for my staff.

I have a good cabinet.

Events are causing us trouble. But look at what is happening elsewhere. I know none of them who would not want to trade places with us. I would not want to trade places with any of them.

Look what happened to President Kennedy at Vienna, with the reserve call-up, with Berlin, with the Bay of Pigs, and with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

President Truman had to use the atomic bomb, fired General McArthur, and saw his polls dip to 30. President Roosevelt went through four years of war. He was only able to win a continuation of the draft by 203-202.

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More

[2 of 3]

Thomas and Horner

- 3 -

The President then read notes taken by Walter Jenkins of the Gulf of Tonkin discussions when various members of the Congress and the Cabinet discussed the Resolution and the action which they deemed necessary. The President particularly stressed comment by Senator Fulbright and Minority Leader Halleck.

I have good cars, good friends, good staff, good dogs, wonderful family. You have never heard me whine. There are no troubles with the press who cover here regularly; it's the people who are not here, who do not know me, who cause problems.

Sure, I've got problems... I won't gloss them over. But they are not health, not job, not personality, not my staff, and not my state of mind.

# # #

10/13/67  
MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 13, 1967

10:45 A.M.

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup> Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with the foreign editors on Wednesday, October 11, 1967, in the Cabinet Room.

The meeting began at 5:37 P.M.. The meeting ended at 7:05 P.M.

Attachment

DETENTION CANCELLATION  
NOTICE, CANCELLED BY [illegible]  
CLERK AND ARCHIVIST'S [illegible]  
MAY 16 1972  
BY DCA ON 5-5-86

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Meeting began: 5:37 P.M.  
Meeting ended: 7:05 P.M.

9a

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
16 FOREIGN EDITORS  
FROM 11 NATIONS

October 11  
1967  
Cabinet Room

The President opened the meeting by saying how happy he was that the editors could visit with him at the White House. Tom Johnson advised the editors that the session was completely off the record, and none of the information discussed in the meeting could be used in print.

QUESTION: What is the military justification for bombing North Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: The people of South Vietnam are being bombed everyday. North Vietnam is trying to take the South by force. They killed more civilians in the four weeks preceding the election than we have killed by the bombing in the war.

We are seeking maximum deterrent with minimum loss of life. We try to minimize civilian losses.

If we were to stop the bombing the cost in lives would be a great deal more. There are 1/2 million North Vietnamese tied down repairing the damage caused by the bombing.

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BY DOD

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- 2 -

QUESTION: Why are you in Vietnam? Is it because of the threat posed by China?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the reason for being there is because of our commitment to our allies. If we ignore this alliance, they will not believe our word anywhere, including Latin America. We are there to permit the South Vietnamese the right of self determination.

QUESTION: Why not recognize China in the United Nations?

THE PRESIDENT: We look forward to the day when China can join the family of nations. We see very little indication that she has any such intention.

QUESTION: What about Great Britain joining the common market?

THE PRESIDENT: We feel this is a matter for Europeans.

QUESTION: The Soviet Union proposed a neutralization of South Vietnam. Why don't we go along with that?

THE PRESIDENT: They have not made any proposal like that to me. We have said that if the aggressor will cease infiltrating and hostilities in South Vietnam, we will have our troops out within six months.

QUESTION: Do you favor UN sanction against North Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: North Vietnam is not a member of the UN.

QUESTION: What more can be done to meet the basic human needs of the people of South Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: We want to do everything we can to alleviate the suffering of the South Vietnamese people. I have had my own personal physician out there and we have met with a number of teams of medical advisors.

QUESTION: Shouldn't health care of South Vietnam be under civilian control rather than military control?

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- 3 -

THE PRESIDENT: Don't worry about that. Civilians have the last word in this government. Ambassador Bunker runs the show in South Vietnam and a civilian President is in over-all control here.

Senator Kennedy wants more money going into civilian aid. So do I. We would like all of you to help us out there too.

QUESTION: Do you think it is meaningful if only two of the four nuclear powers signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

THE PRESIDENT: Any step toward non-proliferation is a step in the right direction. If two of us join together on the same side, perhaps this will be a inducement for others.

QUESTION: What hopes do you see for the alliance with Europe?

THE PRESIDENT: We want to try not to be the architect of tearing the alliance to pieces. We have recognized our commitments in Greece, Turkey, Berlin and we keep six divisions in Germany now. We did not like to be invited out of France but we left when we were asked.

We feel we are doing the right thing. We are trying to protect freedom in Asia as we did in Europe.

QUESTION: What do you think about the current Middle East situation?

THE PRESIDENT: It is dangerous and explosive. We want to be friends with both sides. The Israelis do not feel compelled to follow our advice. We met with Arab ambassadors last week. I had a long letter from King Hussein today. We welcome any suggestions and any help.

QUESTION: What about U.S. relations with Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: We are proud of our ancestry. We never have had better relations with anybody. We feel very special obligations and responsibilities. We tell her everything we know and ask her to help.

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[3 of 5]

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~~Holder: W. Thomas Johnson~~

- 4 -

We have good relations with the British and with the Germans. Just because we go somewhere else doesn't mean we have turned our backs on anybody.

QUESTION: What are the prospects for peace?

THE PRESIDENT: I want peace stronger than anybody in the world except perhaps for those Marines on the DMZ tonight.

I could be a temporary hero like Chamberlain when he went to Munich and came back. We could easily spend our money on bread and butter and schools rather than on bombs and guns, but we believe our present policy is the best one, and we will do everything we can to try to bring peace as soon as possible.

QUESTION: Do you plan another trip to Europe?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I would like to retrace my trip as Vice President throughout Europe.

QUESTION: What about de Gaulle and the future of NATO?

THE PRESIDENT: We will not hurt or depress de Gaulle. If in 1969 he decides to get out of NATO, we will somehow try to learn to get along without him. We will not let LBJ's vanity destroy the health and welfare of the world -- nor will we allow de Gaulle's vanity to destroy it.

QUESTION: What about the internal conditions in China?

THE PRESIDENT: We honestly do not know. We do know there is an evolution taking place there.

QUESTION: Is it difficult to be the man who always has the finger on the nuclear button?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It is a hard job to have a finger on the atomic power button. But we cannot think of it. It is too horrible

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[4 of 5]



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~~Holder: W. Thomas Johnson~~

- 5 -

to contemplate. We are prepared and that may be the reason why a nuclear holocaust will never occur.

QUESTION: As an editor in Denmark, I want you to know that I do not agree with my Prime Minister who urged you this week to stop bombing.

QUESTION: My home is Austria. We owe you much from the Marshall Plan and from your standing up against Russia. What are your personal plans after 1972?

THE PRESIDENT: I intend to go straight to Johnson City, Texas to spend time at my ranch and to teach at the LBJ Library in Austin. I may record some of my impressions and memories and have Mr. Rostow there with me to document some of our years in the White House.

I intend to talk to my students about my time in Congress, in the Senate, as Vice President, and as President. Then I will go back home and take care of my grandchildren.

QUESTION: Are you content with the results of the Kennedy Round?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they worked out well. We sought the best and worked for the possible.

QUESTION: I am hopeful that the U.S., Germany and France can get together again. Do you think it is possible?

THE PRESIDENT: I want Germany to cooperate with France. Kiesinger knows he can count on the U.S. when he needs us. When we make a contract we keep it.

QUESTION: Why has there been no censorship in Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: Because we are fools. It is hard to fight a war without censorship but it would cause more problems than it would solve at this stage of the war.

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[5 of 5]

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1967

5:30 p. m.

10

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup> Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with Chalmers Roberts of the Washington Post on Friday, October 13, 1967 in your office.

The meeting began at 5:56 p. m. The meeting ended at 7:00 p. m.

Attachment.

Meeting began: 5:56 p. m.

Meeting ended: 7:00 p. m.

10a

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
CHALMERS ROBERTS  
of the  
Washington Post  
  
Friday, October 13  
1967  
President's Office

ROBERTS: I am more and more convinced that the key to what happens in Vietnam is what happens in this country. All of the discontent must be a factor in the thinking of Hanoi and Peiping.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think that is right.

ROBERTS: What do you think about the positions of the Republicans and Democrats on the war issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't analyzed them. If you look at the past you will find that politicians will be against the things which are unpopular and for the things which are popular. There is more dissent on the Vietnam issue than we would like. It makes those that fight the war do even more.

I talked to Prime Minister Holt of Australia. Holt said that the President is going to find people will drop out when the going gets tough.

ROBERTS: Secretary Rusk put the Vietnam war in a bigger frame this week. He looked at the whole of Asia and the problems with China.

THE PRESIDENT: Prime Minister Menzies told me that we need to make more statements about how we got into Vietnam, why we are there, and our reasons for staying. He said that we need to repeat these speeches. I got the best response to my San Antonio speech than to any I have given.

The Tonkin Gulf resolution was understood by the members of Congress when it was passed. They have changed their minds.

Senator Fulbright and Senator Morse recently sent me a letter saying that we should not get out of Vietnam. We have a substantial percentage of people in this country who are isolationists.

ROBERTS: They are Asian isolationists.

THE PRESIDENT: The longer the debate goes on, the more effect it will have on this country. The New York Times feels very strongly about our getting out of Vietnam. General Westmoreland said that he has only been out there two years and now he can begin to use the logistical base which he has built.

ROBERTS: What about possible Republican candidates for President?

THE PRESIDENT: The polls show that Nixon is on top and I have no reason to dispute this. Nixon has the delegates, from what I have been told.

Rockefeller is right where he has always been on Vietnam. Romney never expressed the slightest doubt about what we are doing in Vietnam until now -- in a political year. I doubt if there is any real differences between Nixon and Rockefeller in the final analysis, in regard to their position on Vietnam. Percy is a light-weight. Reagan appeals to the Birch-Goldwater-Andrew Mellon type of Republican.

I haven't done much talking about candidates. In fact, I am spending more time talking with you about candidates than I have in total. Nixon will do well with the delegates. He is stronger in the South, in the border states, and in the Dakotas. I don't have any answers, but in my judgment it will be Nixon. Of course, his enemies would use the argument, "you're a loser." Reagan looks like a Goldwater. Percy could be a Wilkie. And everybody could say about Nixon that "all those in the courthouse would be safe."

ROBERTS: Do you have anything from Hanoi?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you anything if I did have it. We are in touch with them, much more direct and authoritative than you could know. But from all I have seen, they have not budged one bit. They still want four things:

- recognize the NFL;
- stop the bombing;
- retreat;
- get out of Vietnam.

I wish my people were as solid in support of my soldiers as Ho's people are solid in support for his troops.

We have made a lot of progress in Vietnam politically. We had three good sessions, in Honolulu, in Manila and in Guam. They have had five elections in Vietnam in less than a year while the fighting has been going on.

If anybody can get talks going, Bunker can do it.

This is not Johnson's war. This is America's war. If I drop dead tomorrow, this war will still be with you.

The President then read sections of Ambassador Bunker's weekly cable.

# # #

Dec 16  
10:10  
MEMORANDUM

11

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1967

5:30 p. m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tom  
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with Jack Horner and Lee Cohn of the Washington Star on Friday, October 13, 1967 in the President's Office.

The meeting began at 7:02 p. m. The meeting ended at 8:10 p. m.

Attachment.

~~MEETING NOTES~~  
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Meeting began: 7:02 p. m.

Meeting ended: 8:10 p. m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING

WITH  
JACK HORNER

and

LEE COHN

of the

Washington Star

Friday, October 13

1967

President's Office

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~~Holder: W. Thomas Johnson~~

11a

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think you will get a tax bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I want one very much. It's up to the Hill now. The academic people want it; the business people want it; the bankers favor it; the economists believe we have to have one.

QUESTION: How do you expect to get it?

THE PRESIDENT: We have given the Congress and the press the facts as we see them. The economy is advancing sharply. Interest rates are going up. This quarter we had the fifth largest GNP gain.

QUESTION: What about talk of a tax reform bill?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll recommend a tax reform bill once we get a tax bill out of the way.

QUESTION: Do you think there is any way you can break the log jam?

THE PRESIDENT: If Congress wants massive cuts they will get them if they make them. They need to pull together among themselves. I am not a stubborn, adamant man. But I do not want to get into a cross-fire between Byrnes and Mills, Mahan and Bow.

I doubt Congress really knows where cuts are that they want to make. They do not know where they can cut it.

I do not want to be uncompromising. If they do not do it, I'll try to see that we do not waste any.

I do think we will have interest rates which are very high. I do believe there will be a new depression in housing. There will be a new upsurge in imports. And I believe prices will rise more than 5 percent in 1968 and more in the years ahead. With the surtax, long-term interest rates should be no higher

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than they are now. It was Bill Martin who convinced me that we have to have a tax bill.

Mills has told me that there is not much sentiment for a tax bill. I have laid out the best guesses which we have. That is \$25 to \$30 billion deficit. We have promised them that we will withhold or defer \$2 to \$3 billion, cut \$2 to \$3 billion, and match the \$7 billion which they get in a tax.

We cannot have 8 to 9 percent interest.

I have told the departments not to spend funds with this uncertainty hanging on. I put all my views into the tax message.

We know that everybody who gets anything in his district cut is not going to like it.

QUESTION: The economic arguments have convinced them, but they want you to tell them what to cut.

THE PRESIDENT: I have grave doubts as to how far we should go. We think they will feel better about this if they do it themselves.

QUESTION: Mills says the outlook for a tax increase is a bleak one. Do you agree with this?

THE PRESIDENT: Chairman Mills is a good judge of the House. I am not going to twist his arm. He has the facts. He is my chairman, and I am going to stick behind him.

QUESTION: Do you think that public sentiment will change their minds?

THE PRESIDENT: We have tried to repeat it and repeat it and repeat it. The public and the Congress know what we believe will happen if we do not have the tax bill. All of this talk does not change one Congressman.

I talked to every Congressman. I brought in fifty freshmen Republicans, all the Senators, and had seven long briefings. We had a press conference at the ranch. We talked to a consumer group and to a bank group, and you have my remarks from those meetings.

Mills is my chairman. Of course I wish all the committee would say yes, I am for your bill.



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- 3 -

But I have made my case. I will get a dollar in savings for every dollar that they tax. I will stretch and bend.

I have not given up hope.

There will be a very serious, critical situation if the Congress leaves and does not pass the bill.

I believe there is some politics involved in this. The Republicans would like to create a financial calamity. They know they can cut these things if they want to. If we have inflation, the people can say that the President foresaw it. I had five press conferences and speeches on this subject. They will see whose possibility was the wisest.

QUESTION: Is there any thought of controls?

THE PRESIDENT: No. If you cannot get a tax bill, you cannot get controls.

Jerry Ford and his group, including Laird, are not going to lose any sleep if we have a \$40 billion deficit. I am no babe in the woods about politics.

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[3 of 3]

SECRET

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 25, 1967

12 noon

FOR THE PRESIDENT

**Tom**

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with Joe Lastelic of the Kansas City Star, in your office on October 23, 1967.

The meeting began at 7:27 p.m. The meeting ended at 7:38 p.m.

Attachment.

Meeting began: 7:27 p. m.

Meeting ended: 7:38 p. m.

122

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH  
JOE LASTELIC  
of the  
Kansas City Star  
  
October 23, 1967  
In the  
President's Office

Lastelic told the President the Kansas City Star planned to have a series on Presidential campaigns. He wanted to know what were the issues that the President expected to be in the campaign.

The President: Vietnam will be an issue. But all of us regardless of party want peace. The question is how we get it. The prudent, careful man will not seek a wider war or a surrender.

The riots and civil disorders also will be an issue. Of course we are trying to get this with a Gun Bill and with a Safe Streets Bill and with other measures.

Taxes also will be a problem. We have recommended a tax increase and believe one to be necessary.

The President then discussed a number of polls, copies of which the President gave Lastelic. They included New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

The President said we are doing what needs to be done. We are taking a lot of criticism. "But I will continue to call them as I see them. I am not trying to be popular, but I am trying to be a good President."

Nixon is an able, tough, good organizer. He has a lot of people supporting him. I don't think there is anything to Romney. Reagan has a touch of McCarthyism.

# # #

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 15, 1967  
9:00 P.M.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup>  
Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of the meeting of the President on Wednesday, November 15, 1967, with Jack Horner, Bob Walters and Lyle Denniston of the Washington Star. The meeting began at 11:15 A.M. The meeting ended at 11:56 A.M.

Attachment

SERVICE SET

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13a

EYES ONLY

November 15, 1967

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH  
LYLE DENNISTON, BOB WALTERS, AND JACK  
HORNER OF THE WASHINGTON EVENING STAR

Lyle Denniston said there were a number of questions which they would like to cover with the President. (See attached letter)

He said they had been working on the article 8-10 weeks, talking with White House staff, members of the Cabinet, and other non-official advisers.

The President said the people who talk the most often know the least. He said the best authorities of the President are George Christian and Tom Johnson.

The President said there were a few reporters who cover the White House who know and understand the President well. They include Merriman Smith, Frank Cormier, Sid Davis, Forrest Boyd and Jack Horner.

"I will have been President four years this month and in those four years I never have seen a story put in by Horner that was not accurate."

Mrs. Johnson knows more about the White House than anybody when you include that she knows a lot about the East side of the White House that I do not.

There are people here who spend a great deal of time with me -- and know me well enough to speak with knowledge about the President.

I would rank them in this order:

In the "A" category: Marvin Watson, George Christian,  
Tom Johnson, Jim Jones and Marie Fehmer.

EYES ONLY

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EYES ONLY

- 2 -

In the "B" category: Joe Califano, Larry Levinson, Harry McPherson, and Doug Cater. (Rostow knows all there is to know about foreign affairs.) But none of these people come into the bedroom and have free and easy access to me at all times, as does the first group.

There are others, including John Roche, Ernest Goldstein who see me in the office every few days.

The farther away you get from the White House the more people you find who speak with authority but who seldom see me. At that level are the Bill Bundys.

Christian is the best informed, the most stable, most conscientious, most thorough press secretary I have had. He is a man of good judgment.

The big credibility problem developed on the Far East tour when Carol and Bill Moyers told the press we were going to make a nationwide political tour -- although I knew (and told George Christian and Dean Rusk) that I would have to enter the hospital for surgery on return.

On other matters, I am a strong believer in the Cabinet. I do not go through underlings in their departments. I handle everything through the Secretaries.

I get regular reports from the agencies and the Cabinet. (The President showed a set of these reports to the reporters.)

In addition, there is a regular schedule of meetings with legislative liaison staff, foreign ambassadors, National Security Council staff, Tuesday foreign affairs luncheon, and leadership meetings each week.

My day begins at 6:30 when I arise to read the morning intelligence reports and the newspapers. In addition, I finish up night reading, read special North Vietnam report, a special Defense report, the Congressional Record, and a State Department report.

EYES ONLY

- 3 -

Marvin Watson and the press secretaries come over to go over work. I work from 6:30 until 3:30 P.M. going to the office around 10:30 to 11 A.M.

I have lunch, go to bed after reading the Washington Star and listening to news on radio. Then after the nap I return to the office, often working until around 11 P.M. when I return to the mansion to watch the network newscasts.

I get a massage every night, working on night reading while getting the rub-down. Last night I worked until 3 A.M.

The demands on the President are legion and so are the opportunities.

But I want somebody else to assess my four years as President -- not I -- it looks immodest for me to assess them, and I am a bit biased on my opinion about those four years.

We have done reasonably well. Look at Latin America, how the Russians and the Chinese failed in Africa. We never have had a better relationship with Europe, particularly Germany.

We have not done as well as we would have liked but we have done better than many people expected with our bill in Congress. It's only half-time now; there is still another session of the 90th Congress to go.

I try to do what is right, not what always is popular. I certainly would not have asked for a tax increase if I were trying to do only what is popular.

Nearly every individual thinks there are comments which are just and comments which are unjust. But every man must live with what he says and does. (The President then quoted Lincoln's remarks and gave the reporters copies of the quotes which appear framed in the President's small conference room.)

I think I will leave as a legacy of the Johnson administration a social consciousness in concrete. There have been 36 education bills and 24 health bills passed. We have made great strides in conservation.

EYES ONLY

EYES ONLY

- 4 -

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I have about 20 appointments each day, only a few of which are on-the-record.

There is no basic decision we have made in the past four years which I would change. There are some decisions which have been questioned (such as the tax bill).

In Vietnam, Ambassador Bunker told me we need patience. He says that history will record Vietnam as another Korea if we have the patience and the will to stay the course.

I am unhappy that we have not found an answer in Vietnam. I hope we can.

EYES ONLY

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The Evening Star - The Sunday Star

Washington, D. C. 20003  
Lincoln 3-5000

13

November 14, 1967

Mr. Thomas Johnson  
Office of the Press Secretary  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Tom:

As part of our research for a story on "The Johnson Presidency," we would like the opportunity to talk with the President. We would be interested in discussing with him these areas of his work and responsibilities:

1. His personal reaction to the demands and opportunities of the office, in the perspective of four years.
2. His assessment of how well he has done.
3. The question of any President's accountability for his actions, in the interim between quadrennial elections.
4. His reaction to explicit and implicit criticism of his personality.
5. The question of how deeply, in detail, he monitors the government.
6. The amount of dependence upon advisers, official and unofficial. Has this changed over the past four years?
7. Does he, on the basis of his long experience in government, feel freer to make decisions without extended deliberation?

8. What institutional changes has he brought to the White House?

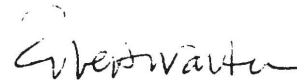
9. How will the Executive Branch be changed as a result of his having been President?

10. What will be the legacy of his Presidency in terms of federal-state-local relations?

We would greatly appreciate whatever help you may give us in this regard.

Very truly yours,

  
Lyle Denniston

  
Robert Walters

Staff Writers

ea

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October 16, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR GEORGE CHRISTIAN

Lyle Denniston and Bob Walters of the Washington Star came by Thursday, October 12. I spent an hour with them primarily on the President's requirements for information, intelligence, and advice in the field of national security affairs. The entire conversation was for background only.

Some time was spent on the way the President is given advice by Cabinet officers and those on his personal staff. I also emphasized the ways in which the President communicates his ideas and directives to Cabinet officers and other high Government officials.

Both reporters were interested and appeared impressed by the extent of the President's involvement in national security affairs and the way he reaches for information which the staff is challenged to obtain and present in a useful form.

I volunteered, after they had been other staff members, to answer further questions. I believe they have a good understanding of the complexities of the Presidential decision-making process as well as the incredible range and importance of decisions which a President must make.

15/  
Bromley Smith

BKS:amc



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20201

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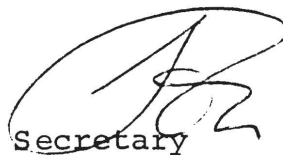
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Lyle Denniston, one of the Star reporters working on the article on your Administration, interviewed me on October 25. His interest was not in the programs of your Administration but in the contributions you have made to the institution of the presidency.

I emphasized two points:

- your insistence on sound management and the government-wide utilization of PPBS;
- your initiative in the reshaping of federal-state-local relations.

I summarized for Mr. Denniston steps which I have taken in response to your instructions to improve the administration and coordination of this Department's programs, and to promote better working relationships with the Governors and other state and local officials.

  
Secretary



The Postmaster General  
Washington, D.C. 20260

November 14, 1967

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

From: Larry O'Brien *LOB*

Mr. President:

You asked for a brief report on the interview I had with the Washington Star for the series it is preparing. I was interviewed on October 20 by Lyle Denniston.

The interview with me was limited to the legislative program and Congressional relations in general. I emphasized your deep interest in the progress of the legislative program, not only as expressed in the State of the Union address or in messages to the Congress, but each step of the way through the Congressional procedure. I pointed out that you had continuing and substantial contact with members of Congress -- in small groups, individually, etc.

I said that the "arm-twisting" charge was a myth -- that the President in all of his relations with the Congress confined himself to reviewing the various elements of the program and leaving the decisions to the members. I pointed out that with your more than thirty years of Capitol Hill experience, you recognized the need to reserve the influence of the office of the President for those significant points when it would be most meaningful.

Also I emphasized that we have a single program -- a team effort between the White House and the Departments and Agencies. I said the head of an Agency had to be concerned with all elements of the Administration's legislative program, not just his particular area.

Additionally, I described your close, working relationship with the leaders of Congress, the warm rapport that exists, and the total understanding on your part of the separation of powers.

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November 24, 1967

FOR: THE PRESIDENT

Tom

From: Tom Johnson

Notes of the President's Meeting with Jim Lucas  
of Scripps-Howard newspapers.

Jim Lucas said he had nothing particular in mind; that he  
"just wanted to see if there is anything I can do. "

The President discussed new charts which had been  
prepared concerning the progress of the war in Vietnam.

The President said he breakfasted with Ambassador Bunker,  
Bob Komer and General Westmoreland. "There were no  
new decisions, no change in strategy, only a discussion  
and a summary of what we are doing out there. We  
believe we are on the right track.

The President continued: " We have the best men this  
country has to offer in Saigon in charge of our operations.  
Bunker-Westmoreland-Komer are there to stay. There  
is absolutely nothing to this talk about Westmoreland  
being relieved and returning here. "

Jim Lucas asked if any decision was expected soon  
on a new Marine Corps commandant. The President  
said there was no imminent decision expect. There  
are three men being considered---Krulack, Walt,  
and Chapman---or there could be a fourth.

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"Each man has his strong points, and his weaknesses. I have talked to many people about them---but I have not reached a decision. If it were based on personal affection alone, I would chose General Walt. He is 100% Marine and is doing such a good job around the country. "

The President said so far as Vietnam is concerned "we are making more progress than we have a right to expect. If we lose the war, it will be lost here---not in Vietnam.

"All our allies feel the same way about the need for us to be there---Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and Korea. "

Jim, if you want an exclusive, you might say that the U. S. Government is tired of offering to negotiate repeatedly and in vain to the Communists and intends to say no more for a while. "

"We waited two months for a response to the San Antonio speech---they made it clear there was no willingness to talk on their part. We have been fair. We have offered to stop the bombing in return for talks so long as they do not take advantage of the bombing cessation. They said no. I do not see what more we can do. Our offer stands, but we are not going begging back. "

(A copy of Jim Lucas' article as it appeared in the Washington Daily News is attached. ")

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November 25, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Tom  
FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are notes of the meeting of the President with  
Howard K. Smith on November 21, 1967.



NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH HOWARD K. SMITH

Howard Smith asked about the criticisms which are being directed at the President.

The President said he never found that he was unpopular when he went out into the countryside. There were polls taken in New York, Pennsylvania, California and New Hampshire which proved that Harris and Gallup were somewhat biased in their results since their polls did not include George Wallace's possible candidacy.

The President said there was no magic in his use of a lavalier microphone in last week's press conference. He said it was fair to say that we never had plain speaking on television before.

The President then outlined the many health, education and conservation bills which had been passed during the administration.

Smith asked if an election victory in '68 would give the President a new mandate. The President said he believed it would if the Democratic party carried the Congress.

Smith asked about a recent column by James Reston in the New York Times. The President said that Reston had not seen him in three years. He said the New York Times is dedicated to do all it can on Vietnam.

The President said all of his life he had resented the theory that "might makes right". "I do not like to see aggression succeed wherever it is. I believe our own security is tied up with the security of Southeast Asia."

The President said in every election speech he has said that he would keep America's hand out but its guard up.

Smith asked if the President had ever recommended to President Kennedy that Fulbright be made Secretary of State. The President said he had not although he did tell President Kennedy that the Senate would support Fulbright if he were to be nominated for Secretary of State.

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The President said if you looked at the record of Fulbright and himself one would observe that Fulbright is the conservative and Johnson is the liberal. The President compared the civil rights records of the two men and pointed to Senator Fulbright's stand on TVA and labor votes.

The President said almost every Senate Foreign Relations Chairman has been at odds with the President.

The President said the strategy of Senator Robert Kennedy is to win the nomination this year if possible. The President denied that he and Senator Kennedy had a fight at a meeting following the Senator's return from Europe although he did take issue with the Senator's appraisal that things are as bad in Europe as the Senator indicated.

The President said Senator Dirksen understood the world picture as well as any man he knew. The President said he is a "big man".

The President said he did get 70 to 80 percent of the bills which have been sent to Congress this year and that he was fighting for a tax bill.

# # #

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 3, 1968

CONFIDENTIAL

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: <sup>Tom</sup> Tom Johnson

Attached are the notes of your meeting with correspondents February 2, 1968, in the Mansion.

Those attending the discussion were:

Max Frankel - New York Times  
Chuck Bailey - Cowles Publications  
Dick Saltonstall - Time Magazine  
Chuck Roberts - Newsweek  
Frank Reynolds - ABC  
Dan Rather - CBS  
Ray Scherer - NBC  
Jack Horner - Washington Star  
Sid Davis - Westinghouse Broadcasting  
Jack Sutherland - U.S. News and World Report  
Forrest Boyd - Mutual Broadcasting

The luncheon meeting began at 4:30 p.m. It ended at 6:02 p.m.

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Meeting began: 4:30

Meeting ended: 6:02

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NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S  
DISCUSSION  
WITH CORRESPONDENTS

February 2, 1968  
In the Mansion

Chuck Bailey: How did your discussion go with General Ridgeway?

The President: We talked about the Pueblo incident and the increase in the number of incidents along the demilitarized zone in Korea. I asked for his advice as I have asked for the advice of many others who have experience in the military and diplomatic field.

Frank Reynolds: What are the North Koreans up to?

The President: It appears to have been an irrational act on their part, perhaps to help their brothers in North Vietnam.

Max Frankel: What is General Giap doing?

The President: I always over-estimate Giap. You see what he did to the French. He is extremely able. I don't know what will happen.

I asked the JCS to give me a letter saying that they were ready for this offensive at Khesanh. They have 40,000 men to our 6,700. We have 40,000 men within 40 miles and we do have air mobility. There are 1,200 B-52 sorties per month going into Vietnam.

Max Frankel: What do you believe Ho is thinking?

The President: I do not know. I felt by February 3 we could have expected the major offensive to begin. What Ho thinks I do not know. I believe he thought that the people would rally with them. They did not. There has been much sporadic activities. The ferocity was not anticipated.

They did not get into the Chancery of the embassy. They sent 19 men. All 19 were killed.

Forrest Boyd: Do you think it will take a long time to get the men back from the Pueblo?

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SEC. 1.3 AND ARCHIVIST'S MEMO OF  
MAR. 16, 1983.

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The President: I am hopeful that we will get it back, but I do not want to raise false hopes about how long it will take. We are working. There has been some movement. We are being heard. We talked to the North Koreans on this matter tonight.

Some people have asked why we did not cover the Pueblo with air and naval support. If we had it covered, we could not have accomplished this mission. It would have been provocative.

If any good thing comes out of this, it was that the Commander of the Fifth Air Force did not send U.S. planes in there. We would have had another Bay of Pigs. There were 76 MIGs on a nearby base and 8 MIGs circling above the Pueblo.

Dick Saltonstall: What items did the President review with the Leadership this week?

The President: I guess I've seen over 100 Congressmen and spent about 10 to 12 hours on briefings this week. We told them we would send 15 to 20 messages to the Congress by early March. We asked them to get moving on the 18 authorization bills. We discussed the schedules, and asked that the House and the Senate start to work on the appropriation bills in the committees.

After that, we then asked General Wheeler to brief on military aspects in Vietnam and the Pueblo incident.

Clark Clifford gave a scholarly presentation on the value of intelligence. He said our principal question is how to get the men and the ship back alive. Personal intelligence doesn't work well these days. We have lost a number of our men in Cuba and in North Vietnam. Since we cannot get humans in, we must turn to electronic intelligence.

Then General Maxwell Taylor reviewed Vietnam and the Pueblo.

Secretary McNamara then discussed the capability of our forces in answer to all of the questions about the Pueblo incident such as why the ship was there, why it was unprotected and why we need ships such as this type.

Then Secretary Rusk went into the diplomatic aspect of it. He does not believe we can get the men back militarily. He explained that we have gone to the United Nations, to Panmunjon, to 110 countries, to several neutral capitals, and to several Communist capitals.

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We are trying. But there is no evidence today that makes me believe we will get the men back tomorrow. I do not want to raise any false hopes.

Dick Saltonstall: Are there any contingency plans that you can discuss with us?

The President: No, I am not going to get into contingency plans. We have looked at many things which are possible. We may need to call up individual reservists. We may need to increase military aid to South Korea. We may need to extend enlistments of men in the service.

We see nothing that is required at this moment. We will have the reserves looking after things back here. That will replace the active units which were sent to South Korea.

Chuck Roberts: In light of the advance intelligence, we were in a state of sufficient readiness in Vietnam?

The President: Yes, anybody who could count can see that we were.

Chuck Bailey: Were the South Vietnamese prepared and how did they conduct themselves during this?

The President: Yes, the South Vietnamese were ready. I have heard nothing that would indicate any cowardice or lack of responsibility on their part.

The President then read to the group the Thomas Paine quote:

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated."

Chuck Roberts asked if there had been any change since the San Antonio formula was given.

The President: We put many long hours and days into the text of the San Antonio speech. We said then and we still believe that that is as far as

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we can go with honor. We stressed prompt, productive, and "it is assumed."

We do not want another Panmunjon. Sure, there will be some regular resupply. We undoubtedly will send in more planes and food and supplies for our troops. We expect them to do something along the same lines. We haven't hit Hanoi or Haiphong in a couple of days. There is good reason to what we are doing. Clark Clifford said what I stated in San Antonio and said it better. But it all means the same thing.

The formula still stands, although you will notice I almost withdrew it yesterday at the Medal of Honor ceremony. Anybody who sees what they are doing out there now knows they do not appear very interested in peace talks.

Jack Horner: Do we have any information that North Korea is planning a massive raid across the DMZ.

The President: We have no information of that type. They are not on an aggressive alert with any evil intentions as far as I know. It just looked like they had a chance to make a contribution that then cost them militarily.

Sid Davis: What is your own gut feeling about Ho? Does he really want to talk this year before the elections?

The President: No, I don't think he wants to talk, but he may have to. I would think he would be better off before the election than after.

Sid Davis: Did the Pueblo manage to destroy all the intelligence gear?

The President: Not all, but they had orders and blew up all they could. The crew had specific instructions to destroy it.

Jack Sutherland: Have there been any reports on the health of the crew?

The President: We have been told by the North Koreans that they are being treated well and the body of the one man is being kept.

Jack Sutherland: We picked up that the Cubans may do the same thing as the North Koreans -- to increase tension in some way.

The President: I haven't seen nor heard of it.

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Ray Scherer: Do you think there will be a partisan issue made of this by Nixon, Percy and others?

The President: I do not know. I know of a lot of people being worried. I do not say this is the last gasp by the North Vietnamese. It is a kamikaze type thing. They are not getting a good return on their investment.

Ray Scherer: What are the Russians doing?

The President: I think they want to live in this world with us. I do not think they are anxious to have any major confrontation over this.

They won't be too enthusiastic about getting into a war with us.

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Meeting began: 1:55 p.m.  
Meeting ended: 2:57 p.m.

NOTES OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING  
WITH JOHN STEELE, BUREAU CHIEF,  
TIME MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 9, 1968

Mr. Steele: Has the President sent a letter of support to General Westmoreland?

The President: I am not going to get into anything like that. There has never been a period when I have had greater confidence in General Westmoreland than now. We looked at the past military men our armed forces have produced. Secretary McNamara put General Westmoreland at the top of the list. My advisors said you could flip a coin between General Johnson, General Palmer and General Abrams. I get two or three reports from General Westmoreland each day. Some come directly from Westmoreland. I have seen nothing that I would correct or criticize. I applaud all his efforts. It is just a bunch of communist propaganda. They seek to jump on him as they do McNamara, Rusk and Wheeler.

Westmoreland would have our vote anytime to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. That is how I feel about him.

Mr. Steele: Was the build-up around Khe Sanh intended to draw our forces from the city?

The President: I haven't seen that.

Mr. Steele: What about Khe Sanh?

The President: McNamara, Rusk and Westmoreland have told you all we know about it. Based on our intelligence, the enemy was going to try to launch an attack in the north. In addition, they were going to seek a chance for uprisings in order to get a coalition government. We knew what had been planned, but we do not have all the details. We knew it was scheduled for the Tet period. Westmoreland put all his men on alert. The Vietnamese let some of their forces go. A damage estimate cannot be fully determined at this time. There were many Viet Cong atrocities. Our military people believe there will be other attacks.

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The Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese were not successful on their first offensive. They plan another, perhaps a wave tonight.

Mr. Steele: Is the kill count so important as you would have us believe?

The President: Yes. The enemy has lost 25,000. The South Vietnamese are down 8,000 to 10,000. We do not really know what will happen.

I wouldn't want to say Khe Sanh is secure or that it will be lost. You don't win elections by predicting defeat.

We have asked General Westmoreland time and time again to exercise precaution and to get every preparation made.

If the weather closes in, there are additional problems. They may surprise us somewhere else.

Mr. Steele: Was that what happened at Langvei?

The President: No, we never expected to be able to hold a small outpost like this against an all-out offensive.

Mr. Steele: Aren't we putting too much emphasis on Khe Sanh?

The President: I haven't. I think the press has.

Mr. Steele: Is there any thought being given that we are not going to be able to apply enough force to move us to the conference table?

The President: I cannot tell you that. The Good Lord did save us from losing the war two years ago. We have established ourselves logistically. We know the enemy will not win.

When we will get them to stop fighting, I do not know. I don't want to even guess.

Mr. Steele: Is it true the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff signed a paper telling you they could and should hold Khe Sanh?

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The President: That is not true. I think your Dick Saltonstall reported that incorrectly.

Mr. Steele: No, I take responsibility for filing that report.

The President: I did say we do not want another Dien Bien Phu. General Westmoreland, not all of the Joint Chiefs, did write me a letter saying Khe Sanh should and could be defended. But I never said "we don't want another damned Dien Bien Phu."

How do you get rid of a lie once the press pins it on you? I don't know what these people will do anymore than I did in Korea or World War II. Sometimes wars end very quickly, as in the Dominican Republic. Other times they drag on for years. I do not believe our people will be defeated over a period of time.

Westmoreland has an excellent job rating in the minds of the American people. It is 96% favorable.

Mr. Steele: It's not important what the American people think of Westmoreland, it's important what you think.

The President: Well, I would make it 100%. He will not be fired. If anything, he will be promoted. Westmoreland did not want to extend the Tet truce because he expected the attack. The Pope asked me to extend it. We did.

Mr. Steele: Are we getting closer to the negotiating table?

The President: I think we are getting farther away. Their answer to our peace proposals seem clear. Look at what they did last week.

Mr. Steele: What is our objective then?

The President: To make it impossible for the enemy to succeed with their aggression just as we have in the past kept them from coming and taking over this country by force.

We are part of the way up the mountain. The San Antonio formula went as far as we can go. Prime Minister Wilson told me that he favors the San Antonio formula. Nobody has changed the formula. In short, it says

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we want to talk but we cannot wait a year, or 6 months, or 3 months after stopping the bombing. The talks have to be more than the harassment and vituperation that we had at Panmunjom. We do not expect them to take advantage of the bombing cessation. We do not want them to use this time to move more supplies in than they had before. When we stop, we do not want a big build-up or a major infiltration.

Wilson said to me he thought we had gone as far as we can with the San Antonio formula. The odds are that the enemy is weaker after these attacks. We think their military effort was a failure. After a period of time, I think their psychological effort will be a failure.

The South Vietnamese did not rally to these attacks. There were no up-risings. But they can come again. Westmoreland may never be completely prepared for them.

Those things happen. If this was a victory for the enemy, they better not have many victories.

Mr. Steele: May I say that the President has complete confidence in Westmoreland?

The President: No, you can gather that from what I said before without attribution to any interview.

Mr. Steele: Are you going to bring more men in there?

The President: I have no request for more troops as of 2:40 p.m. today. (February 9, 1968). There is always a possibility that we will have to spend extra money and send extra men.

I am troubled about the Pueblo. We do not seem to be making any progress. I do not want to go through seven months to get these men. But the best decision of all of this was the decision not to send aircraft in to try and rescue the Pueblo. That would have really started something. The weather was bad, there were Migs overhead and 76 enemy fighters nearby.

I think the best thing the Commander did was not ordering aircraft in.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S NIGHT READING

Tom

FROM: Tom Johnson

THE PRESIDENT WITH THE PRESS *March 2, 1968*  
ABOARD AIR FORCE I  
ENROUTE TO PUERTO RICO

THE PRESIDENT: -- Discussed Carl Vinson

Frank Swoboda: Why do Congressmen retire early now?

THE PRESIDENT: Better retirement benefits.

Question: How can you explain candidates quitting so early?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not given much thought to it.

Question: We were surprised by Puerto Rico -- why here?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a surprising world we live in.

Forrest Boyd: Does your intelligence indicate we can hold Khesanh?

THE PRESIDENT: We have never made a firm decision on whether we can hold Khesanh. I am familiar with all aspects of it. President Kennedy felt his information was bad -- and so his judgment was bad. He wanted independent judgment on intelligence, and set up a Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

Ray Scherer: What is your opinion of the Kerner Report?

THE PRESIDENT: I am generally familiar with it. I have generally reviewed but I have made no judgments on it. Kerner is a good fellow.

Question: How is George Christian?

THE PRESIDENT: No sign of wear.

Ray Scherer: He's got our vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Every man has some wear. George is unflappable.

THE PRESIDENT: Jack Brooks pulled himself up by his own bootstraps. He is a good boy. Jack voted "right" on every bill.

Ray Scherer: How did the cloture vote come unstuck?

THE PRESIDENT: It was never stuck so it didn't come unstuck.

Question: Did you influence Dirksen? How do you "get" his vote?

THE PRESIDENT: I never "got" Dirksen. Over the years he lets the advocate surface - gives the bill a run - then works up a formula for passage

On Dirksen, I learned once before that you treat a man the way he treats you. I am on the same wave length with Dirksen. It is fiction and myth about being great intimate and friend.

Max Frankel: Will Shriver be the new Ambassador to Paris?

THE PRESIDENT: No decision has been made on Paris yet.

There will be a good many changes in government between now and the time Congress goes out.

Frank Cormier: Can I dismiss Henry Ford II?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We like him and admire him. Ford and Rockefeller have been very patriotic. Nelson is very cooperative and helpful.

Question: How do you put a weekend like this together?

THE PRESIDENT: The head of the National Academy of Science was very helpful. The space people are good administrators. I told them I wanted to go to Huntsville - Houston. It helps build the morale of the employees for them. This trip helped give everyone an idea of what will follow from NASA efforts.

I told them I wanted to go to Marietta, Georgia to discuss fixed wing aircraft.

I have also wanted to have a model home for old people.

- 3 -

I doubt that when the war is over in Vietnam that there will be a dip in economy or that there will be a need for a tax increase.

I don't think the people really know what this Administration has done. The Kerner Commission repeats what we have said all along about civil rights.

Our deficit is now \$20 billion.

We have worked very hard on education. We have had eighteen education bills in the last three years compared to five before this administration.

- - -

For Galbraith to say liberalism died with John Kennedy is untrue.

- - -

We are going to do all we can in the consumer bill. We are meeting the problem as best we can.

- - -

The enemy may attack Khesanh and other cities. They probably suffered serious losses in other cities and were disappointed with their mission. There were no uprisings, no defections, and no major victories as they expected.

They lost 50,000 men in their first attack. That is 50,000 out of 60,000. They still have 60,000 men and the capability to hit the cities hard, but our B-52's are pounding the enemy hard.

In order to be in, they must find out what is wrong. Ho may take a second look at Khesanh and may decide to hit. This is the day the party was born and they may decide to hit.

We are now in a period of blood, sweat and tears. We have our troubles. I cannot say that I know of or have ever had a satisfactory solution to our troubles -- we are still seeking. I take everything Mansfield and Fulbright and any others ever say into consideration.



- 4 -

I have told the generals to take every military alternative and examine it.

We have had every independent mind in the country working on political and military analysis.

- 5% think we should withdraw
- 13% think we are doing too much
- 40% are willing to go along
- 42% think we should do more.

That's about where we stand.

- - -

Richard Saltonstall: Do you think there is danger of pushing too far?

THE PRESIDENT: It is hard to make a man go. There has been a lot of talk about corruption. We have to do a lot against corruption here as well as there. We can't do it in the midst of this change. Some people say we are doing too much. Some say we are doing too little. We have to apply all the resources we have to end it, but keep USSR and Red China out of it.

- - -

U Thant did not make a case. I have great patience to see this through.

- U Thant came to Washington
- Bobby went to Paris
- Often visualize false hopes.
- There is no Asian summit in the near future.
- Ho has never misled me. His position has always been the same.

He has held out no illusions. He knows how to get in touch with me without the Polish or Italian Embassies or without Burchett.

--- We have established a record on the last group sent to Vietnam. It was a tribute to McNamara and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Somehow the American people think we don't want peace. We had a man in Hanoi all last month. Had circles around Hanoi.

In August through October we had a reduction in bombing and bombing restrictions in January.

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Our toughest days are ahead. We know our mistakes but we don't know Ho's mistakes.

THE PRESIDENT WITH THE PRESS  
ABOARD AIR FORCE I  
ENROUTE TO PUERTO RICO

THE PRESIDENT: -- Discussed Carl Vinson

Frank Swoboda: Why do Congressmen retire early now?

THE PRESIDENT: Better retirement benefits.

Question: How can you explain candidates quitting so early?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not given much thought to it.

Question: We were surprised by Puerto Rico -- why here?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a surprising world we live in.

Forrest Boyd: Does your intelligence indicate we can hold Khesanh?

THE PRESIDENT: We have never made a firm decision on whether we can hold Khesanh. I am familiar with all aspects of it. President Kennedy felt his information was bad -- and so his judgment was bad. He wanted independent judgment on intelligence, and set up a Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

Ray Scherer: What is your opinion of the Kerner Report?

THE PRESIDENT: I am generally familiar with it. I have generally reviewed but I have made no judgments on it. Kerner is a good fellow.

Question: How is George Christian?

THE PRESIDENT: No sign of wear.

Ray Scherer: He's got our vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Every man has some wear. George is unflappable.

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THE PRESIDENT: Jack Brooks pulled himself up by his own bootstraps. He is a good boy. Jack voted "right" on every bill.

Ray Scherer: How did the cloture vote come unstuck?

THE PRESIDENT: It was never stuck so it didn't come unstuck.

Question: Did you influence Dirksen? How do you "get" his vote?

THE PRESIDENT: I never "got" Dirksen. Over the years he lets the advocate surface - gives the bill a run - then works up a formula for passage

On Dirksen, I learned once before that you treat a man the way he treats you. I am on the same wave length with Dirksen. It is fiction and myth about being great intimate and friend.

Max Frankel: Will Shriver be the new Ambassador to Paris?

THE PRESIDENT: No decision has been made on Paris yet.

There will be a good many changes in government between now and the time Congress goes out.

Frank Cormier: Can I dismiss Henry Ford II?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We like him and admire him. Ford and Rockefeller have been very patriotic. Nelson is very cooperative and helpful.

Question: How do you put a weekend like this together?

THE PRESIDENT: The head of the National Academy of Science was very helpful. The space people are good administrators. I told them I wanted to go to Huntsville - Houston. It helps build the morale of the employees for them. This trip helped give everyone an idea of what will follow from NASA efforts.

I told them I wanted to go to Marietta, Georgia to discuss fixed wing aircraft.

I have also wanted to have a model home for old people.

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I doubt that when the war is over in Vietnam that there will be a dip in economy or that there will be a need for a tax increase.

I don't think the people really know what this Administration has done. The Kerner Commission repeats what we have said all along about civil rights.

Our deficit is now \$20 billion.

We have worked very hard on education. We have had eighteen education bills in the last three years compared to five before this administration.

- - -

For Galbraith to say liberalism died with John Kennedy is untrue.

- - -

We are going to do all we can in the consumer bill. We are meeting the problem as best we can.

- - -

The enemy may attack Khesanh and other cities. They probably suffered serious losses in other cities and were disappointed with their mission. There were no uprisings, no defections, and no major victories as they expected.

They lost 50,000 men in their first attack. That is 50,000 out of 60,000. They still have 60,000 men and the capability to hit the cities hard, but our B-52's are pounding the enemy hard.

In order to be in, they must find out what is wrong. Ho may take a second look at Khesanh and may decide to hit. This is the day the party was born and they may decide to hit.

We are now in a period of blood, sweat and tears. We have our troubles. I cannot say that I know of or have ever had a satisfactory solution to our troubles -- we are still seeking. I take everything Mansfield and Fulbright and any others every say into consideration.

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I have told the generals to take every military alternative and examine it.

We have had every independent mind in the country working on political and military analysis.

- 5% think we should withdraw
- 13% think we are doing too much
- 40% are willing to go along
- 42% think we should do more.

That's about where we stand.

- - -

Richard Saltonstall: Do you think there is danger of pushing too far?

THE PRESIDENT: It is hard to make a man go. There has been a lot of talk about corruption. We have to do a lot against corruption here as well as there. We can't do it in the midst of this change. Some people say we are doing too much. Some say we are doing too little. We have to apply all the resources we have to end it, but keep USSR and Red China out of it.

- - -

U Thant did not make a case. I have great patience to see this through.

- U Thant came to Washington
- Bobby went to Paris
- Often visualize false hopes.
- There is no Asian summit in the near future.
- Ho has never misled me. His position has always been the same.

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He has held out no illusions. He knows how to get in touch with me without the Polish or Italian Embassies or without Burchett.

--- We have established a record on the last group sent to Vietnam. It was a tribute to McNamara and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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29  
FOR THE PRESIDENT'S NIGHT READING

FROM: Tom Johnson



THE PRESIDENT WITH THE PRESS  
ABOARD AIR FORCE I

March 4, 1968

Henry Hubbard: How did you enjoy your "vacation?"

THE PRESIDENT: I enjoyed my visit. The weather is good year around. I spent time with the Chief of Staff. It was my first overnight with him.

Bob Young: What are your plans for this year's campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: No plans for a formal campaign.

Barbara Furlow: What is the situation on copper?

THE PRESIDENT: We recognize the right to strike and hope collective bargaining will work. The strike now injures the nation's cost on balance of payments, Defense, and jobs in the states. It is time now to get down to business. We're going to ask them to sit down and bargain.

Carroll Kilpatrick: What is the future of Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing we can say right now.

George Packard: What is the situation in Khesanh?

THE PRESIDENT: We are not certain of attacks. They are attacking. The activity is confined to mortar and artillery.

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Barbara Furlow: Does public discussion make it tougher?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. This is the only uncensored war we've ever had.

Bob Pierpoint: Some reporters feel we should have it censored through military censors. During Korea, the military censorship was useful. We didn't know when we were giving enemy help.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to get into advising the press.

George Weeks: What is the situation on the PUEBLO?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to say there has been progress. I want everybody to help who can be helpful -- Soviets and everybody.

Dick Dudman: What is the outlook on an allied Asian meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing immediate. It is good to have exchanges. We have meetings from time to time. Vance was in Korea. I met with all of them in December. There are no plans to meet again.

George Packard: Are we pushing South Vietnam about right?

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The Koreans are very disturbed about North Koreans trying to kill their president. I think they understand our position. He's a little insecure. There were 600 incidents last year.

These things have a lot of effect. It has been said here we're about to pull out. Although it's not true, it gets them uneasy. Vietnam is a different thing we have to live with.

Carroll Kilpatrick: They must have planned the PUEBLO incident.

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Shelby Scates: Do you think we will get the crew back?

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Bob Pierpoint: What was your reaction to the Riot Report?

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The Kerner Commission Report brings out and repeats what many have already been said. But it is important to work together in a nonpartisan way.

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Our deficit is \$20 billion plus. There will be other needs for Vietnam.

We must make certain we get necessary revenue to do not only what we're doing but also what needs to be done. Each Cabinet member will look at his responsibilities.

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Shelby Scates: How do you see Wallace doing?

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Sam Donaldson: What about the Illinois Democratic ticket?

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(Question): What about statehood for Puerto Rico?

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Muriel Dobbin: Was your meeting with the Governors last week productive?

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THE PRESIDENT: It couldn't have been better.

MRS. JOHNSON: There was a good spirit there.

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The neglect for the last 100 years cannot be immediately undone. We have many problems to face up to. We are facing up to them the best we can. We don't know what the results will be, but we will do what we can.

It doesn't do any good to talk of "burn-burn-burn." There will be problems -- nobody can dispute that. I've never in my life made a greater effort to deal with the problems that confront us. Everyone is trying to help -- Mr. Ford, Mr. Austin and 180 businessmen are trying to get good jobs for the hard-core unemployed.

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NOTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
PETER LISAGOR

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May 2, 1968

LISAGOR: Are military chafing at bit on the bombing?

THE PRESIDENT: No, they are reasonable men. They are objective and fair. Rusk is a good commander. Wheeler understands political and diplomatic aspects well.

LISAGOR: Things look good on the ground.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right, but they have moved in 30,000 NVA this month. They are paying a big price.

LISAGOR: Have they made any gesture on the ground to reciprocate?

THE PRESIDENT: On the contrary, no.

LISAGOR: Why did they do this in the first place?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. He had to respond, I guess, because of world opinion.

If you really wanted peace, would you pick Warsaw?

LISAGOR: No.

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't be surprised at anything.

LISAGOR: Wouldn't Malik check their proposal with Hanoi first?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. They may have.

LISAGOR: Are you concerned about the Poor People's march?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They are not controlled.

LISAGOR: Feeling, mood, not personally involved politically.

THE PRESIDENT: I have never been that much of a boss politician. Most of the crucial votes were non-partisan. Ike said Westmoreland is entitled to more salutes than any general.

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Bobby did not want me to be Vice President. Bobby said he wanted it to be Freeman.

There are many national problems and many national answers. All my efforts are concentrated toward the resolution of the Vietnam war.

LISAGOR: It looks like you are at peace with yourself -- maybe some of the old dynamic spirit is missing.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I wanted in the Medal of Honor ceremony to measure my words. The press gets the wrong impression about patriotism.

Lynda asks why does my husband have to go to die when there are so many who do not want them there and who do not want to be protected?

You might hear from me between now and November. I have a more important mission right now.

You can protect your national interest.

Be firm, not bellicose

Be considerate and understanding.

They know they can't win a military victory.

They may have concluded it is best to wait until there is a new President here and get a better deal.

LISAGOR: Does the USSR want to be helpful?

THE PRESIDENT: We have assumed so but they don't seem to have much horsepower.

LISAGOR: Did Goldberg leave the U.N. because he didn't get a negotiating role?

THE PRESIDENT: He assured me that wasn't so. He is the best negotiator I've seen. We will use him some more. He told me there was a difference of opinion, but he thought I was a great President. I don't know of a difference of opinion. He said, I have done all I can as the U.N. representative.

He said:

- (1) Dean Rusk is a good man.
- (2) Not leaving because of negotiations
- (3) Not leaving because of Bobby
- (4) Not leaving because he wanted Harriman's job.

Goldberg is an able negotiator.

George Ball has agreed to more decisions in government than almost anybody except Dean Rusk.

He has also disagreed - always effectively and persuasively. He is a good, able man.