

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

7/29/80

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
memo	titled "Visit of the Hungarian Charge D'Affairs" with note at bottom of first page "Cannot tell memo may have been written by John Steinbeck" [original copy of item filed Ex Co 113] <i>opened 5-18-82</i>	filed 6/24/65	C

FILE LOCATION

White House Famous Names
Steinbeck, John
[Copies from WHCF Subject File]

RESTRICTION CODES

- (A) Closed by Executive Order 11652 governing access to national security information.
(B) Closed by statute or by the agency which originated the document.
(C) Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in the donor's deed of gift.

Bill Mays
to be filed

6/24/65

EXECUTIVE
20113
20303
2055
20222
FO
NA11/EG12
COI-4
CROWN of
St. Stephen

VISIT OF THE HUNGARIAN CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRS

On February 7th, the Hungarian Legation in Washington called me to say that Janos Radvanyi, their head of mission would like to call on me.

He arrived at 5:00 in the afternoon and stayed until 7:30 p. m. His call, he said, was social and literary and suggested by our recent visit to Budapest. This seemed unlikely to me, and as it developed, this seems to be true. As I thought he might, he told me things he wanted me to repeat. At one point, I asked him why he did not call on the President and converse with him. He said that even if he could get in to see the President, he would be surrounded by diplomats and officials.

I have the whole conversation, but I digest it as follows.

His main theme to which he returned again and again was that the United States considers Hungary as part of the U. S. S. R., whereas it is not. He said that State is not able or willing to consider Hungary as a separate country. I responded that we could only consider a regime put in and maintained by the Red Army as an extension of the Soviet Union. He replied that this was no longer so.

He went on to say that we restrict diplomats, whereas Hungary had removed all restrictions.

Other subjects in brief:

- (1) Hungary has signed for exchange with the Ford Foundation.
- (2) Hungary is, within its Foreign Exchange abilities, paying royalties to foreign writers in hard currency.
- (3) Restrictions on travel in Hungary and travel by Hungarians abroad are greatly relaxed and in most cases, removed. This includes restrictions on foreign diplomats in Hungary. He thought there should be a similar relaxation in the United States.
- (4) He spoke at length of Cardinal Mindzenti, saying he was an embarrassment to both Hungary and the United States. Hungary, he said, will pension him and let him live in Hungary or will give him a visa and safe conduct over the border. He said the Hungarian church did not want him back as Cardinal, and I neglected to ask him if they would accept a new appointment by the Pope (my error). He said Mindzenti was old and crochety and refused to move out of the U. S. legation. He said the only thing that might work would be a message from the Pope ordering him to Rome. Mr. Radvanyi obviously wanted this repeated.

*Cannot tell anyone you have
been written by John STEINBECK*

SERVICE SET

(5) In two and a half hours of conversation, many fields were covered, but the ubiquitous theme was that Hungary wants to establish closer cultural and trade relations with the United States, but as a separate country, not as a satellite of Russia.

(6) Finally, he spoke of something as of great importance. He said that the Crown of St. Stephen is in the treasury at Washington. I know this. I believe it was taken from the Germans during the last war. He said that this crown is as powerful a symbol of unity to Hungarians as the Declaration of Independence is to America. He said that if this could, through negotiation of any kind, be returned to Hungary, the result would be almost inconceivable. He indicated that Hungary would go to great lengths in the matter of concessions, if this crown could be restored.

In Conclusion:

I know it seems presumptuous for me to offer suggestions to my government (although I have been doing it for years,) but I must concede that what Mr. Radvanyi told me is in line with what we saw and heard and felt during our recent tour of Russia and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. We felt that nationalism in the so-called satellites was increasing or coming into the open very rapidly. That the strength of the movement was so increasingly great that their local Communist leaders were unable to control it completely. We know that Russia has failed to make friends and that only the military threat has held them in line thus far. And we feel very strongly that our Foreign Service will do well to think of the Iron Curtain countries as separate nations and to deal with them as such. I believe that the bloc is beginning to fragment. The ties of Communism have failed. Russia will hesitate to use the Red Army again. (See Khrushchev's charge that Soviet tanks were used against Hungarians in 1956 at China's insistence.) The economies of the satellites under Soviet direction have faltered and in some cases, have failed. Bulgaria has recently removed the Russian language from their schools and in Poland, one hears everywhere disparagement of the Russians and their methods. These countries look increasingly to the west. I believe that we should open increasing discussions on separate agreements in trade, travel, cultural relations and all other feasible relations. Our failure to do this will be gross failure to take advantage of a powerful position in the cold war. At this time, Russia is fighting madly for backing in an attempt to line up the Socialist countries against China. We will be fools if we do not make use of this opportunity to help in the fragmentation of the Soviet bloc.

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

Warfare today has become a series of deterrent checks and balances. A nation develops its weaponry only secondarily for use against an enemy. The primary purpose of weapons is to deter or to forestall the use of similar weapons by one's opponent. Economic weapons have been used in somewhat the same way, but not to the extent possible.

Small Nations

Due to alignments, ambitions and commitments, small and unprotected nations no longer exist. Small countries have become the extensions and sometimes the embarrassments of the larger powers or defensive groups or nations.

C U B A

Such a small and painful cocklebur is Cuba. In the 19th and early 20th century, we would have met Cuba's actions against us with instant military punitive or police action. But due to the new ideological groupings, this is no longer possible. Other methods must be devised in our own defense.

I hope I may presume to explore some of these areas.

Cuba's assets are also its liabilities. In the world of geopolitics, Cuba's only importance lies in her geographic position. Close to the United States coast, Cuba has armed herself against our retaliation for her aggressive acts internally and externally by putting on the mask of Marxism.

Russia

Cuba has only one value to the U. S. S. R. and its complex of satellites. She is an area for threat and harassment designed to neutralize some of our like positions in Turkey, for example, or in Taiwan and the offshore Chinese islands. In accepting this position of fronting for our cold war enemies, Cuba has been forced out on a limb. She cannot retreat from her Russian ties without collapse.

Sugar

Cuba suffers from the prime weakness of having only one access to world trade -- sugar. Her commitments, her borrowings, her world credits and her world involvements are based on sugar alone.

Recently, England, Canada, France and others have ignored our suggested embargo against Cuba by selling her trucks, busses, spare parts and many other

things she is unequipped or unable to produce. Her weapons all derive from the Iron Curtain countries and all of this involvement is based on sugar and sugar futures.

1937

In that year, we began a sugar quota agreement actually designed to support sugar prices and to save Cuba from failure. This agreement has now been abrogated by Cuba.

World sugar shortages have raised the price of sugar. Russia has contracted for Cuban sugar futures at a lower rate than current prices, but a higher rate than ordinary world prices. Countries wishing to trade with Cuba must accept sugar or promises of sugar, because that is all Cuba has. Sugar is Cuba's weapon.

I submit that, faced with a weapon in enemy hands, it is our practice and our duty to meet it with a counter-weapon or a threat of such a weapon. The obvious weapon against Cuba is sugar. We can produce it in quantity and even if that production should be costly, it is not as costly as other weapons.

That we can produce beet sugar in quantity has been demonstrated during two wars. The cost of subsidizing our huge sugar potential would be less than the cost of modern weapons. However I submit that a quiet suggestion to those Western powers now selling equipment to Cuba on long-term credits based on sugar futures, that we are prepared to produce and release enough sugar to destroy the world market, might be enough to dissuade them from their present course. Even the Soviet, which is trying to balance some of its Cuban investment by trading in sugar, might view such a plan with some perturbation. We might represent to the Western trading powers, that if and when the present Cuban regime is replaced, credits of any kind will be valueless.

Guantanamo

Most of the great powers have inheritances from former times which once had military or naval value and now are valueless militarily and embarrassments internationally. Such is Gibraltar and such is Guantanamo. Both are kept and maintained at great expense and neither has any defense or offensive value. One or two shots from a passing submarine would remove such anachronisms from the military picture. We and the British keep these luxuries simply through fear of losing face. If we need a naval base in the area of the Caribbean, I submit that Puerto Rico or better, St. Thomas is more desirable. The harbor at Charlotte Amalie is one of the greatest deep-water harbors in the world.

For the United States, Guantanamo has only one hard and realistic value. It could be used as a trading issue. Castro used prisoners for trade. We could use Gitmo. The issue of Guantanamo is a false one. Cuba does not need a naval base any more than we do. Indeed, under Cuban rule, the base would have the same weaknesses

it has for us. As a base for the defense of the Panama Canal, St. Thomas or Puerto Rico has more potential in being closer.

By selling Gitmo back to Castro for a price, we would at once get rid of a valueless and embarrassing piece of property and at the same time, give Cuba something she does not need.

ADDENDA

(a) I submit that Castro's recent trip to the U. S. S. R. had to do with the Chinese split. He came back with new contracts and he signed the ban bomb treaty. This must have been taken ill by China. It is, therefore, to China that we should look for convenience.

(b) Cuba has only two things to trade with -- sugar and her position in regard to our coasts. Russia has used this second to great advantage.

(c) Cuba's armaments are entirely supplied by the U. S. S. R. or its satellites -- East Germany, Czechoslovakia, etc. Her payments are in sugar -- and cigars? Russia will have to sell or distribute Cuban sugar to get back any part of its investment.

(d) A large percentage of the refugees from Cuba are of no value for use in taking the Island from the present rulers or from the people of Cuba. The refugees, or most of them, were part of the intolerable situation which let the revolt succeed.

(e) It is not to be thought that the pre-Castro Cuba is ever coming back. It is not.

(f) The longer Castro is in power, the harder it is going to be to beat him. I don't mean the present system is permanent, but the forms of it will become clearly set with time.

(g) The present regime can only exist by outside help. Cuba cannot support itself particularly under a Soviet system of production. So far, the rise in sugar prices has somewhat offset the falling sugar production. Machinery and machine tools are needed and will be supplied (East Germany?) until and unless it becomes dangerous or impractical. France and England will happily supply machinery, until it becomes impractical. It would only be impractical if they could not pay.

P A N A M A

This is only a suggestion which I find interesting.

In denouncing the treaty of 1903-04, Panama has also questioned the agreement through which she achieved her independence and our recognition of her as a sovereign state. Colombia only came around in 1923, and then reluctantly.

If we should agree that the agreement of 1903-04 is void, it would seem that we would no longer recognize Panama and would have to go back to negotiating with Colombia.

I suggest that some inspired trial balloons should appear in Colombia -- papers, written by Colombians denouncing the 1923 treaty and demanding that the province of Panama be returned to Colombia.

It is true that this will not happen, but its suggestion might be a very embarrassing dust storm to Panama. It would also take some of the heat off us.

UBA PUTS HOPES IN NEW COMBINE

Looks to Soviet Machine to
Spur Sugar Production

By JUAN de ONIS

Special to The New York Times

AGUACATE, Cuba, Feb. 11—Soviet and Cuban technicians gave a field demonstration today of a new sugar cane combine that is the key to Cuba's plan for a boom in sugar production.

The towering Soviet-built combine, called "Friendship," cuts, cleans, and slices sugar cane. It ground through about 1,000 yards of a straight stand of cane in five minutes, cutting the cane flush with the red earth. Shucked leaves flew, and five-foot lengths of green cane poured into an accompanying crib pulled by a tractor.

"This is still experimental, and we are correcting defects, but I'm quite satisfied," said Nikolai Charikov, assistant chief of the Soviet Union's State Committee on Tractors and Machinery.

Mr. Charikov heads an 18-member Soviet group that designed the machine and is conducting trials here at the Rubén Martínez Villena State Sugar Farm, the former Rosario Central, in Eastern Havana Province.

In addition to the self-propelled combine, powered by an adapted 65-horsepower tractor engine, the Russians are trying out a smaller combine pulled by a tractor, and a mechanized sugar planting machine.

There are 1,560 Soviet-built fork lifts already in use in the current sugar harvest, Cuban officials said, and the rest of the 3,500 that have been delivered are being assembled.

This equipment forms part of the Soviet-Cuban plans to increase sugar production rapidly from an output of 3.8 million metric tons last year to 110 million tons in 1970. A metric ton is 2,204 pounds.

The Soviet Union has agreed to buy increasing amounts of sugar, to a total of more than 5 million tons a year, at a fixed price of 6 per cents a pound over the period. The United States used to buy 3.2 million tons a year under a preferential price arrangement before relations with Cuba were broken in 1960.

"We have 60 days to complete trials on these machines," Mr. Charikov said. "Then we will decide on mass production. Our Premier, Mr. Khrushchev, and Fidel Castro, have decided that the mechanization program will be carried out in two years, and that is what we will do."

The combines' performance appeared impressive. Mr. Charikov said that the cutting blades could be raised and lowered to adapt to the terrain. "There must be no stones, however," he said.

The Soviet designers came here last year and the machines were built in three months, officials said. The designs are original, according to Mr. Charikov.

"This machine is easy to run," said the operator of one of the combines, a Cuban mechanic. "It's marvelous. I don't know how much cane it can cut in one hour, but I'm sure it can do the same cutting and stripping as 60 men."

EF:ew

December 10, 1965

EXECUTIVE

SO 2

CO 92 FG 140

FG 140 FG 145

FG 412 FG 105-7

FG 105 FG 165

FG 296-1

FG 11-8-1

The President and Mrs. Johnson invite you to a black tie dinner honoring H.E. Dr. Ludwig Erhard, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Monday December 20, 1965, at 8:00 P.M., The White House, Formal invitation follows.RSVP.

The Social Secretary
The White House.

MIELZINER, Jo
REINSCH, James Leonard
KNAPPSTEIN, Heinrich, Amb. of the
Federal Rep. of Germany
Vice President Humphrey
Speaker McCormack
Secretary of State Dean Rusk
DOUGLAS, William O., Supreme Court
Postmaster General Lawrence O'Brien
Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall
SPARKMAN, John J., Senator
RUSSELL, Richard B., Senator
MUSKIE, Edmund S., Senator
PROUTY, Winston L., Senator
PATMAN, Wright, Congressman
KELLY, Edna F., Congresswomen
ARENDS, Leslie C., Congressman
FRELINGHUYSEN, Peter, Congressman
McGHEE, George C., State
HAND, Lloyd N., Chief of Protocol, State
WHITE, Lee C., White House
VINSON, Fred M., Jr., Dept. of Justice
REEDY, George E., White House
LEE, Philip R., HEW
CHAPMAN, Oscar,
CONANT, James B.
MESTA, Perle
AKERS, Robert W.
CHANCELLOR, John, US Information Agency
RICE, Emmett J.
ASCOLI, Max, The Reporter
AUTRY, Gene
BUSCH, August, Jr.
CLAPP, Margaret, Wellesly College
CLIBURN, Van
COPLAND, Aaron
COUSINS, Norman
DIETRICH, H. Richard, Jr.
FARKAS, George
FIELDS, Bertram
FRANKLIN, John Hope
FREELMAN, Max
GODWIN, Mills E., Jr.
GOULD, Harry E.

GOULD, Jack, New York Times
HAYES, Helen
HUTCHINSON, Everett
HUTTON, Edward F.
IKARD, Frank
KERR, William G.
JERSIG, Harry
LAWRENCE, Harding
LEISSLER, Kurt T.
LINDOW, Lester W.
MARVEL, William W., Education and World
Affairs
MEANY, George, AFL-CIO
NOELTER, Wolfgang
PORTER, Katherine Ann
RIKIS, Meshulam, Mc Crory Corp.
ROSE, Frank A., University of Alabama
SONTAG, Raymond J., University of Calif.
STEINBECK, John E.
STERN, Edgar
TEMPELSMAN, Maurice
VON BORCH, Herbert
WARREN, Lucian C.
WATSON, James L.
DAY, Price, Baltimore Sun
MAC ARTHUR, Douglas
ELLISON, Ralph
DEWEY, Thomas E.
HOFFMAN, Paul
WROE, E. R. L., Jr.

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK

Jack Valenti
Newspapers &
Clippings



Letters t

Dear Alicia:

Now with the intensity of Christmas past and the new year still in tight bud, there comes the time we call "taking stock" or "reorienting." This healthful practice consists in sitting quietly in a swirling gray mist, thinking absolutely nothing and making a great fuss about it. The past is tattered and thrown down like election posters on the floor of a convention hall, and the future marches toward us menacing with levelled lances. And so we "take stock," which is a way of ignoring the whole thing.

Often as I have traveled in foreign countries, I never remember how news changes its face and its force. In New York I looked first for the news from

abc
goc
it
Ma
"T
clo
go
sto
in
ral
co
on
sto
ow
ca
tir
no

Tom
Mo
Tel Aviv, Israel
February 12, 1966

File
JOHN STEINBECK

Dear Jack:

I'm afraid your immunity is nearly over, my friend. We will be back in the US of A. about the first of March. I hope you have not had too difficult a time running the country without me. And from what I can read in the Paris Tribune, the system has survived my absence. This is not flattering to me but it is reassuring. This is and has been a fabulous experience. I'll want to tell you about it when we get back because I think a lot of things that are happening here are very important in the larger picture. I don't know whether you have been receiving the Newsday letters - I hope so. I've tried to put some of it down, but there is more which should not be printed.

Pictures of the Honolulu visit in the European papers and I don't a bit like the looks of the man. He looks too drawn and too taut. I wish he could slow down and get some joy in his eye but I know damned well he won't. You remember I wrote for the Democratic book that we reserve the right to kill the President with strain and overwork. But I wish he would, just for a little time, study some of the work habits of General Eisenhower. It's the only way to get a complete rest.

Nothing else sent to
Central Files as of *3/12/66*

The decision to resume the bombing must have been a tearing one. But he knew, and told us he knew, that his time for pleasing everyone was about over. But he must take care of himself. We would rather have a little less of him than none of him.

I thank you for the reports on the _____ super ball. Of course I knew better than to suggest napalm. It was thoughtless of me. White phosphorus is much more effective and I ought to know. In laboratory I got a piece of it on the back of my hand and it took out the tissue between my first and second fingers. What I was getting at was a uniquely American weapon - the throwing arm of the average American kid with a weight and size of a baseball. It's like the English longbow at Agamcourt. No one else has this weapon. And it would be received with joy by those out grown little leaguers called soldiers. My boy seems to be doing his boot at Ft. Worth and apparently it is a thorough job because I haven't heard from him. He is probably too pooped to write. I know how that is.

The Israeli are the toughest and most vital people I have seen in a long time. Please look for some pieces I am doing about them. Their army is superb. They say that Israel's secret weapon is "No alternative". They have no place to go and anyone who invades them will have to kill them all, men women and children and they will all go down fighting only they won't go down. Right now with the weapons they have and the command, they could lick the whole Arab League single handed. I hope the President calls this to mind - always give an enemy an out, an exit, a chance to get away - otherwise he'll give you ten times the fight. I've spoken of this before. Ho Chin can't have the whole of the north behind him. Are we offering an alternative to the dissidents?

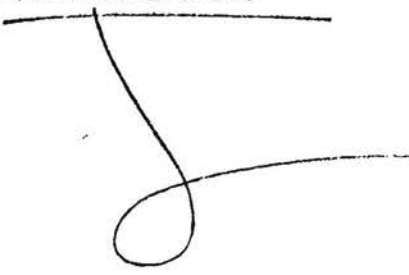
GENERAL (6)
F05
ND19/0312
C050
C055
C0126
Jack Valenti/S*

SERVICE SET

MC

FILE MEMO:

See: C.F. ND 19/CO 312, for corresp., 1/14/66 re John STEINBECK.



SERVICE SET

ms

EXECUTIVE *DT*
FG 266-1-1/A

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

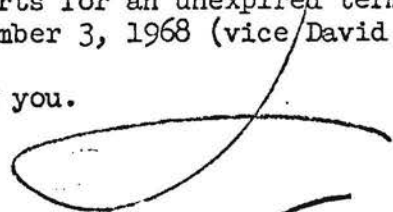
April 26, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR

BILL HOPKINS

Please prepare the appropriate papers for the appointment of John Steinbeck, New York, for appointment to the National Council on the Arts for an unexpired term terminating September 3, 1968 (vice David Brinkley).

Thank you.


Terrence Scanlon

Announced 4/27/66
Commission signed + dated 4/28/66
Commission sent to State 4/28/66

NOTE
4/28/66
TMD

May 10, 1966
10:30 a.m. Tuesday

EXECUTIVE

PBT-2/SK

MR. PRESIDENT:

★
John Steinbeck and his wife will be in Washington next Monday and Tuesday, the sixteenth and seventeenth. He will have with him his nineteen year-old son who volunteered for Vietnam duty.

John and Elaine would be very grateful if they could say "hello" to you and introduce their son to you.

May I set this up?

YES _____ NO _____

Jack Valenti

JV:ny

SERVICE SET

FROM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. John Steinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor, Long Island
New York

EXECUTIVE (2)
PR6-1/S
AUTOGRAPH FILE S-A

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

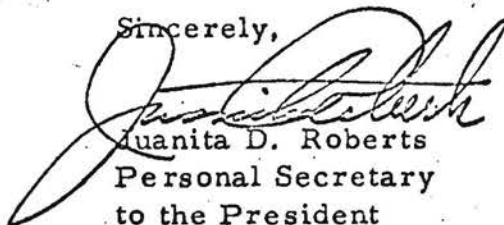
Dear Mr. Steinbeck,

It was the President's pleasure
to autograph the enclosed pictures
for you and John Steinbeck, Jr.

I trust you will be able to
send the pictures to your son.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,


Juanita D. Roberts
Personal Secretary
to the President

May 30, 1966

SERVICE SET

EXECUTIVE (2)

PR 4-1/5732

FO5

PR 8-1/54

December 18, 1963

Dear Mr. Steinbeck:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter.

Over the past troubled and somber weeks, one of the great sustaining forces has been the almost total unity of purpose of Americans -- the obscure and the famous.

Your letter was comforting to me. I am hopeful that very soon I may sit with you and talk about our country.

Sincerely,



LYNDON B. JOHNSON

★
Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East Seventy-second Street
New York 21, New York

LBJ:JV:mhr

RECEIVED
DEC 2 1963
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

THE WHITE HOUSE

DEC 4 3 43 PM '63

RECEIVED
November 27, 1963

Warsaw

President Lyndon B. Johnson

Dear Mr. President:

May I offer my profound respect and loyalty to you in the hard days ahead. Our shock and sorrow are very great but we know the office is in strong trained and competent hands. Our hearts are with you.

At the request of President Kennedy my wife and I have been moving about behind the iron curtain, talking with writers and with students. Being non-diplomatic, we have been able to observe many things not ordinarily available. And if these experiences could be of value to you, they are freely offered. Some of them are highly unorthodox.

I have never met you but I have a curious tie with you. When my wife was in college in Austin, one of her classmates was a boy named John Connolly who said - "Go on into the theatre in New York but as for me, I'm going into politics. There's a man named Lyndon Johnson and I'm going along with him. He's going places." I wonder whether he would remember. Her name was Elaine Anderson - later Mrs Zachary Scott - now Mrs. John Steinbeck.

We think it best to go on with the plan laid down although our hearts are heavy, but we hasten to offer anything we have to our President.

Yours very sincerely,
John Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

gk

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE

F06-2 ③

Albee, Edward

PP13-5

502

C0303

1/21/64

~~RE-11~~

JOHN
Schlesinger's office called re Steinbeck's
appt. with the President. Thought you should
know that Mrs. Steinbeck and the President
went to high school together.

c.

*Pauline -
The Pres. said he
wanted to see Steinbeck
& the Mrs.*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Feb. 3, 1964

Mr. & Mrs. Steinbeck are to be invited
to the Home Dinner at the White House on
February 13th -

RECEIVED
FEB 11 1964
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET



S/S 19627

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

1/10 Bundy
2 c. Golding
1/11
January 10, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: White House Visits by Writers Steinbeck and Albee

Nobel prize-winning author John Steinbeck and prominent young playwright Edward Albee returned to the United States last month from the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. Mr. Steinbeck was accompanied by his wife. These two American writers each spent a month on separate itineraries in the U.S.S.R. before going on to make shorter visits to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Their tours were part of the Department of State's "American Specialists Program" and, in the case of the U.S.S.R., were arranged pursuant to the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Exchanges Agreement of March 8, 1962.

Reports from United States diplomatic missions in the countries which they visited, as well as coverage by the press, indicate that the Steinbecks and Mr. Albee enjoyed singular success as cultural envoys of the United States. The Steinbecks were in Poland and Mr. Albee was in the U.S.S.R. at the time of President Kennedy's assassination. They witnessed there a great public outpouring of grief and concern over this tragic event. Mrs. Steinbeck, a Texan, has stated that she attended school with Governor Connally. Earlier during the visit of the Steinbecks to the U.S.S.R., the arrest of Yale Professor Frederick Barghoorn was announced. Mr. Steinbeck's straightforward, open condemnation of the arrest may well have been an important contributing factor in persuading Soviet authorities of the wisdom of an early release of Professor Barghoorn.

It is suggested that, if his time permits, President Johnson receive Mr. and Mrs. Steinbeck and Mr. Albee briefly at the White House in the near future. Recognition by the President of their distinguished contribution to our exchanges program appears justified and would be useful at the present time while negotiations are underway in Moscow for a new U.S.-U.S.S.R. Exchanges Agreement.

It is understood that the Steinbecks could come to Washington at any time, given reasonable notice. Mr. Albee, however, plans to depart for England on January 23, and it is hoped that the proposed White House visit can be arranged before that date.

Ben H. Read
Benjamin H. Read
Executive Secretary

Attachment:
Biographical Summaries

Also sent to
Control Filed as of 2/10/64

SERVICE SET

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES

John Ernst STEINBECK, novelist and short story writer, was born in Salinas, California on February 27, 1902. He attended Stanford University. Mr. Steinbeck's wife, Elaine Scott, whom he married in 1952, is a Texan. Mr. Steinbeck has two sons by a former marriage. Among Mr. Steinbeck's best-remembered writings are: Tortilla Flat, 1935; Of Mice and Men, 1937; Red Pony, 1937; Grapes of Wrath, 1939; The Moon is Down, 1942; Cannery Row, 1945; The Wayward Bus, 1947; Russian Journal, 1948; East of Eden, 1952; The Winter of Our Discontent, 1961; and Travels with Charlie, 1962. Mr. Steinbeck was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in letters for The Grapes of Wrath in 1940, and a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962.

Edward A. ALBEE, playwright, was born in Washington, D. C. on March 12, 1928. Two weeks after his birth he was taken from a Washington foundling home and adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Reed Albee of New York City. Mr. Albee is single. Mr. Albee attended the Choate School and Trinity College. He gained attention as a playwright in 1959 for his brief drama, The Zoo Story. This was followed by three other short plays, The Death of Bessie Smith, The American Dream, and The Sandbox. Mr. Albee's play, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, achieved the New York Drama Critics Award for the best play of the 1962-63 season. Just prior to his departure for the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, Mr. Albee's dramatization of Carson McCuller's story, The Ballad of the Sad Cafe, opened in New York.

March 18, 1964

EXECUTIVE


IV 1/1964/5732 (Sag Harbor)
PP5/Johnson, Ladybird

Dear Mr. Steinbeck:

You were very kind to write me about the ^XOld Whalers Festival in Sag Harbor. I am sure I would enjoy such an occasion -- it sounds as colorful, as festive, and as robust as those rodeos we land-locked Westerners stage every now and then. Unfortunately, I will not be able to come; my calendar that week is already filled.

Please express my gratitude to the people of Sag Harbor. I might also add that they have selected a whale of an Honorary Chairman.

Sincerely,


Lyndon B. Johnson

Mr. John ^XSteinbeck
190 East Seventy-second Street
New York 21, New York

LBJ:BM:cw

SERVICE SET



Old Whalers Festival

June 12, 13, 14, 1964

Sponsored by Sag Harbor Round Table Club

Sag Harbor Lions Club

SAG HARBOR, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

Honorary Chairman: Mr. John Steinbeck

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

March 16, 1964

Mr. Jack Valenti
White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Valenti:

This is in answer to your telephone call of several days ago. I hope you are assured that I will be very pleased to do the work involved.

However, there are some questions that arise which may be small in your eyes, but are quite important in mine.

First, in the matter of material, I should like to have not only the official material which is available everywhere, but also any small personal and human anecdotal material that may be available.

Next, I shall want to know the countryside Mr. Johnson grew out of, because that is the way I work. The color and the texture of the dirt, what grows there -- everything about it -- and that I can only get by wandering around there a little bit myself.

Next, I would like to know just as soon as possible what length you contemplate this work should be in terms of thousands of words and also, what the deadline is.

Lastly, since this is a labor of love and since the Tax Division takes a rather stern view of such things, I should like to know who you anticipate as publisher, whether the book is to be sold or given away and all such small business arrangements as engage the interest of the Tax Division. This is not being just picky.

During the war, I tried to give a book to the Air Force Aid Society and it took some doing to get permission from the Treasury. I am sure all of these things can be worked out quickly. I just want to present them to you now.

One further thing occurs to me. I will very happily contribute my time and services to this project. However, I don't feel that I can undertake the expenses of research, travel and secretarial help. Will you let me know what arrangements are usual in these matters.

This sums real mean - but I gave the last six months to the State Dept and I'm a little strapped. Sorry I have to mention it.

SERVICE SET

One more thing which I am a little hesitant about bringing up.

The town of Sag Harbor on the end of Long Island, which is so Republican that until very recently, it was considered a felony to be a Democrat, is having an Old Whalers Festival on June 12th, 13th and 14th of this year. It is a good and very local show, rather like those old-fashioned local rodeos you and I know so well. But its coverage will be very large.

Because I am Honorary Chairman of this Festival, I have been asked to invite the President to attend. I hope he may be able to. It will be a good show and he can do a great deal of good by coming and I say this as a Democrat. After many years, we have got our toe in the door in Long Island. We even got ourselves a Congressman named Pike who is a good man and I think that if it were possible for the President and/or Mrs. Johnson to attend, it would give not only a great lift to the party in a traditionally unfriendly district, but might, because of the very large news and picture coverage, do something for a Southern-born President in a Northern or Yankee area.

However, I have done my duty now and issued the invitation in the name of Sag Harbor, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York.

I think that's about all now. But you might ask the President how the descendants of those ten white faces from Melinda Hagy's herd of cattle are doing.

Elaine and I will be away for the two weeks beginning the 23rd of March, but will be back in town on April 5th or 6th. Therefore, if I could have some answer to these questions before next Monday, I would be grateful.

Best regards to you and I will be glad to hear from you.

Yours,
John Steinbeck

P. S. Enclosed is a letterhead of the above-mentioned Old Whalers Festival. *It will be very helpful to us to have some official recognition from the President. There's an enormous potential vote on Long Island and it is increasing every day*

ack by J. Valente filed EX: PU 2-6 3/12/64

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

Handwritten: X- 10/18 3/24
EXECUTIVE
PS 1-6

March 20, 1964

Mr. Jack Valenti
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Jack Valenti:

I have your letter of March 18th and hasten to answer it.

You see, I had no idea of the kind or length of material you wanted and I think as you suggested, it will be necessary for me to work with you as closely as possible.

I am getting this letter off immediately, because on Monday, we are going to Rome for about two weeks.

And incidentally, if you need me or have any suggestions for me, I will be at the Grand Hotel. We intend to be back about April 6th or 7th and after that, we will be at your convenience.

Have you any hot word for the Pope?

Yours very sincerely,

John Steinbeck

RECEIVED
APR 7 1964
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

6
EXECUTIVE

PU 1-6

FG 1

FG 2/Kennedy, J. F. Kennedy

PL 7

PL 3

PP 13-1

March 18, 1964

Dear Mr. Steinbeck, *John*

Thanks very much for your letter. Let me give you some of the details which may be helpful in your thinking about the book I discussed with you.

It will be published by the ^XDemocratic National Committee as the official "program" for the Convention in August -- and then sold throughout the country, with the proceeds going, of course, to the Committee. But it will not be the usual piece of partisan literature.

It is designed, in fact, as a Dedication to President Kennedy and our plans are to make it something of historical significance. Its contributors will include Arthur Schlesinger, Bill Attwood, Sidney Hyman, Bill White, and others whose names will be well known to the American people.

There are two main sections -- one on the late President and one on President Johnson. Each will be a "picture story" with a running text providing the continuity. Schlesinger will provide the text for President Kennedy's story and we are hoping you will write the text for the President Johnson story. I am responsible for pulling together the pictures of President Johnson which will portray his life -- but those pictures without the kind of text you can write would mean nothing. Since the pictures will be here, it is hoped that you could spend some time in Washington working with me.

We will, of course, be able to take care of your travel costs and secretarial expenses for work done in this regard.

I have talked to the President about the Sag Harbor invitation. He will not be able to accept -- although he would like to do so for you -- because

SERVICE SET

of a heavy June schedule that already includes activities out-of-town on at least two of the days in question. Please tell them of his gratitude, however. An official letter from the President is on its way to you.

Sincerely,

151

Jack Valenti
Special Assistant
to the President

Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East 72nd Street
New York, N. Y.

(Handwritten by Mr. Valenti)

This is marvelous that you will do this,
Mr. Steinbeck. It will give quality to the
President's story. 151 JV

JV:gw

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

March 16, 1964

Mr. Jack Valenti
White House
Washington, D. C.

original filed EX: IVI/1964/ST 32 (Ray Huber)
3/18/64

Dear Mr. Valenti:

This is in answer to your telephone call of several days ago. I hope you are assured that I will be very pleased to do the work involved.

However, there are some questions that arise which may be small in your eyes, but are quite important in mine.

First, in the matter of material, I should like to have not only the official material which is available everywhere, but also any small personal and human anecdotal material that may be available.

Next, I shall want to know the countryside Mr. Johnson grew out of, because that is the way I work. The color and the texture of the dirt, what grows there -- everything about it -- and that I can only get by wandering around there a little bit myself.

Next, I would like to know just as soon as possible what length you contemplate this work should be in terms of thousands of words and also, what the deadline is.

Lastly, since this is a labor of love and since the Tax Division takes a rather stern view of such things, I should like to know who you anticipate as publisher, whether the book is to be sold or given away and all such small business arrangements as engage the interest of the Tax Division. This is not being just picky.

During the war, I tried to give a book to the Air Force Aid Society and it took some doing to get permission from the Treasury. I am sure all of these things can be worked out quickly. I just want to present them to you now.

One further thing occurs to me. I will very happily contribute my time and services to this project. However, I don't feel that I can undertake the expenses of research, travel and secretarial help. Will you let me know what arrangements are usual in these matters.

This summes real mean - but I gave the last six months to the State Dept and I'm a little strapped. Sorry I have to mention it.

SERVICE SET

One more thing which I am a little hesitant about bringing up.

The town of Sag Harbor on the end of Long Island, which is so Republican that until very recently, it was considered a felony to be a Democrat, is having an Old Whalers Festival on June 12th, 13th and 14th of this year. It is a good and very local show, rather like those old-fashioned local rodeos you and I know so well. But its coverage will be very large.

Because I am Honorary Chairman of this Festival, I have been asked to invite the President to attend. I hope he may be able to. It will be a good show and he can do a great deal of good by coming and I say this as a Democrat. After many years, we have got our toe in the door in Long Island. We even got ourselves a Congressman named Pike who is a good man and I think that if it were possible for the President and/or Mrs. Johnson to attend, it would give not only a great lift to the party in a traditionally unfriendly district, but might, because of the very large news and picture coverage, do something for a Southern-born President in a Northern or Yankee area.

However, I have done my duty now and issued the invitation in the name of Sag Harbor, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York.

I think that's about all now. But you might ask the President how the descendants of those ten white faces from Melinda Hagy's herd of cattle are doing.

Elaine and I will be away for the two weeks beginning the 23rd of March, but will be back in town on April 5th or 6th. Therefore, if I could have some answer to these questions before next Monday, I would be grateful.

Best regards to you and I will be glad to hear from you.

Yours,
John Steinbeck

P. S. Enclosed is a letterhead of the above-mentioned Old Whalers Festival. *It will be very helpful to us to have some official recognition from the President. There's an enormous potential vote on Long Island and it is increasing every day*

EXECUTIVE
PP 6-1/5*

RD
JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

May 18, 1964

Dear Mr. President:

Then he personally

I thank you for the photograph you so graciously sent me. Unpopular though it may be, I believe with Plutarch and Marcus Aurelius, that just as vice and dishonesty are communicable, so does greatness rub off a little through association.

Your picture will go up in a place of honor as a reminder to me and to my sons that the American dream is not a myth that a lonesome and perhaps a confused little boy from the Texas hills can and has become President through his own efforts.

I come, Sir, from much the same background as you, cattlemen from the dry and treacherous hills of Northern California. Land-poor we were called. Do you have that expression? But we were also land-related and land-proud. Also we were horsemen almost from birth, and that gives a man a kind of humble pride he never loses. And one of our prides is to pay our debts, even those debts of courtesy where no payment is required.

I have written many speeches, but I have delivered only one, my first and last. I spoke it on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

It is my pleasure, Sir, to offer it to you and to Mrs. Johnson with the respect and admiration of

John and Elaine Steinbeck

original to L. H. T. records

SERVICE SET

EXECUTIVE
PR 6-1/5 *

AUTOGRAPH FILE/S *

PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL AUTOGRAPH FILE RECORD

Date Mailed: May 15, 1964

Item Autographed:

- () White House Card
- () Autograph Album
- () Book
- () First Day Cover
- () Souvenir Program
- (x) Photograph of the President, furnished by office
- () Photograph of the President, furnished by party being autographed for
- () Photograph of President with someone else
- () Magazine Cover
- () Newspaper Picture
- Further description of photograph if necessary: Color photo
- () Other

Inscription: "To John Steinbeck - From his friend, Lyndon B. Johnson"

For party other than one to whom addressed or delivered:

Sent or delivered to: Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East 72nd Street Apt. 34D
New York 21, New York

ehl

RECEIVED
MAY 15 1964
COMM-FBI

SERVICE SET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

John: Mr. V's office said
OK to send

Here is the picture....

The President wants me to
talk you with about a little
matter -- I'll call in a couple
of days....

John V.

RECEIVED
MAY 15 1964
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

EXECUTIVE

ME3-3/LS/SAG HARBOR
LG/SAG HARBOR (74)

STRAIGHT WIRE June 11, 1964

Mr. John^X Steinbeck
Honorary Chairman
Village of Sag Harbor
Long Island
New York

To all who participate in the Old Whaler's Festival in
Sag Harbor, Long Island, I am pleased to extend hearty greetings
and warm wishes for an enjoyable celebration.

I commend you all on your energy in preserving and
reviving one of the many colorful pageants which have enriched the
treasured heritage of our land.

From 1760 when the first whaling expedition set out from
your port till the death, in 1903, of the last of the whaling masters
Sag Harbor served as the only important whaling center outside New
England. Throughout these years its inhabitants contributed gen-
erously to the industry and culture of our nation. Today you pay
tribute through this Festival to their valiant feats. You enhance
in an effective way their lasting contributions and bequeath on gen-
erations to come an exciting and picturesque legacy.

Best wishes to all the people of Sag Harbor for prosperity
and progress in the years ahead.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

CC: Mr. Holborn, Central Files
PR Unit and Mr. Reedy/Mr. Valenti LBJ:EH:MB

CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

Approval J Valenti 6/11

Comment _____

Signature off

RVH

PLEASE RETURN TO DICK NELSON

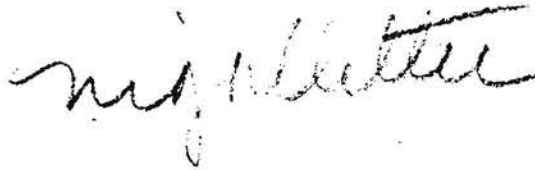
Drafted here

*Valenti
to initial*

*E.H.
Requested and
approved by Jack Valenti*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON



To all who participate in the Old Whaler's Festival in Sag Harbor, Long Island, I am pleased to extend hearty greetings and warm wishes for an enjoyable celebration.

I commend you all on your energy in preserving and re-vivving one of the many ~~rich~~ colorful pageants which have enriched the treasured heritage of our land.

From 1760 when the first whaling expedition set out from your ~~quaint~~ port till the death, in 1903, of the last of the whaling masters Sag Harbor served as the only important whaling center outside New England. Throughout these years its inhabitants contributed generously to the industry and culture of our nation. ~~You who~~ ^{you} today pay tribute through this Festival to their valiant feats, ~~enhance~~ ^{you enhance} in an effective way their lasting contributions and bequeath on generations to come an exciting and picturesque legacy.

Best wishes to all the people of Sag Harbor for prosperity and progress in the years ahead.

LBJ

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 8, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR FRED HOLBORN

John Steinbeck has requested a Presidential message in connection with the celebration of the Old Whalers' Festival taking place in Sag Harbor on Friday, June 12.

The Village is celebrating the day when Sag Harbor was a whaling port - and was, I am told, one of the three great whaling ports in the world. The first custom house was located at Sag Harbor in George Washington's day and the first port of entry into America was located there.

I would greatly appreciate your preparing an appropriate message for transmittal on Thursday evening to:

Mr. John Steinbeck
Honorary Chairman
Village of Sag Harbor

*Long Island
Hill Country*
JV
Jack Valenti

RD
November 10, 1964

GENERAL

PP2-2/ST32

PL 2/PR 1

My dear John:

How does one go about saying anything about this election? It was all that we hoped for and more than we thought we would get. There were some areas where we would have hoped for more favor, but when the consensus runs so strong in one's favor, it is very difficult to pick and tug at small discomforts.

You have been marvelous - although that brief phrase really doesn't do justice to the warmth and support that was so unselfishly given.

Some day soon when I am in New York, I hope to spend an evening with you where we can go over the whole campaign and have some good fresh talk about what happened and why. Your letters have been a joy and so valuable to me personally. You are a good and wise man in a land and in a world where there are too few wise men and even fewer good ones.

Give my love to Elaine and my unshakeable friendship to you.

Sincerely,

Jack Valenti
Special Assistant to the President

Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East Seventy-second Street
New York 21, N.Y.

H
JV:ny

RECEIVED
NOV 13 1964
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

9 OCTOBER 1964

DEAR JACK:

THE PROGRAM ON TV WAS VERY FINE. THE FULL SCRENE MADE IT VERY EFFECTIVE. IT WAS MOSTG IMPRESSIVE. SITTING DOWN GAVE HIM A RELAXED FEELING. YOU REMEMBER HOW I HAVE BEEN YAPPING ABOUT THAT. I PRESUME THAT HE WAS USING A TELEPROMPTER BUT IT WAS NOT APPARENT. YOU MIGHT TELL HIM THAT IF HE LOOKS DIRECTLY AT THE LENS OF THE CAMERA HE IS LOOKING IN THE EYES OF EVERYONE WHO SEES HIM. HIS AUDIENCE IS THAT LENS. I HOPE HE IS GOING TO DO SOME MORE OF THESE HIGH LEVEL THINGS.

I SEE BY THE PAPERS THIS MORNING THAT GOLDIE HAS DUSTED OFF THAT THING WE USED ON NIXON IN THE LAST ELECTION, "WOULD YOU BUY A USED CAR FROM DICK NIXON?" NOW THE PAPER SAYS THE OLD BOY IS USING THIS ON JOHNSON. I'VE THOUGHT OF A QUICK ANSWER. IT IS PROBABLY FOR HHH. " IN 1960 YOU WOULDN'T BUY A USED CAR FROM DICK NIXON. IN 1964 HE'S SELLING USED CANDIDATES. ANY TAKERS?"

I THINK THAT& THE MOST ENCOURAGING THING ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN IS THAT AS THE CANDIDATES ARE EQUALLY EXPOSED TO PUBLIC VIEW, THE PEOPLE IN THEIR WISDOM ARE MOVING TOWARD JOHNSON AND AWAY FROM BARRY'S BAITED TRAP FOR THE UNTHINKING.

WHEN A MAN WHOSE MIDDLE NAME IS MORRIS FINDS IT NECESSARY TO MAKE FUN OF A MAN WHOSE MIDDLE NAME IS HORATIO, THAT MAN LACKS CAMPAIGN MATERIAL.

GOLDWATER HAS SHOWED ONE BIT OF MAGNIFICENT RESTRAINT. HE HAS NOT PROMISED TO GO TO VIETNAM ~~XXXXXX~~ EVEN MILLER, WHOSE SENSE OF THE RIDICULOUS IS EVIDENT IN HIS CANDIDACY, WOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT SUCH A PROJECT.

DURING THE COLD HARD WINTER OF 1938 YOUNG BARRY GOLDWATER, HAVING CORNERED THE MATCHES IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA, RAISED THE PRICE SO THAT FORTY LITTLE MATCH GIRLS STARVED TO DEATH. IF HE DENIES THIS-- LET IT GO.

IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW A COUNTRY COULD BECOME SO GREAT THROUGH ERRORS, SO RICH THROUGH SMOUPIDITIES AND SO SOLVENT THROUGH THE CHICANERY OF ITS LEADERS

SOME YEARS AGO, THE MARX BROTHERS OWNED A PRIZE FIGHTER NAMED CANVAS -BACK KELLY. THEY MADE A VERY NICE THING BY TAKING BETS AGAINST HIM, AND ONCE, WHEN THROUGH SOME ACCIDENT, HE SEEMED TO BE WINNING, HARPO LEAPED INTO THE RING BETWEEN ROJNDS AND NEARLY BEAT HIM TO DEATH WITH A TOWEL. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS CAMPAIGN, IT WOULD BE IN TERES TO KNOW HOW HONEST BILL MILLER IS PLACING HIS BETS AND AT WHAT ODDS..

IN GOLDWATER'S BED ROOM OUT SIDE OF PHOENIX THERE ARE THREE BUTTONS BESIDE HIS BED. ONE SAYS, "SURF" THE NEXT "BABBLING BROOK" AND THE THIRD READS " RAIN ON THE ROOF." THESE SOUND EFFECTS ARE ON TAPE AND IN A DRY COUNTRY THEY GIVE COMFORT TO THE HOUSE HOLDER. WOULD IT WORK FOR
a nation? *James Earl*

SERVICE SET

Checked by Kardex
Two

November 23, 1964

EXECUTIVE

PP2-2/5132

Dear John:

X
STEINBECK

My thanks to you and Elaine for all your labors and loyalty and all your prayers.

I know more than you possibly realize how staunch and spirited has been your support of me and what I am trying to do.

Lady Bird and I send you and Elaine our warm affections. We like being with you both.

Sincerely,

LBJ

X
Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East Seventy-Second Street
New York 21, N. Y.

LBJ:JV:ny

RECEIVED
DEC 3 1964
GENERAL FILE

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

NOVEMBER 12,, 1964

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

ELAINE AND I SEND YOU OUR CONGRATULATIONS ON THE
HAPPY OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION. WE DEEPLY REALIZE THAT IN THIS WE
CONGRATULATE OURSELVES AND OUR COUNTRY. WE KNOW THAT YOUR ADMINISTRATION
WILL BE WISE AND WE PRAY THAT IT MAY ALSO BE FORTUNATE.

WORDS AT THIS POINT HAVE A WAY OF TURNING POMPOUS,
BUT PLEASE DO KNOW THAT IN ADDITION TO OUR RESPECT AND LOYALTY,
WE HOLD A FIERCELY PERSONAL AFFECTION FOR YOU AND FOR BIRD, THAT
BOTH AS CITIZENS AND AS FRIENDS, WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE,

YOURS

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Steinbeck". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "YOURS".

EXECUTIVE

③ +

PP6
PE1
SPI

January 22, 1965

My dear John:

The days of the Inauguration are now over and while they are still fresh in my mind, I want you to know how much I appreciate all of your help.

Your counsel and your advice have been meaningful and sensible.

Lady Bird and I send to you and Elaine^x our warmest best wishes.

Sincerely,


LYNDON B. JOHNSON

Mr. John^x Steinbeck
190 East Seventy-second Street
New York 21, New York

LBJ:JV:ny

SERVICE SET

RD

EXECUTIVE

IV 1/1965/ST 32/Sag Harbor

March 26, 1965

Dear John:

I understand that the Coast Guard would react favorably to a request to send a vessel to Sag Harbor during the "Old Whalers' Festival."

Just write Rear Admiral Irvin J. Stephens, United States Coast Guard, Commander Third Coast Guard District, Customs House, New York, N. Y. They'll work with you from there.

Sending a ship won't substitute for the President, but at least it helps your batting average, my friend.

Sincerely,

Jack

Jack Valenti
Special Assistant to the President

Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East Seventy-second Street
New York 21, New York

Love to Elaine

JV:PB:mhr

3

RECEIVED
MAR 27 1965
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MR. VALENTI

Coast Guard is under Treasury. I
checked with Carswell. He'll be back in
touch.

pb
3/25/65

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 24, 1965

MR. PRESIDENT:

John Steinbeck invites you again this year to attend the Sag Harbor (Suffolk County, New York) "Old Whalers' Festival" on June 11-13. On the assumption that you will not be able to go he further asks that you use your good office to commend to the Navy or the Coast Guard a visit by the Coast Guard training ship Eagle (a four-masted square rigged sailing ship based across the sound at New London) or if the Eagle is on cruise, some other important Coast Guard ship and complement -- to demonstrate their methods of aid, rescue and whatever other functions which can be exhibited.

Do you want me to inquire about the chances of arranging something like this for Mr. Steinbeck?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Jack Valenti

I hope we can do this for Steinbeck. We will if we have president & it is proper

copy sent to your office

SERVICE SET

MEMORANDUM

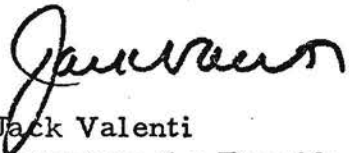
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 23, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. DONALD I. LAMONT

On June 11, 12, and 13 the Village of Sag Harbor in Suffolk County, New York, will celebrate the Old Whalers' Festival. As part of this year's festivities, I have been asked to find out what the chances are to have a visit by the Coast Guard Training Ship Eagle which is based at New London right across Long Island Sound. If Eagle is away on cruise, they would like some important Coast Guard ship and complement to anchor in the harbor -- to demonstrate their methods of aid, rescue and whatever other functions are possible to exhibit. If such a ship could accept visitors, Sag Harbor would see to the carriage of such visitors to and from the anchorage.

May I have your recommendations and comments on the above request?



Jack Valenti
Special Assistant to the President

SERVICE SET

*my fellow set house
with the game*

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

MARCH 12, 1965

DEAR JACK:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VERY KIND LETTER OF RECENT DATE. I UNDERSTAND YOUR CRY OF PAIN, AND I MUST ASK YOU TO REMEMBER THAT THE LAWS OF SELF PRESERVATION WHICH HAVE JURISDICTION OVER BUGS AND LIZARDS AND TIGERS AND POLITICIANS ALSO OBTAIN IN THE CASE OF PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS. YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS BUT IT IS SO. THERE IS NO LAW REQUIRING YOU TO KILL YOURSELF. THINK OF THIS NOW AND THEN.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A MATTER OF SADNESS TO ME

I HAVE PROTESTED AD NAUSEUM THAT I WANT NOTHING OF THIS ADMINISTRATION BUT GOOD GOVERNMENT. AND THIS I HAVE MEANT. HOWEVER, MY FELLOW TOWNSMEN ARE BOUND BY NO SUCH FEELING OR CONSIDERATION AND THEY HAVE PUT THE ARM ON ME. PLEASE BELIEVE THAT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO IMPRESS THEM OR ANYONE ELSE, BUT I AM BOUND BY A KIND OF VILLAGE ALLEGIANCE TO CONVEY THEIR MISERABLE REQUEST, BUT HAVING CONVEYED IT, I HAVE DONE MY DUTY.

PERHAPS YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT THE PROUD HAMLET OF SAG HARBOR, IN MEMORY OF THEIR GLORIOUS WHALING ANCESTORS AND TO TURN AN HONEST BUCK FOR VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT, CELEBRATE "OLD WHALERS' FESTIVAL ON JUNE 11TH, 12TH AND 13TH. LAST YEAR WHEN I WAS (UGH-SOB) HONORARY CHAIRMAN, I INVITED THE PRESIDENT TO ATTEND THIS AFFAIR AND ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT ABLE TO ACCEPT, HE VERY GRACIOUSLY SENT GREETINGS TO SAG HARBOR, WHICH JOYED THEIR HEARTS AND PYRAMIDDED THEIR PRIDE. THIS YEAR, THEY WOULD AGAIN LIKE TO INVITE HIM TO ATTEND AND THEY HAVE ASKED ME TO SNEAK IN THE INVITATION. I KNOW FULL WELL THAT THE CHANCE OF HIS ACCEPTING IS REMOTE TO THE VANISHING POINT, AND SO DO THEY. IT IS TRUE THAT CERTAIN STATESMEN(I THINK OF CHURCHILL IN THIS CONNECTION) HAVE FOUND THAT IF THEY HAVE SOMETHING OF WIDE IMPORTANCE TO SAY, THAT ITS SAYING IN A SMALL AND UNIMPORTANT TOWN OR HAMLET HAS A WAY OF GIVING IT A CURRENCY IT WOULD NOT GET UNDER THE USUAL GOVERNMENT CIRCLE CIRCUMSTANCES. MAY I THEN INVITE THE PRESIDENT TO ATTEND THE OLD WHALERS FESTIVAL AT SAG HARBOR ON ANY PART OF THE TIME MENTIONED ABOVE? THIS SNEAKY KIND OF APPROACH OBTAINES A PUBLIC REFUSAL.

BUT MY DARLING NEIGHBORS ARE NOT WITHOUT INVENTION. THEY HAVE ASKED ME TO ASK YOU TO ASK HIM IF HE COULD USE HIS GOOD OFFICES AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF TO RECOMMEND TO THE NAVY OR THE COAST GUARD THE VISIT TO OUR PORT OF SOME KIND OF EQUIPMENT OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST. WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE ABOVE ALL IS A VISIT BY THE COAST GUARD TRAINING SHIP EAGLE. SHE IS A FOUR MASTED SQUARE RIGGED SAILING SHIP OF GREAT BEAUTY AND DIGNITY AND SHE IS BASED AT NEW LONDON RIGHT ACROSS LONG ISLAND SOUND.. IF EAGLE IS AWAY ON CRUISE, THEY WOULD LIKE SOME IMPORTANT COAST GUARD SHIP AND COMPLEMENT TO ANCHOR IN OUR HARBOR, THERE TO DEMONSTRATE TO OUR PEOPLE THEIR METHODS OF AID, RESCUE AND WHAT EVER OTHER FUNCTIONS ARE POSSIBLE TO EXHIBIT. IF SUCH A SHIP OR SAY SOME NAVY BOTTOM COULD ACCEPT VISITORS, SAG HARBOR WOULD SEE TO THE CARRIAGE OF SUCH VISITORS TO AND FROM THE ANCHORAGE.

SERVICE SET

AND I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST THE RABBITS TO CHARGE A SMALL FEE FOR SUCH FERRYING TO BE PUT TO A GOOD AND PUBLIC CAUSE.

YOU SEE, SIR, SAG HARBOR LOVES ITS ANCIENT GLORY AS ONE OF THREE GREAT WHALING PORTS OF THE WORLD UNTIL THAT RASCAL PETROLEUM WAS DISCOVERED AND THE LAMPS OF THE WORLD CHANGED THEIR FUEL. THEY FEEL THAT THEY ARE SEA GOING PEOPLE AND , DO YOU KNOW, THEY ARE.

ANYTHING THE PRESIDENT COULD DO IN THIS MATTER WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. OUR TOWN AND OUR COUNTY (SUFFOLK) WENT DEMOCRATIC IN THE LAST ELECTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY AND SOME RECOGNITION WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN CEMENTING LOYALTIES FOR THE FUTURE.

I WOULD BE GLAD IF YOU COULD BRING THIS TO THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENT IF HE WANTS NO PART OF IT, I WILL STILL HAVE DONE MY DUTY TO MY VILLAGE. QUITE PRIVATELY , I THINK A LITTLE ACTIVITY AMONG THE NORTHERN VOTERS MIGHT DO MUCH TO BALANCE BOTH THE TEXASNESS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTNESS WHICH IS THE PRESENT PREOCCUPATION OF AMERICANS. AND ALSO IT SEEMS TO ME THAT DEMONSTRATION OF OUR SEA GOING EQUIPMENT IN ITS USEFUL AND HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS MIGHT BE OF VALUE AS A BALANCE TO THE GREY DREADFULNESS OF OUR WEAPONRY. MAY I HEAR FROM YOU IN THIS MATTER AT YOUR CONVENIENCE, JACK? IF ALL SIGNALS ARE NO, I WILL HAVE LOST NOTHING, BUT IT WOULD BE PLEASANT TO ME IF SOMETHING COULD BE DONE FOR MY TOWN, PARTICULARLY IF IT DIDN'T COST ANYTHING BUT GOOD WILL.

NOW BACK TO OUR OLD STANDING OF PRIVATE OBSERVATION AND SUGGESTION. THE CIVIL RIGHTS DELEMA IS DREADFUL. BUT I DO HAVE THE GALL TO SUGGEST, OUT OF EXPERIENCE AS A POLICE REPORTER, THAT WHEN YOU WAN TO BREAK UP A GANG, YOU DON'T HIT THE MUGS. YOU GO FOR THE LEADERS. THOSE USED CAR BOYS WOULD NOT HAVE KILLED THE PREACHER IF THEY DIDN'T FEEL THEY HAD THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND EVEN THE MANDATE OF THEIR STATE GOVERNMENT. WALLACE IS THE MAN TO GO AFTER BUT NOT ON SOME CHICKEN DIRT CHARGE OF PIGGY BANK ROBBING. WALLACE IS , IN FACT THE MURDERER SINCE IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT HIM. IF NOT MURDER, THEN A CHARGE OF TREASON, INCITING TO RIOT AND TAKING HIS STATE OURSIDE THE LAWS OF THE UNION ARE REASONABLE CHARGES, WHETHER FEASIBLE OR NOT. WE FOUGHT A WAR ONCE FOR JUST SUCH FUTSING WITH THE COHESIVENESS OF THE UNION. YOU MIGHT BUY WALLACE BUT YOU COULD NEVER TRUST HIM. AND IF HE COULD BE DESTROYED, THE LITTLE FISHES IN THE TIN HATS WOULD SOON FIND THAT THEY ARE NOT REALLY POPULAR. OUTSIDE OF THE SPECTACULAR CHARGE AGAINST WALLACE, THE BEST WAY TO BRING HIM DOWN WOULD BE TO ALIGN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AGAINST HIM. THEY ARE THE ONLY REALLY RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS AND MUST BE BECAUSE THEIR LIVINGS AND THEIR PROFITS ARE INVOLVED. IF THEY CAN BE CONVINCED THAT WALLACE IS LOSING THEM MONEY, THEY WILL BE THE FIRST TO TEAR HIM DOWN. BUT ONE MUST ALWAYS HIT FOR THE TOP NOT FOR THE BOTTOM. YOU CAN'T BLAME THE SHERIFFS AND SUCH IN THE MATTER OF NEGRO VOTING BECAUSE THEY KNOW DAMN WELL THAT IF THE NEGROS COULD VOTE THE CLARKS AND LINGOS COULDN'T EVEN BE ELECTED AS DOG-CATCHERS.

SERVICE SET

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. JACK. I SHALL HAVE SOME MORF BITS AND

EXECUTIVE

SP2-3/H42-7/Pro/s*

March 27, 1965

Dear John:

Thousands of letters have come to me since my speech to the Congress. But none touched me or affected me to the degree yours did.

Thank you, my dear friend. Thank you for your trust and your affection.

Sincerely,



LYNDON B. JOHNSON

★
Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East Seventy-second Street
New York 21, New York

LBJ:JV:mw

1

Backlet message 4/3/15/65 sent.

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

MARCH 17, 1965

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

SOME TIME BEFORE ELECTION, WE WERE DISCUSSING THE
PRESIDENTS I HAD MET OR KNOWN. SUDDENLY YOU ASKED BLUNTLY,
"WHICH ONE WAS THE GREATEST PRESIDENT YOU HAVE KNOWN?"
I THINK I REPLIED, "YOU ARE, SIR--- SO FAR."

PERMIT ME NOW, SIR TO REVISE THAT STATEMENT BY
DELETING THE LAST TWO WORDS LEAVING, "YOU ARE , SIR."

ALWAYS THERE HAVE BEEN MEN WHO HAD CONTEMPT FOR THE
"WORD" ALTHOUGH WORDS HAVE SURVIVED BETTER THAN ANY OTHER MAN MADE THINGS.
ST. JOHN SAYS, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD"
WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED USING A WEAPON, SOME ONE IS DEAD OR INJURED,
BUT THE PRODUCT OF THE WORD CAN BE LIFE AND HOPE AND SURVIVAL.
ALL OF THE GREATNESS OF OUR SPECIES RESTS ON WORDS--- SOCRATES
TO HIS JUDGES--- THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, THE INTRODUCTION TO THE
WYCLIFFE BIBLE, LATER TAKEN BY LINCOLN FOR THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS.
AND ALL OF THESE GREAT AND IRRETRIEVABLE WORDS HAVE THE BRAVERY OF FEAR
AND HOPE IN THEM. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A FIERCE BUT HOLLOW FEELING
IN THE MEMBERS OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS WHEN THE CLERK FIRST READ
THE WORDS "WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS--" LINCOLN MUST HAVE
DWELT WITH LONELINESS WHEN HE WROTE THE ORDER OF MOBILIZATION.

IN OUR HISTORY THERE HAVE BEEN NOT MORE THAN FIVE OR
SIX MOMENTS WHEN THE WORD AND THE DETERMINATION MAPPED THE COURSE
OF THE FUTURE. SUCH A MOMENT WAS YOUR SPEECH, SIR , TO THE CONGRESS
TWO NIGHTS AGO. OUR PEOPLE WILL BE LIVING BY PHRASES FROM THAT
SPEECH WHEN ALL THE CONCRETE AND STEEL HAVE LONG BEEN DISPLACED OR
DESTROYED. IT WAS A TIME OF NO TURNING BACK, AND IN MY MIND AS WELL
AS IN MANY OTHERS, YOU HAVE PLACED YOUR NAME AMONG THE GREAT ONES OF HISTO

I KNOW OF COURSE THAT IT WILL TAKE TIME, LOTS OF TIME
TO CARRY OUT THE INTENTION OF YOUR SPEECH, BUT, JUST AS A SHIP CANNOT
BE BUILT UNTIL THE KEEL IS LAID, SO NO HUMAN ACTION CAN BEGIN BEFORE
ITS PURPOSE IS CLEARLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY STATED, AND THAT YOU HAVE DONE.

AND I TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT YOU ARE
MY PRESIDENT.

YOURS IN ADMIRATION,
John Steinbeck

P.S. I AM ADDING SOME PAGES TO THIS, LEAVING IT TO JACK VALENTI TO KNOW
WHETHER YOU HAVE TIME FOR THEM OR WHETHER THEY WILL INTEREST YOU.

SERVICE SET

LYNDON B. JOHNSON
Carbon stamped in
George Thomas' office

3/31/65

Jack Patton of the Salinas CALIFORNIAN is
an ardent ~~an~~ admirer of the President AND
John Steinbeck.

Patton is the moving spirit behind a major
civic project in Salinas -- a hometown
exhib of the works of Steinbeck and other
artifacts relating to the author.

He would deeply appreciate it if the
President inscribed the attached Dem.
Convention program on page 94, starting
of the article about the President.
Patton asks that the President "autograph it
to Steinbeck."

You can either turn over the finished product
to me, but I know Jack would be thrilled if
mailed direct by the White House: Jack Patton,
Salinas CALIFORNIAN, Alisal & Church Streets,
P.O. Box 1091, SALINAS, CALIF. THANKS
M. SMITH

mas

April 8, 1965

EXECUTIVE

PR 6-1/S*

AUTOGRAPH FILE/S*

(2)

Dear Mr. Patton:

Merriman ^xSmith told us of your admiration
for President Johnson and John Steinbeck.

Enclosed is the copy of the Democratic
National Convention program which the
President has autographed to John Steinbeck
as you requested.

Sincerely,

George E. Reedy
Press Secretary
to the President

^x
Mr. Jack Patton
Salinas ^xCALIFORNIAN
Alisal and Church Streets
P. O. Box 1091
Salinas, California

GER:WDT:mcc
5

Program inscribed: Best wishes to John [★]Steinbeck, Lyndon B Johnson
_x

CENTRAL FILE

SERVICE SET

June 21, 1965

EXHIBIT

AR/MC

PR 4/ST32

ND19/C0312

ND19/C062

Dear John:

Jack Valenti was thoughtful enough to let me read your letter to him.

As usual, I find your judgment wise and your sentiments warm, and I am mighty glad that your voice and your pen are always working actively in behalf of your country.

Sincerely,

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East 72nd Street
New York 21, New York

LBJ:JV:ny

RECEIVED
JUN 23 1965
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

(2)
June 21, 1965
5:30 p.m. Monday

Mr. President:

Here is a typed copy of a letter
that John Steinbeck wrote to me.

I think that you would enjoy reading
it because of what he has to say
about the Arts Festival and his
feelings about you.

Jack Valenti

Sag Harbor, N.Y.

June 15, 1965

Dear Jack:

I have two things to put in your capable but busy hands, and I know you will do what is right with both of them.

First, my thanks and Sag Harbor's thanks for the Coast Guard's help with our little Festival which isn't so little. Admiral Stevens was more than cooperative. He sent several craft and came himself. Crowds visited the ships and I'm sure people got an idea of the service they never had before. His officers were good men and I think they all had a good time as well as giving one. As a result of this visit it looks as though our town will get one of the light ships which are being removed from the service - here to serve as a Marine Museum. In a very short time, people will not remember what a light ship was like.

I understand that soon Admiral Stevens of the 3rd district comes up for promotion to C in the Coast Guard. If I could say or do anything to that end, I would consider it a privilege. An extremely good man as the Department must know better than I.

Next -

When I sent regrets in the matter of the recent Arts Festival at the White House, Lowell had not sounded off. I want to make it very plain that my absence had nothing to do with foreign policy. I see no reason why he couldn't differ and still attend. I felt that he used his refusal to some extent as a focus of publicity.

No, it is just that I don't want to stand out front. I'm not a social artist if I am an artist at all. Writing is my trade, my profession and my obsession and it doesn't go with public appearances which I never make.

Of course I don't like our troops in Viet Nam or the Dominican Republic and I believe the President hates it worse than I do. They act as though he were playing a parlour game for his pleasure. But I have seen the effect on him of casualties and I know.

SERVICE SET

2.

I have always felt that government should have as little as possible to do with art, the fear being that it would lay down rules and opinions. Now it seems that there is a second reason. The artists, so called, given a chance or a foot in the door, seem to instruct government.

I guess no one has given more advice to Presidents and candidates than I have, some good and some bad but all private. It does seem to me that this performance in Washington, whether so designed or not, has the effect of giving aid and comfort to the enemy by indicating division at home - which just isn't so except in decibels. I'm glad I wasn't there. I'm afraid I would have been in a fight. It seems to me that in times of stress, we should differ privately. I favor the public and foreign portion of "My country may she always be right, but right or wrong...my country." We could use some of that sentiment now. I admire some of the guests but I am very glad they are not President.

This doesn't mean I go along with everything but I do think this last was an unfortunate choice of time and place.

Please make sure that the boss knows my sentiments in this matter. I would hate him to think I ran out on him. I wish I knew something else he could do and I'll bet he does too.

I could write a whole essay on why I think that was a bad show. But I'll limit it to this.

So long.

John

RD
Checked by Gift Unit

October 21, 1965

EXECUTIVE

502/10-5-65
GI 2-7/8*
PP1-1

Checked by Kardex

My dear John:

Today I came home from the hospital. God has been most generous to me for I have come through what is at best a cheerless experience with the prospect that I will be totally fit again very soon.

Your special gift of kindness was never more visibly evident than when I found the ancient talisman that you left with me at the last White House Dinner. I am so grateful to you not only for this expression of friendship but for your prayers which found a welcome reception with a Higher Authority.

Lady Bird and I look forward to being with you and Elaine one day soon.

Sincerely,

JL

Mr. John^{*} Steinbeck
Box 1017[^]
Sag Harbor, Long Island
New York

LBJ:JV:ny

gift
ms. Steinbeck
personally put
the ring in the
President's
packet.

RECEIVED
NOV 3 1965
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York, N. Y. 10021

Sag Harbor
6 October 1965

Dear Mr. President:

I want to thank you for your kindness
and courtesy last night at dinner.

You must know that our hearts, our
nerves, and our prayers are with you. Bless
you!

Yours
John (Steinbeck)

EXECUTIVE

July 30, 1965

TR67

WH14-1

PR 4/ST 32
Steinbeck, Elaine
Camp David

My dear John:

It is I who should be grateful to you for your company
and your counsel and your friendship.

I was greatly pleased that you could be with me when
I went to Illinois to bid goodbye to one of the great
Americans of our times.

Please, if it isn't a discomfort for you, continue send-
ing me whenever you think it appropriate your ideas
and your suggestions. They are always imaginative
and they are always welcome.

Sincerely,



LYNDON B. JOHNSON

Mr. John Steinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor
Long Island, New York
LBJ:JV:ny

2

Checked by Karger

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK • Box 1017, Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York

22 July, 1965

Dear Mr. President and Mrs. Johnson:

Elaine and I want to thank you, not only for your courtesy and hospitality at Camp David last week end, but your discernment in knowing how much it would mean to us to go to Adlai's funeral. This was a great man. We loved him, and he was our friend. Because of my passion for a kind of anonymity, this was not generally known, but you perceived it perhaps because of a similar and to us very dear relationship with your family. We are deeply grateful to you for making this possible. Beyond this, we treasure the insights you give us into your character and your impulses, which must proceed from a kind of trust which we will do anything in our power to deserve. I hope you know how much we are with you and for you.

I am aware enough of history and of events to know that the times are more dangerous perhaps than any our nation has ever faced. I do feel how your smallest decision affects the future of the nation and the world. It is only natural then for any man to want to help no matter how ill equipped he may be.

During Governor Stevenson's two campaigns, he used to say jokingly that I was in charge of keeping him off balance. It was surely a joke because that was never my intention. And if occasionally I do send observations and suggestions through Jack Valenti, (whom you will remember you appointed as special assistant in charge of me,) it is only because I think an unpressured observation may be of some value, at least as a matter of contrast. And sometimes even laughter has value. I trust Jack to edit out any observations of mine which are valueless or stupid. With this safety valve in operation, I will continue to send them through until I am requested not to.

Again, our gratitude and a reaffirmation of our respect and our love for you and for your family,

yours,

John Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

MEMORANDUM

EXECUTIVE

PU2-6

2

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 30, 1965

MR. PRESIDENT:

John ^XSteinbeck has just finished the book he was working on, called: AMERICA AND THE AMERICANS, a kind of dispassionate, yet loving look at his land.

Attached is one of the chapters -- on morality. Steinbeck asked me to read it -- and if I thought it appropriate to send it on to the President.

I suggest you may want to read it -- the prose is pure Steinbeck, pungent, simple, the old, short words that you like so very much. His theme, is, alas, all too true and sad, though he does offer some slim optimism at the end.

Steinbeck

You may want to consider having John and Elaine ^X down for a weekend. They are now back in New York after spending the summer at Sag Harbor.

Other suggested fun guests for you:

Frederic ^XMarch and his wife.

Gregory ^XPeck and his wife.

Jack Valenti

RECEIVED
NOV 6 1965
CENTRAL FILES

Nothing else sent to
Central Files as of 11/18/65

SERVICE SET

This is one chapter in the
forth coming book. America and the Americans

-1-

MORALITY?

I find I have been avoiding or at least putting off one of the most, if not the most, serious problem Americans are faced with, both as a people and as individuals. In very many people this problem is a gray and leaden weight heavy to all and unbearable to some. We discuss it constantly and yet there is not even a name for it. Many, not able to face the universal spread and danger of the cancerous growth, split off a fragment of the whole to worry about or to try to cure. But it seems to me that we must inspect the disease as a whole because if we cannot root it out, we have little chance of survival as a nation and as a people.

First, let us try to find something to call this subtle and deadly illness. Immorality does not describe it, nor does lack of integrity, nor does dishonesty. We might coin the word anethics but that would be a scholarly approach to a subject that is far more dangerous than anything that has happened to us. It is a creeping, evil thing that is invading every cranny of our political, our economic, our spiritual and our psychic life. I begin to think that the evil is one thing, not many, that racial unrest, the emotional crazyquilt that drives our people in panic to the couches of the psychoanalysts, the fallout, dropout, copout insurgency of our children and young people, the rush to stimulant as well

as hypnotic drugs, the rise of narrow, ugly and vengeful cults of all kinds, the distrust and revolt against all authority, political, religious or military, the awful and universal sense of apprehension and even terror and this in a time of plenty such as has never been known -- I think all of these are manifestations of one single cause.

Perhaps we will have to inspect mankind as a species, not with our usual awe at how wonderful we are but with the cool and neutral attitude we save for all things save ourselves.

Man is indeed wonderful and perhaps his gaudiest achievement has been to survive his paradoxes. He is not a herd animal nor has he any of the built in rules which permit the ruminants to graze and mate and survive together, reserving their fear and their ferocity for protection against foreign species.

Mankind seems more nearly related to the predators, possessive, acquisitive, fearful and aggressive. He is omniverous, can and will eat anything living or dead, two endowments shared by the cockroach and the common rat. He is aggressively individual and yet he swarms and goes to hive in the noise and discomfort of his tenements and close-packed cities. Once when enemies roamed the open, there was a reason for thronging in caves and castle courtyards, but with these dangers removed he is drawn to packed subways, crowded streets, howling traffic and penal quarters in apartment houses. And in America, this human tendency seems to be increasing. The small towns grow

smaller so that men and women can breathe poisoned air, walk fearfully through streets where violence does not even wait for darkness. We are afraid to be alone and afraid to be together. What has happened to us? Something deep and controlling and necessary.

I'm not going to preach about any good old days. By our standards of comfort they were pretty awful. What did they have then that we are losing or have lost?

Well, for one thing they had rules -- rules concerning life, limb and property, rules governing deportment, manners, conduct, and finally they had rules defining dishonesty, dishonor, misconduct and crime. The rules were not always obeyed but they were believed in and a breaking of the rules was savagely punished.

Because of our predatory nature, the hive or the herd were always beyond us but the pack and the crowd were open to us. When two humans get together rules are required to keep them from stripping or killing each other. These rules are simply pragmatic brakes on our less than fraternal instincts. Early on to make the rules effective they were put out as the commands of a God and therefore not open to question. By this means, it was simple for obedience to the rules to equate with virtue or good, and disobedience to be bad or evil. Since so many of our instincts lead to rape, rapine, mayhem and plunder, it was necessary not only to ^{punish} ~~punch~~ the bad, or

natural, but to reward the good people who lived by the rules in peace and safety. Since it was impractical to make these rewards in physical form, more and more of the payments were put over into a future life.

In many of our activities, opposites in the world of rules are placed in juxtaposition one to another. It is said that the convict and the keeper are more alike than they are different; that cop and robber are skin brothers. All armies, regardless of their missions, carry death and destruction in their hands, and this is so frightening to us that the rules we make for armies are rigid beyond all others, while punishment for infringement is immediate and savage. In this way we show our awareness of the dark danger lurking in us always.

Over the millennia most of us have learned to obey the rules or suffer punishment for breaking them. But most important -- even the rule breaker knew it was wrong and the other right. The rules were understood and accepted by everyone.

At intervals in our history, through unperceived changes usually economic, the rules and the enforcing agents have come a cropper. Inevitably the result has been a wild and terrible self-destructive binge, a drunken horror of the spirit giving rise to the unspeakable antics of crazy children. And this dark maze mania has continued until rules were reapplied, rewritten or reenforced.

In the light of this human background with its explosive potential, let us explore some of our present attitudes and activities.

Once Adlai Stevenson, speaking of a politician of particularly rancid practices, said, "If he were a bad man, I wouldn't be so afraid of him. But this man has no principles. He doesn't know the difference."

Could this be our difficulty, that gradually we are losing our ability to tell the difference?

The rules fall away in chunks and in the vacant place we have a generality: "It's all right because everybody does it."

This is balanced with another cry of cowardice. In the face of inequity, dishonesty in government, or downright plundering the word is "Go fight City Hall!" The emphasis is of course that you can't win. And yet in other times we did fight City Hall and often we won.

The American has never been a perfect instrument but at one time he had or had a reputation for gallantry, which, to my mind is a sweet and priceless quality. It must still exist but it is blotted out by the dust cloud of self-pity. The last clear statement of gallantry in my experience I heard in a recidivist state prison, a place of two-time losers, all lifers. In the yard an old and hopeless convict said as follows: "The kids come up and they bawl how they wasn't guilty or how they was framed or how it was their mothers'

XEROX FROM QUICK COPY

SERVICE SET

fault or their father was a drunk. Us old boys try to tell 'em -- 'Kid, for Chrise sake do your own time and let us do ours.'"

And in the present climate of whining self-pity, of practiced sickness, of professional goldbricking, of screaming charges about whose fault it is, one hears of very few who do their own time, who take their rap and don't spread it around. It is as though the quality of responsibility had atrophied.

It is hard to criticize the people one loves. I knew this would be a painful thing to write. But I am far from alone in my worry. My mail is full of it -- letters of anxiety. The newspapers splash so much of it that perhaps we have stopped seeing. How is one to communicate this sadness? A simile occurs to me again and again. Our national nervousness reminds me of something -- something elusive.

Americans, very many of them, are obsessed with tensions. Nerves are drawn tense and twanging. Emotions boil up and spill over into violence largely in meaningless or unnatural directions. In the cities people scream with rage at one another, taking out their unease on the first observable target. The huge reservoir of the anger of frustration is full to bursting. The cab driver, bus or truck driver, pressed with traffic and confusion, denounces Negroes and Puerto Ricans unless he is a Negro or a Puerto Rican. Negroes burn up with a hateful flame. A line has formed for the couches

of the psychoanalysts by people wound so tight that the mainspring has snapped and they deliver their poisons in symbolic capsules to the doctor. The legal and criminal distribution of sleeping pills and pep pills is astronomical, the first opening escape into sleep and the second access to a false personality, a biochemical costume in which to strut. Kicks increasingly take the place of satisfaction. Of love, only the word, bent and bastardized, remains.

It does remind me of something. Have you ever seen a kennel of beautiful, highly bred and trained and specialized bird dogs? And have you seen those same dogs when they are no longer used? In a short time their skills and certainties and usefulness is gone. They become quarrelsome, fat, lazy, cowardly, dirty and utterly disreputable and worthless, and all because their purpose is gone and with it the rules and discipline that made them beautiful and good.

Is that what we are becoming, a national kennel of animals with no purpose and no direction? For a million years we had a purpose -- simple survival -- the finding, planting, gathering or killing of food to keep us alive, of shelter to prevent our freezing. This was a strong incentive. Add to it defense against all kinds of enemies and you have our species' history. But now we have food and shelter and transportation and the more terrible hazard of leisure. I strongly suspect that our moral and spiritual disintegration grows out of our lack of experience with plenty.

Once, in a novel, I wrote about a woman who said she didn't want a lot of money. She wanted just enough. To which her husband replied that just enough doesn't exist. There is no money or not enough money. A billionaire still hasn't enough money.

But we are also poisoned with things. Having many things seems to create a desire for more things, more clothes, houses, automobiles. Think of the pure horror of our Christmases when our children tear open package after package and when the floor is heaped with wrappings and presents, say -- "Is that all?" And two days after, the smashed and abandoned "things" are added to our national trash pile, and perhaps the child, having got in trouble, explains, "I didn't have anything to do." And he means exactly that -- nothing to do, nowhere to go, no direction, no purpose, and worst of all no needs. Wants he has, yes, but for more bright and breakable "things." We are trapped and entangled in things.

In my great grandmother's time things were important. I know, because I have read her will and the things she found important enough to bequeath by legal instrument we would have thrown away -- such things as four pewter spoons, one broken in the handle, the square of black cotton lace. I had from Grandmama the little box of leaves from the Mount of Olives, a small bowl carved from one piece of onyx and beautiful to see, twelve books and eight sheets of music. These were valuable things.

It is probable that the want of things and the need of things have been the two greatest stimulants toward the change and complication we call progress. And surely we Americans, most of us starting with nothing, have contributed our share of wanting. Wanting is probably a valuable human trait. It is the means of getting that can be dangerous.

It's a rare morning when our newspapers do not report bribery, malfeasance and many other forms of cheating on the part of the public officials who have used the authority vested in their positions for personal gain. Of course we don't hear of the honest men, but the danger lies not in the miscreants but in our attitude toward them. Increasingly we lose our feeling of wrong. Huge corporations are convicted of price fixing and apparently the only shame is in being caught. It is a kind of a game. On the other hand, these same corporations, if Senate testimony is correct, offer bribes to members of other corporations, install listening devices and use all manner of spying methods against each other. I am not dwelling on these clandestine practices as wrong but as impractical. Businesses must not only watch rivals but must constantly spy on their own people to forestall treachery. And this is regarded as normal. Actually the use of both espionage and security in business is unworkable, expensive, and diagnostic of the collapse of the whole system, for any system which cannot trust its own people is in deep trouble. XEROX FROM QUICK COPY

SERVICE SET

When students cheat in examinations, it may be bad for them as individuals but for the community it means that the graduate is traveling on false papers and very shortly the papers -- in this case the college degree -- lose their value. When military cadets cheat it is in effect a kind of treason for it means they have not learned to do the things they will be assigned to do.

John Kennedy said his famous lines, "Do not ask what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country," and the listening nation nodded and smiled in agreement. But he did not say it because it might happen but because it is happening and in increasing volume. And it is historically true that a nation whose people take out more than they put in will collapse and disappear.

Why are we on this verge of moral and hence nervous collapse? One can only have an opinion based on observation plus a reading of history. I believe it is because we have reached the end of a road and have no new path to take, no duty to carry out and no purpose to fulfill. The primary purpose of mankind has always been to survive in a natural world which has not invariably been friendly to us. In our written, remembered and sensed history, there has always been more work to do than we could do. Our needs were greater than their possible fulfillment. Our dreams were so improbable that we moved their reality into heaven. Our ailments, our

agonies and our sorrows were so many and so grievous that we accepted them either as inevitable or as punishments for our manufactured sins.

What happened to us came quickly and quietly, came from many directions and was the more dangerous because it wore the face of good. Almost unlimited new power took the place of straining muscles and bent backs. Machinery took the heavy burden from our shoulders. Medicine and hygiene cut down infant mortality almost to the vanishing point, and at the same time extended our life span. Automation began to replace our workers. Where once the majority of our people worked the land, machines, chemistry and a precious few produced more food than we needed or could possibly use. Leisure which again had been the property of heaven, came to us before we knew what to do with it and all of these good things falling on us unprepared constitute calamity. We have the things and we not had time to develop a way of thinking about them. We struggle with our lives in the present and our practices in the long and well-learned past.

We had a million years to get used to the idea of fire and only twenty to prepare ourselves for the productive-destructive tidal wave of atomic fission. We have more food than we can use and no way to distribute it. Our babies live and we have no work for their hands. We retire men and women at the age of their best service for no other reason than that we

XEROX FROM QUICK COPY

SERVICE SET

need their jobs for younger people. To allow ourselves the illusion of usefulness we have stand-by crews for functions which no longer exist. We manufacture things we do not need and try by false and vicious advertising to create a feeling of need for them. We have found no generally fulfilling method for employing our leisure. To repeat -- we have not had time to learn inside ourselves the things that have happened to us.

And finally we can come back to morals.

Ethics, morals, codes of conduct, are the stern rules which in the past we needed to survive -- as individuals, as groups, as nations. Now, although we give lip service to survival, we are embarrassed and beginning to be smothered by our own numbers.

Americans who are makers and lovers of statistics, are usually puzzled and irritated when it is suggested that we are one. But neither the sleeping pill, the church nor the psychiatrist can long hide from us that economic laws apply to ourselves, that increased supply causes a drop in value; that we already have too many people and are in process of producing far too many. Remember when we gave our occidental sniff and observed that in China life was cheap? It never occurred to us that it could become cheap to us.

Those codes of conduct we call morals were evolved for this thinly inhabited continent when a man's life was important because he was rare and he was needed. Women were protected

SERVICE SET

to the point of worship because only they could assure us of continuation. A cry for help brought out Americans buzzing like bees. Homosexuality brought down community rage on the practices because it was unconcerned and wasteful. Every pursuit, no matter what its stated end, had as its foundation purpose, survival, growth and renewal.

Perhaps one can judge the health of a society by the nature as well as the incidence of crimes committed against it. Consider us today not only in the cities but in small towns and country as well. There are of course the many crimes against property, but increasingly it is destructive rather than gainful. But the greatest increase is in crimes against people, against the physical bodies of people. The rapes have little to do with sexuality and much to do with destructive murder. The mugging in the streets, the violence which has turned our parks into jungles, has little to do with robbery although as in the modern rape the ritual of sex is added so in mugging there is robbery, but its purpose and its drive seems to be destructive, the desire to hurt, to maim, to kill. Where need for money is the motive of the violence, the reason is again sad and sick and destructive, this time self-destructive, the need for drugs to abolish consciousness or stimulants to give shape and substance to a schizoid twin, hallucinatory aids in the creation of another world to take the place of this hated one. And this too is a kind of murder, and finally

what is known as kicks, the whipping of reluctant nerves, the raising of savage specters even the maudlin witchcraft of the middle ages could not evoke -- and this is another kind of murder of the self that might be called upon for responsibility.

These things for the practicers of our present-day necromancy but how about the bystanders? Remember the windows slammed against a girl's cry for help in the night? How often have you seen a man collapse in the street and the passersby hurry past lest they be involved. People seeing or hearing a violence look away, walk away, refuse to talk to the police. Life is indeed cheap and moreover it is becoming hateful. We act as though we truly hated one another, and silently approved the killing and removal of one among us.

Could it be that below the level of thought, our people sense the danger of the swarming, crowding, invasion of America by Americans? Starvation, pestilence, plague, which once cut us down are no longer possible. And war? Well, during the last war with all its slaughter, the world's population increased. Are people genuinely afraid of the bomb or do they look to it to do the job we have eliminated from nature? There seems to be little sense of horror when authority states that with the first exchange of bombs a hundred million Americans will die.

It is probable that here is where morals -- integrity, ethics

even charity have gone. The rules allowed us to survive, to live together and to increase. But if our will to survive is weakened, if our love of life, our memories of a gallant past and faith in a shining future are removed -- what need is there for morals or for rules? Even they become a danger.

We have not lost our way at all. The roads of the past have come to an end and we have not yet discovered a path to the future. I think we will find one but its direction may be unthinkable to us now. When it does appear, however, and we move on, the path must have direction, it must have purpose and the journey must be filled with a joy of anticipation, for the boy today, hating the world, creates a hateful world and then tries to destroy it and sometimes himself. We have succeeded in what our fathers prayed for and it is our success that is destroying us.

The pictures in this book are of our land, wide, open, fruitful and incredibly dear and beautiful. It is ours and we will make of it what we are -- no more, no less.

-*-

XEROX FROM QUICK COPY

SERVICE SET

EX PR 6-1\S*
AUTOGRAPH FILE/S*

mif

PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL AUTOGRAPH FILE RECORD

Date Mailed: November 23, 1965

Item Autographed: () White House Card
() Autograph Album
() Book
() First Day Cover
() Souvenir Program

() Photograph of the President, furnished
by office
() Photograph of the President, furnished
by party being autographed for
Three (x) Photograph of President with someone
else
() Magazine Cover
() Newspaper Picture
Further description of photograph
if necessary:

() Other

Inscription: To John To John To John Steinbeck
 My best My friend - My friend -
 L.B.J. L.B.J. Lyndon B. Johnson

For party other than one to whom addressed or delivered:

Sent or delivered to: Mr. John Steinbeck
190 E. 72nd Street
New York, New York 10021

SERVICE SET

EXECUTIVE

ME 1/5*
70 5

November 27, 1965

Dear John:

Jack has told me of your impending departure for Europe, as well as passing to me your first column.

I will read them as they follow, with interest and more than a little affection for the author.

The Steinbeckian ideas are always filled with verve and dash, so let them continue to come. Lady Bird and I send our good thoughts to you and Elaine.

We will look forward to seeing you when you return.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Steinbeck^{x*}
190 E. 72nd Street
New York, New York 10021

LBJ/JV/vm

RECEIVED
DEC 1 1965
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

ET
EXECUTIVE

FOS

COI-9

ND 19/CO312

November 28, 1965

Dear John:

Bon voyage! We'll miss you. *nf*

The President told me he was writing you to tell you of his hopes to be with you again real soon. I enjoy your letters. The "loyal opposition" can be marvelously useful particularly when it prods the "ins" to look at the unlookable and think the unthinkable, and then, possibly, to do the undoable.

You ought to come home with some new views of European public opinion -- from the intellectual community whom, as you and I know so well, find the President curiously unacceptable -- in the light of his monumental architecture of practically everything the intellectual liberal community has been fighting for so long, and to many, unachievable for the same length of time. Now, the President did it all. Vietnam, of course, is the fester-point of it all, though I confess to you I suspect many of our critics will hardly break stride in their criticism even after, as God may hopefully will it, Vietnam gets settled.

I send you and Elaine my warm and enduring affection. May you prosper -- and return safely.

Sincerely,

signed

Jack Valenti
Special Assistant
to the President

Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East 72nd Street
New York 21, New York

JV/yb

RECEIVED
DEC 2 1965
CENTRAL FILES

Nothing else sent to
Central Files as of 12/9/65

SERVICE SET

FROM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. John Steinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor, Long Island
New York

EXECUTIVE
PR6-1/S
AUTOGRAPH FILE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Steinbeck,
It was the President's pleasure
to autograph the enclosed pictures
for you and John Steinbeck, Jr.

I trust you will be able to
send the pictures to your son.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

Juanita D. Roberts
Juanita D. Roberts
Personal Secretary
to the President

May 30, 1966

SERVICE SET

Mr. President:

For autograph please:

"To John Steinbeck, Jr.

from his friend, Lyndon B. Johnson"

Inscribed as above and sent with Mrs.
Robert's memo of 5/30/66

vm
5/27/66

2

NAME(S): John Steinbeck and his son,
John, and the President

Mr. John Steinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor, Long Island
New York

PRESIDENT LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON
PHOTOGRAPH MASTER NAME FILE

NEGATIVE NUMBER: A2440-10

A2439-04

DATE: 5/16/66

PLACE:

CATEGORY:

Poor:

Good:

Excellent:

OCCASION:

GENERAL REMARKS:

No color

*Rec'd
5/27/66*

MAILED
MAY 1966
CENTRAL FILE

SERVICE SET

7

Mr. President:

For autograph please:

"To John Steinbeck,

My friend--

~~My valuable counselor,~~

Lyndon B. Johnson"

Inscribed as above and sent with Mrs. Robert's
memo of 5/30/66

vm

5/27/66

also A-2439-04

A 2440-10

Sent to: Mr. John Steinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor, Long Island
New York

Checked by Kardox

*nc
gr*

June 21, 1966

EXECUTIVE

PR8-1/S*

ND9/S*

ND19/60312/ND9

Dear John:

Your visits and your letters never fail to refresh me.

John Steinbeck, Jr

I was delighted to meet your son, and share your pride in him. He is a Steinbeck through and through, perhaps the greatest of the many gifts you have given to this grateful nation. I shall pray for his safe and swift return to you.

Your own wise words of encouragement are a great source of comfort to me.

Sincerely,

LBJ

★
Mr. John Steinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor, L.I., New York

LBJ:REK:CMM:trd

*Mailed Special Delivery 6/24/66
11:35am*

RECEIVED
JUN 24 1966
CENTRAL FILES

Copies of all other memos to Mr. Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

"tell Juanita I'm going to cry
next time there is a letter being
answered so late. I never want
more than three days to go by
without an answer."

LBJ/yb
6/23/66
8:15p

*my
- Jim
- (3/2)*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Charles,

Mr. Valenti wants to be sure
that this letter is acknowledged
for the President's signature.

Will you prepare draft?

Many thanks.

m jdr
Jun 18

SERVICE SET

Mr. President:

John Steinbeck sent the attached to me which
he wanted you to see.

Jack Valenti
June 4, 1966

per Valenti

*per (66)
6-16-66*

JOHN STEINBECK • Box 1017, Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York

28 MAY, 1966

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR RECEIVING MY SON AND ME. IT MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO BOTH OF US AND I AM SURE THAT SEEING YOU REASSURED HIM THAT RESPONSIBILITY IS BEHIND HIM AND BACKING HIM. HE HAD NEVER BEEN TO WASHINGTON BEFORE. FROM THE PLANE I TOOK HIM FIRST TO THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL. HE STOOD FOR A LONG TIME LOOKING UP AT THAT HUGE AND QUIET FIGURE AND THEN HE SAID, "OH! LORD, WE HAD BETTER BE GREAT."

YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT I AM PLEASED WITH THIS BOY AND PROUD. HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS AND MUST DO. HE IS THOROUGHLY TRAINED TO DO IT. HE IS PROUD OF HIS UNIFORM AND PROUD OF HIS COUNTRY. HE GOES VERY SOON NOW, AND AS YOU MUST KNOW, MY HEART GOES WITH HIM. AND I WILL ASK YOU, SIR, TO REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE TO PRAY FOR HIM.

I KNOW THAT YOU MUST BE DISTURBED BY THE DEMONSTRATION AGAINST POLICY IN VIETNAM. BUT PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PEOPLE WHO INSISTED ON THEIR RIGHT TO CHOOSE THE WAR IN WHICH THEY WOULD FIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY. THERE WERE MANY WHO WOULD HAVE NO PART OF MR. ADAMS' AND GEORGE WASHINGTON'S WAR. WE CALL THEM TORIES. THERE WERE MANY ALSO WHO CALLED GENERAL JACKSON A BUTCHER. SOME OF THESE SHOWED THEIR DISAPPROVAL BY SELLING BEEF TO THE BRITISH. THEN THERE WERE THE VERY MANY WHO DENOUNCED AND EVEN IMPEDED MR. LINCOLN'S WAR. WE CALL THEM COPPERHEADS. THEN THERE WERE THOSE WHO NOT ONLY DENOUNCED BUT DESTROYED PRESIDENT WILSON'S POLICY. BECAUSE OF VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WILL NOT CALL THEM ANYTHING--- FOR A WHILE. I REMIND YOU OF THESE THINGS, MR. PRESIDENT, BECAUSE SOMETIMES, THE SHRILL SQUEAKING OF PEOPLE WHO SIMPLY DO NOT WISH TO BE DISTURBED, MUST BE SADDENING TO YOU. I ASSURE YOU THAT ONLY MEDIOCRITY ESCAPES CRITICISM.

AGAIN MY THANKS TO YOU, SIR. YOU GAVE MY BOY A PEDIMENT OF PRIDE, AND THAT A GOOD SOLDIER MUST HAVE.

AS ALWAYS, FAITHFULLY,

John Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

May 10, 1966
10:30 a.m. Tuesday

EXECUTIVE

PR 8-2/5*
ND 19/CO 312/ND
ND 9/5*

MR. PRESIDENT:

John Steinbeck and his wife will be in Washington next Monday and Tuesday, the sixteenth and seventeenth. He will have with him his nineteen year-old son who volunteered for Vietnam duty.

*STEINBECK John Steinbeck, Jr

John and Elaine would be very grateful if they could say "hello" to you and introduce their son to you.

May I set this up?

YES _____ NO _____

Jack Valenti

JV:ny

RECEIVED
MAY 17 1966
CENTRAL FILES

Nothing sent to
Central Files as of 5/23/66
W.R.

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK • Box 1017, Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York

2, MAY, 1966

DEAR JACK:

I GUESS I WAS BORN TO BE A GADFLY, AND NOW JUST AT THE TIME WHEN YOU ARE CLEARING YOUR DESK PERHAPS AND LOOKING FORWARD TO SLEEPING WITH YOUR SHOES OFF. MY BOY'S ORDERS HAVE BEEN CHANGED SO THAT HE GETS TO NEW YORK ON THE 15TH OF THIS MONTH. ALSO I HEAR BY THE GRAPE VINE THAT I AM SUPPOSED TO GO TO TARRYTOWN FOR THIS ARTS THING THE 13TH, 14TH AND HALF OF THE 15TH. (I WONDER WHY TARRYTOWN?) SO THAT MEANS I WILL BE IN NEW YORK THE 15TH TO MEET JOHN. THEN RATHER THAN COMING ALL THE WAY OUT TO SAG HARBOR AND BACK, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO GO TO WASHINGTON THE 16TH OR 17TH?. THAT'S A WEEK EARLIER THAN WAS PLANNED AND IF IT IS IN ANY WAY CONVENIENT I MEAN INCONVENIENT, I HOPE YOU WILL LET ME KNOW. I WILL BE HERE AT SAG HARBOR UNTIL THURSDAY MAY 12.

I AM ENCLOSING A LETTER FROM JOHN WHICH I THINK IS IMPORTANT, NOT BECAUSE HE WROTE IT BUT BECAUSE THE QUESTION IS MUSHROOMING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. MAYBE THE PRESIDENT SHOULD SEE IT. GOD KNOWS HE HAS BEEN "BODY ESCORT" OFTEN ENOUGH. BUT JOHN IS RIGHT. EVERYONE WHO GETS HURT WILL HAVE TO MAKE HIM THE PATSY. AND THE TIME IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING WHEN HE WILL FEEL IT NECESSARY TO MAKE SOME KIND OF SYMBOLIC PHYSICAL GESTURE.

MEANWHILE, WILL YOU LET ME KNOW ABOUT TIME AT YOUR EARLIEST, JACK? AND AT YOUR CONVENIENCE, I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE THIS ENCLOSED LETTER BACK. JOHN WILL BE TWENTY ON JUNE 2,. THEY GROW UP FAST UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, DON'T THEY?

YOURS,



SERVICE SET

Checked by LBJ:JV

July 12, 1966

EXECUTIVE (4)
ND19/00312
PR18
PU2-2/5*
Pearson, Drew

Dear John:

I read your letter in the New York ^XTimes.
Your words say what I have been trying to
say, and you say it eloquently and warmly -
why our cause is right and why we must
fight, and how peace can come to that little
country if the aggressor will simply go
home.

As usual, John, you go to the heart of the
matter and that is what truly counts.

Sincerely,



^{*}
Mr. John ^XSteinbeck
Box 1017
Sag Harbor, Long Island
New York
LBJ:JV:ny

RECEIVED
JUL 15 1966
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

Mr. Hopkins:

The President wanted these two papers to go to Mr. Drew Pearson...to be delivered to his home if need be.

On the President's letter to Mr. Steinbeck, perhaps it would be best if the "LBJ:JV:ny" were cut off..

vicky
7/13/66
5:40 pm

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 12, 1966
10:15 a.m. Tuesday

MR. PRESIDENT:

Here is a letter I suggest you ought to write to John Steinbeck, as a result of his letter in the New York Times. (Attached)

Jack Valenti

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

For the Record:

The President's letter to Mr. Steinbeck was re-xeroxed omitting the initials at bottom -- per note.

Drew Pearson's office said that he was leaving his office for his home and it would be best to send the communication to his home -- 2820 Dumbarton Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C.

This was done. (copies of letter and newsarticle)

rah
7/13/66

SERVICE SET

STEINBECK WRITES TO YEVTUSHENKO

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

novelist's 20-year-old son, John (Catbird) Steinbeck, was now fighting with United States forces in Vietnam.

Following is the text of Mr. Steinbeck's letter:

"My dear friend Genya:

"I have just now read those parts of your poem printed in The New York Times. I have no way of knowing how good the translation is, but I am pleased and flattered by your devotion.

"In your poem, you ask me to speak out against the war in Vietnam. You know well how I detest all war, but for this one I have a particular and personal hatred. I am against this Chinese-inspired war. I don't know a single American who is for it. But, my beloved friend, you asked me to denounce half a war, our half. I appeal to you to join me in denouncing the whole war.

"Surely you don't believe that our 'pilots fly to bomb children,' that we send bombs and heavy equipment against innocent civilians? This is not East Berlin in 1953, Budapest in 1956, nor Tibet in 1959.

"You know as well as I do, Genya, that we are bombing oil storage, transport and the heavy and sophisticated weapons they carry to kill our sons. And where that oil and those weapons come from, you probably know better than I. They are marked in pictograph and in Cyrillic characters.

"I hope you also know that if those weapons were not being sent, we would not be in Vietnam at all. If this were a disagreement between Vietnamese people, we surely would not be there, but it is not, and I have never found you to be naive you must be aware that it is not.

"This war is the work of Chairman Mao, designed and generalised by him in absentia, advised by Peking and cynically supplied with brutal weapons by foreigners who set it up. Let us denounce this also, my friend, but even more, let us together undertake a program more effective than denunciation.

"I beg you to use your very considerable influence on your people, your Government, and on those who look to the Soviet Union for direction, to stop sending the murderous merchandise through North Vietnam to be used against the South.

"For my part, I will devote every resource I have to persuade my government to withdraw troops and weapons from the South, leaving only money

and help for rebuilding. And, do you know, Genya, if you could accomplish your part, my part would follow immediately and automatically.

"But even this is not necessary to stop the war. If you could persuade North Vietnam to agree in good faith to negotiate, the bombing would stop instantly. The guns would fall silent and our dear sons could come home. It is as simple as that, my friend, as simple as that, I promise you. I hope to see you and your lovely wife Galya soon.

"With all respect and affection,

"John Steinbeck."

Cites 'Grapes of Wrath'

In his poem, Mr. Yevtushenko said he regretted that "one of my most beloved writers and friends, John Steinbeck," had not joined other American literary figures in protesting against the war.

Reply by Steinbeck Chides Yevtushenko

John Steinbeck has replied to a plea by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, the Soviet poet, that the American novelist speak out on the war in Vietnam.

In a poem published Thursday in the Moscow newspaper Literaturnaya Gazeta, Mr. Yevtushenko chided Mr. Steinbeck for his silence and urged him to protest against the bombing raids on North Vietnam.

The novelist, winner of the Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes, replied in an open letter today in the Garden City, L. I., newspaper Newsday, for which he writes a syndicated weekly column.

Mr. Steinbeck asked Harry F. Guggenheim, editor and publisher of Newsday, to make his copyrighted reply available simultaneously to all news media. In making the letter public, Mr. Guggenheim noted that the

Monday, September 5, 1966
11:15 a.m.

WJ

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Bill Moyers

John I wanted you to see this. I think
* Steinbeck is being perfectly honest
as he always is, and the article he
is writing for *LOOK will turn out
to be a plus.

EXECUTIVE

FSI

PR 18

PR 15-7

(4)

JOHN STEINBECK • Box 1017, Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York

SEPTEMBER 3, 1966

DEAR BILL:

RODGERS OF LOOK MAGAZINE CALLED ME YESTERDAY TO SAY THAT YOU WERE GOING TO TRY TO SET UP THE MATTER BETWEEN ME AND THE PRESIDENT. AND BEFORE THIS GOES ANY FARTHER, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU AND/OR THE PRESIDENT.

I ADMIT TO A STRONG RELUCTANCE ABOUT THE JOB, NOT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE PLEASANT AND REWARDING TO ME, BUT BECAUSE I SENSE DANGER TO THE PRESIDENT IN THE UNDERTAKING. THAT IS WHY I WOULD LIKE IT THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED BEFORE HAND. I THINK YOU KNOW MY FEELING FOR THE PRESIDENT AND I HOPE HE DOES, SO THAT ELEMENT DOES NOT ENTER. THE DANGERS LIE IN INEPTNESS AND PERHAPS IN A MISCALCULATION OF THE PUBLIC MIND AND FEELING, AND I WOULD NOT WANT TO FALL INTO EITHER OF THESE TRAPS. FOR THESE REASONS, PLEASE BEAR WITH SOME OF MY THINKING IN THESE MATTERS.

PERHAPS YOU READ A PIECE I WROTE IN THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION BOOK ABOUT WHAT THIS PEOPLE DEMANDS OF THE PRESIDENT. THEY INSIST THAT HE BE ALOOF AND THAT THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW ALL ABOUT HIM. IT SUMS UP IN THE SINGLE LINE. THEY DEMAND THAT HE BE GREATER THAN ANYONE ELSE BUT NOT BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE.. THIS SECOND REQUIREMENT SUBJECTS HIM TO OVER EXPOSURE AND THAT IN AN ACTOR AS WELL AS A PRESIDENT IS PURE MURDER.

THE PEOPLE REQUIRE THAT HE BE ABOVE REPROACH AND AT THE SAME TIME RESERVE THE RIGHT TO QUESTION HIS MOTIVES AND TO SUSPECT HIM OF WRONG DOING. THE ONLY KIND OF PRESIDENT SAFE FROM CRITICISM IS ONE WHO DOES NOTHING AT ALL, AS WE KNOW FROM FAIRLY RECENT EXPERIENCE

THE NEXT ITEM IS THAT IT IS ALMOST EXACTLY PREDICTABLE WHEN THE PROCESS WILL CHANGE FROM ADULATION TO SUSPICION AND CRITICISM, AND WE ARE ENTERING THAT PERIOD RIGHT NOW. I WOULD NOT INSULT YOU OR THE PRESIDENT BY BEING LESS THAN TRUTHFUL OR CANDID, AND IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT IF THE PROJECT UNDER CONSIDERATION CONTAINED EVEN A HINT OF BEING AN APOLOGY OR A SNOW JOB, IT WOULD DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. IT WOULD INSTANTLY BE PUT DOWN AS A PIECE OF ORDERED AND INSPIRED PRESS AGENCY.

THERE IS ONE FURTHER CONSIDERATION THAT MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN NEARLY EVERYTHING HE HAS UNDERTAKEN. AND SUCH IS THE AVERAGE MAN'S FEELING OF INADEQUACY IN HIMSELF THAT HE INSTINCTIVELY DISLIKES TOO MUCH SUCCESS. HE MAY ADMIRE THE YANKEES BUT HE CAN ONLY LOVE THE METS. IN OTHER WORDS, PERFECTION IS LIKELY TO INSPIRE DISLIKE.

ALL OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO MY STRONG RELUCTANCE TO DO THIS JOB. BUT THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS WHICH TO A GREAT EXTENT MAKE THE JOB SEEM TO HAVE MERITS, THAT IS, IF YOU AND THE PRESIDENT AGREE. IF YOU DO NOT, THE PROJECT CAN BE CANCELLED NOW. FOR THAT MATTER IT CAN BE CANCELLED RIGHT UP TO THE TIME THE MAGAZINE GOES INTO PRINT.

SERVICE SET

LET ME SET DOWN SOME OF THE THINGS THAT SEEM TO ME TO HAVE SOME KIND OF VALIDITY

ITEM: SOMETIMES A LIKENESS OF EXPERIENCE DOES MUCH TO TURN THOUGHTLESS CRITICISM ASIDE. IF A CONCISE AND UNROMANTICISED ACCOUNT OF HOW A PRESIDENT LIVES AND OF THE PRESSURES UNDER WHICH HE WORKS COULD BE PUT DOWN, IT MIGHT HAVE SOME GOOD EFFECT

ITEM: THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIRECT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WAR AS WELL AS ABOUT MANY DOMESTIC PROBLEMS WHICH ARE CONSTANTLY ASKED. I KNOW BECAUSE MY MAIL IS FULL OF THEM. NOW THESE QUESTIONS MAY HAVE BEEN ANSWERED BUT IF THEY HAVE, IT HAS BEEN FROM MANY SOURCES AND OFTEN IN WORDS LESS THAN DIRECT AND EXACT. I WOULD LIKE TO ASK SOME OF THOSE QUESTIONS AND IF THE ANSWERS COULD BE DIRECT, EXACT AND WITHOUT GENERALITY WORDS OR POLITICAL FOG. THIS WOULD BE OF GREAT VALUE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF A QUESTION IS UNANSWERABLE FOR SECURITY OR OTHER GOOD REASONS, THE STATEMENT THAT THEY ARE UNANSWERABLE WOULD BE MUCH MORE DESIRABLE THAN VAGUENESS. THERE ARE TWO SAFETY MEASURES IN THIS. IF DESIRED, SUCH QUESTIONS COULD BE SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE AND OF COURSE WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S BLUE PENCIL BEFORE TO IS SUBMITTED, BUT I WOULD HOPE THAT THERE COULD BE AN OVERTONE OF CANDIDNESS ABOUT THE AFFAIR WHICH MIGHT OVERCOME TO SOME EXTENT A GROWING FEELING IN THE COUNTRY THAT WE ARE ILL INFORMED OR EVEN MISINFORMED. THIS IS A MOST DANGEROUS STATE OF MIND, AND THIS IS THE CHIEF REASON WHY I AM WILLING TO UNDERTAKE THIS WORK

IF THIS THING GOES THROUGH, BILL, IT IS MY HOPE, MORE I FEEL IT IS A NECESSITY THAT I HAVE A LITTLE TIME WITH YOU ALONE BEFORE IT STARTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING THE GROUND RULES. THAT WOULD AVOID CONFUSION AS WELL AS SAVING MUCH TIME

FINALLY I ASSURE YOU THAT THIS THING WILL BE ALL MY OWN WORK WITHOUT LET OR HINDRANCE FROM ANY SOURCE WHATEVER. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY I COULD CONSIDER DOING IT.

I WILL BE GLAD TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS LETTER, BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT YOUR DAILY MAIL MUST BE LIKE. WILL YOU LET ME KNOW BY PHONE OR WIRE THAT YOU HAVE? MY NUMBER IS SAG HARBOR 5-0997. I WILL MAKE NO PLANS EITHER WAY UNTIL I HEAR FROM YOU

YOURS,


JOHN STEINBECK

GENERAL

GI 2-8/8

D

September 21, 1966

PERSONAL

Dear Mr. Guinzburg:

The copy of John Steinbeck's "America and Americans," sent to the President at the author's request, was very much appreciated. He asked me to thank you for providing such an impressive addition to his library.

With the President's cordial good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Juanita D. Roberts
Personal Secretary
to the President

Mr. Thomas H. Guinzburg
President
The Viking Press, Inc.
625 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

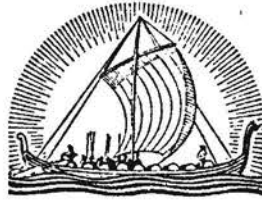
JDR/lf/mek/amw

Gift

RECEIVED
SEP 22 1966
GENERAL

SERVICE SET

SEP 17 1966



THE VIKING PRESS INC • PUBLISHERS

625 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

Cable: VIKPRESS Telephone: (212) PLaza 5-4330

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

September 14, 1966

Lyndon B. Johnson
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Johnson:

John Steinbeck wanted you to have the enclosed copy of AMERICA AND AMERICANS, which we will publish on October 12th.

For several years the Editors of our Studio Books had been collecting photographs for a book that would show the range and beauty of America and her people. We asked Mr. Steinbeck to write a preface for it, but he took to the idea so warmly that he wrote not a preface but a book-length text, expressing his feelings and observations about the country.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Guinzburg
President

THG:eh
Enclosure

SERVICE SET

FROM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East 72nd Street
New York, New York 10021

EXECUTIVE

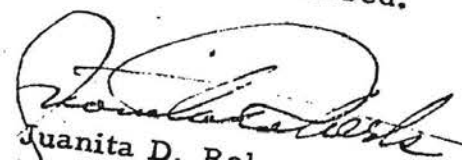
PRC-1/57

AUTOGRAPH FILE/S


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Steinbeck,

The President was looking through
some of his pictures today and thought
you might like to have the enclosed.


Juanita D. Roberts
Personal Secretary
to the President

October 5, 1966

To John Steinbeck
author, friend and patriot - 

82-66 C-3054-21 and 82-66-A-3122-12
A-3127-24A
A-3127-29A
A-3122-28
72-66 A-3111-20A
3111-19A

RECEIVED

OCT 6 1966

CENTRAL FILES SERVICE SET

October 4, 1966

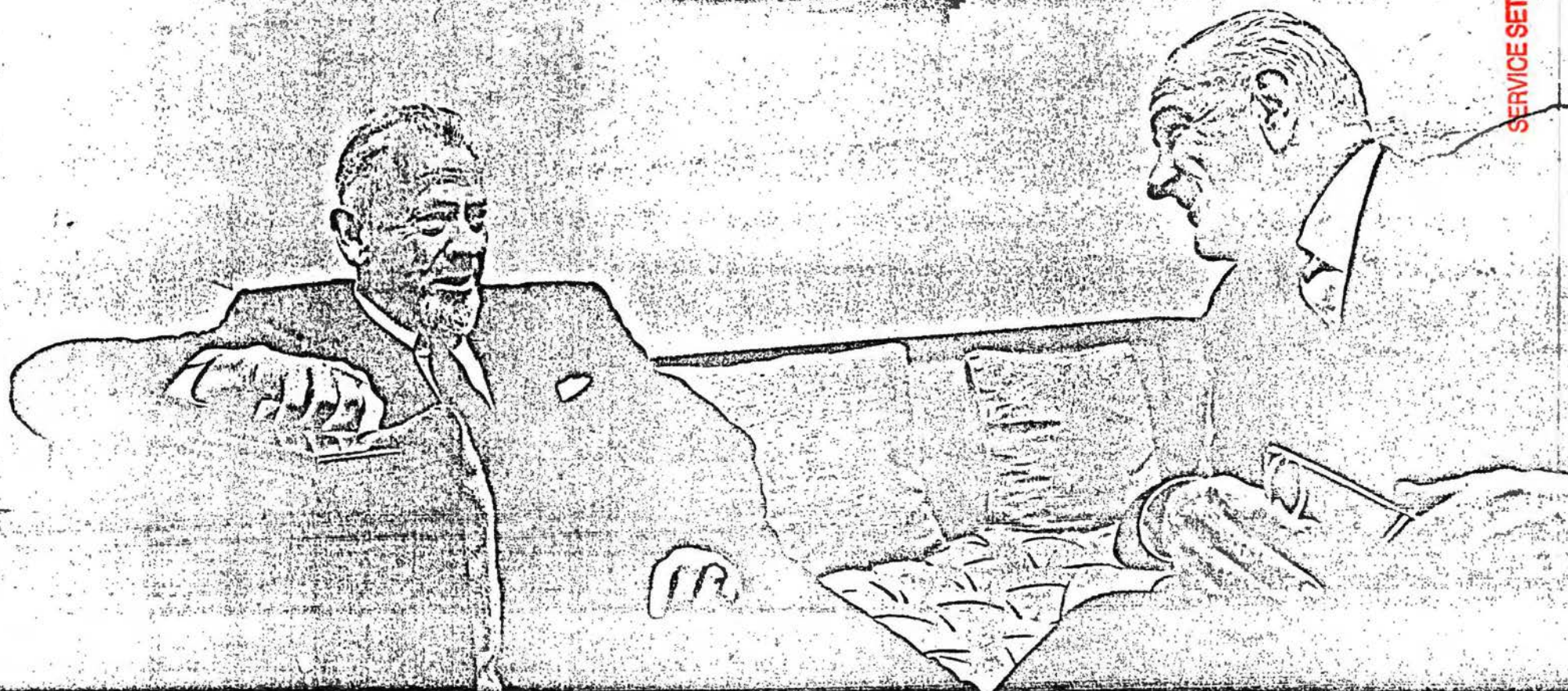
Mr. President:

Would you like to autograph

" To John Steinbeck
Author, friend and patriot, LBJ"

Send him other pictures also? ☒ Yes ☐ No

yb



1 8 Se 66 A- 3122-08

To John Steinbeck
from his friend -
Cyril [signature]

12/20
RECEIVED
C0303
PR 8-2/y*

November 16, 1966

Dear John:

I discussed the ^{*}Yevtushenko matter with the President. ^{*}He felt his operation would probably prevent having a meeting such as you suggested.

He wanted you to know that he is very pleased you are going to the Far East. If there is anything we can do in paving the way, let me know.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Moyers
Special Assistant
to the President

^{*}
Mr. John Steinbeck
190 East 72nd Street
New York 21, New York

BDM:mcc

RECEIVED
NOV 17 1966
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

Monday, November 14, 1966
10:15 a.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Bill Moyers

John Steinbeck is suggesting that you meet the famous Soviet poet, Yevtushenko, with whom he recently had the exchange in the press over Vietnam. Are you interested in doing this?

YES _____

NO _____

RECEIVED
NOV 14 1966
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

JOHN STEINBECK
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

NOVEMBER 12, 1966

DEAR BILL:

I KNOW THAT THIS IS NO TIME TO ADD TO YOUR BURDENS. ON THE OTHER HAND I HAVE PROMISED THE PRESIDENT TO PASS ON ANY INFORMATION OR SUGGESTIONS THAT MAY OCCUR TO ME. AND I THINK YOU, MORE THAN MOST, ARE AWARE THAT SOMETIMES A LITTLE~~er~~ THING MAY HAVE A VERY GREAT IMPACT.

IN SHORT, THE SOVIET POET YEVTUSHENKO ~~X~~ WITH WHOM I RECENTLY HAD A SMALL GO ROUND) IS VISITING IN THE UNITED STATES. HE IS EASILY THE MOST POPULAR POET IN THE USSR AND NOT THE LEAST REASON FOR THIS IS BECAUSE HE STOOD UP TO COMRADE K. I HAVE SEEN HIM SEVERAL TIMES AND HAVE HEARD HIM READ HIS POETRY TO PACKED HOUSES HERE, AND I AM CONVINCED THAT HE IS PERMITTED TO BE HERE FOR REASONS OF IMPROVING PRESENT RELATIONS. THIS I GATHER BOTH FROM PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND FROM THE WAY HE HAS BEEN FIELDING QUESTIONS THROWN AT HIM DURING HIS READINGS.

WHAT~~I~~ I AM ABOUT TO SUGGEST MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE BUT IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. WHEN I WAS LAST IN THE SOVIET UNION, I WAS INVITED BY THE THEN HEAD OF STATE TO MEET WITH HIM. THAT I DID NOT MAKE IT IS ANOTHER STORY.

I BELIEVE THAT IF THE PRESIDENT WOULD INVITE Y. TO THE WHITE HOUSE OR TO THE RANCH, IF ONLY FOR A FIVE MINUTES WITH PICTURES, THAT IT WOULD DO MORE FOR OUR RELATIONS THAN ANYTHING I CAN IMAGINE. I DO NOT KNOW, OF COURSE WHETHER HE COULD ACCEPT SUCH AN INVITATION, BUT A DISCRETE INQUIRY AIMED AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY WOULD ESTABLISH THAT. IF THEY SAID NO, IT COULD BE DROPPED, BUT IF THEY SAID YES, HE WOULD BE THERE. AND THE NEWS OF HIS VISIT WOULD GO LIKE A MISSILE THROUGH THE WHOLE SOVIET WORLD.

ONE OTHER THING WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. IT WOULD KIND OF PULL THE RUG FROM UNDER SOME AMERICAN POETS WHO HAVE CONFUSED POLITICS WITH BAD MANNER. THE MEETING COULD BE FOR THE SHORTEST TIME IMAGINABLE. THE IMPORTANT THING WOULD BE THAT HE WAS INVITED.

WELL THAT'S MY STORY, BILL. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU KNOW THAT WE ARE GOING OUT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA ABOUT DEC. 1. WE WILL START IN SAIGON AND THEN DO ALL THE COUNTRIES THE PRESIDENT DID AND SOME HE DIDN'T. I'LL BE GOING FOR HARRY GUGGENHEIM AND THE NEWSDAY SYNDICATE AND FOR AN INDEFINITE TIME. AND OF COURSE I WILL BE WIDE OPEN FOR SUGGESTIONS.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. EXCEPT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I HAVE NOT MENTIONED THE SUBJECT OF THIS LETTER TO ANYONE, AND ~~W~~ILL NOT. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF THE SUGGESTION. I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT IT WOULD HAVE ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE IMPACT ON THE GRASS-ROOTS SOVIET CITIZEN.

YOURS


JOHN STEINBECK

SERVICE SET

cc
John

EXECUTIVE

N 1019/C0312

PU 2-2

January 18, 1967

His Eminence:

The President wanted you to have this
article.

Sincerely,

W. Thomas Johnson
Assistant Press Secretary

His Eminence Francis Cardinal^x Spellman
Archbishop of New York
452 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

John^x Steinhilber

RECEIVED
JAN 27 1967
CENTRAL FILES

SERVICE SET

John Steinbeck Visits...

"A tiny circle cleared with machetes, just big enough for a chopper to set down in the mountains northwest of Pleiku."

Novelist Steinbeck has been in Vietnam writing dispatches distributed by *Newsday Specials*.

I WOULD LIKE more than anything to be able to plug in so these words might carry the feel and sight of things but more the deep throbbing glory-feeling of being alive in a world of living things. And I suppose part of this exquisite aliveness grows in the steady reminder that at any moment you may not be.

Let you be aware of these statistics. Michael Shaughnessy, commander (Shamrock Flight), D Troop, First Squadron, 10th Cavalry, from Takoma, Wash., a major of very un-Irish gaiety, perhaps because he has never been to Ireland.

The Huey choppers of his flight are painted with big green shamrocks, the result of a can of green paint sent by Michael's wife.

News, or rather a feel, of this man precedes him, so that when his chopper dips down on the pad like a skipped stone and he leans out saying, "I hear you want to go hunting leprechauns," I reply:

"That I do, sir."

"Well it just happens we found a fairy ring in the hills. Hop in!"

Hopping for me in fatigues and field boots is more like clambering, but I manage and pull the buckle straps tight near the door seat, which I like because you can look straight down. I nod to the door gunner on my side and pat the twin handles of his weapon, now down-pointed and unloaded.

Airborne, he will swivel up the muzzle, flip up the breech block and lead the first shell of the belt into the chamber, slam the cover down, move the gun up and down and from side to side and then settle back to watch for any movement on the ground. It is a joy to have him there. His potential burst of tracered fire may well be a deterrent to the casual part-time sniper who can take it or let it alone.

I know about the leprechauns. In this case they are called Charley and high in the jungle hills, D troop has found their cove of gold, this time an extensive cache of rice and we are going up to look at it.

Grace in Action

SHAUGHNESSY lifts the Huey from the pad, backs up in a kind of curtsy, wags it like a tail and off we go. We go fast and low, taking cover in water canyons and when we breast a ridge we graze the trees and instantly drop down on the other side. You can either fly high above the range

of small-arms fire or you can cut low and tricky like a snipe.

Settling in, our rotors kick up a smog of fine red dust so that our faces seem to have a sunlamp pleasure burn. We are to move to the Huey of Maj. James Patrick Thomas, of whom it is said that he has changed the classic sophist's question to how many choppers could Thomas sit on the point of a pin.

I wish I could tell you about these pilots. They make me sick with envy. They ride their vehicles the way a man controls a fine, well-trained quarter horse. They weave along stream beds, rise like swallows to clear trees, they turn and twist and dip like swifts in the evening. I watch their hands and their feet on the controls, the delicacy of the coordination reminds me of the sure and seeming slow hands of Casals on the cello.

Jungle Flight

THEY ARE truly musician's hands and they play their controls like music and they dance them like ballerinas and they make me jealous because I want so much to do it. Remember your child night dream of perfect flight free and wonderful? It's like that and sadly I know I never can.

My hands are too old and forgetful to take orders from the command center, which speaks of updrafts and side winds, of drift and shift, of ground fire only indicated by a tiny puff and flash, or a hit and all of these commands must be obeyed by the musician's hands instantly and automatically.

Suddenly, up and ahead there is a burst of purple smoke, our landing signal, and we loop over to a chopped out clearing so small that our rotor blades barely clear the giant bamboo.

Vietniks Recalled

OUT OF THE undergrowth, thicker than any I have ever seen, faces, or really only eyes, appear. Mottled helmets and fatigues disappear against the background. Faces black or white from sweat and dirt have become a kind of universal reddish gray. Only the eyes are alive and lively.

And when we settle and the rotor stops, the mouths open and they are men, and what men. Can you understand the quick glow of pride one feels in just belonging to the same species as these men?

I suppose it is the opposite of the shiver of shame I sometimes feel at home when I see the Vietniks, dirty clothes, dirty minds, sour smelling

wastelings and their ill-favored and barren-pad mates.

Their shuffling, drag-ass protests that they are conscience-bound not to kill people are a little silly. They're not in danger of that. Hell, they couldn't hit anybody. I think their main concern is that a one-armed, half blind 12-year-old V.C. could knock them off with a bunch of ripe bananas.

I didn't mean to get off on that. I guess D troop set me off. They smelled of sweat. On the back of every helmet, under the strap, was a plastic spray bottle of insect repellent.

I went into a V.C. trail so deep and covered with jungle that you are in perpetual steaming dusk. It was one of the V.C. transport trails over which they force the local people to carry their supplies.

The rice cache was fairly large, a stilted structure deeply screened and disguised. The weary men were stacking unhulled rice to be airlifted to the refugee centers, a good haul, 300 to 400 bags. Once it would have been destroyed. Now if possible at all it is saved and distributed sometimes to the very people from whom the V.C. have taken it.

Back in Danang

DO YOU REMEMBER my telling you that any mistakes might be beauties but they would be my own? Well, I've only been two weeks in Vietnam but, of that time I have spent 10 days out of 14 in the field from base camp to forward position, to patrol, to assault operation.

Last week I went through the booby trap school near Danang. The course is about 400 yards long, winds through thick cover, and on the path and in the houses is every kind of booby trap that has been found. When you trip one a loud blank cap goes off. I set off three and it makes you feel foolish because you are looking for the trip wires and the traps. The instructor told me that since our men have gone through the course that casualties have gone way down, and I can understand that. For several days after, I looked very carefully at the ground before I stepped.

But this is not a pretty war and Charley set the pace. Our kids are learning to fight back. But how I would like to run a protest parade down a V.C. trail. Charley puts paddy peasants over a suspected path before he goes in. Maybe the Peace Marchers might like to, serve in this capacity. Sorry to be so vehement but I've seen a boy with punji wounds.

SERVICE SET

EXECUTIVE

ND19/20312

March 7, 1967
12:00 noon

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BENJAMIN READ
Department of State

Mr. Kintner has asked me to request your assistance in the following matter.

The attached is a newspaper clipping reporting on the favorable opinion of John Steinbeck on the lack of censorship in Vietnam. The President has asked if Secretary Rusk could follow through and persuade Steinbeck to release the text or substance of his report in Saigon, or through appropriate Vietnam channels.

It may be something Dixon Donnelly could handle. Will you let us know of your progress? Many thanks.

Charles M. Maguire

Chas,

3/17/67

This doesn't quite fit what you were saying the S letter was supposed to have revealed, but it is the only one I know. If you believe there is another ---addressed to Secy of St--- I can only suggest asking his Secretary.

mjdr

NOTE:

Steinbeck letter to Rusk sent to us by Read. Pres. asked Rostow get State contact Steinbeck; rewrite letter eliminating attack on press, release thru Moyers or similar U.S. ~~xxx~~ press channel.

C

SERVICE SET

Bob:

Follow through on this and see if Secy Rusk
can't get Steinbeck to release substance
of that letter out there.

LBJ/mf
3-3-67
3:15p

rcn 2, 1967

Mr. President:

U

FYI, From Fred Panzer.

^K
Robert E. Kintner

(22)

Editorial & Published
4/18/67

Steinbeck Says He Found No Censorship in Vietnam

War reporters in South Vietnam are subject to no censorship except their own and that of their editors and publishers, John Steinbeck, the novelist, reported after nearly two months spent covering the war.

In his report to *Newsday*, Long Island newspaper, Steinbeck said the United States and South Vietnamese authorities had given him full freedom and assistance in reporting on the country and the war, and that the same facilities are extended to any accredited reporter from any other country.

"The United States Armed Forces and the American civilian organizations, as well as the government and army of South Vietnam, have taken me where I wanted to go, have let me see everything I wished to see and have placed no restrictions or censorship on what I wanted to write. And this has not been special to me," Steinbeck wrote from Bangkok, Thailand.

Freedom of Choice

"Any reporter, from any country, can have the same facility of movement as long as he represents a newspaper or papers. If any reporter says that he has been restricted, I am inclined to believe that he didn't want to go. Those who stay safely and comfortably in their apartments in Saigon, reporting only the official reports and briefings available at 5 o'clock every day, do so because that is what they want to do.

"On the other hand, there are a goodly number of newsmen who cover the fighting areas personally and bravely and these should not be forgotten. The armed forces do us a further honor. They do not protect us in life and limb beyond the care they have for their own men. Any newsman is free to move about, to talk to anyone he wishes, and to report as he sees fit.

"There are some things I have not told you, but the censorship has been my own. I have gone in with certain operations which I have not reported for the reason that the moves have not been completed and that to tell plans, tactics and objectives at the present time might endanger first, the men and second, the operation, and that I am not about to do. But I repeat—the censorship has been my own.

"If there is criticism of the news about this area, it must be aimed at (1) those corre-

spondents who do not wish to report it at first hand and (2) the editors and publishers who, by cutting and changing the material that comes to them, warp the news to their liking or limit it to the spectacular, the bloody and the shocking. All war is those things by its nature, but there are other sides to it—the helping, the rebuilding, the saving."

SERVICE SET

2/18/67

VietNewsmen Protest CMJ Jurisdiction

SAIGON

American officials announced Feb. 15 that civilians, including newsmen, "serving with or accompanying" U.S. forces in Vietnam come under the Code of Military Justice.

The joint announcement by Staff Judge Advocate Col. Edward W. Haughney, U.S. Consul Robert A. Lewis and U.S. Mission spokesman John Stuart came during a news conference at the daily military briefing.

Some newsmen argued at length over the statement that Vietnam "is not in a formal state of war but in a time of war" and that military police can "apprehend and detain" any U.S. citizen in Vietnam.

One issue is whether U.S. civilians in Vietnam on private business are under U.S. military or Vietnamese control at all times even when not accompanying American forces in the field.

Haughney said "in the field applies to all of South Vietnam" for the purposes of the ruling.

There have been frequent clashes — usually verbal — between newsmen covering events in Saigon and military policemen.

National Broadcasting Company correspondent Howard Tuckner was struck by a U.S. military policeman carrying a machinegun on a Saigon street while Tuckner was trying to cover a terrorist mortar attack.

The spokesmen said military police were ordered not to manhandle newsmen performing their duties. They replied "no comment" when asked about specific incidents.

The spokesmen contended the "field" ruling would not hamper reporters in news gathering.

Lewis drew an angry response from British and French newsmen when he declared that U.S. jurisdiction "technically could be applied to third country nationals."

picture. Lucas

— 1 us —

fed for 6 — then

— down

my way & w.

nd vis + . m. Op

as 1 a. Lucas

2-9 PK vil ad

pass-6

gl L mad

Sol as — in nls

adv 1/2 — se y ka — des —

as L

EXECUTIVE

ND 19/00312 (3)

ND 1

FO5

Sai gon 18 January 1967

Dear Mr. President:

I have been in Vietnam about six weeks now, and most of that time I have spent in the field with our troops of all branches as well as with some of the Allied forces. From north to south I have been on every outpost, have flown with Air Cavalry, with Forward Air Control, with 1st Cavalry units. In fact I went in with the first strike of Operation Thayer II although I have not written about that since the operation is not completed.

I think I know our men very well now for I have lived with them and have been shot at with them.

I know, Mr. President, that you get many reports through your official channels of information. But I do want to tell you by this completely unofficial means, that we have here the finest, the best trained, the most intelligent and the most dedicated soldiers I have ever seen in any army and I have seen soldiers in my time. These men are the best we have ever had.

In addition to fighting, they have taken on the duty of pacification and repair simultaneously and that is a new thing in the world. It seems to me that von Clausewitz is finally dead. He said, you remember, that war is an extension of politics. Now we have discovered and are putting in practice a new dimension--that politics is an extension of war. And this policy is being implemented by American soldiers. They make me very proud to be an American and I know they must make you very proud to be their Commander-in-Chief. The restrictions placed on them in carrying the war to the enemy must be and are galling to our soldiers. But they obey. I hope, sir, that in the near future you may find occasion to celebrate these men, to give verbal evidence of our love for them and our pride in them. They deserve it and I well know that you feel it.

I am going out to Bangkok now to see Thailand and Laos and if I am permitted to enter, to see Cambodia. After that I want to look at

John Steinbeck

Letter copy sent to President LBJ 2/13/67

Copy to Mrs. Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

the other peripheral countries, Indonesia, Malaya, the Filipines, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and Japan. Our future is closely tied to these nations and I want to know about them. Meanwhile, if any definite change takes place, I shall return to Saigon. I have made arrangements to be notified.

I shall take this letter to Bangkok with me and will ask our ambassador there to put it in the pouch for you.

If you have anything in mind that I can do for you, I can be reached either through the embassy at Bangkok or at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok.

Yours with all respect,

John Steinbeck

P.S. Elaine is with me. She is a real trooper and a proper descendant of the frontier. I am very proud of her also.

Please give our love to Bird, and to yourself our affection as always.