

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

From Bob Fleming

Following are notes on your discussions at 6:25 p.m. Sept. 5 with the following:

Eric Sevareid, CBS
John Cauley, Kansas City Star
Duff Thomas, UPI
Walter Ridder, Ridder Newspapers
James Cary, Copley Newspapers
Bernard Gwertzman, Washington Star
Richard Stolley, Life
Wayne Kelly, Atlanta Journal

Cauley asked the President to discuss his philosophical approach to his office at this time in his service. The President said he'd often read that his was a lonely position, but it was never that. It is exciting every moment, he said, with the biggest problems the decisions that must await further information. The responsibilities shift often and rapidly, he said, with a ~~man~~ calm evening followed by a 4 a.m. crisis.

The President recounted crisis problems of the past 60 days, and then reviewed the domestic problems faced by other Presidents in time of war. His conclusion, he said, was that he held a job that was most exciting, most interesting, with power to solve problems if a President can find the right things to do.

Duff Thomas asked the President's views of Republican presidential possibilities in 1968. The President said he gathered only bits of information available to the press. He read the papers, he said, and noted that Gov. Romney had explained his Vietnam views by saying he'd been "brain-washed" in Saigon. The President observed that any man "brain-washed" by diplomats and generals might have problems facing Chairman Kosygin.

Bernie Gwertzman asked the President's reaction to the South Vietnam elections. He said he felt much the same as when his first daughter was born - he was pleased she was alive and well, but knew much ahead could not be anticipated. He traced development of the democratic process in Vietnam, said when Gen. Ky took second-place on the Thieu-Ky ticket the President was as surprised as when he found he'd done the same thing at Los Angeles (to create the Kennedy-Johnson ticket), and explained the importance of American election observers there.

Ridder asked how racial problems were evolving. The President said they were most serious, because 100 years of neglect could not be cleaned up in two years. Negroes are understandably restless, he said, but he believed the best hope was to find jobs for all by providing federal funds to be operated with local supervision for some million

SERVICE SET

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

unskilled Negroes. The President said Vietnam peace and urban progress with equal justice were his biggest challenges. He reviewed the legislative proposals to help the cities, said he felt results in congress would be better than signs now indicated.

Kelly asked details on congressional prospect; the President reviewed bill by bill. He said the prospect was not hopeless, was difficult, but that he felt the results would be good.

Sevareid asked if the President believed the new South Vietnam government would seek peace. The President said he knew it would, and that we'd encourage them. We would stop bombing tomorrow if that could lead to productive talks, the President said, but he said North Vietnam will offer no assurances that they won't use a pause to their military advantage.

Sevareid asked what the new government could actually do. The President said it can improve the leadership of three divisions, can get rid of corruption, can institute land reforms to give people pride in ownership. He said he thought the new government could extend free speech and political rights to the VC and NLF under party structures.

Gwertzman asked the President's reaction to Hanoi claims they'd talk if bombing stopped. The President that was a common misunderstanding - that Hanoi's position was that they'd consider talking if the bombing stopped permanently, and if we'd pull out.

The President noted we were not alone in wanting an end to the war. He said he felt the Soviets did. He said many people argued they could not be trusted, but he cited agreements of the past three years: cultural, civil air, consular and space, with talks in prospect on ABM and non-proliferation treaties.

Sevareid asked if the President was confident that the ABM treaty would be drawn. Not confident, but hopeful, the President said. He said we will have to be reasonably patient, and that while we will have to build a missile defense against China, he hoped to avoid the wasteful effort of US and Soviet ABM expenditures.

The President had commented that he felt his communication with our public was not the best. Stolley asked him to explain. The President said his administration was not making the news media confident it was getting good information. Part of the problem could be his own personality, he said; part of it was geography. He said the war overshadowed all else to many people.

SERVICE SET

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Camery asked the arguments against neutralizing Haiphong. The President said there were two: it would not be sufficiently effective to cut off North Vietnam supplies, and there was too much risk of involving Russia by hitting one of their ships. He reviewed the target categories -- said of 350 listed, less than 30 had not been hit, and these included three ports, nine POL locations, a small tire plant, and the rest bridges or targets we'd previously hit.

The session ended at 9 a.m.

SERVICE SET

SUBJECT: Jim Jones' Supplementary notes of President's meeting
with Bureau Chiefs in the Yellow Oval Room, September 5, '67.

President further elaborated on Gwertzman's question about the Vietnam elections saying Bunker was the real hero. President said he couldn't take pride of authorship on Bunker because President Kennedy had brought Bunker in and both Kennedy and Johnson had given Bunker the toughest diplomatic assignments. President said Bunker moved this thing (elections) faster than we expected. "We went to Honolulu and were surprised at their (Ky and Thieu) attitude. I thought of them as Hitler, heel clicking, power grabbers as they were ~~expre~~ portrayed in ~~the~~ papers," the President said. The President then said he went to Guam to expedite the Constitution and the elections. He described how proud Ky was to present a copy of the Constitution.

President said Bunker accurately predicted the elections with only one surprise. Bunker expected Huong to come in second and Dzu to lead all the minor candidates. Dzu instead was second.

"If I had to re-do what's been done in last 16 months, I don't know how I would do it differently," the President said.

Concerning Ridder's question on how will racial problems evolve, President said that it is most serious that we rebuild our cities. He noted that we are in a transition ~~perio~~ period, they are restless and want things a little faster than we've been willing to give. President said he always felt that if you give a man something for nothing, you hurt him more than you hurt the State.

Amplifying on Kelly's question about the poverty program, the President said it is not hopeless to pass a poverty program but it will be difficult. He said the Negro leaders should spend less time marching and more time in Washington testifying before Congress where the votes are to pass this social legislation.

Severied asked if the new Vietnamese government should try to initiate peace moves. The President said yes and we will encourage this. He said we'll stop bombing if it will lead to any productive discussions. President said he thinks the bombing is wearing on the North Vietnamese.

Carey asked why we don't neutralize the port of Haiphong. President said even if we do, they will still have nearly all capability. Furthermore, Russian ships are in the harbor side by side and we can't hit the harbor without hitting a Russian ship and even Admiral Sharp said this in his testimony.

SERVICE SET

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 6, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM JAMES R. JONES

SUBJECT: Luncheon with publishers and Vietnam Election Observers
in the State Dining Room of the White House.

Wednesday, September 6, 1967

Luncheon convened: 1:20 PM
Program convened: 2:10 PM
Program adjourned: 3:30 PM

The President opened the program introducing the Vietnam Election Observers. The President said he was concerned with many things and his biggest concerns are to find the road to an honorable peace; doing something in our cities, educating our children, providing jobs and looking after the health of the citizens, and having a sound fiscal policy. He named some of the crises he has faced in the last few months. He introduced the Members of the Cabinet and then called for questions from the audience.

Jim Chambers of the Dallas Times Herald asked what the consensus of the Vietnam Election Observers was of the elections.

The President said the press had covered their report that morning. All were encouraged by the election that took place. He said they found no substantial evidence of fraud. However, there were a few instances of questionable election practices.

Bob Taylor of the Philadelphia Bulletin asked "now that the elections are over, will there be a new peace initiative?"

The President read from the "Blueprint" which he had discussed with Ambassador Eugene Locke. He pointed out that we are trying to probe in every way to find some way to get Ho Chi Minh to talk even while they continue to fight. The President read President Thieu's peace overtures which were made during the campaign and which included bombing pauses. The President said "your government has said to Hanoi that we are ready to talk immediately if they will talk and if the talks will be productive." The President also said that Hanoi has shown no interest in negotiations. He pointed out that there will be efforts made by the government of South Vietnam and other governments toward peace initiatives. However, at the present time it takes two to negotiate and "we have no one to talk to."

MORE

SERVICE SET

John Knight asked why the President had a change of heart on imposing higher income taxes when he would not raise taxes last year.

The President replied "because of a change of conditions." The President then explained his tax proposal saying he did not feel the monetary restraints could guard against the dollar. A tax increase is also needed. To compensate for a possible 29 billion dollar deficit, he plans to borrow half of it, tax half of it, and reduce a fourth of it through reduced spending. He pointed out however that the Tax Bill is unpopular in the Congress and he does not know if it will pass.

Tom Vail of the Cleveland Plain Dealer asked if the President plans to run in 1968.

The President said "we will cross that bridge when we get to it and we're not to it yet."

Otto Fuerenbringer of Time Magazine asked why Ho Chi Minh would not come to the conference table.

The President said that Ho has looked upon South Vietnam for years as something he wants to rule. The President felt that each day Ho Chi Minh has a little more doubt that he will ever rule South Vietnam but he does not have enough yet to be willing to talk peace.

Columnist Robert Spivack asked the President to elaborate on his meeting with Kosygin.

The President said they had two profitable days together. "I understood him and his people better and I hope he feels the same. We talked mostly about the Middle East although we could not agree on a solution." The President said he and Kosygin talked about the antibalistic missile and the President urged Kosygin to sit down and talk and work this agreement out. Kosygin agreed to do this but would not set a time and date. The President hopes Kosygin will talk to us shortly. The President also said that Secretary McNamara will speak on this subject in San Francisco at the UPI Editors Convention. The President also said that he and Kosygin talked about the nonproliferation treaty. He then cited the many agreements that had been reached between the Soviet Union and the United States since Mr. Johnson has been President. Namely the Exchange Agreements, Civil Air Agreements, the Consular Treaty, the Space Treaty, final work on the Nonproliferation Treaty and the ABM if we get it. The President said he and Kosygin also talked about farm houses and grandchildren.

MORE

SERVICE SET

Martin Hayden of the Detroit News asked about the complaint that the Joint Chiefs are being held down.

The President said that's a correct statement. The President pointed out that he and Rusk and McNamara never leave the room without agreement. The Joint Chiefs have recommended 400 military targets, of the 400 about 50 have not been authorized. Of the 50, some were restrikes, leaving a total of 30. Of the 30, many are classified by the Joint Chiefs as of small value, such as small tire factories, small POL, etc.

Erwin Canham of the Christian Science Monitor asked a two part question. The first being why the budget message expected that we'd be out of Vietnam by June 30. And the second being, what about having another halt in the bombing of North Vietnam without expecting Ho Chi Minh to answer.

The President answered the first question by saying the Budget must be drawn up 18 months before the Fiscal Year begins. At the time they didn't include any plans beyond 18 months for Vietnam such as planes and other hardware. We had to come in with a supplemental of \$10 billion dollars to make up for it. In answer to the second question -- the President said he had asked General Westmoreland that same question and General Westmoreland pointed out that we had six bombing pauses, one of which went 37 days. Westmoreland then cited the example to the President that to have a bombing pause without extracting any concessions from the North Vietnamese would be like sending Westmoreland against a boxing champion and tying Westmoreland's right hand behind him. The President reiterated that we had told Hanoi that we would stop bombing if they would just talk.

Whitney Young asked, with the increased expenditures in Vietnam, will we have to cut back on our cities program -- in other words will we have to cut back on butter in order to provide for guns.

The President said we are not cutting back on anything this year. We have a 6.8 billion dollar program for the cities before the Congress that we haven't been able to get acted upon. That represents the most innovative program for our cities of any Administration in the history of the United States. If we get this program passed it will be the first forward thrust our cities have seen. What the President is afraid of is that when we talk in terms of 70 billion and other astronomical terms that this will create fear among the electorate and no program will pass.

SERVICE SET

7
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON95
September 6, 1967

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM Larry Levinson LEL

Re: Summary of The President's Meeting with News Publishers and Columnists and the Vietnam Election Observers - September 6, 1967

Following is a summary of the questions and answers at the meeting held this afternoon in the State Dining Room:

1. Mr. Knight - of the Knight Newspaper Chain

Q: Why didn't the President propose an income tax increase earlier?

A: Conditions changed over the past six months. The drop in estimated revenues and the increase in expenditures, the restraints on participation certificates and the risk of appropriation increases for veterans and civil servants have increased the deficit to \$29 billion.

To reduce this deficit, we will borrow -- cut -- and tax. We hope to borrow 50% (\$15 billion), we will try to reduce expenditures through Congressional restraint and executive action by 25% (for \$7.5 billion) and we will hope to raise taxes to increase revenues by \$7.5 billion, thus reducing the deficit a further 25%.

2. Tom Vail, Cleveland Plain Dealer

Q: Does the President have plans to run in 1968?

A: The President has not crossed that bridge yet and when he does, he will let you know.

3. Otto Fuebringer, Time Magazine

Q: Why won't Ho Chi Minh bargain?

A: The President believes that Ho Chi Minh wants South Vietnam in his pocket. Until he is convinced that this cannot be possible and that the war he started is costing him more than he can gain, he will not come to the table.

SERVICE SET

4. Robert Spivack

Q: What is your size-up of Kosygin after your meetings with him?

A: We had a good two-day meeting. We talked about the Middle East but could come to no agreement because Kosygin insisted that the Israelis withdraw. There was a frank discussion of the ABM problem but we could not agree, even after two days, on an hour and date for a meeting on this subject although the President kept urging that this be done. Even with Vietnam, the President believes that we have done very well with the Soviets and cited such agreements as the Consular Treaty, Tabling the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, Air Travel Routes and three other agreements. Probably we have concluded more successful agreements with the Soviets over the past several years than we have with any other Nation. Kosygin discussed life on the farm and we shared some common experiences.

5. Martin Hagen, the Detroit News

Q: Are the Joint Chiefs being held down by McNamara?

A: The Commander-in-Chief, the President, must make the decisions and he receives the best advice of his military advisers and his civilian advisers - - McNamara, Rusk and Rostow. The decisions made are in line with our policies to achieve maximum deterrent with minimum risk. Here the President outlined the number of targets that the JCS had recommended and that of the 400 targets, only a small percentage have not been hit and of that percentage, the targets were of small value, not worth risking American lives (e. g., a tire plant making only 30 tires a week) and several of the others were extremely risky because they could involve hitting Soviet ships. The President recalled that destruction of naval vessels have always sparked off conflict and cited the Maine and the Lusitania.

SERVICE SET

6.

Cannon
Erwin Cannon

Christine Hecine Hecine

Q: Why did we underestimate the costs of the Vietnam war?

A: The President explained the difficulties of making long term estimates, 18 months in advance. He cited the fact that long lead time items, such as aircraft, have to be ordered two years in advance. Earlier budget estimates made certain assumptions that the war would end by June 30, 1967 but with the reservation that additional funds would be sought if this did not occur. This accounted for a \$10 billion Vietnam supplemental for fiscal 67.

Q: Why not unilaterally halt the bombing in Vietnam?

A: The President said that he asks himself this question all the time. The best answer he received was from General Westmoreland at 1 AM, after a lengthy discussion at the White House about Vietnam. General Westmoreland said that you would not go into the ring and fight Jack Dempsey with your right hand tied behind your back. The President recounted the history of the bombing pauses thus far -- six in all. Some were as a result of conversations with the Russians, others as a result of special pleas from Senators. One pause lasted for 37 days. During each pause, the enemy took the advantage and moved supplies and troops down and built up his forces. The President said to stop the bombing without the promise of productive discussions would be an act of folly for a Commander-in-Chief and would jeopardize the lives of 20,000 marines in the DMZ. The President repeated that the U.S. would stop the bombing if Ho Chi Minh would promise productive discussions.

7. Whitney Young

Q: Because of the requested tax increase, the added expenditures for Vietnam, can we continue to have both "guns and butter"?

A: We have not cut back anything on our part. There are no price controls. Budget expenditures have increased many billions over the past several years. There are \$6.8 billion in city programs now pending -- the most comprehensive package on cities ever presented to Congress

SERVICE SET

on cities by an American President. It is important to stop "barking at the moon" and talking in terms of huge \$500 - \$700 billion figures. To do this, you will have to raise taxes and when you ask people whether they are willing to pay the increased taxes -- which would have to be vastly increased -- the answer is no.

But progress, strong progress is being made. Private industry is becoming more involved. We are moving ahead with Turnkey. Several years ago, only 18% of Negro families earned over \$7,000. Today, 28% do. We are in a period of high employment and good wages. In 1963, we were spending \$4 billion for education. Today, we are spending \$12 billion. In 1963, we were spending \$4 billion for health. Today, we are spending \$12 billion and have passed 24 Health Bills, including Medicare. So, it is important to stay with a realistic program which was developed by the best urbanologists and thinkers of the country. The President asked the guests to get their city Congressmen to vote for these programs. He pointed out that Senator Dirksen had changed his mind on rent supplements and was going to work for it and that the idea was one developed by the Chamber of Commerce in 1937.

8. One of the Election Observers

Q: After having come back from Vietnam as an observer during the elections, we were well briefed by the military on bombing effectiveness. We understand its use and its limitations. What is our strategy in Vietnam?

A: The President said that there really are three courses: To get out and very few favor this. To move into enclaves but this is not realistic because every responsible military adviser reports that this would increase our casualties and not stop the fighting. The Viet Cong could simply wait outside the enclaves and launch mortar shells into them. 40 Americans were killed just the other night in such a raid on a base. A third alternative is the course we are pursuing which is to do our best through maximum

SERVICE SET

deterrence with minimum risk. At the same time, we are pursuing our pacification programs. The Vietnamese are becoming heavily involved in the democratic process, witness the national elections which they have just come through very successfully.

The President said that no man living wants to end the war as quickly as I do. The problem is to get Ho Chi Minh to come to the conference table.

The President pointed out that Asia is undergoing a transformation -- from the Philippines to the mountains of Korea, industry is expanding, hunger and poverty are being attacked. These are the highest purposes of mankind.

The President said that our job is to prevent Ho Chi Minh from thinking we are divided and do not have the will to see this through. He will come to the conference table once he knows that and understands that he cannot dominate South Vietnam.

The President said that Ellsworth Bunker, a great New England businessman, in his "second career" was always given the "impossible" assignments and always did them with excellence and devotion. Bunker represents the highest tradition of America's public service. The President then told of Secretary Rusk calling him, waking him up from a nap to tell him that Bunker had accepted the Vietnam assignment and was "as proud as an 18 year old Marine".

The President then read extracts from critics attacking George Washington, Woodrow Wilson, FDR, Truman and other American Presidents for getting involved in foreign conflicts and cited these to show that this current situation must be viewed in the context of our national history. The President predicted that future historians will look back at our efforts in Vietnam as a proud hour for America.

The luncheon meeting began around 1:00 PM. It ended at 3:25 PM.

NOTES ON THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING
WITH CHRISTOPHER H. SERPELL

September 15, 1967

Mr. Serpell recalled that his daughter attended Cathedral School with one of the President's daughters.

In answer to a question about Britain's future in the Common Market, the President said this country is for it, but he couldn't predict what would happen.

Mr. Serpell said the latest Soviet propaganda is for an East-West Conference to do away with NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The President declined to speculate on this.

Asked if Glassboro would lead to reduced tensions, the President answered in the affirmative. He said the Russians have been saying nothing can be done because of Vietnam when in fact the United States and the USSR have reached agreements on cultural exchange, civil air, counsels, and space; have deepened an NPT Agreement, and have a tentative agreement to talk on ABM and disarmament.

Asked if a Vietnam solution would be a relief to the Russians, the President said yes, the USSR helps when they can, but "I don't think they have the horsepower."

Asked to define the "real reason" for Hanoi's obstinance, the President said: "They want that country, but they aren't going to get it."

The President also discussed the effectiveness of the bombing, and in answer to a question about the possibility of a Chinese breakdown, the President said he did not expect the present turmoil in China would have much effect on ending the war.

George Christian *gxc*

— 97
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 19, 1967
5:30 p.m., Tues.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Attached are notes of the meeting
with Max Frankel of the New York
Times.

Loyd
Loyd Hackler

SERVICE SET

Meeting began: 6:00 p. m.

Meeting ended: 7:25 p. m.

97a

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT
WITH
MAX FRANKEL, OF THE NEW YORK TIMES
Friday, September 15, 1967

Max Frankel stated that he would like to get down on paper why a strong man -- a strong political figure -- like the President, is having trouble inspiring and moving people to his causes.

The President replied that first he didn't agree with the premise. The reason for the problems are threefold: The Republicans, factionalism of the Democratic Party, the war in Vietnam, plus the New York Times.

One, the Republicans are trying to capture the Presidency and will say nothing good, will use mis-truths on whatever can make the President look bad. The Republicans have an organization with planners to work on this specifically.

The President cited an instance involving discussions with the Secretary of the Treasury on the Tax Bill. Congressman Curtis said that he was going to vote against the Tax Bill because President Johnson didn't really want it. This, the President said, was a lie, that never had Congress been as thoroughly briefed about legislation as on the tax bill.

Chairman Mills was brought to the White House to meet with the President many times. All of his ideas were incorporated. The President went over the legislation with Congressman Mills and Congressman Byrnes and had a minimum of five conferences with them. Curtis said the President had no Conferences. Curtis, the President said, is running for the Senate.

Another factor, said the President, is the division of the Democratic Party and the Bobby Kennedy influence in the Party with the ADA and the liberals. "The liberals and the ADA have their mind on one subject only, Vietnam. They are not looking at any of the other problems; their mind is just on big old Vietnam," the President said. They are attached, without their knowing it, to Bobby's ambition and they want to return to this house at the earliest possible hour.

(The President told a story about working in a store for 50 cents a day when he was young, and why sales fell off because the owner had only one thing on his mind.)

Another factor, the President said, is the New York Times. It plays a leading part in prejudicing people against him. Editors won't use the words "President Johnson" in anything that is good. Bigotry, the President said, is born in some of the New York Times people. "I told Scotty Reston at a meeting two months after my election that it wouldn't be long before my geography

SERVICE SET

and parentage catches up with me in the minds of these people," the President stated.

The President said he didn't feel he was bigoted, that he found he could cooperate in certain areas even with his critics. He cited, for example, Senator Morse who is violently opposed to the President in Vietnam, but the President works with him in education, labor, and other fields.

The President said the Republicans are trying to destroy him. The President said, however, that he never hit back personally, and he feels he is running an honest Administration based on merit and judgment.

The President: Romney criticizes me for being a political animal, yet while he has severe problems at home he is out running around for political headlines, can't make up his mind, can't take a position. He rides on a sweeper with Rufus Mayfield to get his picture in the paper, but is not giving any help to get legislation through that would help the problems of the ghettos.

The President said he was willing to submit to an impartial board of three for judgment that Vietnam is the best run war, and has the best support of any Administration in history. He noted that on manpower and money to run the war, Congress was overwhelmingly in support.

He noted that other Presidents have had their problems with wars; Wilson and Lincoln had their critics. In 1912 the whole of New England tried to secede and during the Revolution only 1/3 were for, 1/3 were against, and the other 1/3 couldn't make up their minds.

The President: In all cases Presidents' problems with war in the Republic were partly due to the New York Tribune. He stated that he didn't know what major errors his Administration had made, but the New York Times sees only bad, never good.

The President discussed polls and said that there was not a major Republican whom he did not currently lead in the polls, adding they are the only ones he has to beat.

"They said that I am a bad speaker, I have no charisma, folks don't like me, I am not a good campaigner. I have never lost a campaign."

The President said that Rockefeller told him only this week that his polls were down to 24%.

Of course he is losing support, the President said, because of the war and because of economic conditions requiring tax increase and because of the riots. He said he thinks television hearings on Watts showed people that they have to have a riot to get \$50 million, and this encouraged riots this summer.

The President said that in the last ninety days he has had to make twenty decisions that would try men's souls, and looking back he wouldn't change a one.

The twenty decisions and the President's comments:

- (1) British and German troop levels. This was one which could have weakened European defenses, yet it was resolved satisfactorily, despite the calling of removal of troops by the Senate Majority leader and others.
- (2) The Mideast War. This resulted in the most difficult exchange in the history of government between two powers. The U.S. firmness, and finesse, resulted in the Russians conceding to a ceasefire before it got worse for them.
- (3) The United Nation debates on the Mideast. The Russians called the Security Council meeting, and Kosygin came to New York with everyone saying he had the votes for turning the military defeat into a diplomatic defeat. Before it ended, even the Arabs wouldn't applaud the Russians. The Latin Americans stood by the U.S., and this was the result of the time and patience with them in Punta del Este. No one even mentions that.
- (4) Draft Law passed. The two most important points of support for Vietnam manpower and money were approved by Congress.
- (5) The Kosygin Glassboro Conference. There were results in the Nonproliferation Treaty, and the President feels there will be results in others. Kosygin agreed to talk about ABM, but no date set.
- (6) The debt ceiling, defeated, was brought back and passed.
- (7) The C-130's to the Congo. The government is still standing, and two have been brought home because that was the agreement.
- (8) The Newark Riots. They came out reasonably well.
- (9) The Rail Strike. We got the bill even though it was first defeated in the House, and we got the board.

SERVICE SET

(10) Detroit Riots. The federal government got its job done; 5,000 troops were moving within minutes after Romney complied with what the best constitutional lawyers said had to be done. To this day he hasn't said he couldn't control the situation, only that there was reasonable doubt. Both National Guard generals were saying they didn't need troops. Of the 41 killed, only one was killed by the federal troops. When General Throckmorton arrived, Romney said he hadn't put half his National Guard in, because he said, he was waiting for the general. Then he went on television and said the federals delayed action, and press swallowed his line hook, line and sinker.

(11) Clifford-Taylor Mission. History will show it one of the most successful missions. The press said that Honolulu had no substance, but we pledged there that we would work toward constitutional government. We have a constitution there, a Constituent Assembly was elected (even this was derided by the press before the election, but they had to admit it was a success); and now we've elected a President that even the critics have had to admit was fair. We catch it for the civilians killed by bombing, and the press howls about this, and Salisbury of the New York Times gets world attention with stories. Yet, the Communists have killed more civilians in 30 days before the election than in all our bombing raids. They're not worried about the ones we kill; they're worried about the 750,000 people tied up by bombing and want us to stop so they can help kill more civilians.

(12) Tax measures. We have brought together the powerful and often conflicting economic forces for support. Four-fifths of businessmen and four-fifths of the economists support the measure. If it isn't passed, the country will be hurt, inflation will be hurt. And the President is going to put that blame on the Committee.

(13) Westmoreland asked for troops. He will get all the troops he asked for when we and other countries commit them. People swore and said there was something wrong about troop figures, but when Romney lied about the troops and draft, and these figures that can be shown, no one hops on him, and there hasn't been a single editorial about Romney's lies.

(14) D. C. Reorganization. The President is proud of this; it was said that it couldn't be done. Popularity was spent on it, but it was done and it was the right thing.

(15) Kiesinger visit. Kiesinger agreed to no significant troop reduction, and we had an understanding on our problems.

(16) Nonproliferation Treaty. We've been working on this 10 years. Add this to the Exchange Agreement, Civil Air Agreement Consular Agreement and the agreement to talk on ABM, and it is indication that we can get agreement with the Russians.

(17) International Monetary Agreement. The New York Times was very unfair on this; their hand was called by Douglas Dillon. (Mr. Frankel was given a copy of the Dillon letter.)

(18) Vietnam Election. Some tried to prove fraud before it was held. They were saying it was controlled, rigged, and that it wasn't fair. Even some of the observers selected said they would go just to find out what they knew, that it was rigged. No one found fraud.

(19) The India Wheat Agreement.

(20) Pledge of \$1 billion by insurance companies for urban building. The New York Times was congratulatory, but they just couldn't bring themselves to mention President Johnson in the same editorial because it was a good act; yet it was the President who pushed Secretary Weaver to get any cooperation, and brought them in.

The President said he had not lost a major battle and has lost nothing yet in Congress. He feels of the 100 bills proposed he will get 75 passed, and that he will have the best record this year of passage of legislation in history except for one other Johnson year.

Mr. Frankel asked: "Why do people dislike you?"

The President: "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and when one is oblivious to all but the thing that matters at hand and there are a good many people on that line in your way, and you don't always go around, but go through some; then some people are going to be unhappy."

"I am a dominating personality, and when I get things done I don't always please all the people."

The President said the same critics who are attacking him have attacked other Presidents. He said Fulbright attacked Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy. He added, however, that Fulbright had reported out all of his Ambassadors from his committee.

SERVICE SET

The President said foreign aid would be reduced, but he thinks that we will wind up with less percentage loss than in years past.

Mr. Frankel asked if criticism and the reports of the public's dislike bothered the President deeply.

The President: "No, no it doesn't. Let's look at the popularity record." The President said he doesn't believe that there is any man in history who has served for 37 years in every important legislative and executive office who has a record of elections comparable to his. He said this has been accomplished while people are saying that they have elected the most unpopular SOB all along.

They say that Kennedy picked Johnson for President, but they can't say Kennedy elected him when he won with more than 61 percent majority.

The President: Let's look at the horse's track record. I came to Washington in 1931, was elected little Speaker by the House clerks. I went back to Texas to run the NYA and was named the best NYA Administrator. In 1937 I was elected to Congress by twice as many votes as my nearest opponent. In 1946 I was elected for the Senate, running against a Governor who controlled all the party machinery. I have never had any trouble in re-election. In the Senate I was elected Whip, then was elected Majority Leader with only two years seniority. Then I whipped the Governor of the State, Allen Shivers, in a convention fight for party control and went to the Convention leading the delegation."

The President said he felt he had made some contribution as Vice President on the ticket with President Kennedy.

The President said Bobby Kennedy had people hired in New Hampshire in 1964 to try to force him to put Bobby on as Vice President. At Atlantic City they had the movie and Jackie was there, and were geared for emotion for the same purpose.

The President said while he had received 61% of the popular vote, that as President he had got some rough bills through and spent his popularity doing it.

The President said the only significant piece of legislation in real trouble is the Tax Bill. Failure to pass this would hurt the country, and cause inflation; but he still thinks he will get 75 or 100 bills passed.

The President said newspapermen are the only group in the country who operate without license. He said reporters can show complete irresponsibility and lie and mis-state facts and have no one to be answerable to.

The President said the same groups continue to call him "that lying SOB." These are the preachers, liberals and professors who are the first to cry discrimination if anybody says anything about them.

The President told Mr. Frankel he would hold an interview on-the-record with the New York Times magazine as did Mrs. Johnson.

Max Frankel: "I have heard it said that the President's communication problem was partly due to the President's reluctance to agonize in public. Does the President consider this a fair evaluation."

The President: "Not at all." The President said he consulted with more people on more problems than any other President in the past. Within the last week the President met with leaders of the Chamber of Commerce, Junior Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, Labor groups, businessmen, Veterans organizations, mayors organizations, and Governors, and took every question every one of them wanted to ask. He said he doesn't do this before cameras because he doesn't think the people would be as frank. He said he had every Democratic Congressman and every new Republican Congressman, all Majority and Minority Chairmen at the White House and gave every one of them the chance to ask their President any question they had the guts to ask.

The President said he did not think the press reported him fairly, but that Lincoln and Kennedy both were getting worse stories before they were killed than he has ever gotten.

"Remember, people booed Ted Williams, too," the President said.

The President cited Merriman Smith's comments on TV when Smith said that reporters and Presidents are like the pitchers and the batters in a ballgame.

The President said he was not unhappy and was not bitter, and he said that he was not attacking anyone personally. However, he did say that he might pin on the Republicans the fact that they were with the gun lobby.

Mr. Frankel: What do these problems do to you as 1968 approaches. Do you think you can talk to people again?"

SERVICE SET

The President: "I sure as hell can if I decide to run for office, I will win and be right here." The President reminded Max that no Democratic President ever had the press on his side. He said that all he would ask of the press was that they "give me my runs, hits and errors, fairly reported. I don't like them saying I knocked the ball over the fence, but they don't like the way I stand at the plate."

Mr. Frankel: "Why is there so much hate talk about the President?"

The President: "I think it is because of Texas, because of the label of professional politician, and a good deal my own impatience."

The President said he is willing to stand judgment of the people if they have the information.

END

72
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 21, 1967
9:50 a.m.

MR. PRESIDENT

I thought you might like notes of
your meeting last night with the
Australian group. Thank you for
inviting me in.

CM
Charles Maguire

SERVICE SET

NOTES OF PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH AUSTRALIAN
BROADCAST GROUP

President's Office, 6:30-8:30 p.m., September 20, 1967

(Partial notes taken from time of late arrival at President's meeting with T. S. Duckmanton, General Manager, Australian Broadcasting Corporation and his colleagues, Mr. Peter Barnett and Mr. Charles Buttrose. Also attending were Messrs. McPherson, Califano, Christian, Goldstein, Rostow, Sanders, Cater, Duggan, Johnson, Maguire.)

President: How widespread is Australian opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam -- "About one-third?"

Mr. Duckmanton: "Closer to one-fifth of the population."

President: "How much of the agitation here gets back to Australia?"

Mr. Duckmanton: "Quite a bit." It's "all out of proportion" to the American domestic scene, but that is "inevitable and hard to avoid."

President: "What would the Australian opposition do if they were me ... if I gave them carte blanche?"

Mr. Duckmanton: Take our Labor Party as an example. They have changed their stand as of 12 months ago, when "they were 100% for withdrawal." They now feel this is unrealistic. The U.S. can't withdraw, but they should still do more to achieve peace. The Labor Party ratified this stand just six weeks ago at their Conference -- admitting also that it was wrong to withdraw Australian troops from Vietnam.

Laborites and many other Australians do feel the U.S. should stop bombing -- "in spite of what you and your advisers have been saying." They think a bombing pause "would be meaningful."

President: Read from a letter declaring U.S. willingness to halt bombing at first sign of Hanoi willingness to reciprocate. "Don't you think that puts it as simply as you can?"

Determined to be an
administrative mailing
By DCH On 11-10-81

SERVICE SET

"Hanoi will not even agree to sit down and talk...if people want to talk about bombings, they should know that the North Vietnamese bombed and killed more civilians in the last four weeks, up to the elections, than all we killed in 2 1/2 years...and they're North Vietnamese figures, not ours."

There are good reasons why we can't stop bombing now, as much as we want to.

"We can't stop unless we really want to be murdered... We want to provide a maximum deterrent at a minimum cost... They keep putting the bridges back and the POL stations back... 400 sorties keep 7000 of them busy... If we stop the sorties we release those 7000 VC... and what do I say to our boys then? There's 60,000 to 70,000 of them in the DMZ and they can engulf us."

Remember three things when you ask us to stop bombing:

- "We're willing if they want to talk."
- "But even if we're willing we're taking the risk of releasing 60-70,000 of them right across the street from us... and if they throw pressure at us we'll have to resume."
- "I can't understand anyone who wants a Commander-in-Chief to let 20,000 men be wiped out..."

Mr. Duckmanton: Agreed. "It's hard and I am fascinated by the way The VC are able to push their arguments..."

President: "I don't know why the critics don't shudder when the VC throw bombs at my Pleiku headquarters."

Nine Familiar Peace Theories

The President recalled the most common suggestions for achieving peace, and the answers to each:

1. The "Negotiate Now" Theory

"I am ready this second. I have always been ready. But they won't talk, they won't sit down -- and I can't negotiate with myself."

2. The Enclave Theory

"We've a good example of that right now in the DMZ. We're hunkered up there right now, sitting it out like a jackass in a hailstorm and taking a beating." The Gavin theory just isn't working in practice. "We needed the B-52's just yesterday" to help relieve the pressure on us in the DMZ.

3. The Surrender Theory

"You can make a case for it but" -- turning to Mr. Duckmanton -- "I think your blood pressure would go up if we swallowed our pride and pulled out... Thailand, Laos, and other Asian nations would feel the squeeze... It would be an open invitation to China and I think they would pick it up a hell of a lot quicker than the Soviets did in Eastern Europe."

4. The "Reject Military Advice" Theory

"We're careful about that." McNamara is very cautious. "We'd hit Haiphong tomorrow and wipe it out if the Soviets and others would oblige us by pulling out their ships... but they don't and we won't."

5. The "Negotiate with NLF" Theory (recalled by McPherson)

"I have asked them, we've invited them... Thieu has asked them, but you can't rope them -- we just don't have that many cowboys out there."

6. The "Go to Geneva" Theory (recalled by Goldstein)

The theory holds that the President should make a dramatic personal appearance at the truce table. "I've said that I'll go anywhere any time and Thieu has said it... we'll go along with the Vietnamese and they'll sit down with the NLF."

7. The United Nations Theory (recalled by Maguire)

"Yes, we hear that one, but they don't belong to the UN and U Thant says we can't do it... and the Russians have problems with that one and they'd have big problems because of the Chinese."

8. The "All for Nothing" Theory (recalled by McPherson)

It is said that U. S. overtures to the NLF promise them little or nothing. NLF regard our proposals as forcing them to yield all advantages and gains. They want harder assurances in advance.

The President disputes these assumptions: "They are not taking any bigger chance than we are."

9. The "You Don't Really Mean It" Theory (recalled by Mr. Duckmanton)

Critics such as Harry Ashmore dispute the genuineness of U. S. peace proposals. The President explained the Ashmore incident, stressing the sincerity of that U. S. peace proposal and others preceding and following.

President (to Mr. Duckmanton): Do they make these arguments in your country?"

Mr. Duckmanton: Yes. Australians are particularly receptive to suggestions for a bombing pause and recourse to U. N.

President: "Would they stop bombing if Westmoreland put Australians on the line in the DMZ?"

(BREAK)

The President left to meet with Secretary Fowler and Dr. Watanbe, President of the Asian Development Bank. He invited the group to remain and continue their discussion until he returned.

Mr. Duckmanton: It is hard for television broadcasters to tell the Australian people about the real struggle going on in Vietnam... the economic progress and successes... the true American purpose and achievements. A "spectacular" like a mortar attack or the bombing of the Chinese Nationalist Embassy in Saigon always dominate the news. To the reader and viewer, these "spectaculars" are a sign of V. C. strength "despite U. S. explanations" of V. C. defeats, growing weaknesses and denials of stalemate.

SERVICE SET

Mr. Rostow: Described record and pattern of V. C. battlefield and terrorist initiatives. "We have them plotted back to 1961... 1962 was a bad year for the V. C."

(Mr. Rostow drew a simple sketch for Mr. Duckmanton, showing the declining curve of V. C. initiatives.) "Their curve went to a peak in 1966, now there is sliding back even on the battalion levels... They are down-slope now... relying, as they told the Polish mission recently, on our incapacity to sustain DMZ casualties" and scattered incidents or the feel of stalemate.

Hanoi's leaders are elderly men. They are living on their French Indo-Chinese memories. "They're hanging on." They lost their winning strategy between the 1964 build up and now -- "now they are just hoping we cave in."

Hanoi is suffering a growing manpower shortage. That is one reason why they have switched to terrorist tactics and new reliance on mortar strategy -- "to spare men."

Mr. Duckmanton: "Of course, this is our first television war." It is difficult to control news content, impossible and undesirable to censor it. Last night, he heard a television commentator make a "hard-hitting comment" on U. S. conduct of the war. The commentator described a Marine landing with tanks, describing tank support as wasteful in terms of V. C. destroyed and destructive in tearing up the rice paddies.

Mr. Rostow: "The population thing is really fascinating... It isn't all pacification... The U. S. construction effort has created employment and a city boom... it's really a developing nation over there, a rare thing in Asia... and it's spilling over into the countryside."

The President rejoined the meeting at this point. He described how the real story of the U. S. reconstruction and pacification effort shows up in his mail from the battlefield -- in stories of Marines rebuilding schools and the fighting man's compassionate concern for the Vietnamese.

"But the television doesn't want that story. I can prove that Ho is a son-of-a-bitch if you let me put it on the screen -- but they want me to be the son-of-a-bitch."

Press coverage of Vietnam is a reflection of broader and deeper public attitudes, a refusal by many Americans "to see the enemy as the enemy."

The President analyzed this public mood as being rooted in "a maternalistic attitude toward the enemy unlike anything we have had in other wars." You can blame it on liberal (permissiveness). But the best way to turn a peacenik into a realist is to tell him the truth about the chances of his wife being ravaged by V.C. if she were over there.

NBC and the New York Times "are committed to an editorial policy of making us surrender." To correspondents like Wilson Hall and Dean Bralis there is no such thing as a good American record -- "they just leave out the U.S. figures and give statistics showing American losses and V.C. successes."

Mr. McPherson: Sympathy for Ho may be an echo from the past. Ho has a certain charisma remaining from his fight against French colonialism. Americans and other democratic peoples are anti-colonial, siding with small nations and national leaders, hostile to Big Powers on principle.

The President agreed with Mr. McPherson's basic thought, but recalled the pro-Castro reports by Herbert Matthews of the New York Times in the first stages of the Cuban revolution.

Mr. Cater: Inquired if the President had seen the Eric Hoffer - Eric Sevareid television interview last night.

President: "No, but I want to see Hoffer." (The President had been detained with President Saragat, "an able man.")

Mr. Duckmanton: "Who do you think has the power in Hanoi? Does Ho really have it?"

President: Yes. Ho has the power, though he may be sharing some of it with younger men. But he retains authority and command.

The President asked Mr. Rostow to look into "all the PL 480's." Mr. Rostow said he was working on it.

The President asked Mr. Duckmanton where the Australians planned to provide the new R&R facilities for Vietnam troops. Mr. Duckmanton cited Brisbane and Melbourne for an anticipated 4000 fighting men.

SERVICE SET

The President asked Mr. Duckmanton's advice on "how to keep the press happy." Mr. Duckmanton deferred to the President's greater expertise. He described current Australian press treatment of Prime Minister Holt as "rougher than usual." Vietnam is only a partial explanation. The Australian press is "testing Holt because he has had 12 months since his last election and it's a good time to test his mettle." Holt also has a tough Senate election coming up. Proportional representation means that even a 5-7% swing will make it difficult to get a majority. "It is a big test for Holt."

Holt is much better on TV now than before, though still a little nervous.

President: "But he is not like that in person." Mr. Duckmanton agreed, while citing a recent 40-minute TV interview where Holt kept shuffling his feet, giving a nervous impression to viewers.

President: "What do the Australians think would happen if we pulled out of Vietnam?"

Mr. Duckmanton: That Red China would dominate the region. Many, but not all, believe in the domino theory -- that other small Asian nations would fall.

Mr. Duckmanton: Suggested a further theory for President's listing of most common peace suggestions:

The "Limited U.S. Presence" Theory

Part of Australian opinion holds that the Vietnam conflict "is really a National Liberation action... a political crisis that the Vietnamese should be allowed to settle for themselves." These Australians ask if "the U.S. could not exercise its good influence in Asia without a ground commitment?...If you could keep mobile with your bases and avoid a ground presence or confrontation?"

President: "We tried that...we tried hard and long from 1963 to 1964 and half of 1965...That is 19 months but it didn't stop North Vietnam. We still have our bases, but there is no stopping...They just don't understand that language."

President: "Do the Australians know that if we pull out and failed in Vietnam it would affect more than Vietnam?"

Mr. Duckmanton: "Yes, they do."

President: Do they believe that it would encourage the growth of domestic Communist influence in Australia?

Mr. Duckmanton: Not really. They are more concerned with the outside threat of Red China.

President: Do you think the Indonesians could go it alone if we came home? Could they stand up without us?

(To Walt Rostow) "What do you think would happen if we pulled out of Vietnam?"

Mr. Rostow: The U.S. would suffer an immediate and profound political crisis -- "the worst of this century." We would be divided by a bitter and prolonged debate, which the forces of "a powerful isolationism" would win.

President: "They would say our character had worn out?"

Mr. Rostow: Yes. And while we were divided and preoccupied by debate, the USSR and China would seize dangerous initiatives. NATO "could never hold up."

President: "What about out there?"

Mr. Rostow: Leadership in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand "would cave in." They would be compelled to "make deals with China." Concessions would be made "as a matter of political agreement," because no one nation or leader would have the power to withstand Chinese pressure. All deals would be made on Chinese terms. The whole area would "go under to Chinese influence."

There is some possibility that the Indian subcontinent might hold firm. It is more certain that the Japanese would refuse "to kow-tow to Peking." Instead, Japan would go nuclear. The USSR and China would react in turn, "making for an extremely dangerous situation in the Far East."

Looking ahead, the world could return to a cycle of Big Power struggles. A weakened and divided America would be powerless to modify or check the cycle. At worst, America could recover from an isolationist spasm only to be pulled back into wider and more grievous international conflicts, possibly a larger war.

SERVICE SET

President: "In five years could they take Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand, the Philipines and Malaysia?"

Mr. Rostow: "There's no doubt of it. There's no power to stop them. The countries would go down by political agreement."

President: "The Soviets could not provide countervailing power.... Great Britain couldn't do it. And I guess Holyoke is not up to it."
(Laughter)

Mr. Rostow: "That's the way the Asians look at the problem. They fear this today."

President: (to Mr. Goldstein on subject of European repercussions)
"Why shouldn't we come home?"

Mr. Goldstein: First, a Vietnam pull-out "would make DeGaulle look like the biggest hero in Europe." Secondly, it would invalidate "The U.S. word throughout Europe." NATO would go,....the Germans would demand nuclear power....that would bring the Soviets in.... Western Europe would tighten up, "tensions would mount and conflicts erupt,

President: "I don't want to be misunderstood, so I'll measure my words. I think we may have made two mistakes in Vietnam...."

First, our posture at home and abroad may have been too moderate, too balanced, not strong or assertive enough from the first. It is possible that we may have moved into Vietnam too slowly -- that we have been too restrained in our bombing policy -- too gradual across the board. In retrospect, we may have been too cautious for too long.

Second, we may have helped to create mistrust or misinterpretation of our peace proposals. If the sincerity of our overtures are questioned, it could be that we have crawled too often.

History will record the lengthy and imaginative list of U.S. peace initiatives. It will record how they met nothing but arrogant rebukes by Hanoi, a pattern epitomized by Ho's letter.

Tommy Thompson, one of our wisest and most experienced diplomats, labored through all of January to bring Hanoi to the conference table. When he could not deliver, we decided to shoot the works -- to have the President himself write Ho -- because we couldn't be at peace with ourselves unless we tried it.

We may have misled Hanoi by such willingness. We may mislead them still by the soft, sob-sister, maternal image we project.

Eisenhower may be right. If gradualism does not pay off early, then the enemy must be regarded as the enemy and fought with all resources, with no sanctuary or quarter given.

Mr. Duckmanton: Thanked the President for his time and thoughts. "I am not giving you any Australian line and I am not at all gloomy ... I do not believe there is any softness in the Australian resolve to see this thing through."

President: "I don't want you to mistake my feelings either...I don't intend to retreat an inch...I'll advance...and I'll stick with our gradualist policy too... We won't step it up but we will never stand down."



- Notes by Charles Maguire

SERVICE SET

NOTES ON MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT WITH JOSEPH
KRAFT -- SEPTEMBER 27, 1967

The President asked Kraft if he had a good trip, and the reply was "not bad, interesting." The President asked him to give his impressions.

Kraft said he was in Vietnam three weeks and the Middle East 10 days. He praised the American leadership in Vietnam, saying it was heartening to have men like Bunker, Abrams and the pacification team. He described them as the best people we have ever had there. He said the situation along the DMZ is "very, very rough, like World War I." He described the mortar bombardments of Danang, saying it is obvious the Viet Cong are getting help from the civilians in the Danang area. He said he thought military operations overall were going about as well as expected, but very slow.

Kraft said it would be useful to make a serious effort to negotiate, to suspend the bombing. He said he realized this was a tough thing to do, and that it grieved him to hear people in this country talk like it's an easy decision.

He said if the bombing is stopped, some arrangement must be found to protect our people. He thinks there is a possibility on negotiation.

The President replied that Hanoi has consistently said they would not negotiate. He said the best professionals in the business say there is no interest in negotiations at this time.

Kraft asked if it wouldn't be possible to stop the bombing for two weeks, say we are ready to negotiate and wait for a response. The President said he had tried this, and it hadn't worked. Kraft asked why it is necessary for the Marines to be belly to belly with the North Vietnamese on the DMZ. The President said it was always possible to pull back, but you faced the risk of pulling back until you're in the water. He said Westmoreland feels the North Vietnamese losses are all out of proportion to their gain; our losses are relatively small. He showed Kraft a UPI story in which Westmoreland said the heaviest concentration of bombardment in history of warfare was being applied to the North Vietnamese army in the DMZ.

More

SERVICE SET

Joseph Kraft -(Con't)

On the subject of Congress, the President said two factions in Congress are working at cross purposes. He said the conservatives are frightened by the liberal demands for much higher domestic spending. "They get apoplexy when they hear about \$700 billion programs." The President said the liberals are talking about adding \$300 billion to a \$200 billion poverty bill when we only have 250 votes for the two billion.

He said his position is to tell Congress not to ask him to cut poverty, health, education and other important programs when Congress won't cut. He said he had about \$10 billion in the budget for States including \$6.7 billion for new programs.

The President said it is his general philosophy that you accomplish things by a process of evolution, that you can do it "if you don't try to do everything by daylight." He said it is unreasonable to think he can accomplish more in an hour than was accomplished from Lincoln through Kennedy.

On the Poverty program, the President said he had asked Walter Heller and Kermit Gordon three years ago to develop a program that would help every child get all the education he could take, help train the drop-outs, keep people on the farm, and get at other problems of poverty. He started with \$800 million and increased the next year to \$1.6 billion. When the extreme liberals tried to go over his recommendation of \$1.75 billion, the House cut it back to \$1.6 billion.

He said the problem now is to get \$1.6 billion to stand up in the face of increased opposition. He said he is 40 or 50 votes short.

Kraft asked if the same situation exists on the tax bill. The President said he had carefully briefed the Congress on the fiscal problem, and now an effort is being made to blackmail him to make cuts Congress does not want to cut. He described Mills as the "chief Blackmailer," but made this statement in a light vein.

The President said this Congress will be the best in history with the exception of last year and the year before. He said we have passed 55 of our 100 bills, including difficult measures like draft and consular treaty.

Joseph Kraft (Con't)

The President said his best guess would be that Congress would cut the \$140 million budget by 2 1/2 percent and that we would wind up with \$135 million. He said we have to try to get as much of the budget as we can and have to stay with the executive recommendation. The President said the administration plans for the cities is imaginative, and described the history of the model cities program. He pointed out that he had recommended \$2.3 billion last time but had to take a cut to \$900 million in order to get Senator Muskie's support and get the bill passed. He said Muskie made a fine speech for the bill; in fact, Bobby Kennedy told him it was the best he had heard on cities.

The President said he didn't think many people realized he has recommended \$10 billion for the cities in this year's budget. While Senator Case says food stamps shouldn't be included in cities legislation, the President said he didn't know why.

On Vietnam, the President said this remains the big problem, but pointed out that we haven't lost any countries to Communism for four years, "and in due time we will have an independent state in South Vietnam." He said he thinks the American people should "understand that we are there not because we like Ky, but because we have an interest in Southeast Asia." He said nearly everyone from that area says they would be in danger if we pulled out.

The President also discussed the figures on wounded in Vietnam, pointing out that nearly half of the wounded didn't require hospitalization and 80 - 90 percent of the total wounded returned to duty. He also discussed the New York poll with Kraft, but declined to compare Republican candidates. He did say he did not believe there would be a Rockefeller-Reagan ticket.

###

George Christian

October 6, 1967

MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT WITH DOUG CORNELL
AND MERRIMAN SMITH, SEPTEMBER 27, 1967

The President spoke briefly to Smith and Cornell about a Washington Star story that he had entertained a group of Senators, some of whom opposed him on Vietnam.

The President told them off-the-record that he averaged one or two meetings a week with Senators, House members, farmers, businessmen and others. He said he could not publicize these because of all the problems involved.

He said he had invited all the Senators to the White House during the last few weeks, sees the Leadership frequently, and said the newspaper story by Mary McGrory was reasonably accurate. He said he guessed that Senator Church told her about it.

The President emphasized that he tries to consult with as many people as possible on various policies, pointing out that during the past 12 months he had seen some 75 heads of states. As an example of consultation, he noted that he had leaned over backwards to consult the Congress on the Tonkin Gulf resolution. In fact, he said "Mansfield told me I was consulting too much." On Tonkin Gulf, the President said he was sure everyone knew the meaning of the resolution, despite what they might say now. He said there were joint hearings, that Dirksen and Fulbright were for it, that Senator Aiken had said that everybody would be for the resolution by the time the message went up.

####

George Christian