

THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
DAILY DIARY

Date November 9, 1965

The President began his day at (Place)

White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

Day TUESDAY

Entry No.	Time		Telephone f or t		Activity (include visited by)	Expense Code
	In	Out	Lo	LD		
	3:15			t	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C.	
✓	3:36			f	Secy. McNamara - Washington, D. C.	
	3:45				The President, w/ Judge Connally and Bill Moyers and Col. Cross went to the s. end of the runway - to take BM to the helicopter that he boarded to go to Austin.	
	4:07				The President returned to the house w/ Judge Connally	
✓	4:11		t		Dale Meeks - in his trailer	
✓	4:15			t	J. C. Kellam - Austin, Texas	
✓	4:17			t	Governor John Connally - Austin, Texas (the President talked on MW's call w/ the Gov.)	
approx.	4:30			t	Bob Bower - Houston, Texas -- (talked on Judge Connally's call w/ him)	
	4:35				The President and Judge Connally departed by helicopter enroute to the Moursund Ranch arriving at 4:43 pm.	
					Upon arrival there, he was joined by Judge Moursund and Mrs. Johnson	
	5:08			t	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C. -- over the car radio -- re the news at 5:00 that the President heard -- saying that the lights and electricity had gone out in NYC -- and asked him to check w/ McNamara, etc. and find out what caused it -- whether it was sabotage or what.	
	5:17			f	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C. -- over the car radio -- w/ a report that the lights had also gone out in Boston and Canada and that the land-line to Moscow was not functioning -- and then suggested that the President go to a regular phone	
approx.					In between the President's talks w/ Joe Califano, the President called Col. Cross over the radio phone -- telling him to prepare the planes for an emergency. Col. Cross replied that the planes were standing by and ready to go.	

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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
DAILY DIARY

Date ⁹ November 1, 1965

The President began his day at (Place)

White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

Day TUESDAY

Entry No.	Time		Telephone f or t		Activity (include visited by)	Expenditure Code
	In	Out	Lo	LD		
C	5:23			f	Secy. McNamara - over the radio phone -- the President had not a chance to get back to the Moursund Ranch house as of yet -- they were driving in the ranch area. --	
	5:25			t	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C. -- from the Moursund Ranch house	
	5:27			t	Bill Moyers -- Austin, Texas -- from the Moursund House	
	5:31			t	MF - at the LBJ Ranch	
C	5:33			t	Governor Buford Ellington - Director, OEP - Washington, D. C. -- at his residence from the Moursund Ranch house	
	5:40			t	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C. - (still at the Moursund Ranch)	
	6:06			f	Bill Moyers - Austin, Texas (at the Moursund house)	
	6:22			f	Marvin Watson - LBJ Ranch -- w/ a report on the lights-out in NYC and other areas	
	6:35			f	Marvin Watson - LBJ Ranch --	
	6:38			f	Bill Moyers - Austin, Texas	
	6:47				The President w/ Mrs. Johnson, Judge Merrill Connally, and Judge and Mrs. A. W. Moursund departed the Moursund Ranch in helicopter via the LBJ Ranch	
	6:55				Arrived at the LBJ Ranch and went to the office.	
C	7:05			t	Dr. Donald Hornig - Washington, D. C. -- returning his call fr. the afternoon - on the NYC lights out problem -- and then transferred him to BM in ^(B.3)	

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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
DAILY DIARY

Date ⁹ November 4, 1965

The President began his day at (Place)

White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

Day **TUESDAY**

Entry No.	Time		Telephone f or t		Activity (include visited by)	Expenditure Code
	In	Out	Lo	LD		
	7:15			f	Bill Moyers - Austin, Texas	
	7:27			f	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C. (B. 4)	
	7:43			t	Bill Moyers - in the Press Room - Austin, Texas	
	7:45				DINNER w/ Mrs. Johnson, Judge and Mrs. A. W. Moursund, Judge Merrill Connally, Marvin Watson, Ashton Conella (who just arrived this afternoon), Marie Fehmer, Ginny Thrift, Vicky McCammon --	
					Dinner consisted of green peppers - stuffed, cabbage, string beans, cornbread, The President had vegetable soup and tapioca for dessert. Others had ice cream and cookies for dessert.	
✓	7:58 8:35	8:40		t	Dale Malachuk - Fredericksburg, Texas To the Living Room --	
	8:17			f	Bill Moyers - Austin, Texas	
	8:40	9:00			In the office	
✓	9:00				Returned to the Living Room and watched 2 movies -- "At Home w/ Mrs. Johnson" an interview w/ Mrs. Johnson at the ranch house w/ Walter Kronkite and "Conventions, 1964" -- the Republican and Democratic Conventions. -- U. S. I. S. w/ dinner guests and Wm. Sparks and Bob Hardesty joining	
	9:10			f	Bill Moyers - Austin, Texas (B. 5)	
✓	9:15			t	Governor Nelson Rockefeller - NYC - at his office -- (B. 5)	
	9:20			f	Bill Moyers - Austin, Texas	
✓	9:29			f	Dr. Hornig - Washington, D. C. (his residence) (B. 6)	
✓	9:33			t	Mayor Robert Wagner - NYC -- at his residence (B. 6)	

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Day TUESDAY

White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
DAILY DIARY

Date November 10, 1965

The President began his day at (Place) White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

Day WEDNESDAY

Entry No.	Time		Telephone f or t		Activity (include visited by)	Expenditure Code
	In	Out	Lo	LD		
	8:39 am			f	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C.	
	8:49			f	Secy. Fowler - Washington, D. C.	
	9:22 am				The President -- w/ Governor John Connally and Judge Merrill Connally departed the ranch house and went driving on the ranch area	
					They stopped by the Malachuk house and picked up Dale Malachuk	
	9:56	10:00			At the Martin ranch house	
	10:04	10:20			Riding on the Hightower ranch	
	10:40	10:49			At the birthplace house	
	10:50			t	J. C. Kellam - Austin, Texas	
	11:03				The President and the Governor and Judge Connally returned to the LBJ Ranch house and the President and group went to the office.	
	11:07			t	Joe Latin - Austin, Texas	
	11:19				The President -- w/ Governor Connally and Judge Connally, Col. Cross -- Dr. Burkley, Lem Johns, Clint Hill (SS), and Dale Meeks -- departed the LBJ Ranch in the Queen Aire -- enroute to the Jack Bowman Ranch arriving at 12:17 pm.	
	12:17				The President w/ the Governor and Judge went into the Bowman House for lunch	
	1:40			t	Secy. Robert McNamara - Washington, D. C.	
	1:45				The President w/ Jack Bowman, Governor Connally drove in the immediate ranch area... and looked at cattle	

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Date November 10, 1965

The President began his day at (Place) White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

Day WEDNESDAY

Entry No.	Time		Telephone f or t		Activity (include visited by)	Expenditure Code
	In	Out	Lo	LD		
	2:21				The President, Jack Bowman and Governor Connally arrived at the Governor's ranch (Judge Connally had driven his car from there to the Governor's house) Tortuga Ranch (??)	
	2:21	3:15			In the Connally Ranch House	
	3:15				Drove on the Governor's ranch -- and then to the Carter Ranch (owned by Bowman w/ Jack Bowman, Governor John Connally, Judge Merrill Connally)	
	3:41				Arrived at the Carter Ranch and went to the house there (owned by Bowman)	
	4:12				Left the Ranch house -- and drove on the area	
	5:22				At the Bowman Ranch House again	
	6:06				The President -- w/ Governor John Connally and Judge Merrill Connally departed the [redacted] Bowman Ranch (Carter ranch) -- in the Governors' plane (The queen aire had gone back to take Judge Moursund and Mr. Kellam to Little Rock, Ark.)	
	6:50				Arrived at the LBJ Ranch house and went to the office.	
C/	7:10			f	Secy. Robert McNamara - Washington, D. C. (B.1) RE: the aluminum companies have agreed to roll back their price increase	
	7:13			t	Joe Laitin - Austin, Texas (re [redacted] morning press briefing)	
	7:25			f	Joe Califano - Washington, D. C. - re -- same as McNamara's call	
C/	7:44			t	Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower - -- Mrs. Johnson also talked on the call... (B.1) - in Ft. Gordon, Ga.	
	7:50			t	Joe Laitin - Austin, Texas - re his call to Mrs. Eisenhower	

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DAILY DIARY

Date November 10, 1965

The President began his day at (Place).

White House - LBJ Ranch, Texas

Day WEDNESDAY

Entry No.	Time		Telephone f or t		Activity (include visited by)	Expense Code
	In	Out	Lo	LD		
✓	7:53		t	x	Dale Malachuk - at his house	
✓	7:54			f	Secy. McNamara (B:3) - Washington, D. C.	
	8:00				To his room to dress for dinner	
	8:15				DINNER w/ Mrs. Johnson, Ashton Gonella, Marvin Watson, Ginny Thrift, VM bar-b-q, beans, slaw, and tapioca for dessert. (The President had a bowl of chili, a spare rib, cole slaw and had tapioca for dessert.)	
✓	8:34			t	Cecil Presnell - Round Mtn., Texas - Mrs. Johnson also talked on the call (he owns a bar-b-q stand and does painting, etc. on the side.)	
✓	8:41			t	AG Katzenbach - at the City Tavern on M Street, Washington, D. C.	
	8:47				To the office -- read the afternoon briefing, etc.	
	8:47			t	Bill Moyers - at his residence - Washington, D. C.	
	8:57			t	Bill Moyers - Washington, D. C.	
	9:15				The President retired for the evening	
✓	9:30		t		Dale Malachuk	

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Day _____

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Daily Diary November 1965	Log sheet		November 9. Daily Diary	11/9/65	4
"	"		November 10 " "	11/10/65	4

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Fee 120

transmission lines, defective generators or faulty circuit-breakers."

In New York, a Consolidated Edison spokesman compared the power cutoff with a giant water-main break. "The interconnected power networks lost vast amounts of electricity, like a huge short circuit into the ground. We are at a complete loss to explain it."

The chairman of the Federal Power Commission, Joseph C. Swidler, was equally baffled. Heading the investigation, he began a check of the evidence, aided by top power experts. After two days, he made this somber statement: "The Northeast blackout may never be fully explained, and there is no guarantee it will not happen again."

By this time, company heads knew they were in trouble. When the power grid was first proposed it was explained as beneficial to the consumers as well as the utilities. With the power plants hooked together electricity would feed back and forth, flowing to where it was needed to maintain the proper voltage. The Federal Power Commission and a congressional committee had been assured that the hundreds of automatic safety devices would prevent any cascading chain reaction effect or a transmission line failure. Now the grid had failed almost completely, leaving their promises open to doubt, even outright attack.

The FPC also was in trouble. After checking all the grid plans and equipment it had told the White House and Congress that the system was fully protected from any serious breakdown. Now they might be accused of incompetence or careless supervision.

Adding to the FPC problems, some editors and newscasters were still suggesting that EM interference by UFOs had caused the big blackout. One commentator linked this with a statement by a Canadian power expert. Some unknown cause, the engineer said, apparently had created a strange reaction in the grid control circuits. It was, he said,

"like a nervous breakdown in the electronic brain controlling the widespread grid system."

On November 14, the Premier of Canada warned the FPC that he might pull out of CANUSE (the Canadian-United States Eastern interconnection), to protect the country against any further U.S. power failures.

That same day, NBC commentator Frank McGee broadcast a new UFO report. Just before the blackout began, he said, a pilot had sighted a round, glowing object near the Niagara Falls power plant. The story was picked up by the Associated Press and carried in numerous papers.

Next morning, the *New York Journal American* ran a feature article on the Syracuse report, with UFOs blamed for the grid disaster. It was also quoted on the air, building up the suggestion of a deliberate act by beings from a more advanced world.

Suddenly the UFO discussions ended—eclipsed by a news flash from Washington.

The great blackout, stated the FPC, was now explained. The mystery which had baffled all the top power experts had a simple explanation: a broken relay, a circuit breaker, in a Canadian power plant.

The billion-dollar grid system had been knocked out in spite of the hundreds of safety devices—according to the FPC. The supposedly broken relay was located at the Adam Beck No. 2 Plant in Ontario. Somehow, during the five-day search for the answer, it had been overlooked.

After all the grid experts' statements this was an incredible explanation.

It also was false.

The Adam Beck Plant relay was *not* broken. It was tripped by some unexplained surge of electricity.

Proof that the relay never broke was later revealed in a special report by the industry publication *Power*, which had close ties with the utilities. The report was written by the

executive editor, J. J. O'Connor, after a thorough investigation by Power.¹

The following details from the Power report give a startling picture of the catastrophe which struck the grid system.

On the late afternoon of November 9, Adam Beck Plant 2 was in normal operation. Through five transmission lines its generators were providing current to the city of Toronto. The power loads were well within safe limits. But suddenly a relay tripped, as though from an unexpected overload. By tripping, the relay disconnected one of the five Toronto lines.

Ordinarily, this would have been a routine operation. The actual reaction, described in the Power report, sounds like a fantastic nightmare.

In just four seconds, the Canadian-U.S. grid disintegrated.

The other Toronto lines instantly tripped off. As though there had been no safety controls a tremendous surge of electricity flashed through the lines to the south. In a violent chain reaction, the Clay substation and a St. Lawrence River plant were knocked out. Then the entire CANUSE network split into four parts.

Until the disaster struck, twenty-nine utility plants were connected with the grid system. In a few cases, automatic devices separated plants from the network or engineers hastily cut them loose. But at most generating plants the enormous surge of power came too swiftly.

Never before had the operators known such chaos. At some points, the cascading current reversed, dangerously increasing the pressure on the grid. More of the steam-driven generators were forced to cut out, and skyrocketing steam pressure blew open boiler safety valves. With the current off, pumps, air compressors and other auxiliaries failed. Plants without standby emergency equipment were unable to restart for hours. Meantime, complaints from stricken areas and demands for restoration of the lights poured in on the helpless operators.

¹ Copy of the Power special report in author's files.

In most details, Power's picture of the breakdown is correct. But certain important information is missing. The grid's supposed invulnerability is not mentioned, and Power skirts around the failure of the extensive safeguard system. Even more curious, it does not actually answer the big question:

What caused the great blackout?

According to Power, there was no outside interference. The trouble source was solely within the grid—the tripping of a “simple relay” at Adam Beck No. 2, followed by a series of “improbable events.” The load on the line, Power stated, was “well within carrying capacity.” In spite of this the relay tripped, setting off the violent reaction which wrecked the network in four seconds.

If this was the truth then one hard fact stands out:

The vaunted safety system was a dangerous fraud.

But this was preposterous. It would mean the utility companies had deceived the government, operating under the constant risk of a huge blackout, hoping there would be only minor power failures. The Federal Power Commission almost certainly would have discovered the conspiracy, and company heads would be exposed to White House and congressional attack, public indignation and probably legal action. To follow such a dangerous course would be little short of insanity.

Besides this, the grid safeguards had already met the threat of a large power failure. Over several years there had been a few smaller-scale blackouts, and the safety devices had kept them from spreading. These same safeguards would have confined the November 9 trouble to a fairly small area, if some ordinary power increase had tripped the Adam Beck relay. Instead, scores of other circuit breakers had tripped in those four tense seconds, as the strange surge of electricity swept through the grid system.

There was only one true explanation—an unpredictable, overwhelming EM interference the safety devices were not built to handle.

For some years, there had been verified evidence that UFOs could cause power failures. The same type of electrical interference could have been directed at one or more strategic parts of the Northeast network, causing the uncontrollable, tremendous surge which led to the disaster. The targets could have been the Clay substation, the St. Lawrence plant or the enormous generator system at Niagara Falls, according to the UFO reports.

Though a UFO connection was not proved, the evidence was too strong to be ignored or debunked if it were all brought into the open, along with the reports of previous UFO-caused blackouts.

The increased press suggestions of a UFO link were seriously worrying the AF when it learned, through the FPC, of the Adam Beck development.

The official Canadian message to the FPC actually reported the tripping of the Adam Beck relay and all the others in the swift breakdown. To the AF this was an immediate danger, certain to lead to speculation about the strange surge of power, especially with its source still unknown.

To avoid this, and also to shift attention from the UFO explanation, the "broken relay" story was invented. Since this could have been construed as blaming Canada, the Premier must have been convinced it was best for both countries not to disclose the true situation.

The false explanation disturbed some U.S. utility heads. To the press and the public, it might seem they were only pretending to be baffled, that they knew the grid was at fault. But the criticism was relatively mild. Apparently most people were unaware that the grid was supposed to be invulnerable and a broken safety device seemed a reasonable answer.

Even though they had not been negligent, the utilities began to search for ways to strengthen the grid, in case such an emergency happened again. Not only the companies but the FAA, industries, hospitals and some apartments and office buildings rushed plans for standby emergency equip-

ment—generators driven by diesel or gasoline engines—with special attention to high-rise elevators where thousands of people had been trapped.

Announcements of all these improvements, combined with the broken relay story, rapidly reduced UFO discussions. But the lull ended abruptly as new blackouts occurred.

On the night of November 26, 1965, two sections of St. Paul, Minnesota, lost electric power and lights. Residents of one section reported lighted UFOs were overhead, and the power company had no other explanation for the blackout. The second failure was blamed on the wind, which supposedly blew two power lines together.

On December 2, parts of Texas, New Mexico and Mexico were suddenly hit by a grid failure. Almost a million people were affected, from El Paso to Juárez. There was an unverified report of a UFO over the area. The chain reaction blacked out stores, homes, hospitals, airports and also defense bases—Fort Bliss, Holloman AFB, White Sands Proving Ground and Biggs AFB.

On December 5, some 40,000 homes in East Texas were darkened by another power failure.

The number of December blackouts was higher than normally would be expected, and the December 2 case was a more massive failure. No UFO link was proved; the power company gave a routine explanation.

During December there was also an unusual outbreak of foreign power failures. One occurred at the Zwolle plant in East Netherlands, another in Saudi Arabia. On December 26, Helsinki and three other cities were blacked out in Finland. That same day, a grid chain reaction in Buenos Aires stopped trains on five subway lines and four commuter branches. Thousands of people were trapped in elevators. Lights went out in all buildings. Adding to the tension, all communications failed, leaving millions with no idea when the ordeal would end. After the blackout, a newscaster tied in the great Northeast power failure and the suggested UFO connection,

alienating the unidentified craft.

Fuller also obtained a report from a military radar operator who told him that a UFO came directly toward an unnamed base, was seen visually and clocked on the radar scope. For a moment, it appeared that the object would actually land at the base. Instead, the officer of the day watched it hover through a telescope, then suddenly accelerate to over 800 mph, while it was simultaneously clocked on the radar scope. Fuller also learned that "constant" radar reports were being made at the Portsmouth Naval Base. In one instance, an object hovered over a water tower at the base before taking off incredibly fast, also seen visually and on radar. By this time, at Pease AFB, at least 15 pilots were no longer skeptical about UFOs. Other Air Force officers told Fuller they were "shocked and dismayed" by the Pentagon report on Exeter. They all believed that the report severely damaged the Air Force. Fuller theorized that the Air Force impotence against UFOs might be the underlying reason for the stonewalling.⁸⁸

In early November, the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board met in Dallas to discuss the UFO question and the idea of an independent study of the problem. Within a year, this led to the announcement of the Air Force decision to commission a study of UFOs by the University of Colorado, otherwise known as the Condon Committee. The meeting in November, 1965, was later offered by Jacques Vallee as "near-proof" that the Air Force's policy regarding UFOs was more of a bungling than a conspiratorial nature. This is a frail reed upon which to base such an argument. Could it be possible that after almost twenty years of investigation, the Air Force was *still* trying to determine what UFOs were?⁸⁹

BLACKOUT SEASON

Over the years, blackouts linked to UFO sightings had been reported in cities throughout the world. None, however, matched the massive blackout that affected 35 million people throughout the northeastern United States on November 9, 1965. Nearly 800,000 people were trapped in elevator shafts, subway cars, and commuter trains. The entire power grid for the region, supposedly invulnerable, failed. In addition, several local companies independent of the main power grid also failed, and short wave and VLF transmissions & reception were jammed with static.

The blackout began in the Syracuse area, at 5:15 p.m. At precisely that moment, there was a UFO sighting in the area. Pilot Weldon Ross was approaching Syracuse when he and his student pilot saw a huge red ball "of brilliant intensity" appearing over the power lines at the

Syracuse substation. Ross estimated it to be about 100 feet in diameter, and determined that the fireball was where the New York Power Authority's two 345,000 volt power lines at the Clay substation passed over the New York Central's tracks between lake Oneida and Hancock field. At least three other people corroborated this sighting. One of them was Robert C. Walsh, who was the Syracuse area deputy commissioner for the Federal Aviation Agency. Walsh reported that he saw the same phenomenon just a few miles south of Hancock Field.

At 5:25, a teacher in Holliston, Massachusetts saw through binoculars an intense white object in the sky moving slowly toward the horizon; a man from the same town reported an identical object. At the same time in New York City, two witnesses declared separately that they saw unusual objects in the sky. "It was different from anything I had ever seen," said one.

So, did UFOs cause the blackout? The possibility received widespread discussion during the aftermath, but was never offered as a serious explanation to the public. President Lyndon Johnson ordered an investigation to determine the cause. Early on, it was announced that a line break near Niagara Falls had done it. A quick check, however, ruled this theory out. Next, the announcement pointed toward a remote controlled substation at the power authority's transmission lines at Clay, New York, about 10 miles north of Syracuse. This did not stand up to scrutiny, either. The Niagara Mohawk men who looked into it found the substation in fine condition, with no sign of any failure or damage. The final, and official, conclusion was that backup relay #Q-29 at the Sir Adam Beck generator station in Queenstown Ontario was the source of the failure. Even so, this relay went right back into operation, and the line it protected was completely undamaged.

On the other hand, circumstantial evidence existed to show that some sort of electromagnetic condition existed that caused the blackout. The fact that stations outside the main power grid were affected suggested this. In addition, after the episode, Con Edison quietly installed expensive magnetic shielding devices around key equipment. Bell Telephone Company also switched from overhead lines to more expensive, heavily shielded cables buried under the ground. Beyond the somewhat suggestive UFO connections, however, hard evidence is lacking.⁹⁰

The great northeastern blackout was the most publicized of a series of major blackouts during late 1965. On November 16, a series of power blackouts hit Britain, affecting dozens of sections of London. On November 26, NICAP learned of unexplained power failures in St. Paul, Minnesota, coming at the same time as UFO sightings in the

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<u>Appointment File (Diary Backup)</u> ^{NOV. 9, 1965}	<u>news conference</u>		<u>News Conference #193-A</u>	<u>11/09/65</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>		<u>News Conference NOV. 10 (10:00 am)</u>	<u>11/10/65</u>	<u>7</u>
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THE WHITE HOUSE
(Austin, Texas)

WITH BILL MOYERS

8:30 PM CST

NOVEMBER 9, 1965

TUESDAY

MR. MOYERS: The following is a memorandum already dispatched to the Chairman of the Federal Power Commission by the President:

Q. What is his name?

MR. MOYERS: Joseph C. Swidler.

"Today's failure is a dramatic reminder of the importance of the uninterrupted flow of power to the health, safety and well being of our citizens and to the defense of our country. This failure should be immediately and carefully investigated in order to prevent a recurrence. You are therefore directed to launch immediately a thorough study of the causes of this failure. I am putting at your disposal the full resources of the Federal Government and directing the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Defense, and other government agencies to support you in any way possible. You are to call upon the top experts in our nation in conducting this investigation. A report is expected at the earliest possible moment as to the causes of the failure and the steps you recommend to be taken to prevent a recurrence."

Q. Bill, does this in any way indicate there may be sabotage?

MR. MOYERS: This indicates nothing other than the fact that all of the resources of the government should be made available to the Federal Power Commission as they conduct an investigation.

Q. Bill, would you rule out nationalization as one of the steps to be taken?

MR. MOYERS: Would I what?

Q. Rule out nationalization of the power companies as one of the steps to be taken?

MR. MOYERS: That's not in anybody's mind.

Q. Bill, Swidler is retiring -- resigning from his job on the 15th. Does that mean he will stay on until this investigation is over?

Q. What was the question?

MR. MOYERS: The question is that Mr. Swidler has already announced that he will be leaving the Chairmanship of the Federal Power Commission -- I don't know the exact date. What does this mean? It means that this memorandum will go to Mr. Swidler and whoever is Chairman of the Federal Power Commission, of course, will be conducting the investigation.

Q. Bill, has the President talked directly to J. Edgar Hoover in connection with this situation?

MR. MOYERS: No.

MR. MOYERS: The President has communicated to the Justice Department -- to the Attorney General -- his desire that the Department of Justice, and other agencies of the Government, cooperate in this study.

Q. Did he talk to Attorney General Katzenbach?

MR. MOYERS: I am not sure that he talked personally to Attorney General Katzenbach, but the instructions of the President have gone to the Attorney General as, in fact, they have gone to other department heads and agency directors.

Q. This means that most of us will have to file separately. I am still centered around the President. Can you give us a little personal insight as to where he is sitting doing this?

MR. MOYERS: The President is at his desk in his office at the ranch, where he has full communications facilities available to maintain constant touch with the appropriate officials. He receives calls at least every five minutes, giving him information on an up-to-date basis of what is happening.

Q. When and how did he learn of the blackout?

MR. MOYERS: The President first heard of the power failure when he was just a little north of his ranch, riding out in his car, listening to a radio newscast. He immediately, through the very excellent, modern, and highly efficient communications system that accompanies the President wherever he goes, was in touch with Special Assistant Joseph Califano back in Washington, who, by the way, had not heard about it by the time the President called, Secretary McNamara, Governor Buford Ellington, who is the Director of the Office of Emergency Planning, and his Press Secretary. The President returned in a matter of minutes to his office at the ranch, where he has been this evening receiving reports and issuing instructions to appropriate officials of the Government.

Q. Some of the reporters were in the room when you made the announcement and have left. My question is, whether they are filing?

MR. MOYERS: I have no idea.

Q. Bill, would you repeat your announcement for film?

MR. MOYERS: Yes.

Q. Were these telephone calls made from the President's car to Buford Ellington and Secretary McNamara?

MR. MOYERS: He talked to each of them.

Q. In the car?

Q. When you say he received a report from his radio, you don't mean it was over NBC or CBS, it was over his 2-way radio?

MR. MOYERS: It was over a regularly announced newscast.

Q. You mention here a reference to the Defense Department. Does this in any way mean there is something happening with the defense system tonight?

MORE

MR. MOYERS: No. It means that a power failure could have an effect on the defense system. The power is essential to the defense of our country.

Q. So far as you know, there was no interruption to any of the warning system?

MR. MOYERS: That is correct.

Q. Bill, do they yet know the cause of what caused the chain reaction?

MR. MOYERS: No.

Q. Bill, do you happen to anticipate making any further announcements tonight?

MR. MOYERS: I will put out anything I have concerning future developments from here as I get them. I really don't anticipate much, but I will put out anything we get.

Q. What is the atmosphere in the President's office?

MR. MOYERS: The atmosphere in the President's office is one of quiet efficiency.

Q. Who did he call first, Secretary McNamara or Mr. Califano?

MR. MOYERS: I don't have the exact order. I think it was Buford Ellington, Secretary McNamara, Mr. Califano, and then the Press Secretary, in that order.

Q. Bill, the last we had from you was that they had not yet isolated the original source of the trouble. Is that still the case?

MR. MOYERS: That is still the case.

Q. Who is out there with the President helping him?

MR. MOYERS: Marvin Watson, Col James Cross.

Q. How many secretaries are there, two or three?

MR. MOYERS: Three. Vickie McCammon, Marie Fehmer, and Miss Ginny Thrift, who is Col Cross' secretary and who also helps the President from time-to-time.

Dr. Hornig, who is the President's Science Adviser, said he talked again to the President of the Niagara Mohawk Power Company, Mr. Minot Pratt, who is not able to confirm or deny the already mentioned report that the power failure occurred in his jurisdiction. He simply said it has not been located yet.

Dr. Hornig also talked to Mr. William S. Chapin, who is the general manager of the New York State Power Authority to confirm that the Niagara Falls and the Messena plants are operating.

Q. Bill, who was in the President's car when this was made known to him?

MORE

MR. MOYERS: I don't know.

Mr. Califano has just informed the President that Governor Scranton has reported to the White House that power is back in the State of Pennsylvania, that the area affected in Pennsylvania was less than earlier believed, and that the power companies have told Governor Scranton that they expect no more problems during the night in that state.

Q. Bill, how long ago was that conversation with Governor Scranton?

MR. MOYERS: The President did not talk to Governor Scranton. Mr. Califano talked to Governor Scranton, and he related the information to the President. Governor Scranton talked to Mr. Califano about 10 minutes ago.

Q. Has Mr. Califano had any dinner yet?

MR. MOYERS: No.

Q. Has the President eaten?

MR. MOYERS: Yes.

Q. Bill, can you tell us what time it was when the President was told of General Eisenhower's illness this morning?

MR. MOYERS: It was about 6:15.

Q. Has anyone in the Federal Government raised the possibility of sabotage?

MR. MOYERS: I don't know anyone who has raised that possibility. The President believes that the Federal Bureau of Investigation should be involved in this study because it does have resources that should be of help during the study to find out specifically what happened when the power failed.

Q. But the Government is not ruling out the possibility?

MR. MOYERS: That is correct. I know of no one who has talked about the problem of sabotage and, therefore, it is not ruled in or ruled out.

Q. Did the President eat at his desk?

MR. MOYERS: No.

MORE

(News Conference #193-A continuing at 9:40 PM):

MR. MOYERS: The President has just talked to Governor Rockefeller and Mayor Wagner, both of whom assured him that they would cooperate fully in the investigation ordered tonight by the President through the Federal Power Commission.

Mayor Wagner informed the President that it appeared that about one-third of the power in New York City was operating again.

I talked to Dr. Donald Hornig, the President's Science Adviser, who has been on the phone constantly this evening with people in the local power companies, and Dr. Hornig says that those people believe that while the original source has not been pinpointed, they, that is, the officials of the power companies and others concerned with the problem in New England, are, and this is Dr. Hornig's quote, pretty well agreed upon the belief that there is substantially no chance of sabotage. End quote.

In fact, while I repeat the original source has not been pinpointed, there are some people who are most concerned with the problem in the power companies and in the New York State Power Authority, who believe that this could have happened as a result of a failure in the automatic frequency control equipment. I want to emphasize that this is purely conjectural, but it is one of the routes down which your mind could lead you as you study the problem from the standpoint of engineering and technology.

There has not been, Dr. Hornig informs me, much time for diagnosis, and, he repeated to me with inflection that seemed to underscore his statement, no one knows exactly what did happen.

Officials in New York, and again I repeat that this is unproved and conjectural, but officials in New York are saying that the difficulty may lie on two lines carrying the main power supply between Rochester and Clay, New York, at a point approximately one hundred miles between these two cities. According to these officials, the only way to determine if that in fact is the point of disruption is to trace these two lines manually, that is, to walk them, and they have already started the tracing process.

If by in the morning at daylight they have been unable manually to locate the problem, they will use helicopters.

Let me again emphasize however that this is not authoritative and this is not firm. This is, again, one of the routes down which you could go in pursuing the possibilities of the source of the problem.

Q. You say the New York City Power Authority people have been speculating on this?

MR. MOYERS: Yes, officials of the New York State Power Authority have been speculating in this.

Q. Whose lines are these -- Niagara's or Mohawk's?

MR. MOYERS: I don't know.

Q. This point a hundred miles between the two locations doesn't mean anything to me.

MR. MOYERS: We can check that on the map.

Governor Volpe has informed the White House that 60 per cent of the power is back on in Boston.

MORE

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(News Conference #193-A continuing at 10:35 PM):

MR. MOYERS: Mr. Swidler has communicated to the President the following steps taken to implement the President's directive to investigate the causes of the power breakdown.

1. A telegram has been sent to all of the major companies involved, requesting that they assemble the relevant facts as to the impact of the interruption on their systems and the steps taken to restore service.
2. A group of electric power system operation experts from various private and public power systems throughout the country will meet tomorrow in Washington to help plan the details of the investigation.
3. As I have already informed you, Mr. Swidler has been in communication directly with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense to assure continuing liaison.
4. A Federal Power Commission staff team has been dispatched to the operating offices of the Niagara-Mohawk system so that the Commission can be fully informed on the steps taken to locate faults which precipitated the breakdown of service.
5. Another Federal Power Commission staff team has been dispatched to the operating offices of Con-Edison in New York to cooperate and coordinate with the efforts of that company to restore service.

Mr. Swidler informed the President that the Commission staff would work through the night on these, as well as other steps now being planned, to carry out the President's directive. The Chief of the Bureau of Power of the FPC, Mr. F. S. Brown, has been named staff director of the investigation.

The President continues to receive up-to-the-minute reports from his assistants and advisers in Washington. He is of course keeping in touch also through newscasts.

Q. Where are the operating offices of Niagara-Mohawk Power Company, Bill?

MR. MOYERS: Syracuse is the headquarters of Niagara-Mohawk.

Q. Did Mr. Swidler talk to the President on the telephone?

MR. MOYERS: This was a cable sent through our communications system in the form of a memorandum to the President.

Q. Is the President staying awake?

MR. MOYERS: He is awake.

Q. Bill, could you say whether these teams are already on the way?

MR. MOYERS: Yes, they are.

Q. Bill, I notice Mr. Swidler has been asked several questions in Washington according to our wire and he keeps bucking them down here, saying "you'll have to ask the White House about that." So you might end up for quite some time being the primary source of information as to what the government is doing.

MORE

MR. MOYERS: I haven't talked to Mr. Swidler but the information I have I will be glad to make available. He is perfectly free to talk to you and I will so instruct him. I think the President has done all he can do tonight.

Q. Bill, to help round out the stories, could you let us know when the President finally goes to bed?

MR. MOYERS: If I can I will, Jack.

Q. For the time being, at least for the wires, we will continue to keep somebody in here.

MR. MOYERS: I think that is a good idea. If something comes up I'll be down and give it to you.

Q. Anything new on Eisenhower, Bill?

MR. MOYERS: No. That's all I have. If anything major breaks we will have you called in your rooms.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Bill.

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FROM JOSEPH LAITIN
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE AUWHOO12

UNCLAS

NEW CONFERENCE

AT THE WHITE HOUSE
(AUSTIN, TEXAS)

WITH JOSEPH LAITIN

10:00 AM CST

NOVEMBER 10, 1965

WEDNESDAY

MR. LAITIN: THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT IS FOR 10 AM CST
RELEASE. AFTER THE BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT IF WE HAVE ON OR TWO
QUESTIONS I'LL TAKE THEM AND THEN HAVE A TEN- MINUTE RECESS
BEFORE CONTINUING THE BRIEFING.

MERRIMAN SMITH: HOW LONG DOES THE ANNOUNCEMENT RUN?

MR. LAITIN: IT IS VERY SHORT.

THE PRESIDENT WILL MEET WITH CHANCELLOR ERHARD ON
DECEMBER 6TH, 7TH AND 8TH. JUST WHERE AND WHAT TIME THE SPECIFIC
MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE WILL BE DETERMINED LATER.

ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS BEFORE I DECLARE A RECESS?

BOB YOUNG: THIS OPENS THE POSSIBILITY, JOE, OF A MEETING
DOWN HERE IN TEXAS INSTEAD OF IN WASHINGTON?

MR. LAITIN: I SAID JUST WHERE AND WHAT TIME THE SPECIFIC
MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE WILL BE DETERMINED LATER, BOB.

BOB YOUNG: IT DOES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING DOWN
HERE IN TEXAS?

MR. LAITIN: I JUST SAID WE WILL DETERMINE THAT LATER,
BOB.

THERE WILL BE A TEN-MINUTE RECESS NOW.

((AT 10:09 AM, CST, THE BRIEFING CONTINUED)):

MR. LAITIN: I HAVE BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS
BETWEEN CHANCELLOR ERHARD AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON. THE LAST
MEETING WAS ON JUNE 4TH AT THE WHITE HOUSE, AT THE TIME
CHANCELLOR ERHARD WAS HERE TO RECEIVE A DEGREE FROM COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY.

HELEN THOMAS: JUNE 4TH OF WHAT YEAR, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: OF 1965. AT THAT TIME THERE WAS A JOINT
ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THEY WOULD MEET REGULARLY TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS
OF COMMON INTEREST.

M. SMITH: JOE, ARE YOU SURE ERHARD WAS IN THIS COUNTRY
THIS YEAR?

MR. LAITIN: YES. THE MEETING PRIOR TO THAT WAS JUNE
11TH THROUGH THE 13TH, 1964, ALSO AT THE WHITE HOUSE. THE
PREVIOUS MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND DR. ERHARD WAS
DECEMBER 28TH AND 29TH OF 1963 AT THE RANCH. PRIOR TO THAT THEY
MET IN WASHINGTON OVER THE WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 22, 1963.

KARL BAERMAN: THAT WAS WHEN THE FOREIGN DIGNITARIES CAME
OVER FOR PRESIDENT.

MR. LAITIN: YES.

RECEIVED:
2:55 P.M. WEDNESDAY 10 NOVEMBER
1965

BOB THOMPSON: WOULD YOU REPEAT THE QUESTION, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: THE QUESTION FROM MR. DAUMAN WAS IF THAT WAS THE WEEKEND WHEN THE FOREIGN DIGNITARIES CAME HERE FOR THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. THE ANSWER WAS YES.

BERNARD EISIMAN: JOE, WAS TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT PRODDING IN ANY WAY BE CHANCELLOR ERHARD'S STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH TO THE BUNDESTAG THIS MORNING IN WHICH HE COMPLAINED ABOUT GERMANY'S POSITION AS A SECOND-CLASS POWER IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE?

MR. LAITIN: NO.

THE PRESIDENT WAS UP WILL AFTER MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT RECEIVING REPORTS ON THE POWER BLACKOUT IN THE NORTHEAST. HE WAS UP EARLY THIS MORNIG.

JACK HORNER: DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME?

MR. LAITIN: I DO NOT HAVE THE EXACT TIME.

FRANK CORMIER: SIX AM -- IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD?

MR. LAITIN: IT WAS EARLY THIS MORNING, FRANK. HE TALKED BY PHONE WITH SECRETARY FOWLER ON THE GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND BUDGETARY MATTERS.

CHARLES BAILEY: DID THEY DISCUSS ANY ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS?

MR. LAITIN: WHAT I JUST GAVE YOU WAS THE GENERAL AREA OF THEIR DISCUSSION. THE PRESIDENT THEN TALKED TO SPECIAL ASSISTANT JOSEPH CALIFANO AND RECEIVED FROM MR. CALIFANO A DETAILED REPORT OF THE SITUATION IN THE NORTHEAST.

AMONG THE THINGS THAT MR. CALIFANO INFORMED THE PRESIDENT WAS THAT THE CONSOLIDATED EDISON COMPANY IN NEW YORK REPORTED THAT 95 PER CENT OF THE ELECTRICAL SERVICE IN NEW YORK CITY WAS RESTORED.

AMONG THE THINGS THAT MR. CALIFANO INFORMED THE PRESIDENT WAS THAT THE CO COMMEN TAKE THIS OUT

IF I CAN JUST GO ON BACKGROUND FOR A MOMENT, I BROUGHT THIS FIGURE UP-TO-DATE IN TIME TO CONFORM WITH THE 95 PER CENT. I JUST DOUBLE CHECKED THAT THE 95 PER CENT OF ELECTRICAL SERVICE IN NEW YORK CITY WAS RESTORED AS OF 10:40 AM, EST, AND THAT EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO RESTORE THE OTHER 5 PER CENT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE.

MR. CALIFANO ALSO REPORTED ON WHAT THE MILITARY HAS DONE DURING THE NIGHT TO ALLEVIATE THE SITUATION. THE NAVY REPORTED THAT THE NAVAL AIR STATION AT FLOYD BENNETT FIELD IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK PROVIDED GENERATORS TO A NUMBER OF HOSPITALS; THAT THE NAVAL SHIPYARD AT NEW YORK PROVIDED ICE TO A HOSPITAL AND MADE GASOLINE AVAILABLE FOR CIVILIAN EMERGENCY VEHICLES; THAT THE DESTROYER ESCORT ALBERT T. HARRIS IS NOW ON STAND-BY-DUTY AT THE UNITED NATIONS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL POWER IF NEEDED. I MIGHT ADD PARENTHETICALLY THAT THE UNITED NATIONS ABUTS THE EAST RIVER WHERE THE DESTROYER ESCORT IS. ALSO THAT THE USS BROSTOL, A DESTROYER HAS HOOKED ITS POWER LINE INTO THE 14TH STREET POWER STATION IN MANHATTAN AND MADE THAT POWER STATION OPERATIONAL. ALSO IN NEW YORK CITY, TWO PORTABLE POWER UNITS WERE PROVIDED BY THE NAVY TO THE RAVENSWOOD POWER STATION, WHICH IS A VERY LARGE INSTALLATION IN LONG ISLAND CITY. THAT, INCIDENTALLY, IS PART OF NEW YORK CITY, PART OF THE MUNICIPALITY.

IN BOSTON, THE NAVAL SHIPYARD PROVIDED BACK-UP FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT FOR THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT AND ALSO SUPPLIED POWER TO THE MYSTIC POWER STATION IN BOSTON.

CHUCK BAILEY: JOE, BOSTON NAVAL SHIPYARD PROVIDED THIS FOR MYSTIC CONNECTICUT OR MYSTIC, MASSACHUSETTS?

MR. LAITIN: THE MYSTIC POWER STATION IN BOSTON.

M. SMITH: JOE, ARE YOU SURE THE BROSTOL IS A DESTROYER? THERE USED TO BE A CRUISER BY THAT NAME.

MR. LAITIN: THE REPORT I GOT SAID IT WAS A DESTROYER. I CAN'T COUCH FOR IT BOYOND THAT. I'LLCHECK ON THAT, SMITTY, RIGHT NOW FOR YOU.

THE NAVY ALSO SUPPLIED BOSTON WITH 3,000 KILOWATTS OF POWER DURING THE NIGHT.

BOB PIERPOINT: HOW DID THEY DO THAT?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON THAT, TOO. THE NAVAL STATION AT NEWPORT, RODE ISLAND SUPPLIED 700 KILOWATTS OF POWER TO THE ELECTRIC COMPANY IN NEWPORT, AND IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, THE NAVAL RESERVE TRAINING STATION PROVIDED ONE GENERATOR TO THE MERCY HOSPITAL IN SPRINGFIELD.

THE AIR FORCE REPORTED IT MADE AVAILABLE ALL OF ITS AIRFIELDS FOR EMERGENCY CIVILIAN USE. ONE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, IS THAT A FLIGHT OF NORTHEAST AIRLINES USED HANSCOM FIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. THE AIR FORCE ALSO MADE AVAILABLE FIRE TRUCKS AND FUEL FOR HOSPITAL GENERATORS.

THE ARMY CALLED OUT A NUMBER OF NATIONAL GUARD UNITS TO ACT AS NECESSARY, AND ALL CIVIL DEFENSE UNITS WERE MOBILIZED AND READY FOR ACTION.

BOB PIERPOINT: JOE, YOU MEAN ALL IN THE STRICKEN AREA?

MR. LAITIN: YES.

BERNARD EISMAN: JOE, ANY IDEA ON THE NUMBER OF NATIONAL GUARD UNITS?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL HAVE THAT FOR YOU LATER.

JOHN POMFRET: CAN YOU GET THE UNITS, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: YES

HELEN THOMAS: HOW IS ELECTRIC POWER IN ALL THE OTHER STATES AFFECTED? IS IT ALL BACK IN CONNECTICUT AND MASSACHUSETTS?

MR. LAITIN: I AM GIVING YOU ALL THE UP-TO-DATE REPORTS. THERE IS A MEETING GOING ON NOW IN WASHINGTON IN WHICH THEY ARE TRYING TO PINPOINT THE EXACT LOCATION AND THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE, AND ALSO WHAT THE PRESENT SITUATION IS. THE MEETING IS GOING ON RIGHT AT THIS MINUTE.

BOB PIERPOINT: WHERE?

MR. LAITIN: IN THE OFFICES OF THE FEDERAL POWER

PAGE THREE

COMMISSION IN THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE BUILDING IN WASHINGTON. THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE AT THIS MEETING WITH FPC CHAIRMAN SWIDLER -- AND THESE ARE JUST PART OF A SPECIAL PANEL OF EXPERTS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, UTILITY AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY PEOPLE -- ARE AS FOLLOWS:

G. O. WESSENAUER OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY;
CHARLES P. ALMON, JR., ALSO OF TVA;
E. B. CRUTCHFIELD OF THE VIRGINIA POWER COMPANY;
W. J. KLEINBACH OF THE PHILADELPHIA ELECTRIC COMPANY;
F. J. SNYDER OF THE NIAGARA-MOHAWK POWER COMPANY;
GEORGE MCDANIEL OF THE AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY;

JACK HORNER: DO YOU KNOW WHERE THAT IS?

MR. LAITIN: THEIR HEADQUARTERS ARE IN NEW YORK.

T. J. NAGEL, ALSO OF THE AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY;
LUDWIG LESCHER, COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY OF CHICAGO;
MORGAN DUBROW, DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR;
DR. CHARLES CONCORDIA, GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY.

CHAIRMAN SWIDLER WILL BE WORKING IN CLOSE CONNECTION WITH THE FBI AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND THEY WILL PROCEED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. THEY WILL BE MEETING A GOOD PART OF THE DAY.

CHECK BAILEY: JOE, WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FBI PARTICIPATION?

MR. LAITIN: THEY WERE INCLUDED AMONG THE AGENCIES THE PRESIDENT YESTERDAY INSTRUCTED TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE FACILITIES.

I HAVE A FEW MISCCELLANEOUS THINGS THAT WERE ALSO IN THE REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT. THE NEW YORK AND AMERICAN STOCK EXCHANGES WOULD BE OPENING AT 11:05, EST, FOR TRADING. THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT 20 MINUTES AGO. ALSO THAT THE PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON EXCHANGE AND THE BOSTON EXCHANGE ARE OPEN AND TRADING AT ABOUT THE REGULAR TIME.

HERE IS A GENERAL STATISTIC ON THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED IN THE NORTHEAST. THE POWER FAILURE AFFECTED MORE THAN 30 MILLION PEOPLE IN 8 STATES, WHICH COMPRISES OVER 80,000 SQUARE MILES. THE STATES AFFECTED WERE NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW JERSEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, CONNECTICUT, VERMONT AND RODE ISLAND.

CHARLES MURPHY: NOT MAINE?

MR. LAITIN: NO

JOHN POMFRET: PARTS OF CANADA, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: I JUST HAVE THE AREAS IN THIS COUNTRY THAT WERE AFFECTED. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT CANADA.

CHARLES MURPHY: WE HAD MAINE AND CANADA ON THE MAP LAST NITHT.

MR. LAITIN: THIS IS A LATER REPORT AND I DON'T HAVE MAINE ON IT.

MERRIMAN SMITH: IT WAS ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT THAT THE POWER WAS OFF IN MAINE AND THAN WAS XOMING BACK ONE. BILL ANNOUNCED THAT LAST NIGHT.

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON THAT. THE ELECTRICAL SERVICE IN PENNSYLVANIA, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW JERSEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, CONNECTICUT,

VERMONT AND RODE ISLAND IS PRACTICALLY NORMAL AT THIS TIME,. AND THE SITUATION IN NEW YORK AS OF 9:30 OUR TIME IS THAT POWER HAS BEEN RESTORED TO AL OF BROOKLYN AND ALL OF UPSTATE NEW YORK; THAT 60 PER CENT OF THE POWER IN THE BRONX IS ON AND THE REMAINDER SHOULD BE ON VERY SHORTLY. INCIDENTALLY, THEY ARE THROWING ELECTRICAL SWITHCHES ONE AT A TIME THERE TO PREVENT OVERLOADING. ALMOST ALL OF THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS NOW HAS POWER; ABOUT 71 PER CENT OF MANHATTAN HAS POWER.

BERNARD EISMAN: IN MANHATTAN IS IT PRIMARILY THE DIRECT CURRENT AREAS THAT ARE STILL OUT?

MR. LAITIN: MANHATTAN DOES HAVE QUITE A BIT OF DC AREA, BUT WHETHER THIS IS THE AREA STILL AFFECTED, I DON'T KNOW. SERVICE SHOULD BE RESTORED IN MANHATTAN COMPLETELY SOME TIME DURING THE DAY.

ALL MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS WERE OPERATING EFFECTIVELY THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE POWER FAILURE, AND THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PLANNING WAS FULLY GEARED UP AND READY TO GO 35 MINUTES AFTER THE POWER BREAK.

HERE IS THE ANSWER TO AN EARLIER QUESTION.

AN OFFICIAL IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE IN MAINE ADVISES OUR PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON THAT MAINE WAS NOT AFFECTED BY THE POWER BLACKOUT. THAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE OMISSION OF THE STATE IN THE LIST OF 8 STATES THAT I JUST GAVE YOU.

BOB PIERPOINT: WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT DOING NOW, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: HE IS LOOKING AT SOME CATTLE ON HIS RANCH.

BOB YOUNG: JOE, WHAT IS THE SITUATION FOR TOMORROW?

MR. LAITIN: JUST AS MR. MOYERS REPORTED TO YOU AT THE BRIEFING YESTERDAY. I HAVE NOTHING NEW TO ADD TO IT.

I WANT TO GIVE YOU ONE OTHER ITEM. THE PRESIDENT READ A MEMORANDUM FROM SECRETARY OF COMMERCE CONNOR SUMMARIZING THE REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRST TRADE EXPANSION MISSION TO RUMANIA AND POLAND. THEIR MISSION TOOK PLACE FROM SEPTEMBER 18TH TO OCTOBER 16TH. THE MISSION MISSION TRAVELED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE. THEY REPORT THEY HAD FULL ACCESS TO A WIDE VARIETY OF PLANTS IN ROUMANIA AND POLAND AND FRUITFUL DESCUSSIONS WITH TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND INDUSTRIAL LEADERS.

THE MISSION WAS COMPOSED OF U.S. BUSINESSMEN AND HEADED BY COMMERCE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS. SECRETARY CONNOR INFORMED THE PRESIDENT THAT THE PEOPLE OF BOTH COUNTRIES DEMONSTRATED INTEREST IN U.S. PRODUCTS, A DESIRE TO EARN MORE FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO BUY THOSE PRODUCTS AND A WILLINGNESS TO MAKE APPROPRIATE TRADE CONCESSIONS IN ORDER TO DO SO.

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SECRETARY CONNOR SAID THE MISSION AGREED THAT THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. FIRMS TO TRANSACT BUSINESS IN BOTH COUNTRIES, BUT THAT DEVELOPING THESE MARKETS WILL TAKE TIME AND A PIONEERING SPIRIT.

THE MISSION RECOMMENDED THAT U.S. BUSINESSMEN WITH AN INTEREST IN THESE MARKETS VISIT THE AREAS AND ACQUAINT THEMSELVES WITH AN COMMERCIAL NEEDS AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS.

THE MISSION ALSO MADE THESE POINTS:

1. A LACK OF GENERAL MARKETING INFORMATION EXISTS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.

2. THERE IS CONCERN IN RUMANIA OVER LACK OF MOST-FAVORED-NATIONS TREATMENT BY THE UNITED STATES, AND THERE IS CONCERN IN POLAND ABOUT ACCESS TO NORMAL U.S. CREDIT.

THIS MISSION WAS ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED AS PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM TO BUILD BRIDGES OF TRADE WITH THE NATIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE.

BOB PIERPOINT: JOE, IS THIS REPORT TO BE TAKEN AS A RECOMMENDATION BY THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE THAT ROUMANIA BE GRANTED MOST-FAVORED-NATIONS TREATMENT?

MR. LAITIN: THIS IS SIMPLY A REPORT OF THE MISSION TO THE SECRETARY, WHICH THE SECRETARY REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT.

JACK HORNER: DO YOU KNOW WHETHER POLAND NOW GETS MOST FAVORED NATIONS TREATMENT?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON THAT, JACK.

HUGH FLAHERTY: JOE, IS THERE NOT A NEWS CONFERENCE WITH SECRETARY CONNOR AND THE HEAD OF THE MISSION IN WASHINGTON TODAY?

MR. LAITIN: THERE IS A MEETING OF SOME KIND GOING ON THERE ABOUT NOW.

BOB PIERPOINT: WITH REPORTERS?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON THAT. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT IS WITH REPORTERS OR NOT.

JOHN POMFRET: JOE, DOES THIS INDICATE THAT THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY THAT A TRADE AGREEMENT SUCH AS THAT NEGOTIATED WITH ROUMANIA MAY NOW BE NEGOTIATED WITH POLAND?

MR. LAITIN: I WOULDN'T WANT TO INTERPRET THIS IN ANY MANNER, JOHN.

JOHN POMFRET: COULD YOU SAY WHETHER THIS MISSION SOLD ANYTHING?

MR. LAITIN: I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THAT WAS THEIR PURPOSE, JOHN, BUT I'LL BE GLAD TO CHECK ON THAT FOR YOU LATER.

CHARLES MURPHY: HOW MANY MEN WERE IN THE MISSION AND WHO ARE THEY, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON THAT, CHARLES. WE ANNOUNCED THIS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, WITH ALL OF THE NAMES OF THE MISSION. I DON'T HAVE THEM HANDY AT THE MOMENT.

MERRIMAN SMITH: JOE: DID THE PRESIDENT HEAR ANYTHING TODAY FROM FORMER PRESIDENT EISENHOWER?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON THAT, SMITTY.

M. SMITH: ALSO, IS MR. JACOBSEN HERE OR DID HE GO BACK?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL HAVE TO CHECK ON THAT IF YOU ARE REALLY INTERESTED. I KNOW MR. WATSON IS HERE.

M. SMITH: WELL, I'M INTERESTED BECAUSE CONGRESSMAN RESMICK OF NEW YORK SAYS THAT HE PLANS TO CONFER HERE TOMORROW WITH MR. JACOBSEN.

D. KIKER: MOYERS SAID LAST NIGHT JACOBSEN WAS GOING BACK TO WASHINGTON.

MR. LAITIN: SMITTY, I CAN CHECK ON THAT RIGHT NOW. HE IS HERE IN TEXAS. THAT IS ALL I HAVE FOR YOU NOW. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?

JACK HORNER: WILL YOUR NEXT BRIEFING BE AT 4?

MR. LAITIN: YES.

JOHN POMFRET: JOE, ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING AT ALL ON MR. YOUNGBLOOD AND MR. JOHNS?

MR. LAITIN: THAT SHOULD BE COMING OUT OF TREASURY IN WASHINGTON ABOUT NOW.

CHUCK BAILEY: WILL YOU MAKE THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE? CAN THAT BE DONE?

MR. LAITIN: YES.

JACK HORNER: WHAT SHOULD BE COMING OUT OF WASHINGTON ABOUT NOW, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: I WAS ASKED ABOUT MR. YOUNGBLOOD AND THE SECRET SERVICE. I SAID THAT SHOULD BE COMING OUT OF WASHINGTON. I WILL SEE IF I CAN MAKE THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO YOU HERE A LITTLE BIT LATER. I'LL CHECK ON THAT RIGHT NOW. TREASURY IS ISSUING IT.

THE PRESS: THANK YOU, JOE.

THE END

FROM JOSEPH LAITIN
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE AUWH0013

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLAS

NEWS CONFERENCE

AT THE WHITE HOUSE
(AUNTINT, TEXAS)

WITH JOSEPH LAITIN

4:08 P CST

NOVEMBER 10, 1965

WEDNESDAY

MR. LAITIN: THERE ARE 4 PRESS RELEASES THAT ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED TO YOU NOW. ONE IS THE GRANTING OF A RECESS APPOINTMENT TO CECIL LYON AS U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE MALDIVES ISLANDS. AMBASSADOR LYON WILL SERVE IN A DUAL CAPACITY, REMAINING AS AMBASSADOR TO CEYLON.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON IS ALSO GRANTING A RECESS APPOINTMENT TO MARSHALL P. JONES OF MARYLAND, A CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, AS UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO MALAWI. HE WILL REPLACE AMBASSADOR SAM P. GILSTRAP, WHO IS RETURNING TO WASHINGTON TO BECOME DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS.

JACK HORNER: WAS HE NOMINATED, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: NO.

THE PRESIDENT IS ANNOUNCING THE APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR NELSON ROCKEFELLER TO THE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, SUCCEEDING GOVERNOR JOHN ANDERSON, JR., OF KANSAS.

THE FOURTH RELEASE IS ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF OUR PUBLIC MEMBERS TO THE FATHER MARQUETTE TERCENTENARY COMMISSION.

DOUGH KIKER: HAS THIS COMMISSION EVER MET? I DON'T MEAN THE QUESTION FACETIOUSLY. LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY: HAS IT MET SINCE THE PRESIDENT APPOINTED IT?

MR. LAITIN: I'LL CHECK ON IT LATER.

THE PRESIDENT IS ANNOUNCING THAT CHAIRMAN JOSEPH C. SWIDLER, JR., OF THE FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION HAS AGREED TO STAY ON AS CHAIRMAN UNTIL DECEMBER 31ST. CHAIRMAN SWIDLER WAS TO LEAVE THE FPC NOVEMBER 15TH TO ENTER THE PRIVATE PRACTICE OF LAW IN WASHINGTON.

CHARLES MURPHY: IS HE NOT SERVING BY GRACE NOW ANYWAY?

MR. LAITIN: CHAIRMAN SWIDLER'S TERM ACTUALLY EXPIRED ON JUNE 22ND BUT, LIKE MANY TOP LEVEL POSITIONS, THERE WAS WHAT THEY REFER TO AS HOLD-OVER TENURE WHERE A MAN WILL SERVE UNTIL HIS SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED.

FRAANK CORMIER: JOE, CAN YOU SAY HE IS BEING HELD OVER TO CONDUCT THIS INVESTIGATION OF THE POWER FAILURE?

MR. LAITIN: ACTUALLY, THE PRESIDENT REQUESTED HIM TO REMAIN FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE POWER FAILURE DEVELOPED.

KARL BAUMAN: HE AGREED TO THIS BEFORE THE POWER FAILURE?

MR. LAITIN: I SAID THE PRESIDENT REQUESTED HIM TO, AND THIS MORNING HE AGREED TO DO SO. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE PERSONAL SACRIFICE INVOLVED AND WANTED HIM TO KNOW HOW MUCH HE APPRECIATED IT.

BOB YOUNG: JOE, HOW LONG HAS SWIDLER BEEN ON THE COMMISSION?

MR. LAITIN: CHAIRMAN SWIDLER WAS APPOINTED TO THE FPC IN JUNE, 1961; WAS APPOINTED CHARMAN TWO MONTHS LATER AND HAS BEEN CHAIRMAN EVER SINCE.

DOUG KIKER: IS HE A REPUBLICAN OR A DEMOCRAT?

MR. LAITIN: I DON'T HAVE ANY POLITICAL AFFILIATION ON HIM. I WILL CHECK IT. HE IS FROM NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, WHERE HE WAS ENGAGED IN THE PRIVATE PRACTICE OF LAW UNTIL HAS APPOINTMENT. HE PLANS TO RETURN TO THE PRIVATE PRACTICE OF LAW IN WASHINGTON, D. C. HE LIVES IN BITHESDA, MARYLAND BUT STALL VOTES IN NASHVILLE.

BILL CHAPMAN: JOE, WHY DID THE PRESIDENT ASK HIM TO STAY ON?

MR. LAITIN: HE SIMPLY WANTED CHAIRMAN SWIDLER TO REMAIN THERE UNTIL HE FOUND A SUCESSOR.

JOHN POMFRET: JOE, DID MR. SWIDLER AND THE PRESIDENT TALK BY TELEPHONE TODAY?

MR. LAITIN: NO

CHUCK BAILEY: HOW WAS THE AGREEMENT CONVEYED TO THE PRESIDENT BY MR SWIDLER?

MR. LAITIN: IT WS THROUGH CALIFANO.

CHARLES MURPHY: THAT'S A FIVE-MAN COMMISSION, ISN'T IT, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: YES.

DOUG KIKER: THE REQUEST WAS CONVEYED TO MR. SWIDLER THROUGH MR. CALIFANO JUST A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE LIGHTS WENT OUT ALL OVER THE EASTER SEABOARD?

MR. LAITIN: YES

CHUCK BAILEY: WAS BOTH THE REQUEST AND THE ACCEPTANCE THROUGH MR. CALIFANO?

MR. LAITIN: YES.

HELEN THOMAS: IS IT A 4-YEAR TERM OR FIVE?

MR. LAITIN: IT'S A 5-YEAR TERM. HE DID NOT LEAVE THE POSITION ON JUNE 22ND BECAUSE THERE WAS SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND IT WAS BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT THAT HE WAS REMAINING ON UNTIL NOVEMBER 15TH.

HAYES GORRY: JOE, WHAT WAS HIS RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST? YOU SAID HE AGREED TO STAY ON THIS MORNING?

MR. LAITIN: I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HE HAD PRETTY MUCH AGREED TO STAY ON YESTERDAY BUT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR HIM TO MAKE CERTAIN ARRANGEMENTS IN HIS PRIVATE LIFE WHEREIN OTHER PEOPLE WERE INVOLVED, AND HE WANTED TO CONSULT THEM BEFORE HE FORMALLY AGREED TO STAY ON.

THAT IS ALL I HAVE. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?

CHARLES FREUND: JOE, EVERYBODY IS ASKING DOES THE POWER FAILURE, AS FAR AS THE PRESIDENT IS CONCERNED, MEAN THE NATION IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO SABOTEURS, THAT ONE OR TWO SABOTEURS COULD DO THIS SOMETIME AND THIS COULD HAPPEN IN THIS WAY?

MR. LAITIN: THE PRESIDENT LAST NIGHT ORDERED A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF THE POWER FAILURE AND FPC CHAIRMAN SWIDLER ACTED IMMEDIATELY AND CALLED TOP EXPERTS IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY. THEY'VE BEEN MEETING ALL DAY IN WASHINGTON. THE PRESIDENT SAID A REPORT ON THIS STUDY WOULD BE EXPECTED AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT AS TO THE CAUSES OF THE FAILURE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO PREVENT A RECURRENCE.

BOB THOMPSON: WOULD YOU REPEAT THE QUESTION.

BOB PIERPOINT: IT WAS A GOOD ONE.

MR. LAITIN: I WAS ASKED AT THIS MORNING'S BRIEFING ABOUT WHAT NATIONAL GUARD UNITS WERE INVOLVED LAST NIGHT, AND I WILL POST THEM.

BOB THOMPSON: WAIT A MINUTE, I WANT TO HEAR THAT QUESTION.

CHARLES FREUND: ALL I ASKED IS WHAT EVERYBODY IS ASKING ME OUT ON THE STREET -- DOES THIS POWER FAILURE MEN THAT A HANDFUL OF SABOTEURS COULD DO THE SAME THING?

MERRIMAN SMITH: JOE, THIS IS EVIDENTLY A SERIOUS SITUATION BECAUSE IT OCCURS TO PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY THAT SUCH A THING COULD SHUT DOWN THE POWER SUPPLY WITHIN A GREAT SECTION OF THE COUNTRY.

MR. LAITIN: THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION IS THAT THERE IS NO INFORMATION ON THAT AT THIS TIME.

BOB YOUNG: JOE, ON THE SITUATION REGARDING TOMORROW, WILL THERE BE SOMETHING AT THE RANCH, AND, MOST SPECIFICALLY, IS THER ANY POSSIBILITY WE MAY GO OUT THERE?

MR. LAITIN: NO. THIS IS, AS MR. MOYERS EXPLAINED TO YOU YESTERDAY, SIMPLY THE EQUIVALENT OF THE TUESDAY LUNCHEONS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS WITH THESE MEN, AND JUST AS IN WASHINGTON, THESE MEN WOULD NOT NORMALLY BE AVAILABLE TO YOU.

CHUCK BAILEY: DO YOU EXPECT TO HAVE ANY INFORMATION FOR US THROUGH ANY CHANNEL ON WHAT IS DISCUSSED AT THIS MEETING?

MR. LAITIN: PROBABLY NOT.

JUST ONE LITTLE FOOTNOTE TO THE DETAILS I GAVE YOUR THIS MORNING ON THE POWER FAILURE. THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN DIRECTED TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO SPEED UP THE FLOW OF MAIL WHICH WAS HELD UP AS A RESULT OF TUESDAY NIGHT'S BLACKOUT. THIS WILL INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF ALL AVAILABLE MANPOWER AND THE AUTHORIZATION OF ANY NEEDED OVERTIME WORK FOR POSTAL EMPLOYEES.

DICK MCGOWAN: IS THIS THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THAT?

MR. LAITIN: YES, IT IS. POSTMASTER GENERAL LAWRENCE O'BRIEN ADVISES THAT THIS PROJECT WILL INVOLVE THE EXPANDED USE OF AIRLIFT FOR FIRST CLASS LETTERS FOR ACCELERATING DELIVERY OF MAIL TO MORE DISTANT STATES FROM THE NORTHEAST SUCH AS CALIFORNIA, FLORIDA, ETC.

HUGH FLAHERTY: HOW MUCH MAIL IS BACKED UP, JOE?

MR. LAITIN: I DON'T HAVE ANY FIGURES ON THAT, BUT NONE OF THEM WORKED IN ANY OF THE AFFECTED POST OFFICES DURING THE NIGHT, OBVIOUSLY.

BOB PIERPOINT: JOE, COULD YOU GIVE US ANYTHING ON THE PRESIDENT'S REACTION TO THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MET THIS POWER FAILURE, THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE OEP ACTED AND AND THE MILITARY ACTED?

MR. LAITIN: NO, BUT FOR BACKGROUND I CAN TELL YOU THAT I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM THE NEWS DIRECTOR OF A RADIO STATION IN TROY, NEW YORK A SHORT TIME AGO, WHO TOLD ME THAT THEY WERE THE ONLY RADIO STATION THAT WAS FUNCTIONING LAST NIGHT IN THE SCHENECTADY-ALBANY-TROY AREA; THAT THEY COULDN'T MAKE ANY PHONE CALLS, THEIR WIRE SERVICES WERE OUT. THE REASON THE NEWS DIRECTOR CALLED ME WAS TO SAY THAT THIS MORNING THEIR RADIO STATION WAS FLOODED WITH PHONE CALLS FROM LISTENERS WHO ASKED THE STATION TO CALL HERE AND TO EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HAVING MR. MOYERS BRIEFING THEM LAST NIGHT BECAUSE THAT WAS THE ONLY CONTACT THEY HAD, THE ONLY NEWS THEY HAD OF WHAT WAS GOING ON. I ASKED THE NEWS DIRECTOR IF HIS TELETYPES WERE DOWN AND THE PHONES WEREN'T WORKING, HOW WAS HE GETTING INFORMATION? HE SAID THEY WERE MONITORING A RADIO STATION IN ANOTHER CITY.

IF ANYBODY WANTS IT, I CAN GIVE YOU THE STATION'S NAME.

HELEN THOMAS: DOES THE PRESIDENT HAVE ANY PLANS FOR ANY CELEBRATION FOR VETERANS DAY?

MR. LAITIN: I DON'T KNOW IF ANYTHING BUT I'LL CHECK.

M. SMITH: JOE, HAS HE BEEN IN ANY CONTACT AT ALL ABOUT THE CONDITION OF PRESIDENT EISENHOWER TODAY? THERE IS A STORY OUT OF THERE AT 3:59 THAT SAYS THE CHEST DISCOMFORT HAS RETURNED AND HE CANNOT BE MOVED TO WASHINGTON.

MR. LAITIN: THE STAFF AT THE RANCH IS BEING KEPT FULLY INFORMED ON THE SITUATION, SMITTY.

HARLEY PERSHING: JOE, IS THERE ANY INDICATION OF WHEN WE MIGHT LEARN OF WHERE MR. JOHNSON WILL MEET ERHARD, EITHER HERE OR IN WASHINGTON?

MR. LAITIN: NO.

HARLEY PERSHING: I MEAN DO YOU EXPECT IT SOON? OR DO YOU EXPECT IT NEXT WEEK?

MR. LAITIN: WHEN I KNOW, YOU'LL KNOW.

M. SMITH: COULD WE RETURN TO THE QUESTION ABOUT GENERAL EISENHOWER?

WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION DO YOU HAVE ON HIS CONDITION?

MR. LAITIN: WHEN I KNOW

REPEAT LAST LINE

MR. LAITIN: THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION IS FT. GORDON.

BOB THOMPSON: JOE, YOU SAID THAT THE STAFF IS BEING KEPT FULLY INFORMED. IS THE PRESIDENT KEEPING TABS ON EISENHOWER'S CONDITION?

MR. LAITIN: YES, THEY GET REPORTS FROM FT. GORDON.

BOB THOMPSON: HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN RECEIVING THESE REPORTS?

MR. LAITIN: YES.

BOB THOMPSON: WHAT THE PRESIDENT BEEN DOING THIS AFTERNOON?

MR. LAITIN: HE HAS BEEN DOING A LITTLE WORK AT HIS DESK.

JOHN POMFRET: JOE, I NOTICE IN THE RELEASE ABOUT GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER'S APPOINTMENT THAT IT SAYS THAT FORMER GOVERNOR ANDERSON'S MEMBERSHIP

then taking stock, they found themselves still stranded and far from home. Thousands took refuge in National Guard armories thrown open to them after 8 P.M. by Governor Rockefeller.

At 5:27 P.M. Major General Robert E. Condon, director of Civil Defense for New York City, was stepping into an elevator at the Biltmore Hotel when the lobby lights dimmed and died. He made his way to the street. Seeing that all lights were out in the area, he called his headquarters by car radio and alerted civil defense offices in the five boroughs.

Governor Rockefeller was on his way from Kennedy International Airport to his home at 812 Fifth Avenue when darkness struck the city. He had been in Atlanta to attend the National Pure Water Conference of the National Association of City Officers. As his car was leaving the East River Drive in Manhattan the Governor noticed the snarled traffic, and then the pitch dark. He went home and climbed the fifteen stories to his apartment. He had a candlelight dinner with his wife, then took her with him to his New York office at 22 West 55th Street. It was 7:30 when he arrived. By then the gravity of the situation was clear. Mr. Rockefeller ordered out the National Guard and took other emergency measures. He worked by the light of flashlights and candles lent by a nearby restaurant. Mr. Rockefeller then made statements for the leading radio stations. For his message to get on the National Broadcasting Company network he had to call the network affiliate in Chicago by telephone, which in turn relayed the message to the station in New York and on to the air. Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller went home about midnight, climbing those fifteen flights again. They had several hours to wait before the lights went on.

President Johnson received word of the massive power failure at 6 P.M. Except for a quick meal, he was at his desk until he went to bed at 1 A.M. At the height of the crisis he was talking to Mr. Ellington in Washington every five or ten minutes.

Mayor Wagner, who was to leave after twelve years as Mayor on December 31, was in his car on the East River Drive when the power failed. Using his telephone connection to the Fire Department radio, he established the seriousness of the situation and turned the limousine back to City Hall. The snarled traffic caused him a half-hour delay. He conferred with his Emergency Control Board until long after midnight.

Mayor-elect John V. Lindsay was about to enter an elevator at radio station WEVD, 117 West 46th Street, when the power failed. He was scheduled to tape an interview with Victor

Riesel, the syndicated labor columnist, who is blind. Mr. Riesel, who had arrived a moment earlier, was trapped in an elevator near the second floor. Mr. Lindsay ran to the second floor and shouted encouragement, then left for a candlelight dinner engagement with his campaign staff while workers tried to extricate Mr. Riesel. Some observers said later it was odd that Mr. Lindsay had not been invited to the City Hall conference. An aide said Mayor Wagner had felt that it was his responsibility to deal with the problems of the city until December 31.

By 6 P.M. that night it was obvious that the city was in deep trouble. Most of those in the subways were able to make their way to the darkened streets immediately. But there were more than ten thousand for whom what promised to be a quick ride home turned into a seven-hour incarceration. The most difficult evacuation took place just after 10:30, when seventeen hundred passengers were escorted from four trains on the Williamsburg Bridge high above the East River. They had been stranded for five hours.

Throughout the system, with emergency lights glowing, subway attendants and policemen walked deep into the tunnels and far out on elevated structures to lead passengers to safety. An IRT train stalled underneath the East River between the Grand Central and Vernon-Jackson stations. After a two-hour wait in dimly lit cars, the passengers were led by Transit Authority policemen two thousand yards to the Queens station and, finally, the street and fresh air. The passengers coming from powerless trains gave similar reports. They said most trains sputtered into stations, moving in fits and starts as the lights grew dimmer. The lights finally went out, the trains stood still, the doors opened. Most passengers sat and waited, striking up conversations. Most of the irritation was taken out in sarcasm.

Mrs. Yael Klein of 360 Cabrini Boulevard said that her northbound IND Eighth Avenue train had stalled halfway out of the 168th Street station and that a conductor had entered the car with a flashlight and said there was a power shortage. The passengers were then led out of the cars by the conductor, Mrs. Klein recalled. The exit was orderly. Passengers joked as they trooped to the street above. At some places, subway workers were brisk and terse in the manner of New York conductors. At the northbound IRT platform at Broadway and 42nd Street, a Transit policeman walked along a stalled train and shouted: "O.K. Trains not running. Everybody out." Policemen were assigned to help in the evacuation and to keep anyone from walking into the stations. "You don't want to go in there," said a policeman at the IND station at 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue, as he pointed down a flight of stairs

Mr. McNamara and other top foreign policy advisors to come to the ranch two days later for a conference. He ate lunch with Mrs. Johnson and took his customary nap. It was later in the afternoon that he began his drive around the Texas hill country. He loves this country and finds a sense of well-being and peace there. As the sun begins to go down behind the rough hard-scrabble hills, Mr. Johnson often takes his car out on the public roads to see the deer and watch the sunset.

The sun was soon to disappear, leaving Texas in darkness, when the President's radio told him of the startling loss of light in the eastern cities and towns and hamlets.

Completing his calls to Mr. Ellington and Mr. McNamara, the President next talked to Joseph A. Califano, Jr., one of his special assistants, who was also in Washington. His fourth call was to his press secretary, Bill D. Moyers, who had established the temporary White House press headquarters at the Duskill Hotel in Austin, sixty-five miles east of the President's ranch.

It was not very long before the President was sitting at his desk in the white ranch house, where, except for a quick meal in the dining room only several steps away, he remained in office and conference by telephone throughout the evening, until he went to bed at 1 o'clock in the morning.

The President gave directions for full Federal assistance to the governors of all the darkened states and received assurances from the Pentagon that all defense systems were "go" safely intact and smoothly operating. Every military installation, the Pentagon announced, had auxiliary power systems, and these had "kicked on," usually automatically, where the lights in the stricken zones flickered, then died.

Confident that he had cleared his desk of first-priority measures for the emergencies at hand and the President turned quickly to his concern for the future security of the people and the country. He dispatched this urgent memorandum to Joseph C. Swidler, chairman of the Federal Power Commission.

"Today's failure is a dramatic reminder of the importance of the uninterrupted flow of power to the health, safety and well-being of our citizens and to the defense of our country. This failure should be immediately and carefully investigated in order to prevent a recurrence. You are therefore directed to launch immediately a thorough study of the causes of this.

"I am putting at your disposal the full resources of the Federal Government and directing the Federal Bureau of

7. A Call from the President

As the President and Mrs. Johnson rode a few miles north of their Texas ranch, the radio in their white Lincoln Continental turned in to the 6 o'clock news broadcast. President Johnson heard the report that sudden darkness had blanketed New York City and great areas of the northeast.

His quick concern as President was for the people—their health, their well-being, their safety. His quick concern as Commander-in-Chief was for the defense of the country.

His first act was to reach for the receiver of his radio-telephone and call Buford Ellington, director of the Office of Emergency Planning, and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. While he talked, the putting car closed the distance to the LBJ ranch.

The blackout crisis was proof again that for the President there is never escape from office. He had gone to his ranch near Johnson City, seventeen days earlier to recuperate from surgery, performed on Oct. 8, to remove his gall bladder and a kidney stone.

The ranch is home for the President, his retreat, his return to himself, and he tries there to keep the chores of the Presidency to their minimum. The day started quietly. He had arisen early, by custom, and had received word from his Armed Forces aide, Colonel James Cross, and his personal physician, Vice Admiral George G. Burkley, on the hospitalization of General Eisenhower at Fort Gordon, Georgia. The President telephoned Mrs. Eisenhower, then sent a wire to the general.

Following his doctor's standing orders, President Johnson took a walk around his ranch, then went to his desk to check some documents. He approved a reorganization of some of the operations of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and gave directions to have Secretary of State Dean Rusk,

Investigation, the Department of Defense and other Government agencies to support you in any way possible.

"You are to call upon the top experts in your action in

conducting this investigation. A report is expected at the

earliest possible moment as to the causes of the failure and the

steps you **recommend** to be taken to prevent a recurrence."

People in trouble and **rarely** have there been such sudden

full-scale trouble and potential peril as there were that Tuesday

night of darkness-means also and instantaneously that a

nation's defenses may be down, it was the military security

of the United States that created that might so much concern

in so many places.

Mr. Moyers, who from the Colonial Room of the hotel was

furnishing the news and developments from the temporary

White House in Texas to an anxious nation, was asked about

the President's reference to the Federal Bureau of Investigation

in the **directive** to the Federal Power Commission. Did this

mean that the Government believed sabotage was involved?

Mr. Moyers, cool as always, replied:

"This indicates nothing other than that all the resources

of the Government are to be at the disposal of the Federal

Power Commission in making the investigation."

He added that the President had not talked with J. Edgar

Hoover, director of the bureau, but had indicated to the

Justice Department and other Federal agencies that he wanted

complete cooperation in the inquiry.

In the usually **uncommunicative headquarters** of the FBI

in Washington nobody talked, on the record or off the record.

The assumption was, however, that agents of the investigative

agency had moved at once, fanning through the blacked-out

regions and checking with the local police departments.

As the hours passed, however, and then as the days went

by, sabotage did not emerge as the villain. But uneasy in

many minds was the thought that it **could** have been sabotage,

that it indeed the darkness that suddenly engulfed 30 million

Americans was finally traceable to a single "unimportant"

power plant going out of whack, might it not then be equally

plausible for half a dozen saboteurs to **paralyze** the country's

vast interconnected power systems simply by cutting a few

wires?

The question-and the **grim** possibilities--raised another

question-and even more grim possibilities-on the vital issue

of survival: defense. Were the country's defenses also vul-

nerable when so much of the power that feeds the armed forces

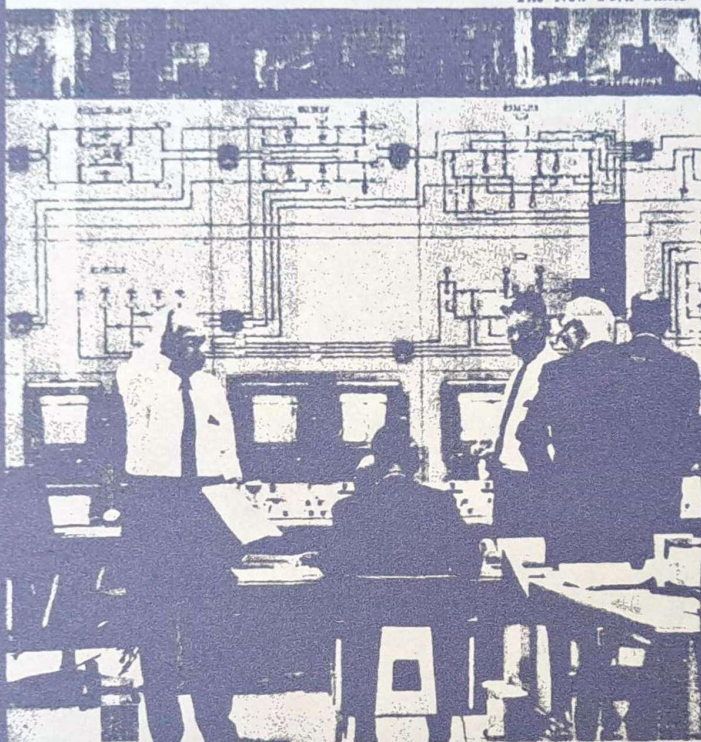
could short circuit into nothingness?

All the information that has been given out by officials of

the Department of Defense and all the information that has

The blackened city seen from New Jersey.

The New York Times



Consolidated Edison Energy Control Center's night crew.

been pyramided by probing reporters add up to evidence that the defense network functioned smoothly.

From General Thomas **Powers**, the blunt-spoken man who once **commanded** the Strategic Air **Command** and is now in retirement, came the most terse and assuring comment on the continuing operations of one of the **country's** most vital defenses--SAC.

"The Strategic Air **Command** has its own methods of generating power," he said. "It doesn't depend on anybody."

Confident in their system that provides **auxiliary**—completely independent—power at all Air Force, Army and Navy installations, officials at the Pentagon nevertheless checked major military stations throughout the country in a swift **pre**-cautionary measure when the blackout descended. They declared that military operations and communications had not been seriously affected. The word "seriously" was apparently a bit of military conservatism. The Pentagon meant that its bases had not been totally uninvolved, but, caught for the moment in the blackout, they had been able to switch to their own power sources.

The statements out of the Pentagon did not quiet all fears. Representative L. **Mendel** Rivers, Democrat of South Carolina and chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called on Mr. **McNamara** to make a "full report" on the effect of the power failure on national defense.

"Such a failure must come as a great shock to the American people, for it indicates a heretofore unrealized vulnerability that could have most serious consequences," Representative Rivers said to the Secretary of Defense.

There was one report that the Nike Hercules base near Hartford, one in a series of air defense installations housing batteries of anti-aircraft missiles, had been **immobilized** by the blackout. But inquiry at the Pentagon produced only the comment that investigators were "looking into everything" and would make their report through the Federal Power Commission to the President. Unofficially, spokesmen at the Pentagon were acknowledging that the defense communication **system** probably had not been "perfect." A reporter making a call to the White House telecommunications center three days after the blackout was told that everyone in the center was very busy "re-examining how we came out."

Nobody would openly discuss the "hot line"—the special telephone that connects the White House with the **Kremlin**—when inquiries were made to determine if the vast blackout had shown weaknesses that could someday critically delay communications between the heads of the two great nations. But it was indicated **unofficially** that the "hot line" had not been

affected, and those who know the operational procedures at the White House noted that there were "several" alternatives available to keep the power working on the key link.

It is these "alternatives," or "back-up systems" or what in military jargon is called "redundant systems," that kept defense installations free of the crippling power failures.

While there was some initial and very brief trouble during the blackout, quick switching of power sources made it possible for the Pentagon to communicate with every base and depot.

First to be checked during the early and suspenseful minutes of darkness were the three regional bases of the Strategic Air Command: the Westover Air Force Base at Springfield, Mass., the Griffiss Air Force Base at Rome, N. Y., and the Plattsburg, N. Y. Air Force Base. Simultaneous checks were made with other major installations, including SAC headquarters at Omaha and the North American Air Defense headquarters in Colorado Springs.

"There are reports of difficulty on some land lines, but there are adequate alternate routes to take care of such emergencies," the Pentagon reported shortly after the civilian power network collapsed.

Independent generators on the tiny island post of Fort Jay in the middle of New York harbor, headquarters of the First Army, kept military activities there in full swing; soldiers and their families stared from the windows of their old red-brick barracks at the eerie scene of a lightless metropolis looming up from dark waters.

Throughout New York and New England the lights at the military landing fields blazed brightly from their own generating sources, and in many instances commercial aircraft, their pilots dismayed as cities below them suddenly vanished, winged in for safe landings on military strips.

The Navy, with a number of warships in darkened harbors along the coast, dispatched them to power stations and hooked them up together to provide temporary electricity, while the Army rolled out many of its portable generators and lent them to critical land spots to give power.

Typical of the emergency service offered stricken land areas by naval ships was the case of the U.S.S. Bristol, a reserve training ship berthed at the naval shipyard in Brooklyn. The destroyer, which has two steam and two diesel turbines capable of generating 500 kilowatts, was ordered to proceed to two plants of the Consolidated Edison Company.

With Commander William S. Butler on the bridge, and a skeleton crew of 60 officers and men aboard, the Bristol left the naval base five hours after the city's lights began flickering, arriving at the Consolidated Edison plant on the East River at

Astoria, Queens, about midnight. The remainder of the ship's crew, another 60 officers and men, had gone on shore leave earlier.

Before leaving the naval base, Commander Butler took aboard a supply of electrical feeder cables to use in transmitting power from the ship's engine room to the plants on shore.

When the Bristol arrived at the Astoria plant emergency crews there already had the generators going again. Two hours later and four miles down the river the Bristol found that the second plant at 14th Street & Manhattan had also been able to get going again. But the Bristol anchored in the middle of the East River and stood by through the night, symbol of the defense elements essentially untouched by the crisis but ready to serve as needed.

Responding to orders from the President to help wherever they could, the military services offered all kinds of assistance. The naval air station at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn supplied mobile power units to keep the lights and vital equipment in operation at Brooklyn General Hospital. One hospital received a shipment of ice from the naval shipyard in Brooklyn.

But for the military services the military needs, of course, came first, and it is these critical needs that were fully met, according to the Pentagon spokesmen. Washington was virtually unaffected by the blackout, except for a momentary "dip" in the local power system, but had the nation's capital suffered a power collapse the Pentagon could have kept in full operation through the use of its own auxiliary sources.

But if the Pentagon were someday to be eliminated—a direct missile hit, perhaps, crippling all communications—there are still a number of communication alternatives to link the crews flying on SAC patrols and the men underground in the missile silos across the country, according to Defense Department officials. They say that the blackout, insofar as it affected the military network at all, demonstrated dramatically how independent their own communications and power plant systems were. How many communication alternatives are available to military posts if the regular commercial links are broken are often a military secret, but in some highly sensitive installations there are reported to be "four or more" separate systems.

In many defense posts an auxiliary generating plant "kicks in" automatically within sixty seconds of the moment that the civilian power source fades, while in the major defense installations—the SAC airdromes, for example, and other key bases—the "back-up generator" is keyed for instantaneous switch-in.

Pentagon officials say that they did not need to wait for the blackout crisis to test the readiness of their standby generat-

affected, and those who know the operational procedures at the White House noted that there were "several" alternatives always available to keep the power working on the key link.

It is these "alternatives," or "back-up systems" or what in military jargon is called "redundant systems," that kept defense installations free of the crippling power failures.

While there was some initial and very brief trouble during the blackout, quick switching of power sources made it possible for the Pentagon to communicate with every base and depot.

First to be checked during the early and suspenseful minutes of darkness were the three regional bases of the Strategic Air Command: the Westover Air Force Base at Springfield, Mass., the Griffiss Air Force Base at Rome, N. Y., and the Plattsburg, N. Y. Air Force Base. Simultaneous checks were made with other major installations, including SAC headquarters at Omaha and the North American Air Defense headquarters in Colorado Springs.

"There are reports of difficulty on some land lines, but there are adequate alternate routes to take care of such emergencies," the Pentagon reported shortly after the civilian power network collapsed.

Independent generators on the tiny island post of Fort Jay in the middle of New York harbor, headquarters of the First Army, kept military activities there in full swing; soldiers and their families stared from the windows of their old red-brick barracks at the eerie scene of a lightless metropolis looming up from dark waters.

Throughout New York and New England the lights at the military landing fields blazed brightly from their own generating sources, and in many instances commercial aircraft, their pilots dismayed as cities below them suddenly vanished, Winged in for safe landings on military strips.

The Navy, with a number of warships in darkened harbors along the coast, dispatched them to power stations and hooked them up together to provide temporary electricity, while the Army rolled out many of its portable generators and lent them to critical land spots to give power.

Typical of the emergency service offered stricken land areas by naval ships was the case of the U.S.S. Bristol, a reserve training ship berthed at the naval shipyard in Brooklyn. The destroyer, which has two steam and two diesel turbines capable of generating 500 kilowatts, was ordered to proceed to two plants of the Consolidated Edison Company.

With Commander William S. Butler on the bridge, and a skeleton crew of 60 officers and men aboard, the Bristol left the naval base five hours after the city's lights began flickering, arriving at the Consolidated Edison plant on the East River at

Astoria, Queens, about midnight. The remainder of the ship's crew, another 60 officers and men, had gone on shore leave earlier.

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automatically when the blackout came. It marked the first time that all the standby generators operated simultaneously, to provide continued service for 9.7 million telephones in the state. Not so certain was the efficiency of the civil defense system during the crisis. Some military officials in Washington conceded privately that the blackout showed, as one officer put it, "a type of vulnerability," but they tended to regard it as more of a police and civil defense problem than a military one. Less pessimistic judgments were made, however, by the Civil Defense authorities themselves, who said they regarded the experience as a successful demonstration of their operations. A spokesman declared: "Our job is to keep people informed, and we did. There was no panic."

While military officials were checking their vital installations in the darkened areas, the Civil Defense chiefs communicated with each of seven hundred warning points throughout the country.

The first Civil Defense calls went to the ninety-seven warning points in Region I, covering eight states in the Northeast. Within two to five minutes, a spokesman reported all communication points were in contact with headquarters in Washington. Civil Defense warning stations were apparently able to relay complete reports of what was going on. These relays went in two directions—providing information about a local area to Civil Defense headquarters and providing to local areas reports received from Washington.

But liaison may not always have been as smooth as Civil Defense spokesmen contended. Governor Rockefeller, for example, quickly complained that he was unable to communicate with the Federal Government had failed to implement a new civil defense communications system in the state. The governor reached the public by individual radio stations. In some cases he went on "live," in others, his message on what authorities were doing about the emergency was taped.

Mr. Rockefeller characterized the lack of such a system as a "major weakness" in emergency procedures. He said that the old Conelrad civil defense system, in which two points on the radio dial provided reception in an emergency, was abandoned two years earlier. In its stead, a straight Federal subsidy to twenty-five radio stations in the state, to pay for diesel- or gas-oline-powered auxiliary generators then was proposed to enable the stations to remain on the air in emergencies.

Mr. Rockefeller said that the \$1 million or less needed for the subsidy has not been made available.

But civil defense officials in New York City said information during the emergency had been received and relayed

ing units. At the key defense bases the auxiliary power units are tested every week, lasting for four hours.

The city went up quickly after the blackout ended: why can't the rest of us have "back-up" and "alternative" systems, if the Army and the Navy and the Air Force can have them? The Army and the Air Force say there is no great secret to their success, they simply are forced to install their several systems, for reasons of national security, and both the cost, which is enormous. The stockholder and the taxpayer, they note, are not likely to approve spending that kind of money for less than urgent provisions.

In his column in *The Nation*, written the day after the power blackout for the editorial page of *The New York Times*, Arthur Krock touched on another aspect of this question. He stated that it had been "amply proved to about thirty millions of Americans last night that vast reciprocal integration of the industrial sources of power and light, a corollary of the federalization concept, can create a calamity of the same size instead of compensating for a local failure." Mr. Krock, arguing that bureaucratic doctrine and procedures did not deserve all the blame, paid special tribute to the armed forces:

"The armed forces contain bureaucracies, too, and more of its members are in uniform than not. However, it is notable that there was no breakdown of communications or electronic installations in the defense centers last night. And this fact, taken in conjunction with the Navy's solution of the problem which overwhelmed the light and power companies through the United States-Canadian complex, called *Canus*, suggests that the investigation the President has ordered may reveal a superior competence in the military administration of these facilities, where the political issue of public versus private power does not reach."

The Navy was confronted by the problem when the electrical system on the battleship *North Dakota* failed and the vessel was exposed for fourteen minutes to a Japanese bombardment it was unable to return. Immediately orders went out for the installation of auxiliary power and for a schedule of constant drills in turning it on. Also, the experience of the *North Dakota* was made the basis of meticulous and successful planning for anything electric or electronic which might conceivably go wrong.

The "back-up" principle, as a matter of fact, was also in use by the telephone companies, which helped to keep the defense establishments working without any real interruption. For example, there are 505 buildings operated by the New York Telephone Company in New York and in each one of these 505 structures a standby diesel generator switched on

through the entire Northeast region by a radio-telephone network of the North American Air Warning System. This is a 24-hour-a-day hookup under the North American Air Defense Command.

Less technical, and much more pictorial and dramatic, was the convergence in armories of National Guardsmen summoned by radio and telephone to emergency duty. More than five thousand of them, mostly men of the 42d (Rainbow) Division and the XVII Corps Artillery, turned up in armories in New York City to help the police lead stranded subway riders from dark tunnels, direct traffic and rush emergency generators to hospitals. The Guardsmen opened their armories to shelter hundreds of New Yorkers and visitors to New York, who had no way of getting home. Hundreds of them spent the night trying to sleep on floors or in wooden chairs.

Civil Defense headquarters at 135 East 55th Street resembled a wartime command post, dimly lit by battery-powered battle lamps. The city's Civil Defense director, Major General Robert E. Condon, sent generator-communications units to City Hall, police stations and firehouses.

General Condon would not estimate the number of Civil Defense workers who turned out in New York City to meet the crisis, but other officials gave a guess that the total may have been as high as 200,000.

All of this was soon history, soon the stuff of personal recollections to be told and retold, but it was also something that made for uneasy memory. There was every sign that the nation's defenses had met the crisis, had demonstrated clearly that they could keep functioning within a wide area of paralysis.

At the same time, every crisis teaches, and the Eastern blackout had its own lessons to give, its own implications for the terrible day that could come when vast paralysis might be prelude or part of war. For a long time after the lights went out in the country's Northeast regions the lights burned specially brightly in the Pentagon as strategists analyzed the crisis, studied its import and planned.

8. The Fail-Safe Syndrome

Few events since the last war have awakened such deep uneasiness as did those of Nov. 9, 1965. When reports began coming in that communities as widely separated as New York and Boston had been hit, ill-defined fear took hold of many citizens. It seemed impossible that so many cities could be struck by a single accident. The only alternative explanation was that the blackouts were occurring by design. What did that mean? Was it sabotage, prelude to an attack? Was it a demonstration against the Vietnam war by a group of technically trained students? Or was it merely a surprise test of Civil Defense capabilities?

When later reports indicated that none of these was the probable explanation—that a single, inadvertent malfunction of some sort had knocked out the entire system—then fear for the present shifted to fear for the future.

In the first place, it was evident that a single ingenious saboteur could paralyze a large number of our cities. Secondly, it had been demonstrated with terrible effectiveness that our most sophisticated technology is far from foolproof. The electronics and automation of electric power generation, control and distribution over the most populous section of the country are not far removed from another family of highly automated systems—those relating to our national defense. Across the country Minutemen Missiles stand ready in their underground silos, each with its designated target in the Soviet Union. Across the Arctic Ocean there are other missiles, aimed at American targets. Supposedly no one man—and no one accident—can launch one of these weapons inadvertently. The chances, we have been told, that a nuclear holocaust could be started by accident are virtually zero.

Yet there is the "fail-safe syndrome"—the fear that this could occur despite all the safeguards. Fail-safe procedures are

9. Mr. Moyers

In time of crisis, when a nation is confronted by the unknown and a whole people are puzzled and afraid, information-the facts, the honest appraisals-becomes one of the most acute concerns of efficient government.

President Johnson, after hearing on his radio about the massive power failure, made his first of four emergency calls on his radio-telephone to Bill D. Moyers, the White House press secretary.

Mr. Moyers had established the temporary White House press headquarters in the second-floor Colonial Room of the Driskill Hotel in Austin, an hour's fast drive from the President's ranch. The call from the President reached the 31-year-old press secretary in his own third-floor hotel suite. Half an hour earlier he had completed his routine afternoon briefing for the corps of reporters covering the temporary White House, so most of the newsmen were still in the Colonial Room preparing or writing their stories. Those who were not were quickly rounded up, and Mr. Moyers began a **marathon briefing** that continued on and off for about seven hours.

As the hours wore on, the air became foul with tobacco smoke and the odors of stale food. Mr. Moyers stood at a lectern at the front of the room, alternately taking telephone calls from the President and his aides and then relaying information to the reporters. For emphasis he occasionally jabbed the air with a long, **thin**, black Brazilian cigar.

The briefings began so quickly and went on so late that no stenotypist was on hand to take down all of the **briefing sessions** by Mr. Moyers. Here, for the record, are **reconstructions** of some of Mr. Moyers' briefings that night on the blackout crisis, taken from the notes of John D. Pomfret, correspondent there for *The New York Times*. The parts that

were recorded. **in an official White House transcript** are so marked.

Mr. Moyers first reported on the **President's** initial telephone calls from his car. He said that **the President had told them to stay on top of the situation as long as necessary, to report to him frequently and to offer the governors of the affected states all possible Federal Assistance.**

Mr. Moyers said that initial reports indicated that the source of the trouble might be a break in the power line running from Niagara Falls south at a point between Rochester and Buffalo.

He said that Mr. Califano had telephoned an aide in Gov. Rockefeller's office who had reported that the Governor was in a plane at the time of the failure and had been unable to land at Albany because the runway lights were out.

Mr. Ellington, he said, had asked that the people in the affected area use as little electricity as possible as their power was restored to avoid putting additional strain on emergency sources of electricity.

On the President's orders, **Mr. Moyers said, Secretary McNamara had opened all military airfields in the area to commercial airplane traffic** and had instructed **military commanders in the area to offer all assistance at their disposal to officials of communities in their vicinities.**

Mr. Moyers tentatively **identified** the extent of the area affected as parts of New York, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Toronto. He said that A. O. O'Connor, the Regional Director of the Office of Emergency Planning in Massachusetts, at that moment had a conference **call** underway with governors **in the affected region in an effort to determine the exact extent of the area.**

Meanwhile, in Washington, Dr. Donald Hornig, the President's science advisor, was at work in Washington trying to **discover** the cause of the failure.

Dr. Hornig reported frequently during the evening to the President, then to Mr. Moyers. After talking **with** Dr. Hornig shortly before 7 P.M.—8 o'clock in the east—Mr. Moyers gave this report:

Dr. Hornig has just told the President that the best information we have at the moment is that the failure **started in the area of the Niagara-Mohawk Power Company near Syracuse. According to Dr. Hornig, it was**

not the Niagara Falls generator. The situation spread **essentially** by the domino effect—the **cascading effect**—from one switching point to another. **As** one failed in one area, this overloaded the **next**, it went out, **overloading** the one down the line, and so on. Our latest information is that they have not yet isolated the source of the original trouble. We are trying by **all possible means** to track that down.

Mr. Moyers continued: the Niagara **Falls-Massena**, N. Y., facilities are back in operation. Power is back on in the Rochester area. Consolidated Edison **has** informed Dr. Homig that they expect to have some power on within the hour and a fairly substantial amount in about three hours.

President Johnson said that he ordered Gov. **Ellington** to send the regional O.E.P. people out tonight to make an **on-the-spot** survey to see what would be needed in the way of items such as medical supplies and water.

Joe Califano has told the President that Gen. William McGee, head of the Federal Aviation Agency, has informed him that plane8 are landing at both Kennedy and **LaGuardia** Airports in New York now, the **fields** are using emergency lighting, but they are diverting a tremendous number of **flights** from Philadelphia, Boston and Albany and some flights from Kennedy to the south and west.

Mayor Wagner has reported to Joe Califano from New York that mainly the situation, as far as possible, is under control. **All** the emergency services of hospitals are operating. Fire and police stations are taking care of thousands of people stranded in the city. There **has** been a slight easing of the **traffic** jam clogging the streets.

At this point Mr. Moyers took a brief rest and then returned to the platform at 8: 30 P.M.

Following is the official White House transcript of this part of the briefing:

Mr. Moyers: The following is a memorandum already dispatched to the Chairman of the Federal Power Commission by the President:

Q. What is his name?

Mr. Moyers: Joseph C. Swidler.

"Today's failure is a dramatic reminder of the **importance** of the uninterrupted flow of power to, the

health, safety and well being of our citizens and to the defense of our country. **This** failure should be **immediately** and carefully investigated in order **to** 'prevent a recurrence. You are **therefore** directed to launch **immediately** a thorough study of the causes of this failure. **I** am putting at your disposal the full resources of the Federal Government and directing the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Defense, and other government agencies to support you in any way **possible**. You are to call upon the top experts in our nation in conducting this investigation. A report is expected at the earliest possible moment as to the causes of the failure and the steps you recommend to be taken to prevent a recurrence."

Q. Bii, does this in any way indicate there may be sabotage?

Mr. Moyers: This indicates nothing **other** than the fact that all of the resources of the government should be made available to the Federal Power Commission as they conduct an investigation.

Q. Bill, would you rule out nationalization as one of the steps to be taken?

Mr. Moyers: Would I what?

Q. Rule out nationalization of the power **companies** as one of the steps to be taken?

Mr. Moyers: That's not in anybody's mind.

Q. Bill, Swidler is retiring-resigning from his job on the 15th. Does that mean he will stay on until this investigation is over?

Q. What was the question?

Mr. Moyers: The question is that Mr. Swidler **has** already announced that he will be leaving the **chairmanship** of the Federal Power Commission—I don't know the **exact date**. What d&s this mean? It means that this memorandum will go to Mr. **Swidler** and whoever is chairman of the Federal Power Commission, of **course**, will be conducting the investigation.

(The next day, the White House announced that a few hours before the blackout, the President, through Mr. Califano, had asked Mr. Swidler to remain as F.P.C. chairman until Dec. 31, and that the next **morning** he had agreed.)

Q. Bill, has the President talked directly to J. Edgar Hoover (director of the F.B.I.) in connection with this situation.

Mr. Moyers: No. The President has communicated to the Justice Department—to the Attorney **General**—

his desire that the Department of Justice, and other agencies of the government, cooperate in this study.

Q. Did he talk to Attorney General (Nicholas de B.) Katzenbach?

Mr. Moyers: I am not sure that he talked personally to Attorney General Katzenbach, but the instructions of the President have gone to the Attorney General as, in fact, they have gone to other department heads and agency directors.

Q. This means that most of us will have to **file separately**. I am still centered around the President. Can you give us a little personal insight as to where he is sitting doing this?

Mr. Moyers: The President is at his desk in his office at the ranch, where he has full communications facilities available to maintain constant touch with the appropriate officials. He receives calls at least every five minutes, giving him information on an up-to-date basis of what is happening.

Q. When and how did he learn of the blackout?

Mr. Moyers: The President **first** heard of the power failure when he was just a little north of his ranch, riding out in his car, listening to a radio newscast. He immediately, through the very excellent, modern, and highly efficient communications system that accompanies the President wherever he goes, was in touch with special assistant Joseph Califano back in Washington, who, by the way, had not heard about it by the time the President called, Secretary **McNamara**, Governor Buford Ellington, who is the Director of the Office of Emergency Planning, and his press secretary. The President returned in a matter of minutes to his office at the ranch, **where** he has been this evening receiving reports and issuing instructions to appropriate officials of the government.

Q. Some of the reporters were in the room when you made the announcement and have left. My question is whether they are filing?

Mr. Moyers: I have no idea.

Q. Bill, would you repeat your announcement for film?

Mr. Moyers: Yes.

Q. Were these telephone calls made from the President's car to Buford Ellington and Secretary **McNamara**?

Mr. Moyers: He talked to each of them.

Q. In the car?

Q. When you say he received a report from his radio, you **don't** mean it **was** over NBC or CBS, it was over his **2-way radio**?

Mr. Moyers: It was **over** a regularly **announced** newscast.

Q. You mention here a reference to the Defense Department. Does this in any way mean there is **something** happening with the defense system tonight?

Mr. Moyers: No. It means that a power **failure could** have an effect **on** the defense system. The power is essential to the defense of our country.

Q. So **far as you know**, there was no interruption to any of the **warning system**?

Mr. Moyers: That is correct.

Q. Bill, do they yet know the cause of what caused the chain reaction?

Mr. **Moyers**: No.

Q. Bill, do you happen to anticipate **making** any further announcements tonight?

Mr. Moyers: I will put out anything I have **concerning** future developments from here as I get them. I really don't anticipate much, but I will put out anything we **get**.

Q. What is the atmosphere in the President's **office**?

Mr. Moyers: The atmosphere in the President's **office** is one of quiet efficiency.

Q. Who did he call **first**, Secretary McNamara or Mr. **Califano**?

Moyers: I don't have the exact order. I think it was Buford Ellington, Secretary McNamara, Mr. Califano, and then the press secretary, in that order.

Q. Bill, the last we had from you was that they had not yet isolated the original source of the trouble. Is that still the case?

Mr. Moyers: That is still the case.

Q. Who is out there with the President helping him?

Mr. Moyers: Marvin Watson (presidential appointments secretary), Col. James Cross (the President's armed forces aide).

Q. How many secretaries are there, two or three?

Mr. Moyers: Three. Vickie **McCammon**, Marie **Fehmer**, and Miss Ginny Thrift, who is Col. Cross' secretary and who also helps the President from time-to-time.

Dr. (Donald) Hornig, who is the President's science adviser, said he talked again to the President of the Niagara Mohawk Power Company, Mr. Minot Pratt, who is not able to confirm or deny the already **mention-**

ed report that the power failure occurred in his jurisdiction. He simply said it has not been located yet.

Dr. Homig also talked to Mr. William S. Chapin, who is the general manager of the New York State Power Authority to confirm that the Niagara Falls and the **Messena** plants are operating.

Q. Bill, Who was in the President's car when this was made known to him?

Mr. Moyers: I don't know.

Mr. Califano has just informed the President that Governor (William W.) Scranton has reported to the White House that power is back in the State of Pennsylvania, that the area **affected** in Pennsylvania was less than earlier believed, and that the power companies have told Governor Scranton that they expect no more problems during the night in that state.

Q. Bill, how long ago was that conversation with Governor Scranton?

Mr. Moyers: The President did not talk to Governor Scranton. Mr. Califano talked to Governor Scranton, and he related the information to the President. Governor Scranton talked to Mr. Califano about 10 minutes ago.

Q. Has Mr. Califano had any dinner yet?

Mr. Moyers: No.

Q. Has the President eaten?

Mr. Moyers: Yes.

Q. Bill, can you tell us what time it was when the President was told of General Eisenhower's illness this morning?

Mr. Moyers: It was about 6:15.

Q. Has anyone in the Federal Government raised the possibility of sabotage?

Mr. Moyers: I don't know anyone who has raised that possibility. The President believes that the Federal Bureau of Investigation should be involved in this study because it does have resources that should be of help during the study to **find** out specifically what happened when the power failed.

Q. But the government is not ruling out the possibility?

Mr. Moyers: That is correct. I know of no one who has talked about the problem of sabotage and, **therefore**, it is not ruled in or ruled out.

Q. Did the President eat at his desk?

Mr. Moyers: No.

(Mr. Moyers took a brief break and resumed his briefing at 9:40 P.M., 10:40 in the East)

Mr. Moyers: The President has **just** talked to Governor Rockefeller and Mayor Wagner, both of whom assured him that they would cooperate fully in the investigation ordered tonight by the President through the Federal Power Commission.

Mayor Wagner informed the President that it appeared that about one-third of the power in New York City was operating again.

I talked to Dr. Donald Homig, the President's science adviser, who has been on the phone constantly this evening with people in the local power companies, and Dr. Homig says that those people believe that while the original source has not been pinpointed, they, that is, the officials of the power companies and others **concerned** with the problem in New England, are, and this is Dr. Homig's quote, pretty well agreed upon the belief that there is substantially no chance of sabotage. End quote.

In fact, **while I** repeat the original source has not been pinpointed, there are some people who are most concerned with **the** problem in the power companies and in the New York State Power Authority, who believe that this could have happened as a result of a failure in the automatic frequency control equipment. I **Want to** emphasize that this is purely conjectural, but it is one of the routes down which your mind could lead you as you study **the** problem from the standpoint of engineering and technology.

There has not been, Dr. Homig informs me, much time for diagnosis, and, he repeated to me with **inflection** that seemed to underscore his statement, no one knows exactly what did happen.

Officials in New York, and again I repeat that this is unproved and conjectural, but officials in New York are saying that the **difficulty** may lie on two lines carrying the main power supply between Rochester and Clay, New York, at a point approximately one hundred miles between these two cities. According to these **officials**, the only way to determine if that in fact is the point of disruption is to trace these two lines manually, that is, to walk them, and they have already started the tracing process.

If by in the morning at daylight they have been **un-**

able manually to locate the problem, they will use helicopters.

Let me again emphasize however that this is not authoritative and this is not firm. This is, again, one of the routes down which you could go in pursuing the possibilities of the source of the problem.

Q. You say the New York City Power Authority people have been speculating on this?

Mr. Moyers: Yes, officials of the New York State Power Authority have been speculating in this.

Q. Whose lines are these-Niagara's or Mohawk's?

Mr. Moyers: I don't know.

Q. This point a hundred miles between the two locations doesn't mean anything to me.

Mr. Moyers: We can check that on the map. Governor Volpe (John) has informed the White House that 60 per cent of the power is back on in Boston.

(Mr. Moyers went out and came back at 10:35 P.M.-11:35 in the east.)

Mr. Moyers: Mr. Swidler has communicated to the President the following steps taken to implement the President's directive to investigate the causes of the power breakdown.

1. A telegram has been sent to all of the major companies involved, requesting that they assemble the relevant facts as to the impact of the interruption on their systems and the steps taken to restore service.

2. A group of electric power system operation experts from various private and public power systems throughout the country will meet tomorrow in Washington to help plan the details of the investigation.

3. As I have already informed you, Mr. Swidler has been in communication directly with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense to assure continuing liaison.

4. A Federal Power Commission staff team has been dispatched to the operating offices of the Niagara-Mohawk system so that the commission can be fully informed on the steps taken to locate faults which precipitated the breakdown of service.

5. Another Federal Power Commission staff team has been dispatched to the operating offices of Con Edison in New York to cooperate and coordinate with the efforts of that company to restore service.

Mr. Swidler informed the President that the commission staff would work through the night on these, as well

as other steps now being planned, to carry out the President's directive. The chief of the Bureau of Power of the FPC, Mr. F. S. Brown, has been named staff director of the investigation.

The President continues to receive up-to-the-minute reports from his assistants and advisers in Washington. He is of course keeping in touch also through newscasts.

Q. Where are the operating offices of Niagara-Mohawk Power Company, Bill?

Mr. Moyers: Syracuse is the headquarters of Niagara-Mohawk.

Q. Did Mr. Swidler talk to the President on the telephone?

Mr. Moyers: This was a cable sent through our communications system in the form of a memorandum to the President.

Q. Is the President staying awake?

Mr. Moyers: He is awake.

Q. Bill, could you say whether these teams are already on the way?

Mr. Moyers: Yes, they are.

Q. Bill, I notice Mr. Swidler has been asked several questions in Washington according to our wire and he keeps bucking them down here, saying, "You'll have to ask the White House about that." So you might end up for quite some time being the primary source of information as to what the Government is doing.

Mr. Moyers: I haven't talked to Mr. Swidler but the information I have I will be glad to make available. He is perfectly free to talk to you and I will so instruct him I think the President has done all he can do tonight.

Q. Bill, to help round out the stories, could you let us know when the President finally goes to bed?

Mr. Moyers: If I can I will, Jack.

Q. For the time being, at least for the wires, we will continue to keep somebody in here.

Mr. Moyers: I think that is a good idea. If something comes up I'll be down and give it to you.

Q. Anything new on Eisenhower, Bill?

Mr. Moyers: No. That's all I have. If anything major breaks we will have you called in your rooms.

The Press: Thank you, Bill.

(At about 12:30 A.M.—1:30 in the east-Mr. Moyers reappeared. No stenotypist was present. What follows is a reconstruction from *The Times*' reporter's notes of what he said.)

Mr. Moyers: President Johnson was **notified** shortly after midnight that several of the persons working on locating the problem believe with tentative confidence that the probable source of the trouble was a mechanical breakdown at the substation near Clay, N. Y., about 20 miles north of Syracuse. They ran tests by conducting power on a detour around the substation and it worked well. When they poured power through the substation, there was trouble. Since then, a number of persons equally authoritative have said that they believe this is pure conjecture and that they are not sure that the trouble was at the substation.

Dr. Homig says that almost all of the power in Brooklyn is back in operation. Charles Eble, president of Consolidated Edison, told him that they are diverting some power from Brooklyn into Manhattan. Mr. Eble expects the situation in Manhattan to be under control by sunrise. Two power stations are working in the Bronx.

(In response to reporters' questions, Mr. Moyers elaborated on his information concerning the possible source of the power failure.)

Mr. Moyers: The people who came up with the original feeling that it was the (Clay) substation say they still feel it was the probable cause. The Clay substation is a remote control-station. It is run by remote control from **Syracuse**. I called the **manager** of **Niagara-Mohawk** at Syracuse. He is **Jack Mowers**. He **tells me** that for the last several hours the substation has been working well and that there is no reason to believe that this was the cause.

Q. Who came **up** with feeling that the source of the trouble was the substation at Clay?

Mr. Moyers: Federal officials in conjunction with New York State Power Authority officials. At last **count**, they were still searching for the **difficulty** and personnel were en route to the substation for a check.

(With that, Mr. Moyers reported that the President was about to go to bed for the night and that he did not expect to have any more information until morning. It was almost 1 A.M.—2 A.M. in the east.)

10. From Abroad: Smiles, Sneers and Disbelief

From the Via Veneto to the **Oliza** the reaction to the blackout was dismay, disbelief and simple amazement. And on Red Square, there was, not unexpectedly, a trace of a sneer.

"Are you sure it isn't sabotage?" a Japanese **businessman** demanded.

"It can't happen here. . . . We think. . . . We hope," said a West German power expert in **Frankfurt**.

"It is quiet in the streets of New York," the correspondent for **Tass**, the Soviet press agency wrote. "And if there are signs of panic it is not among the population. The Pentagon announced that the blackout has not paralyzed the United States defenses."

In **both** East and West, many newspapers carried banner headlines and some carried assertions of chaos, panic, **paralysis**, and looting.

Tass gave a mildly sardonic-somewhat acid-account of the power failure, declaring that "radio stations constantly call upon the population not to panic. There are cases of looting under the **cover** of darkness," **Tass** went on, "but according to the latest reports this has been cut short." (Like other international news agencies, **Tass** received reports from its New York correspondents by telephone during the blackout.)

In Moscow, meanwhile, **Izvestia**, the Government's evening newspaper, told its readers that Americans caught in the blackout reacted with "panic and unreasonable hysteria. The **state** of shock and even panic spread to ordinary people and to politicians," the New York correspondent for **Izvestia** reported.

Moskvites expressed both incredulity and amusement that a major part of the most modern nation on earth **could** be knocked out so easily. In other parts of the world, some