

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

30 March 1981

To: GB

From: Chase

Here is my transcription of your comments to me in flight this afternoon, plus your own notes. These are for your personal files, though the fact I took them and transcribed them probably makes them subject to disclosure after 12 years under the Presidential Papers Act.

You may wish to expand on these.

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30 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Vice President George Bush's comments to Chase Untermeyer aboard Air Force 2, en route from Austin to Washington, 5:55 pm CST, this date:

It's hard to describe my emotions; they're cumulative. A funny thing: The way Reagan's and my relationship has developed -- not President/Vice President but more like a friend, a concern for someone who's your friend. Because I see it that way -- seeing him (on videotape) getting into that car, waving -- I see it on a personal plane.

Because of this relationship, I feel very strongly about the way we come back home.

It doesn't overawe me of what might happen because of the good relations between my staff and Reagan's, good relations with the Cabinet. Playing it the lowest-key way possible.

A certain faith enters into this sort of thing -- turning to God -- the way I was taught and brought up.

There's a certain wondering about the unknown but not (being) concerned about it. We've got Poland out there; could be something there tomorrow -- tonight. I'm doing my reading. The Soviets could go into Poland, and I'd have to make those decisions. I've got to sort those things out, absorb it, but I don't feel any lack of confidence. There are conflicting recommendations, hardline/softline. (would be?) We've got allies.

But having to be the person to determine that, be the critical person to make that decision -- I don't have any consternation about it all. Government cohesion is enough that it doesn't scare me.

My every inclination is to be calm; not churning around. I would have thought it would have been much more complicated about the responsibilities, but my innermost thoughts are (that) this guy is a friend. If you had hypothetically posed a problem to me a year ago, I may not have thought the same. You see a guy get into a car, waving, and you think, How could anybody shoot that nice guy?

I think about Nancy Reagan: Is anybody holding her hand?

I have a great feeling that all will work out. The President is very strong.

(Untermeyer: How did you hear the news?)

Funny; I can't remember that.

(With reconstruction from staff, VP says that Jack Steel and Betty Green of his Houston office were in the AF2stateroom when Ed Pollard, Agent-in-Charge of his Secret Service detail, came in with word that an attempt had been made on the President in Washington and that "two agents were down." Later, Sec. Haig called and said VP should come right home; this was before the VP learned that the President had been shot. On the ground in Austin,

Governor and Mrs. Bill Clements came on board with state Secretary of State George Strake, but this was a social visit. The decision had already been made to return to DC. The VP got a call at some point from Treasury Sec. Regan, overall head of USSS, saying same thing: return to Washington.)

(Untermeyer: Do you ever have any premonitions about this sort of thing? The VP: No.)

6:08 pm: Ed Meese calls. GB heard to say: "That's very good.... That's fine.... Anything you can give me on this line? Say that once more, Ed; it's cutting out.... That's wonderful -- that's very good. See you at the house." VP tells staff that doctors got the bullet out, that the President's condition is stable and that he's resting comfortably.

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TRANSCRIPTION of Vice President George Bush's notes, made on board Air Force 2 en route from Austin to Washington, the afternoon of 30 March 1981:

1. Enormity of it comes upon me 20 minutes out of (=away from landing in) Austin.
2. Pray -- literally -- that RR recovers
3. Element of friend not just C. in C. . . President decent, warm, kind
4. Not knowing -- uncertainty
5. Not fly onto S. Lawn
6. Not panic
7. Unknown
=====

4:40: Talk to Bar. Call Nancy R. Fly to Observ.

5 PM -- Murphy calling

5:01 -- Ed Pollard (USSS) -- fly into hangar; large crowd; security worry

5:05 -- Condition good -- told NR. R still in surgery. Brady critical -- land Andrews to Ob (?) -- to sit. room. Recovery rrom 2 hours -- visit Pres.

5:17 -- Dan Called (.) Brady just died. No other change.

5:25 -- report of Brady's death erroneous (new call from DM)

1. Emergency of it comes upon
in 20 mins out of Austria
2. Prag - lit coalt - think P.R
means
3. Exhaust & fuel not just

Welcome Aboard

C. in C. President

Decent, warm, kind

4. Not knowing - uncertainty
into S. Land
5. Not fly
6. not possible (practic)
7. unharmful -



4th - Tally + Reay
coll. Hwy R
city to Green

S.P.M. - supply calling

Sol Ed. ^{MAC} ~~Almond~~ - fly into (Kangas)

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

large crowd - security
many

see conditions good - total A.R.
R still in emergency
Broadly critical - land

moving more 2 base -
visit Pres.

5¹⁷ Dan called Bradley just ahead
no other change

FLIGHT INFORMATION

From AUSTIN, TX To ANDREWS AFB MD

Distance 1370 Statute Miles

Flight Time 2 Hours 29 Minutes

Flight Altitude 33,000

Please Set Your Watches Back 1 HOUR For
Ahead

A 6:40 AM Arrival.
PM

Our Route Will Be Over DIRECT WASHINGTON

The Enroute Flight Conditions Will Be GOOD

DESTINATION WEATHER FORECAST

Temperature 65 °F Precipitation SHOWERS

Wind WEST 20 MPH Clouds OVERCAST

Other _____

MAJOR ORCHARD
Aircraft Commander

525

report of Brady's death enroute
Crew call from D. M.