

JULY 28, 1965

PERSONNEL SORENSON, THEO.
 KENNEDY
 THOUSAND DAY
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WIDNALL CRITICIZES SCHLESINGER AND OTHERS FOR UNDERMINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS WITH "INSTANT" HISTORY; SUGGESTS THE NEED FOR REFORM

(Mr. WIDNALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WIDNALL. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks there has been an avalanche of so-called historical accounts of the Kennedy administration that are damaging the reputations and effectiveness of those still holding high office within the Johnson administration.

Either the Congress or the President should hereafter place sound limitations on former White House and executive department personnel concerning revelations to the public of privileged conversations and the background of key decisions.

This suggestion was triggered by the Arthur Schlesinger account currently appearing in serialized form in Life magazine, "A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House," wherein Secretary of State Dean Rusk was pilloried in an incredibly insulting fashion. Here are just a few examples of reaction that

are being carried in front pages of newspapers throughout the world this week:

He [Rusk] was unembarrassed by banality.

At times one wondered whether the harshness of life—the seething planet of revolutionary violence, ferocity and hate, shadowed by nuclear holocaust—ever penetrated the screen of clichés, ever shook that imperturbable blandness.

Rusk would sit calmly by, with that Buddha-like face, and his half-smile, often leaving it to Bundy or to the President himself to assert the diplomatic interest.

He [J.F.K.] would say to Jacqueline, "Dammit, Bundy and I get more done in 1 day at the White House than they do in 6 months in State."

He [Rusk] rejoiced in the role of tedium in diplomacy.

What is most disturbing to me is the fact that Secretary Rusk is caught in a position where he cannot defend himself. Moreover, for obvious reasons, the President himself can do little more than reassert his faith in his Secretary of State—doing so only at the risk of creating still more worthless as well as damaging Washington gossip. Additionally, for political reasons, members of the Democratic Party will hesitate before criticizing Mr. Schlesinger and others formerly in the Kennedy administration for what can best be termed "instant history, untempered by time."

I always thought the mark of a truly liberal mind was supposed to be fairness, to the individual, respect for office, dislike for kicking a man when he is unable to answer because of his office, and distaste for commercial profit at the expense of others.

Even if one totally ignores the damage already done to the position of our Secretary of State, think of the effect these accounts are having within the highest councils of the administration. At a Cabinet meeting, can anyone speak his piece without fearing that another in the same room may be shooting for next year's cover of Life or the Saturday Evening Post?

Theodore Sorensen's forthcoming book, "Kennedy," raises several of the same questions, plus the possibility of a serious breach of security, in his account of the CIA's decisionmaking process surrounding the Bay of Pigs disaster. Other books by former Kennedy White House aids are soon to be published, including some by individuals currently serving on the White House staff.

If Congress pays their salary, Congress has the responsibility to guard against this commercialization of the byproducts of having had the privilege to serve in a sensitive position.