

July 13, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MRS. NIXON

FROM CONSTANCE STUART

If you haven't already seen this, I thought you might enjoy reading the news summary that was put together for the President on your trip to Peru.

All the women (and the man) who went with us on the trip to Peru gave you excellent coverage... Helen Thomas did her usual wonderful job, but I think you might want to note what Fran Lewin filed. Her stories were marvelous. A rough guess on my part is that Fran's stories were picked up more than Helen's.

MEMORANDUM

The attached report on Mrs. Nixon's trip was in the President's News Summary Wednesday. Thought you would be interested in it.

THE FIRST LADY'S TRIP
TO PERU
July 7, 1970

The most striking media development regarding Mrs. Nixon's mission was the incredibly wide photo play she received in the papers for three days running. The departure from El Toro with President and Mrs. Nixon inspecting cargo was widely played -- often on front pages. And it was followed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday by frequent use of pictures of the arrival in Lima, the attendance of the mass and the little children of devastated Huarez hugging Mrs. Nixon. While the wire stories were usually played inside, either the photos or the title over the story with Mrs. Nixon's name were bound to draw wide reader response. The wire stories emphasized the personal, non-governmental nature of Mrs. Nixon's visit; her decision to make the dangerous trip into the heavily damaged areas; the very warm rapport between her and Mrs. Velasco; the deep gratitude of the villagers for Mrs. Nixon's visiting them; the emotion that overcame the First Lady in the damaged towns; the apparently significant diplomatic impact of the trip in strengthening US-Peruvian relations; and the deep appreciation extended Mrs. Nixon from President Velasco.

There were 7 network film reports of the mission -- 2 each on the departure and the moving visit to Huarez and 3 (1 on each network) of the mission in progress and the warm reception Mrs. Nixon was given. Both Time and Newsweek have favorable reports and both those journals

were joined by Life in running the heartwarming picture of Mrs. Nixon being greeted by the children of Juarez.

Following is a digest of wire stories and editorial comment:

Mrs. RN will fly to Peru as America's "Lady Bountiful," with two plane loads of blankets, tents and warm children's clothing to the refugees in earthquake shattered areas. During her trip the First Lady, stressing U.S. concern for the plight of the stricken Peruvian victims, was the bearer of bundles and cash gifts from voluntary organizations and citizens throughout the country. The Presidential jet flown by Nixon's personal pilot also was filled with donations. In addition, a drive launched at the WH by Robert Finch netted 350 blankets from Cabinet wives and other members of the official family. (6/27 UPI)

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Mrs. Nixon, flying to Peru with the "heartfelt" prayers and offerings of the American people, changed her trip schedule so she could visit earthquake victims in the most devastated areas. Her brown eyes filled with excitement as she spoke of her plans for the visit. Mrs. Nixon told reporters in an airborne news conference: "I feel deeply about these things. That's the kind of person I am. I told my husband how proud I am of the American people. They raised \$2.5 million and they really showed compassion and affection for the Peruvian people." After she had expressed her concern for the thousands of stricken Peruvians the President said he thought "it was a great idea" for her to make the journey, Mrs. Nixon said. Overruling her cautious advisers, the First Lady decided to cancel a helicopter trip to Chimbote to make a more treacherous trip to the interior, going to Anta, Huaras and Yungay, towns obliterated by the mighty glacial avalanches triggered by the massive quake. "I really intend to meet with people," she said with emotion. "I don't intend to sightsee." She was particularly elated with checks and cash which poured in to aid victims in Peru since the WH launched a fund drive. (6/28 UPI)

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Mrs. Nixon flew on a mercy mission to earthquake-stricken Peru with two planes packed with relief supplies. Her visit, with Peru's first lady as her hostess, could help take the strain off US - Peruvian relations in addition to promoting relief work for the survivors of the western hemisphere's worst earthquake of the 20th century. Peruvian newspapers, including those controlled by the military government, have devoted columns to Mrs. Nixon's visit and to the nine tons of donated relief supplies. Significantly, nothing has been published for nearly a week about Cuba's relief effort. (6/28 AP)

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Mrs. Nixon arrived in Lima on a mercy mission to survivors of the western hemisphere's worst earthquake of the century. Peru's first lady met Mrs. Nixon. Three thousand Peruvians, most of them women, shouted approval as the two first ladies embraced when Mrs. Nixon reached the foot of the ramp. "I receive you with great joy and open arms. There are not words to express the feelings of my country," Mrs. Velasco said. Replied Mrs. Nixon: "I have come to express the feelings of the United States and the sorrow we feel for the tragedy which afflicts you." (6/28 AP)

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The first ladies of Peru and the US walked side by side into a Catholic church to attend a traditional holiday mass before flying into the Andes to view the damage of Peru's most catastrophic earthquake. President Velasco also attended the special mass along with the members of his cabinet. He entered after the first ladies. He did not meet Mrs. Nixon but nodded to her when he entered. (6/29 UPI)

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Mrs. Nixon and Mrs. Velasco flew on a US air force cargo plane deep into the Andes to view earthquake destruction in the valley of Callejon de Huaylas, scene of one of the greatest disasters of the century. Mrs. Nixon told the crew members "I'm mighty proud of all of you." The crew has been working for several weeks flying mercy missions into the stricken area. Earlier Mrs. Nixon went to a special holiday mass. At the Cathedral in Lima's most revered church. When Mrs. Nixon left the Cathedral a simply dressed girl about 15 slipped through the screen of guards and ran up to her, holding a letter in her hand, trying to give it to her. But Mrs. Nixon didn't see her and walked on by, and the girl stood dejected. But others got through the

police lines and one Indian woman ran up to Mrs. Nixon, embraced her and kissed her on both cheeks. Mrs. Nixon obviously was moved by the demonstration of affection.
(6/29 UPI)

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Mrs. Nixon flew deep into the Andes to witness the "incredible" destruction, the smell of death and the tearful tales of Peruvians who suffered through the earthquake. Deeply moved by the panorama of the mass tragedy, Mrs. Nixon said "the destruction was much more incredible than I had read. It is all so saddening. The people are so brave. We are going to try harder to help them." Mrs. Nixon looked deeply saddened on her tour. Her guides took her everywhere except to one area in Huaraz which was ruled out because "the smell of death was too great." Flying sometimes as low as treetop level over the once picturesque area, Mrs. Nixon saw a statue of Christ and four palm trees -- all that remained of a town of 20,000. "You people are so brave," Mrs. Nixon kept saying to the women and children attired in colorful costumes. "You will have good times again." Her tour of Huaraz was mostly on foot through the rubble and awesome destruction. Residents shouted and pushed to get near her. Sometimes Mrs. Nixon grabbed up little children and kissed them on their mud-stained cheeks. Her parting from the village was emotional and flowery. One woman cried. An old man thanked her and told her "we are completely grateful to you and President Nixon. Thanks for coming." Mrs. Velasco gave Mrs. Nixon a warm embrace at the airport and told her: "Muchas gracias for todo (thank you for everything)." (6/29 UPI)

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The First Lady met monks and nuns, pilots and nurses, volunteers from many nations who rushed in to help. At Huaraz, where her helicopter landed in a soccer field, thousands ringed the area and watched the landing. They ran in the streets beside the motorcade to meet Mrs. Nixon and their own first lady. "You all make me sad," Mrs. Nixon said at one point in response to a grey-haired woman who came up to her at the dirt airstrip in

nearby Auta and thanked her for coming. "Now you are able to see how great the disaster was," the woman said. Mrs. Nixon found some of the scenes "absolutely unbelievable." She said, "Yungay looks like the face of the moon." (6/29 UPI)

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Mrs. Nixon took a five-hour tour in the dust and rubble of an earthquake-devastated Peruvian canyon and said: "The destruction was worse than we read about." She moved from town to town in a WH helicopter. When Mrs. Nixon flew back to Lima she took with her 14 homeless people from the town of Yungay, which was buried after the quake. Mrs. Nixon patted children and climbed steps of a ruined cathedral in what remains of this valley town. She said the refugees were "brave and courageous people" and promised them help. There were poignant, sad and shocking scenes in the emotion-packed afternoon tour through what once was a beautiful valley, with snowcapped peaks looking down on it. Mrs. Nixon met the victims and the rescuers. She commiserated with the suffering and thanked those who were helping. (6/29 AP)

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President and Mrs. Velasco gave a dinner for Mrs. Nixon. The President's secretary said that Velasco was "deeply touched by the gesture of President Nixon in sending his wife. If he had sent the whole US Air Force it would not have meant as much as sending his wife." The newspaper Correo, which has supported the military government of Velasco, said: "We must tell the American people that in the person of Mrs. Nixon the Peruvian people will never forget her compassion, her identification with our pain and her generous help." The US ambassador to Peru, Taylor Belcher, called Mrs. Nixon's visit a "tremendous success," President Velasco, he said, "couldn't have been more moved by Mrs. Nixon's visit. I heard this from many people." (6/30 AP)

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Mrs. Nixon went home from this earthquake-ravaged country with a bouquet of roses from an injured child and editorial praise for her "compassion and generous help." ... The visit, plus US assistance, may help improve strained relations between the two countries. (6/30 AP)

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The first ladies of Peru and the US said farewell with a hug and a kiss and Pat Nixon flew home, weary from her dramatic visit to this earthquake-ravaged nation. Her last hours were spent in a taut-faced, emotional tour of relief organizations and a children's hospital where she pinned a rose on the gown of a little boy injured in the catastrophic quake. Mrs. Nixon impressed Peruvians when she took a dangerous flight into a high mountain valley and spent hours walking through the scarred towns talking to survivors and rescue workers. She left Peru, too, as the most successful goodwill diplomat the US has had in Peru since Velasco seized power. The political triumph was a tribute to the personal impact she made on Peruvians. Even Velasco, the classic military man of stern visage, obviously moved by the warmth of her feeling for the Peruvian people. (6/30 UPI)

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Pat Nixon returns home with a first-hand picture of the devastation left by the earthquake and warm words of praise from a military government that has been feuding with her husband. President Velasco said Mrs. Nixon's visit went by "too fast." He said he would have liked her to stay longer to see what his country is doing and to get a better idea of "what we feel for your nation." Going into the heart of the "valley of death" for a helicopter view, to walk in the rubble, meet the refugees and the rescuers, Mrs. Nixon won thanks and good will. Mrs. Nixon brought a new spirit to the people who have received her with much happiness," said Mrs. Velasco. Mrs. Nixon was indefatigable in her tour. Provided a rest stop at a Red Cross tent she said, "I didn't come here to sit." She said she came to find out what was needed for relief and reconstruction. (6/30 AP)

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First Lady Pat Nixon came home with compliments for a goodwill relief mission described as diplomatically and personally successful. She said she hoped it would focus worldwide attention on the needs of 800,000 people homeless. "They have a lot of courage and will and I know they will recover with the help of the people in this country and throughout the world," she said. Mrs. Nixon noted the US may have competition in relief aid, referring to rumblings of international rivalry in the effort. But, she said, "That's good. I don't mind that kind of competition," "I want to go back and see it all reconstructed," she added. "We have to help them rebuild." Mrs. Nixon won thanks and praise from Peruvian officials, from President Nixon and from the refugees she went to console in the devastated high valleys of the Andes. And President Nixon jokingly suggested: "We will now have invitations for her to represent us in other places, too." The three-day trip also launched a warm relationship with Peru's First Lady who was Mrs. Nixon's traveling companion. "I like her tremendously," Mrs. Nixon said, "I feel she's a First Lady who does have the hearts of her people." The two women frequently embraced and kissed Latin style. When Mrs. Nixon left Tuesday, Mrs. Velasco thanked her for "bringing warmth and affection" and also for "exposing yourself to the danger of the trip" to the heart of the disaster area. (7/1 AP)

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First Lady Pat Nixon was welcomed home by her proud husband after she won the hearts of the Peruvian people with her warm compassion for the thousands of earthquake victims. Nixon appeared delighted with the results of the First Lady's initial solo diplomatic venture. Mrs. Nixon made a big hit with the Peruvian President and his wife. Although the two countries have had chilly diplomatic relations for two years, President Nixon was toasts at a dinner Monday night for sending US assistance to the ravaged areas of Peru. Nixon said his wife's trip was a demonstration that "while nations have political differences, people have a deep sense of affection, sympathy and concern for each other." (6/30 UPI)

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The wire stories reflecting so positively on the mission clearly must have affected the editorial writers. High praise came from Administration critics as well as supporters.

The Phil. Inquirer editorially emphasized that the visit demonstrated the concern for Peru from US citizens and that it showed how relations between people can be strong even if they are strained between governments. Similarly the C.S. Monitor said: "the trip is one of those acts which can do more than all the diplomatic treaties ever put on parchment to unite two peoples. . . . Perhaps most important, Mrs. Nixon's visit is a reaffirmation of concern which the US has traditionally felt for the beleaguered and belabored abroad." The Monitor felt RN's decision not to go was a wise one -- it would have become too official (NB. Before visit, Monitor had criticized US failure to act more quickly.)

The S.F. Chronicle said the mission was "more than a gracious gesture. It may represent the opening of an era in which this country gains stature in S. America and a new access of genuine friendship." The Atlanta Constitution felt Mrs. Nixon's efforts personified "a liberated woman's best qualities. . . . She went in a spirit of generous concern; and she was received in a spirit of genuine gratitude. . . . The President can be proud."

"No finer envoy could have been chosen," said the Nashville Banner, "to serve as the nation's bearer of good will." Mrs. Nixon proudly personifies the role of good neighbor and friend. The Washington Post praised Mrs. Nixon's admirable skill in threading her way through the potential problems inherent in a disaster-relief trip to a country with strained relations with the US. "She appears to have conveyed a genuine desire to help and to have

done so with great tact, for all of which she deserves much credit."

The Manchester Union-Leader found the mission an excellent example of the good neighbor policy. The mission was carried about by a First Lady with "leadership, imagination and energy." The Dallas Morning News terms the tour "a triumph of hemispheric diplomacy. . . . Mrs. Nixon's courage and obvious concern brought a great outburst of popular admiration and gratitude. . . . She exalted her rank as First Lady. . . . She could have been above all the tragedy, but instead, for a few hours, she became part of the suffering and tragedy and her face and voice showed it. . . . Mrs. Nixon was able to bring two peoples closer together." Charles Bartlett said the trip was a display of the Nixons compassion but it was also an effort to open clogged channels of communication with Velasco. "Mrs. Nixon's trip is the first eye-catching gesture of a low-profile policy toward the Latins. It may prove to have been wise as well as humane."

The admiring Richmond News Leader says "Mrs. Nixon was the heroine of the hour;" to the ravaged land "she must have seemed a ministering angel of mercy." But she also brought new cooperation to US-Peru relations. "Mrs. Nixon's mission proved to be one of RN's more imaginative diplomatic moves in Latin America -- far more productive than any conference or packaged program could have been."

Wauhillau LaHey of Scripps-Howard writes that "a firm friendship between two first ladies of the Western Hemisphere was forged during Mrs. Nixon's goodwill mission. " After reviewing the trip at length, Wauhillau concludes the warm rapport between Mrs. Nixon and Mrs. Velasco resulted in "another pair of hands -- across-the-border. Clasped in friendship. "

A lengthy Sunday AP piece by Fran Levine says "the unprecedented mission will be marked as turning point for Pat Nixon. . . . She achieved a new dimension of her own. " None of the former activist first ladies -- Mmes. Roosevelt, Kennedy or Johnson -- "ever tried such a person-to-person mercy mission of human concern and diplomatic side-effects. . . . What really struck the Peruvians was that RN sent his own wife. " Mrs. Nixon's own description is a proper term to point out what distinguished it -- it was "meaningful. " She went into areas of massive death; received incredibly warm welcomes from generally stolid Peruvians; refused to rest; and risked considerable danger in landing in the mountains. This widely distributed Sunday (7/5) feature seems to accurately portray the week's coverage of Mrs. Nixon's trip -- very, very positive.

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