

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 9, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR:

HUGH CARTER

FROM:

BILL GULLEY *B.S.*

As a result of the OPAL III drill this morning, following are the times, coordinated with helicopter personnel, NMCC, and the WHCA Switchboard:

0734	Drill initiated
0737 + 10 seconds	Clearance received from Washington Tower
0741 + 50 seconds	Helicopters on the South Lawn
0749 + 43 seconds	Helicopters rendezvoused with NEACP (NEACP was airborne at 0753)

First of all, the pilots who stand by in the helicopters at Anacostia do not have the opportunity to land on the South Lawn; consequently, they are not as smooth coming in as the people who pick up the President. As I am sure you know, the helicopter came too close to the mansion. Without the aircontrollman backing him up, the pilot may have blown the canopy off that covers the entrance to the Diplomatic Reception Room.

In addition, when Bill Odom ran across the South Lawn, it cost about a minute. More important, when the aircontrollman observed this, he had the pilot slow the rotor and open the door so that Bill Odom could board. Otherwise, had the helicopter continued, he literally could have swung his tail around and chopped Odom into little bits and pieces with his tail rotor.

I have discussed this with the helicopter people and I am absolutely convinced that we should never run an OPAL III drill without the aircontrollman manning TEACART. Granted that if the balloon went off, the aircontrollman may not be able to get to TEACART in time, and of course we would take chances under those conditions that we would not take with a drill. I think all of the players should be told that

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whenever an alert is to be given, they should allow time for TEACART to always be manned by the aircontrollman.

From our standpoint, other than the danger of Bill Odom running across the South Lawn, the drill went very well from the time of notification to the rendezvous with NEACP.

I assume all went well with NEACP as I monitored some of the communication exercises that were run.

Cy:

Herb Upton  
✓ Bill Odom  
Cliff Sharrock