

Johnson Uses Rebuilt Kennedy Car, Now Bulletproof



United Press International Telephoto

President Diosdado Macapagal of the Philippines with the President in the limousine

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 5—President Johnson rode in the White House bubble-top limousine today for the first time since it had been almost completely rebuilt after President Kennedy's assassination. The black, 1961 model Lincoln Continental limousine, in which Mr. Johnson took President Diosdado P. Macapagal of the Philippines for a noontime parade in downtown Washington, has been reinforced with armor plate and made bulletproof according to Secret Service specifications. A White House spokesman said that the car's glass panes and top could now withstand a direct hit from a .30-caliber rifle. Once famous for its three interchangeable roofs—of metal, of convertible fabric and of plastic for the bubble top—the Presidential limousine is now a permanently closed vehicle. The roof directly over the back seat and the back panel are made of glass, but a black metal detachable cover can be slid over them to assure protection and privacy.

Large metal handgrips have been installed on each side of the back trunk so that, if needed, Secret Service agents can easily get aboard the car when it is in movement. According to a White House spokesman, the limousine has been 90 per cent rebuilt by the Ford Motor Company, and the Hess & Eisenhardt custom-body concern of Cincinnati.

Although the car was returned to the White House by Ford last June, considerable additional work was done on it in the last three months. The car was repainted only last night, in time for today's parade in President Macapagal's honor, and there are still some minor modifications to be made.

Now weighing more than five tons, including more than 1,500 pounds of armor plate, the limousine has a new 500-horsepower engine, new heavy-duty transmission, suspension, steering, brakes and bullet-proof tires.

It is the first bulletproof car used by the White House since 1953. At that time, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had the steel-plated roof removed to make room for the sliding plastic bubble-top, which allowed him to stand up in the limousine.

Discussing this change, the report of the Warren Commission on President Kennedy's assassination said that at that time "the state of the art did not permit the development of a bulletproof top of sufficiently light weight to permit its removable on those occasions when the President wished to ride in an open car."

The White House Press Secretary, George E. Reedy, said today that the refurbished limousine, which Mr. Kennedy was riding in when he was slain in Dallas, would be used on many Presidential trips. But Mr. Reedy, in a reply to a question,

acknowledged that he could "not foreclose" the possibility that Mr. Johnson may wish to ride in an open car on some occasions.

The Warren Commission quoted J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as recommending that "the President never ride in an open car."

Some of the new security precautions surrounding the President were visible today as he rode with President Macapagal for eight city blocks among noontime crowds.

Secret Service agents riding in three open limousines—one preceding the Presidential car and two following it—were continuously looking up at the roofs and windows of the buildings along the parade route.