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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING
E.O. 12065, Section 6-102
By ckmf NARS, Date 6/15/81

March 12, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. DENT

Some quick thoughts while they are still fresh in my mind regarding the GOP Dinner last night.

It was my very strong feeling, and I find, in doing considerable checking about, that it's shared by everyone who was there with whom I've been in contact, that overall the program was an absolute disaster except for the President, who managed to salvage it to a fairly substantial degree.

All of the remarks delivered by each of the preliminary speakers were badly written. Not one of them did an adequate job of building any kind of enthusiasm. They all devoted their efforts to kicking the Democrats while they were down, instead of taking a positive and enthusiastic approach to the President and the present Administration.

No one had the perspicacity, consideration or politeness to build up the great accomplishment of Pat Nixon on her recent national tour; they simply said "...and, of course, you all know the First Lady."

These people have got to be made someday, somehow to realize that they are missing the opportunity to build our pluses, and that running around kicking the Democrats is the last way we are going to accomplish anything. The strong, positive points to make about the Administration were, to a minor degree, covered by Hugh Scott and Jerry Ford and the Vice President. As I recall, they were totally overlooked by Tower and Wilson, and no one in the whole group, including Rog Morton, really generated any enthusiasm or uplift for the people that had been there.

Another consideration... a great number of the people in the audience were Democrats; and yet, we spent our time kicking Democrats in a very ungracious, undignified, and unbecoming manner. This is hardly

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going to endear us to a member of the Democratic Party who paid \$1,000 into the Republican coffers, thinking he was doing it to provide a better government for America.

The totally graceless and highly embarrassing fiasco of Bob Wilson's presentation of the Footdragger Award reached an all-time low for this type of thing.

One very highly placed and perceptive observer commented that, "You'd think we were the defeated Party," after the dinner.

In a meeting today with the President, several Republican Governors made the point that he alone had saved the day last night and that by talking in a positive way to all of the people... not to the 24 per cent who think they are Republicans... and they urged him to continue always to speak to all the people, and not as a Republican. This is excellent advice for the President, and our Republican leaders have got to realize that it is. Also, it would be excellent advice for them as National leaders. If they expect to become Majority leaders and Speakers, etc., they have got to start acting like them.

All of the above probably serves no useful purpose. Let me say, however, that last night was the last occasion of that sort--political or otherwise--that's going to be attended by the President and left to its own devices. From now on, it has got to be clearly understood, before the President is committed to such an appearance, that we have total control over the form and content of the entire program of the evening. The President was degraded by this operation last night, and we, as his staff, have the obligation to see that this never happens again. The way to do it is to say that the President will not attend such a function unless and until the entire program, the contents of all of the speakers' speeches, etc., have been submitted to us for review. We have got to start looking at ways to pump enthusiasm, excitement, interest, and all of the ingredients of a good political rally into dinners of this sort, or else we should just quit having them, which is probably the best idea of all. Believe me, all of this is not simply my view; you will find, with a little checking, that it is very widely shared.


H. R. HALDEMAN

cc: Mr. Chapin
Mr. Chotiner