



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Saturday, May 27th. This was our trip to Leningrad. We left first thing in the morning, basically uneventful, as we went in. The President had me in to the guest house during the staff break before the luncheon...

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...made the point that he wanted to be sure that Kissinger's people were dictating complete notes on the flavor of the dinners and meetings and so on, not the substance, which he knows they are covering. But he wants to be sure to get the human side of it also, making the point that Brezhnev is a warm Georgian, and Kosygin a cool Leningrader, and that we've got to get those nuances. He also wants to be sure the interpreters do their notes regarding the Brezhnev meetings and so forth without sending any copy to State files. One copy only is to be made and that's to the President.

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He then got into a discussion of plans for Henry's birthday, which is today. He thought maybe he'd have a birthday dinner with Safire, Klein, Scali, Ziegler, Price, and me. We went round and round on that and ended up with the wise decision not to do it at all.

The crowds in Leningrad were huge, but they were totally restrained by the police, one or two blocks back from the motorcade. It was absolutely an eerie feeling to drive through the main part of the city with absolutely no one on the street except police and soldiers. A guard at the doorway to every apartment, the gate to every courtyard, and so on, with people all kept inside.



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They were behind the gates. On the cross-streets, they were kept at least one, sometimes two, blocks away, often with the streets blocked with a couple of dump trucks or buses, so that there was no chance of people getting across, but always with huge numbers of troops. Still, great crowds of people at all these places, and actually along the main boulevard, but kept way, way back behind ropes and troops. They responded very warmly when we waved to them, although they didn't seem to wave of their own accord. It was obvious that they wanted to see us and were not going to be given that opportunity by the Russians.

At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we had a very impressive and solemn ceremony. The President was quite impressed by the mass graves. 20,000 people in each of them, and the fact that there are half a million Leningraders buried in that cemetery. He was very touched by the story of a twelve year-old girl Tanya who kept a diary that's in the little pavilion there, and he told us, told Ron and me about it afterwards at the guest house. Then later used it in his toast at the luncheon, and later on in the day, said that he wanted Ray to use it in the speech tomorrow night on Soviet TV.

We got into some discussion on the return speech; went over Ehrlichman's idea of going into sort of a campaign kick-off speech. The President thought that was ridiculous and said that of course, he couldn't get into that kind of thing and totally rejected the idea. He is still questioning whether there's really anything to say, and whether he should go to Congress or whether he should just do a quick glad to be back thing on the White House lawn.

On the plane back to Moscow, he and I rode alone in the private compartment on the Russian plane, and discussed some of these things some more, and also the general political approach that



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it's not domestic issues that we should spend our time on, that's their issue, not ours. We should concentrate on the international, which is where we make the gains.

End of May 27th.