



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

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Sunday, February 20th. In Guam. Morning, and then on to China, losing a day the process, so it's now Monday the 21st, and I'll go on that basis, as Guam and China dates.

On the plane from Guam to, no from Hawaii to Guam, the President had a picture session with Rogers, etcetera, and they discussed the approach to the meetings. He decided that Ziegler and Scali can't sit in the Rogers meetings, because it's not fair to Rogers, and wanted me to work that out.

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Also, they agree that Rogers and Green would deal with the Taiwan matter and take a tougher line than he President does so that later they can moderate it back to the agreed upon position.

This morning in Guam, I talked with Hodgson, on the dock strike, and he said that the thing is settled, that President should sign the bill in China, and we should release it. We left it that the President would sign it tonight after the banquet, which would be at midday Tuesday, in Washington, excuse me, midday Monday in Washington, late Monday night in China. So that was set up, and I'll call Hodgson before the President does it. We may do some kind of a signing ceremony in China on that.



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On the way to Shanghai from Guam, the President called me up, made the point that he doesn't want to use a military aide in the landing, he's very concerned that the whole operation at the Peking airport be handled flawlessly since that will be the key picture of the whole trip, and he doesn't want anything to be blown on it. So I had to work on getting every detail of that set out exactly right, so there are no dangers of slip-up.

The Shanghai operation went fine, we landed right on time, were met by a small group of PRC dignitaries, and escorted into a small waiting room in the airport, where we sat for a half an hour and had tea and tangerines and engaged in idle chitchat. Then back onto the plane with the Chinese escort group, and on our way to Peking. During the flight, we worked out some of the final arrival details and other still unanswered questions. Things seemed to be in pretty good shape for the arrival. It now, it appeared while we were on the plane that as the information came in from Peking that there was not going to be any big crowd or hoopla on arrival, or during the motorcade, so we shifted anticipations to some degree on that.

We arrived in Peking and went through the airport ceremony just as the original plan had been laid out, and we didn't have any untoward circumstances. The President greeted Chou exactly as he had planned, went through the ceremonies, got in the car, drove rapidly in from the airport through the town and out to the Guest House, with virtually no public attention at all. It appeared as we drove through the streets, particularly in the downtown area, that people had actually been kept away from the motorcade route, because as you looked down the side streets, you could see quite a large gathering of people one block away, being held off by a barrier. There were some pedestrians and bicycle riders, etcetera, on the main streets that we drove on, but they studiously paid no attention to us, and it almost appeared as if they had been put there for the purpose of ignoring us. It's hard to imagine that a motorcade the size of ours could whip through town



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without creating any attention at all. It also appeared that the people on the barricades had gathered there to try and see what was going on, but weren't permitted to do so.

We arrived at the Residence and were escorted into a reception room, where Chou En-lai greeted us. Then we all sat down in a horseshoe, with the President and Chou at the couch at the head, the rest of us ranged down the two sides—had tea, cookies, etcetera. And the President and Chou engaged in a fairly extended conversation, while the rest of us sat quietly and listened. It was mainly an exchange of general humor, no real substantive points, some chitchat about the advance party, the original early arrangements, and that sort of thing. Both seemed to be very friendly, but noncommittal. They didn't get off of the trivial ground at all during that session.

The President called me up to his room as soon as we got in, or as soon as the tea party broke up, and just wanted to review things in general. I had a plan for the dock strike bill signing to get the press in to do a picture after the dinner tonight. The President agreed to do that. Later on we decided that wasn't a good idea, and then it turned out the Chinese were very much opposed to it, so we dropped it. The President simply signed it privately after dinner, and Ron put out the word to the press.

We talked a little about getting out the line that we weren't concerned at all about the lack of people in the streets and so forth, and the President wanted to be sure that we got that line out. That this was exactly what we'd expected. And point out the significance of other things, such as, Chou En-lai being at the airport, their playing "The Star-Spangled Banner", and that sort of thing. A little later I got a phone report from Mort Allen on the news coverage, and it turned out that the networks handled it exactly the way the President wanted. There was no need for us to put out any further line, it had come through very well on just exactly the approach he said to



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take. That is the networks made the point, very consciously that we didn't expect any spectacular kind of thing. That it was a cool and formal reception, but that's what was planned. They explained that the President clapping on the stairway in response to the Chinese applause was what was expected in China custom, and overall the whole thing from that viewpoint went very well.

I left the President around 2:00, and came down and had a chat with Henry, who was concerned and wanted me to talk to the President about the problem of the President making quips about him at the little tea gathering here at the Guest House with Chou. Chou paid several compliments to Henry, about his good work in setting up this meeting and so forth, then the President made some quips about it. Saying, which one of our advance people did the job, and that kind of thing, which had Henry disturbed that it would put him down in the eyes of the Chinese. He wanted me to talk to the President about that. During this time Henry was just kind of wandering around with nothing much to do until his meeting with Chou at 3:00. Then at about 2:30, or maybe a little bit before, apparently Chou En-lai appeared at the Guest House, unannounced, got a hold of Henry, and said that Chairman Mao would like to see the President, if he would come over. Henry rushed upstairs, told the President, he slapped on his coat, the two of them went out, grabbed Bob Taylor, on the way, and took off for Mao's residence unbeknownst to anybody else. Taylor did, or Henry, I guess caught Chapin on the way out and said where they were going, and said--, no, I guess Taylor told them. Taylor came into the, Chapin's schedule planning meeting and said that this is what they were going to do. He was very concerned about it, but that he was under orders to tell no one, and that they were not to tell Ziegler or make any public thing out of it until they got back. So Dwight came right down and told me. We debated how to handle the thing for a while, called Ziegler, and had him come over. I told him. We spent a very long hour and a half trying to figure out what the various contingencies were, since we had no idea when they'd be back, or what would happen in the meantime. The press was on its way over to the Great Hall of the People to set up for coverage of the arrival of the President for the plenary



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session with Chou, which was scheduled for 4:30, now it had been postponed. The networks were planning to cover the arrival live and all that sort of thing. Also a press pool was on its way over here to the Guest House to cover the President's departure. Since we couldn't announce any of this, we didn't exactly know how to handle it. We debated it back and forth as to what to do, also speculated on all the wild range of possibilities that you have when you're sitting in a Chinese guest house with Red Army troops guarding you outside. And you kind of wonder, as the President's taken off alone with no staff, no security, except one agent, no doctor, etcetera, but--, the worries generally turned out to be unfounded since the President returned shortly after 4:00, and they delayed the departure for the plenary session another half hour. And we just kept the press waiting, saying the thing had been postponed.

In the meantime, of course, Bill Rogers had called me and was very concerned about the delay of the meeting and that sort of thing, so I just had to stall him for a while. I went up to see the President at 4:45, just before he left for the plenary session, and he approved my suggestion that I call Rogers and tell him that he had met, the President had met with Mao. I caught Kissinger on the way in, and we worked out a plan for announcing the meeting, because Mao had agreed that it could be announced jointly by us and the Chinese.

It's kind of funny. When I had called Ziegler in here to begin with, I sat him down in my room and told him not to go up the wall, that he knew we had to be prepared for surprises, and that sort of thing, and that he should just be calm, but that I wanted him to know that the President at that moment had left here, and was over meeting with Chairman Mao at his residence. Ron was holding a tangerine in his hand, took a bite of it, getting about half the tangerine in one bite, peeling and all. He was, to say the least, a little startled. Anyway, the President called me up and told me he had been over to see Mao. Obviously, he was very impressed with the whole thing, but didn't get into any details at that time. He said to explain it to Bill on the basis that the reason



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that the meetings were delayed was that Chou came by unexpectedly, and asked the President and Kissinger to go over for a private meeting with the Chairman prior to the plenary session. And that Henry is now working on the plan for release, which the President discussed with Chou in the car on the way back.

The--, Kissinger came in about half hour later and--, oh while I was up with the President on that, he read me his toast that he's going to give at the dinner tonight, and obviously he felt he'd come up with a very good one, which I completely agreed with. He then, Kissinger came in at about 40 minutes later. I was still up chatting with the President; he was just back from his meeting with Chou. They had agreed on the release and so forth. He reported the Chinese were very concerned about the dock strike signing, and so we canceled that ceremony, as I indicated earlier. Then the President read his toast to Henry, also. Henry made a couple of suggestions on some deletions that he felt would, of things he felt would be offensive to the American Right-Wing, and with which I completely agreed. It was a good, very definite improvement, and the President made the deletions Henry suggested very willingly, and then it was time to leave for the plenary session, so I gave the corrections to Rose just as we were going out, then rode over to make sure the session got started right. The President mused a little bit more, just before he left about the, how impressive the Mao meeting was, but again didn't get into any detail.

The--, after he came back from the plenary session, he had to get dressed quickly for the dinner. I was up there for a little while, working out some minor details with him on that. Then we left for the dinner, which was worked out fine—very good Chinese meal. We went through the whole handshaking business on arrival at the Great Hall, and down some receiving lines, up a spectacular grand staircase to the banquet hall area. The toasts went extremely well. It's a little awkward at the Chinese dinners, because they have a glass of wine, a glass of Maotai, and a glass of orange juice at the table, and your Chinese hosts keep drinking to your health in Maotai,



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and you're supposed to respond, which is not too bad until they call gan bei, which means bottoms up, and at that point you're supposed to empty your glass, which I explained to them I couldn't do for religious reasons. And I did finally get away with it, although it was a little difficult making it stick, and they kept trying. They obviously delight in going all out on the toasting bit.

The Chou En-lai toast was very good, and after the toast he came down and made the rounds of all the official party tables, individually toasting each American at all those tables. The main toast he gave was in the middle of the dinner, and the President's was between several of the latter courses. The President followed the same pattern that Chou had in toasting the individual Chinese at the official party tables, which took a lot longer, because there were about eight Chinese to two or three Americans at each of the tables. The President did a superb job. He's really impressive.

As he completed his toast and then they completed the Chinese translation, the band, which was also superb, a Red Army band, struck up "America the Beautiful". It was quite an emotional moment. The President then made the rounds, and he was really charged up. He'd move very forcefully, take a firm stand in front of the individual, look him squarely in the eye, raise his glass and clinked the other person's, take a quick sip, then he raised his glass again and gave a little staccato bow to the individual, and then he turned marched to the next individual, and repeated the performance. It was really quite spectacular, as "America the Beautiful" was playing in the background. Then the dinner concluded. The President and most of the rest of us in the American party moved through the hall to the other side where the band was, to thank the band for their performance. They had played "Turkey in the Straw", and an "American March", and "Home on the Range" as well as "America the Beautiful", and our national anthem at the beginning of the dinner. It was very impressive and quite overwhelming, even to the cynical



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members of the press corps, apparently. We then came back to the Residence. The President had Henry in for quite a while, and then after I had gotten undressed, and was just ready to go to bed, then he had Henry tell me to come up. We sat and talked for about an hour. He was sort of just looking back over what was obviously a rather overwhelming day. I was able to give him a report on the general press coverage, which had been extremely good, and he was very pleased with that.

He got to talking some about his meeting with Mao, which obviously was quite an experience for him. He said Mao was in basically pretty good shape, although he had trouble walking. His mind is very sharp, has a very good sense of humor, and he felt they had a very good first session. He was particularly impressed by the fact that at one point Mao reached over, talking, and grabbed the President's hand and held it for more than a minute while he made the point that he was covering. President felt that was rather significant, and was especially pleased that the Chinese film cameras had managed to cover it. The Chinese agreed to make the film and their still photos available to us for release, which Ron got later tonight and put out. So we should get some great coverage as a result of that.

President finally decided to fold up for the day after we reviewed the schedule for the week again, and that's the end of a very memorable day in American history, February 21st.

February 21st.