



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

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Thursday, January 8.

Back to DC. Long sessions in the late morning - going through all his notes, schedule guidance, plans for Western White House government use, etc. Thorough review of idea of bringing Chotiner into White House. Arose from plane conversation on the way out. President feels need of real political pro, and has confidence in Murray. So we'll do it - have to lock up tight control, which Ehrlichman deftly shifted to me. Little delicate vis-a-vis Harry Dent but will work out. President concerned regarding Murray getting loose, but willing to take the risk.

President registered in Santa Ana - then off in Air Force One for DC. Called Ehrlichman and me up for long session on the plane. Heavy dose of political strategy review - regarding Chotiner's role, Phillips' thesis, need to build our own new coalition based on Silent Majority, blue-collar Catholics, Poles, Italians, Irish. No promise with Jews and Negroes. Appeal not hard right-wing, Bircher, or anti-Communist. Need to study the real base, and the reason for Agnew upsurge. Feels he's getting coverage on his trip because he attacked the press and forced them to pay attention.

Then added Kissinger to group, general talk regarding foreign policy and leadership. Got into a long dialogue regarding the Chinese (who have agreed to reopen talks – this time at the embassies in Warsaw) and the Russians. Feeling that the Chinese are less dangerous than the Russians for the exact reason people generally feel otherwise. Russian leaders are thugs with a vested interest in foreign war or threat because nothing else to add interest and appeal to Communism – and country is dull, dreary, etc. So people will come to need stimulation. Chinese leaders are smart and sophisticated and less likely to blunder into war or stupid action – and have less need for war with United States – or threats of it – for internal consumption. Actually better off taking on the Russians. Real fear in Russia is that their “Kennedy” might emerge and urge let's get moving. People ripe for it – could really cause trouble. Question is how much time do we have. The new leader would now have some military areas of superiority over United States and could be tempted to try to use it.



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Then a long analysis of PR, and where we've failed. President's main thrust is that we haven't adequately developed the image of him and his role and the office. Need to build image now while going good, in order to carry over when going badly. Ideas for new year - wants to hold to aloofness theory, and build on it.

Great quote - "No leader survives simply by doing well. He only survives if the people have confidence in him when he's not doing well." Basis of his reasoning regarding need to move fast and hard now to build up mystique. Have to build the equity now on the personal side so when the attacks come the person stays above the attack.

Feels '70 will be the worst year - have to ride it through. Will have inflation/recession, no turn on crime, election attacks, etc. But will improve in '71 and build for '72. Must be prepared.

President called me back up with Bebe regarding problem of personal household staff, lousy food of wrong kind, etc. Wants me to solve it. Pretty hard when Pat Nixon won't help and yet won't let someone else take over. Wants to get someone in who can really run the place - and this is the answer, but hard to work around Lucy and Rex. Also wants to change personal family cooking, but Pat Nixon approves the menus. Gave orders about wines, no French or California white, only Moselle or Rhine, Johannesburg, only Bordeaux red, or very good light French Burgundy. Salad - wilted lettuce and Camembert cheese.