



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

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Tuesday, February 22.

President called me up at 9:00 this morning. We reviewed the news summary, and he was extremely pleased with the reaction. The shift in coverage has been very good. While they responsibly reported the low-key arrival ceremonies yesterday, they're now shifting to almost euphoric reporting of the banquet and the Mao meeting, both of which had enormous significance, which interestingly enough was realized by the networks and the wires and thoroughly reported. The network coverage of four hours, live, of the banquet period was apparently very impressive and they got all the facts the President wanted, such as his use of chopsticks, his toast, Chou's toast, the President's glass-clinking tour, etcetera. So that came off very well. President made the point to me that after his toast, when he went down to clink Chou's glass, Chou said to him that they-- that he had the band play *America the Beautiful* because the President had it played at his Inaugural, and he assumed it was one of his favorite songs. He then said here is a toast to your next Inaugural, which is obviously rather significant.

In the tea party meeting at the arrival at the Guest House yesterday, Chou had made some comments regarding the President's need to stand for election, as contrasted to the situation in this country, where they don't have to do that. There was some light quipping about the difference in the two political processes. Also, at the opening of the plenary session yesterday evening, Chou made the point that the President's party was very young, and he said our men here are all quite old, your people are all very young, and he specifically referred to Chapin in that context.

This morning at 9:45, Henry joined us and told us-- again reviewed the press reaction and his general plans for his meeting with the counterpart guy this morning, to get the agenda prepared for this afternoon. President and Henry both in very good spirits, feel we're off to an excellent start, but all of the indications so far are extremely significant, particularly the Mao meeting, and Chou's attitude, and so we're going well so far.



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The afternoon session went as scheduled from 2:00 to 6:00, and apparently went very well. I went out shopping during that whole period and spent most of the time at the friendship store buying--, in fact all of the time, buying junk, but still rather a fascinating experience, as they have a whole series of little stores with different kinds of pure tourist trivia in them, some of it going up in price, however, to forty thousand dollars for a jade ring.

Fascinating session as we went into the bank to exchange our money, and went through the whole involved process of the operation of the Chinese bank, with one girl at the front desk—first desk behind the counter, who took our order, had us sign the form, then handed the form to the next lady, the lady at the next desk, who fanned out the money and counted six hundred dollars in almost unbelievable quick time. Then they ran some calculations on the abacus, and counted the money again, then handed it across to a man at another desk, who counted it again, looked all the papers over, and stamped them three or four times, then the girl at the first desk handed them to me, insisted that I count them again. The total honesty is astonishing, there's just complete determination not to cheat anybody.

We had dinner at the Guest House, apparently a standard Chinese dinner, and then went to the evening ballet performance, which was quite an experience. We drove to the Great Hall of the People in a motorcade and were ushered right up to the entrance to the theater, where we went into a little room and sat down, that is the top members of the official party sat down for tea and refreshments, after going through the handshaking process. Then we went into the theater, which was quite a small one, with the usual applause from the gathered group. We applauded back, took our seats, and comfortable easy chairs with tea tables in front of us, and tea on the table, and watched the first three acts of the ballet, "The Red Detachment of Women." We went back out to the lounge room for tea at intermission, then back in for the rest of the ballet and then home. The ballet itself was just as we had been led to believe, a complete propaganda operation, extremely well done. Music was very good, a modernized form of traditional Chinese music, as was the ballet, a modernized form of traditional Chinese ballet.



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The interpreter seated behind me explained the ideological aspects of the ballet all the way through, and wanted to be sure I understood all the points. In fact all of the Chinese kept asking all of us if we were understanding the point that was being made, but it was a rather odd sight to see the President clapping at the end for this kind of thing, which would have been horrifying at home, but it all seems to fit together somehow, here. He had me up to the room afterwards and, obviously, was very much impressed by the performance and by the music.

End of February 23. Correction: End of February 22.