



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

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Sunday, February 23.

The high point of the first day was Haldeman's disaster. The President's helicopter was scheduled to depart the White House lawn at 7:28 for Andrews --then departure ceremonies --then take off at 8:00. I ordered a car for 7:00 since we (staff) were due at White House at 7:20. Set my clock for 6:30 and went to bed.

In the morning my signal phone rang and woke me up from a dead sleep. It was the garage asking if I still wanted my car to stand by. I looked at the clock-- it was 7:30! I frantically leaped up, still in a daze, and started throwing clothes on. The phone rang again at 7:31 - Don Hughes from the helicopter asking where I was. Told him I couldn't make it for at least five minutes and to go ahead without me. He said he'd send another helicopter back for me -- in five minutes.

I finished dressing, slapped on some shaving cream and gave a quick once-over with the razor, ran down to the car and headed for the White House. En route, driver said they had an escort ready to drive me out to Andrews, we checked on radio to confirm helicopter and canceled escort. It was snowing -- slushy type.

As the car drove up the South drive, the helicopter was just landing on the lawn. I jumped out, ran to helicopter, the door opened, Marine saluted, I sat down, door closed, we took off. Fastest helicopter take off I've ever seen. Barreled to Andrews, landed by Air Force One, Honor Guard was just dispersing. President was aboard. I ran up rear ramp into President's cabin, they closed the door, and we took off. Airborne at 7:58 - less than a half hour from when my phone first rang. Naturally, everyone was in great state of glee, although all were most understanding. President just said good morning as I walked through his cabin.

Flight uneventful. Breakfast and lunch aboard. President worked all the way, mostly alone, a little with Kissinger and Rogers. A couple of short sessions with Ehrlichman and Ziegler regarding details. Kissinger very impressed with President's complete grasp and understanding of briefing materials and the fact he had drawn his own conclusions --contrary to those in briefings.



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Arrived Brussels precisely on time at 9:00.

Brussels

Arrived on time at 9:00. King Baudouin and many dignitaries on hand. Parking area of plane brightly lighted for television. Troops (United States and Belgian) all lined up, red carpet laid, podium set for remarks.

Fairly large crowd of students(?) on roof of terminal chanting in French. We thought they were unfriendly at first - especially when they kept chanting all through national anthem, but they stopped when King and President spoke, and cheered both. General Walters (interpreter) later said it was a friendly chant. King gave formal greetings, President responded. Then they reviewed the troops.

At the end of the line of troops a lovely white tent had been erected for the VIP reception. We went in, President and King went down the line. We were also supposed to, but screwed it up and stood at the end - to the President's embarrassment when he arrived at us.

Motorcade line-up got a little mixed, and we couldn't find our cars until after President and first part of party had pulled away. Worked out OK. I had two NATO officials as hosts, and our driver whipped through a few short-cuts and got us to the hotel in good order.

President and small party went directly to the Royal Palace for meetings. As usual at ceremonial things he appeared to greatly enjoy the whole arrival business - especially the "Star Spangled Banner". Meetings at Palace went a little over schedule. Assume this is a sign they went well.

After return to hotel, President went to bed but not to sleep. Staff stayed up working on schedule and speeches and cards for tomorrow. As I walked out of Hughes' room at about 2:15 am, President opened his door across the hall - in his pajamas - and asked me to get the speaking copy of his address to NATO tomorrow. I just happened to have it in my hand, having just picked it up from Rose, and handed it to him forthwith, which dumbfounded him. He stayed up,



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sitting in bed working, until well after 3:00 am, as I took several schedules, etc. in, that he wanted.