



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

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Monday, February 24.

Brussels

I slept in, the President left at 9:00 for NATO. I guess it went well, although Kissinger felt he was too verbose in his responses. He stayed a half hour beyond scheduled time, so was late for Tomb and Palace.

I watched (and filmed) procedures at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Well-conducted wreath-laying and fire-lighting ceremony. Colorful old Belgians in overcoats wearing their battle ribbons and holding flags. Area tightly secured to avoid hostile demonstrations - only school children, and most of them American, allowed in range. They stood waiting in the chill wind chanting, "We want Nixon" and waving American flags. Great cheers when the President arrived. After the ceremony he went across the street to shake hands and talk with the kids. They really were excited!

Then to the Royal Palace for intimate lunch with King and Queen and a hundred others. All seated at one long table. Beautiful room, crystal and silver and china service and delicious lunch with three wines, etc. President impressed all with his long, warm and personal response to King's toast. He did seem to be tired. He then went back to hotel for meetings with EEC.

I went to airport with Kissinger and Juanich for a special meeting in plane (only secure area). Very interesting discussion regarding important future possibility - can't be identified until later.

Then departure ceremonies at the airport and we're off for London, with the lost time made up.

Back to the lunch - fabulous service. For each course the troop of waiters marched in on each side of the table, alternating a senior man in black britches with a junior man in red and gold livery. Fish course was a sort of soufflé with two sauces. Then a broiled breast of chicken with marvelous mushroom sauce, and stuffed artichoke bottoms. For dessert, a mocha cream pie with a white sauce.



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London

Arrived on time at Heathrow, met by Prime Minister Wilson and military honors. President left direct from airport with Prime Minister to Chequers for dinner. Too foggy to use helicopters so had to drive. Rest of us to Claridge's for the night.

Beautiful hotel accommodations. Real old-fashioned elegance. Lovely suites, huge bathrooms, with directly overhead showers, monstrous tubs, heated towel racks, bidets, etc. Great service and real style. I am in part of the President's suite, with a separate hall way, bedroom, sitting room and bath. Great!

Feels like we're in an armed camp. Threats of demonstrations in Grosvenor Square have brought out more police than even New York produces, many of them on horses, all unarmed. Group of us, with State Department officials, had dinner in hotel dining room, then went out to scout demonstrations. Pathetically small and ineffectual group, contained in a little square, totally surrounded by police who out-number them at least fifty to one. They are shouting and will be a real problem for sleeping if they keep it up. This is going to be a problem from here on, I guess.

President arrived about an hour late - got into the hotel with no problem, and the demonstrators all dispersed. Now we're left with just armies of cops.

He called me in to review the trip so far, was in his pajamas and pretty well out. Made point that two major purposes of trip are: 1) to establish with the free world leaders a clear picture of Nixon as the leader; and 2) to present to people of United States the clear picture of Nixon as free world leader and so accepted. Thus far he's sure accomplishing this in fine fashion. Discussed NASA appointment briefly, he said to go ahead on Paine, the Deputy, unless I thought we could do Borman. I don't.

Long talk with Rose and Hughes. Now to bed at 2:30 - beats last night by an hour.