



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

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Friday, Saturday, Sunday, February 28, March 1,-2.

Paris

Arrived in mid-afternoon. De Gaulle very cordial. Greeted President in English which is very unusual. Usual ceremonies, only the French do it with more style. De Gaulle, in welcoming speech, referred to his peoples' and his personal pleasure with the statesman the American people had selected as their leader. President responded with very warm words regarding American relations with France and ended with "Vive la France". De Gaulle started to applaud at English version, then waited for translation.

On drive in from airport, many police, as everywhere all roads completely cleared in both directions - kind of eerie. Huge motorcycle escort. A few people along the way, but not many. Went directly to Quai d'Orsay, beautiful palace and lovely quarters. I have a corner room - blue cloth walls, white and gold trim, huge room, high ceilings, great chandelier. Bathroom is also a corner with huge windows. Big bath tub with rack holding sponge, Chanel soap, and thermometer. Really luxurious living. Also an array of French cigarettes and a beautiful leather holder with Cuban cigars.

Left shortly after arrival for Arc de Triomphe. While waiting for departure, Sargent Shriver introduced me to Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, and we had quite a chat. Drive down Champs Elysees was disappointing to me - not very many people, and even less enthusiasm. Quite a contrast to Berlin, and even to Rome. A few hecklers along the way - the police really pounced on them. Barricades on all streets and lots of police.

Ceremony at Arc went well - usual routine. Then President went to meet with de Gaulle. Ehrlichman and I went to Embassy to do some business, then back to Quai. Apparently meetings went well - President in great spirits when he returned.



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Tonight may well have been his finest hour. At de Gaulle's dinner, the General's toast was warm, eloquent, and way beyond the need of protocol. The President's response was absolutely superb. He really built up France and de Gaulle in beautiful style. I was seated next to Madame Billotte, wife of the General who was de Gaulle's Chief of Staff during the war. She said at the end of dinner that she felt we had seen the making of history tonight - and she was quite overcome and most sincere. It would appear that at least a giant step has been taken toward the principal goal of this trip.

The dinner was the best of all. The French seem to handle things the best of any country we've visited. Eighty-eight were at the one long table, small orchestra in the wings for dinner music. All guests at their places, then de Gaulle and President made their entrance with music playing. Very impressive. Food was great. Consommé, delicious fish with fried shrimp and some seafood in a little pastry shell; meat was sliced strip, with carrots, peas, cauliflower, green beans, a green leaf, potatoes, little onions; then a sherbet in shell of burnt sugar and cookies. Four wines, one of the reds the best ever. After dinner to the salon for liqueurs, cigars, etc., including Napoleon brandy that Shriver says is \$600 a bottle.

Before dinner we assembled in the salon. The two Presidents came into the next room - we went in one by one, announced with title, to meet them - then into next room for drinks, champagne, port or martinis. After dinner they first served liqueurs, then trays of orange juice and grapefruit juice, then champagne. Only two hors d'oeuvres before dinner and those very skimpy (there were none in Italy or Germany).

Beautiful palace courtyard entrance, guards with swords at salute, red carpet up steps, etc. I sat between Mme. Billotte (above) and Mme. Lucet, wife of the Ambassador to the United States. Both spoke perfect English, but I had an interpreter (pretty young girl) who sat behind me all through dinner, and before and after. Would have sure helped last night in Rome.

Back to the Quai - where a lovely tray of fresh fruit and a bottle of Evian was on my mantel.