



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

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Monday, September 28.

Rome. A really good day - with the highlights two unscheduled activities which were great. The usual meetings, etc., this morning. Then we learned the American hostages were coming through Rome on their way home - here for fueling stop only. So we went into high gear - I talked to President on his way out of Palace and he agreed to see them. After meeting with Prime Minister, we choppered to Fiumicino Airport and President met them - talked a little on the strip then went up into plane and talked some more. Guess he did extremely well. Gave us a big news story. Managed to juggle schedule so he got through Saragat luncheon and on to Pope on time.

He extended his meeting with Pope well past the 45 minutes to about one and a half hours. He had me ride with him from Palace to Vatican and said on the way he wanted to go back into city and see people before boarding chopper in St. Peter's. So we worked out plan for him to take Pat Nixon back to hotel. It was spectacular. Crowds big and very enthusiastic. No bad guys at all - great shouts and clapping. He stopped and got out just outside St. Peter's Square, and was mobbed. Stood up on car, moved through crowd. Great! I rode in car with him and Pat Nixon. Crowds solid along streets all the way to hotel - long drive, President up through the top most of the way. A real coup.

Then chopper to Saratoga - for overnight. President had me in for half hour, general talk regarding the day, etc. Very pleased. Then the Cabinet officers and staff had dinner in flag mess and started a movie. Interrupted by word that Nasser had died. So we had a big conference of Rogers, Laird, Kissinger, later Moorer and Zumwalt regarding how to handle. Agreed should issue statement from President and should cancel firepower part of tomorrow's operation. Some argument regarding whether to cancel aircraft launch and recovery. I woke President up and told him. He agreed with statement, disagreed with cancellations but said would go with our decisions, then went back to sleep. Our discussion went on, zeroing in on planes or no planes. Deferred until morning.



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Then Kissinger and I got into whole question of continuing the trip - a real problem because Tito will undoubtedly go to funeral on Thursday. We finally came up with a plan - that lets President visit Tito briefly on Wednesday then back to Naples, until to Spain on Friday. Good if we can work it. The Kissinger-Rogers thing came up again, this time with Kissinger the dove and Rogers as the hawk regarding using the planes tomorrow.