



*act file*

July 9, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. RUWE

The President had a number of comments, suggestions, and instructions as a result of last night's dinner.

He wants to revise the timing for State Dinners as follows: 7:45 - Guest of Honor leaves Blair House; 7:50 - Guest of Honor arrives White House and proceeds upstairs to the Yellow Oval Room; 8:10 - the President and Guest of Honor come down the grand staircase, take the honors in the Grand Hall, move into the East Room for the reception; 8:30 - reception is concluded and the President enters the State Dining Room for dinner; 10:00 - dinner concludes, the President moves to Blue Room with Guest of Honor to chat briefly with selected dinner guests; 10:15 - the President and Guest of Honor move to the hall to receive the after-dinner guests as they go into the East Room; 10:30 - entertainment begins; 11:00 - the President escorts the Guest of Honor to the door and returns to the second floor.

The President wants the invited dinner guests to be escorted upstairs and into the East Room immediately upon their arrival; he does not want them held downstairs until after the Guest of Honor has arrived and gone up to the second floor. The seating chart, etc., should be handled in the Diplomatic Reception Room as the dinner guests come in so that they don't bottle neck at the top of the stairs.

There should be a platform in the East Room for the receiving line. This should be a one-step riser large enough to accommodate the President and official guests and the Color Guard. It should be covered with red carpet and there should be a set of brass stanchions and a red velvet rope across the front of the platform.

During dinner the Strolling Strings should come in as soon as dessert has been served and start playing at that time so that they will be out of the room by the time the guests have finished dessert, so that the President can start immediately with the Toast.

The whole idea here is to speed up the process and bring the President's participation to a close by 11:00 p. m. If it can't be

worked out this way, he will then eliminate the salad course in order to speed up the dinner. He does want the waiters to be instructed to serve the dinner as expeditiously as possible; although others felt last night's was done very rapidly, the President apparently does not agree. He had the feeling that the waiters were just standing around when they could have been clearing the table or bringing something in or something.

The musical program or other entertainment is to last for a maximum of 20 minutes and the entertainers should be firmly informed of this prior to making the commitment.

The social aides are to start the dancing immediately after the President has gone upstairs by inviting lady guests to join them for a dance.

For future dinners honoring Chiefs of State, the President would prefer to use the E-shaped table because he feels it is more dignified, although he recognizes it is not perhaps as pleasant for the other dinner guests. For dinners other than those honoring Chiefs of State, last night's table format is satisfactory.

For the after-dinner guest list, the President would like more Assistant Secretaries and that level of officers throughout the Government included, rather than so many White House staff types.

Also, will you please be sure that I'm given a copy of the guest list at the same time that it goes to the Social Office, and before the invitations are sent out so that I can quickly review it for the current thinking of the President before it is actually implemented.

I also need a copy of the final list of acceptances so that we can work out the program of meetings with the President which we started on last night.

The President urges that we consider adding more celebrities to the guest list because he feels it would enhance the excitement of the evening.

The President still wants a list of musicians and performers of White House caliber who were for us in 1960 or 1968. The last list didn't

really accomplish this since it was only a set of recommended people as of that point in time. Can't we get the Supporter List put together somehow?

We are also to think of other types of entertainment besides music. Your suggestion of Hal Holbrook, for example, would be a good one, and maybe there are some others.

H. R. HALDEMAN

cc: Mr. Chapin