

IS MEMORANDUM IS NOT TO BE HANDED TO ANYONE TO READ -- IT IS FOR TALKING PURPOSES OF HRH AND RMW.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 31, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR RMW

FROM THE PRESIDENT

CC: ✓ H. R. HALDEMAN

Drury asks some general questions with regard to my personal habits, which in the future I think you can respond to when friendly columnists or authors are given permission to receive full White House cooperation. This memorandum to you will be basically a talking paper which you can use in your discussions with Drury when you see him, or anyone else who may ask such questions.

Drury asks, "how do you arrange to have time for long-range, broad-scope thinking?"

The answer here has to do with the way I discipline myself and the use of my time. I have learned through the years that the most important asset a leader can have is the ability to concentrate on those subjects in which what he says or does can make the difference and to delegate to others all other subjects that really do not require his attention even though they may seem very important. Even with this kind of discipline I have accomplished this through the simple expedience of not wasting two hours in the middle of the day with social or business lunches and of having breakfast with someone else only when a breakfast serves a necessary purpose. For example, in over two years in the White House, I have had lunch in the Residence on only two occasions -- once for the King of Belgium and another when I had the special luncheon for the Speaker. This takes two hours from the time that can be used far more effectively on more important matters.

On an ordinary day I take five minutes for breakfast and five minutes for lunch. When lunch is finished I always reserve another 40 to 45 minutes with nothing whatever scheduled so that I can have the opportunity to get in perspective the problems of the afternoon. If I have had a particularly long evening or have one coming up, I may try to rest for 30 minutes during that 45 minute period, but more often than not I am unable to do so. I use the time for reading and preparing for the

afternoon schedule. I never have social dinners at night, and this also gives me more time for reading and long-range thinking. During the first six months in office several members of the staff were pressing me to have various people in for drinks or for a social lunch or dinner because they thought it would be good "therapy." After due consideration I have rejected this suggestion and have substituted instead the period from 12 to one o'clock and from five to 6:30 at night when I invite people in who have something to talk about and make it basically a business call. This really compliments them more in the long run although, of course, some of them would prefer to go back and say that they had had a drink with the President. It has been my experience over 25 years that the social lunch, the social dinner or the social cocktail hour is one where there is a great deal of talk and many promises but very little follow-through. It is simply one of those luxuries that whoever is President ought to give up in the interest of doing his job better.

With regard to delegation I am exactly the opposite of Cleveland. Cleveland read every bill -- I suppose that is the reason that he vetoed more bills in two terms than any other President in history has in two terms -- but, on the other hand, he got so enmeshed in details that he could not take the long view at times. One of his close associates said that "Cleveland would rather do something himself poorly than to delegate it to someone else who might do it well." My philosophy is exactly the opposite. If I have somebody on the staff that I think can do something better than I can by reason of the fact that he can devote more time to it I delegate, and I leave those matters for myself where I have particular competence and where my decision rather than anybody else's can make the big difference.

The question about "getting away from the Presidency" has never been one that particularly concerns me. I have no desire to get away from the burdens of the Presidency. As a matter of fact, when I feel most frustrated is when I am spending time doing something that I may really enjoy, but which I feel takes me away from what I really ought to be doing to do the job of the Presidency adequately. Polk once said that no one who really does the job of the Presidency adequately has any time for leisure -- and this was 100 years ago.

I would not go as far as Polk -- a President owes it to the country to take some time off for leisure so that he can be fresh for the great responsibilities of his job. Every one of our Presidents has followed this rule. TR loved the Presidency, but he took plenty of time off to recharge his batteries before going back into the daily routine of running his office. Wilson worked ferociously, particularly during the war, but he took his drives with Mrs. Wilson, played golf -- usually nine holes in the morning at least once a week -- and also had to have a vacation from time to time so that he could come back refreshed for the bigger tasks. The same was true of FDR and of Eisenhower.

I perhaps differ from my predecessors in this respect, Where golf is concerned, while I greatly enjoy the game when I do not have what I consider enormously important problems to work on, I do not enjoy it whenever I believe that it is taking me away too much from the mountain of work I have on my desk. Four to five hours on the golf course coming and going, etc. is one of those luxuries that I as President have found cannot really be justified and then still have time to do the job I was elected to do. That is why my golf has been pretty much limited to ceremonial appearances over the past two years.

However, a swim, which may take an hour, in the surf, a walk on the beach, bowling for an hour, may not give me as much pleasure as four to five hours on the golf course might give me, but I have no feeling of short-changing my greater responsibilities when I limit my periods of exercise or relaxation in this way. I find that a ride on a boat in the Florida Keys or in the Bahamas for an hour is also enormously refreshing and does not consume so much time that I feel guilty about having left the job.

Perhaps another reason for my different attitude is that I can recharge my batteries very fast. Rebozo has often remarked that during the years I have come to Florida sometimes looking very tired and that within one day, even though I may be working quite a bit during the day, a few dips in the salt water, sitting in the sun, brings me back completely. As a matter of fact, I have found that taking off any more than three days brings me past the point of enjoyment. I begin to be too concerned about being away from the job and am anxious to get back to it.

My exercise, as I have already indicated publicly, is very limited -- jogging in place perhaps for three or four hundred fast steps in the morning, occasional bowling, and when I am at the seashore, either in California or in Florida, a walk on the beach, a swim, or a ride in a boat. I do not enjoy fishing myself, but I do enjoy being on a boat and watching other people catch fish. I simply don't have the patience to be a good fisherman, either on stream or in the sea.

My major recreation is probably reading, primarily in the field of history and philosophy. I suppose I get double enjoyment out of this because I would enjoy it if I had no responsibilities as President whatever and I find that I get a number of good ideas from my reading, which I can use in speeches and other meetings, and always a sense of perspective which I otherwise might lose if I simply paid attention to the instant news analysis in the newspapers and on TV.

I listen to music, usually very late at night, around 11 o'clock, before going to bed. But while I listen to music I cannot read, and I can never have it on when I am actually in bed. I concentrate on the music and enjoy it by itself. My preferences are classical music, Tschaikovsky, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, Liszt, and except for the choral conclusion of Beethoven's Ninth, only symphonic, non-vocal recordings. I like opera, although I seldom get an opportunity to go, but I do not like it on a record, and the same is true of vocalists generally. I like them in person but not on records. Ormandy is my favorite conductor.

I enjoy the personal diplomacy aspects of the Presidency but I could well dispense with the ceremonial aspects. I consider the latter, however, very important, and when I apply my test of enjoying what I think is important it makes me do a better job. I suppose it could be said that I enjoy the ceremonial part of the Presidency to the extent I can be convinced that the ceremony is one that only I as President can perform and that it will help do the job in the long run.

I noticed that Drury asked questions with regard to 1972. My answer, of course, has to be to him as to everybody else that I will not comment on 1972 in 1971.