



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

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Wednesday, May 14.

The Big Speech on Vietnam.

President holed up at the Residence all day, in the Lincoln Sitting Room, working on the speech. Called over three times - in the morning, to say he wasn't coming over; in early afternoon, to say he wanted small steaks served at the breakfast tomorrow because "they don't do eggs very well"; and in the late afternoon to be sure I had solved the problem of the podium light (I assured him I had, but later discovered it was still totally inadequate - shafted again by WHCA!)

President met with the bipartisan leaders regarding the speech, in the Treaty Room. He had a call during the meeting from Chief Justice Warren (I assume about Fortas) who said it was urgent. So President came out of meeting to return the call. A little later a letter arrived from Warren. Can only assume it's the Fortas resignation.

Kissinger did briefings all afternoon about the speech. They did some good with the TV commentators. He realized by late today, though, that we had made a mistake in trying to make a major diplomatic move - requiring checking with other governments, etc. - in the form of a TV speech. Instead should have done a paper, gotten it cleared, etc., and sent it. Then go on TV to explain it, instead of presenting it there. Whole thing was too complex with too many nuances that are totally unintelligible to the ordinary guy.

Rose was engrossed all day in typing the speech, so we still don't have guest lists for King Baudouin luncheon next week and two State Dinners the week after. A real mess and it gets worse.

Staff meeting this morning was mainly about reaction to Abernathy yesterday. We were had, and now they all realize it. Hope a lesson is learned.



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Lunch with Ehrlichman about treachery in the State Department. Reports show all kinds of staffing skullduggery at end of last Administration. We have to figure out a way to get on top of this. Obviously it's all over, not just in State.

Reorganized my staff operation to utilize Staff Secretary more fully - also moving mail and phone calls to my office, and will use the troops much more extensively on projects, of which ABM with BeLieu is a real disaster. He's a lost cause organizationally.

President called late in evening - after TV - to raise hell regarding invitation list for Armed Forces breakfast because he found his friends weren't on. Turned out he was wrong.