



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

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Thursday, March 18.

After considerable discussion and weighing of alternatives, the President decided to drop his plan for an in-office press conference tomorrow. He felt it would undercut the Howard K. Smith interview Monday night and makes the point that even a one network TV deal is worth a hundred times the writing press all put together. Second, he agreed with Buchanan's feeling that, because we had no good news, this would be a primarily defensive exercise on the economy. And third, it isn't needed for press therapy because we've got so much other action going this week that will carry the press activity. The decision made today a clear day, and he used it to do some general thinking himself.

Had me over for several long periods at the EOB and a session in his Oval Office in the late afternoon. Also had a long session with Henry and a good long meeting with Connally. Actually, it's probably the most useful kind of day he can have. In one session with me, he got into the whole question of scheduling, as he developed some ideas for future planning: he wants to keep moving on our 50 state plan idea; wants to go to an auto race, maybe in California this next time; wants to be sure we're taking a good bunch of sports personalities to the baseball opening game; wants to see how the Stone fundraising dinner comes off, and if it does well, he'll consider doing others. Then we got into the problem of the New York trip tomorrow for the Dewey funeral...

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Audio Cassette 5, Side B.  
Duration: 31 seconds

...and the question of whether the Drowns would be going which led into the whole Drown problem. Which came up later, when he had Rose trying to scout out what their plans were but



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she was unable to determine it. The whole thing ended up that he kept Ehrlichman and me in the office till after 7:30 as he was stalling to avoid dinner with the Drowns at the residence. He finally gave up and went over to the EOB and had dinner there alone.

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We talked a little about Colson's plan for bringing John Scali in, and the President is intrigued with that as a good staffing step forward. I had a long meeting, although I was in and out of it, with Malek, Colson, Ziegler, and Chapin to cover their whole communications area and how to solve the Klein problem within that. There was something of a flap this afternoon when Ehrlichman learned from George Romney that he and Hardin, Blount, Stans, Volpe had been meeting with McCracken and Burns on the economy. John thinks this is a maneuver to try and undercut Shultz. The President had me check with McCracken on it, and he says they-- he only had one meeting with this group and that Burns was not present, and that it was to do with the construction wage problem. He denied any knowledge of other meetings with Burns or anyone else, but it appears that there have been such. The President is going to see Arthur tomorrow, alone, and maybe he'll be able to smoke it out.

Henry was in for a while and reported that he had received a long proposal from Dobrynin today on proposed Berlin settlement, which is still not in form to be satisfactory to us, but it's getting much closer apparently, and Henry thinks maybe there's something workable that can be developed from it.

The full House voted on Supersonic Transport [SST] today and defeated it, which is something of a blow, but there's still a chance of saving it in the Senate, where it will now go.



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End of March 18.