



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

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Monday, January 11.

The President is still in San Clemente and I'm still in Palm Springs. He called and really had very little to cover. He did get into the question of follow-up on getting our poll information out, which is the one thing he seems to be particularly concerned with. He had spent the morning trying to decide whether to go back to Washington today or not. We finally, after a full morning's maneuvering involving Ehrlichman, Rebozo, Rose Woods, and me, ended up deciding to stay out here until Thursday. In the interim, the President proposed a whole series of alternatives for Nebraska one-by-one, including: canceling the whole thing; moving it up to Tuesday and doing it on the way back; going back on Tuesday and coming back out to Nebraska on Thursday or next Monday, etcetera. We finally convinced him it should be left the way it is, and that he should just suffer through the time here and go on. The problem is, the weather's bad at San Clemente and not too much better at the desert, and he's getting antsy.

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Audio Cassette 03, Side A.

Duration: 30 seconds

Also the Drowns staying on through the weekend greatly accelerated it, and as a matter of fact, Ehrlichman says that the President spent most of the two-hour session John had with him this morning discussing how to get the Drowns out of his hair in future visits. This had also been thoroughly discussed with Bebe and Rose earlier. It really is a sad situation but until the President and Mrs. Nixon step up to it there's no solution.



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I called Connally, finally, to follow up on his conversation with the President regarding Presidential PR; and he basically recapped the same things he had told the President, and that the President had passed on to me already. He did make the point that he had met last week with a small group of the top bankers in New York, and had taken the opportunity to devote 15 minutes of his conversation with them to just talking about the President, and what kind of a man he is. In doing so, he made the points: that the President has the best concept of his problems than any man Connally knows; that he is isolated to a certain extent, as any President has to be; that he has allocated his time better than any man he has ever seen; that he has an extremely competent staff and delegates more than any other President, and it's the only way a President can operate effectively; that he is highly disciplined mentally and physically; knows his people, their strengths and weaknesses, and his adversaries and their strengths and weaknesses, both foreign and domestic; that he's ruthless enough to be a great President.

And he feels that we should get all the Cabinet and staff getting out this same kind of picture of the President at every possible opportunity. We have a good selling point in the basis that the President surrounds himself with strong men, which only a really strong man can do; and the Cabinet members, therefore, should sell themselves and build themselves up, as well as the President. The staff should not be built up, he feels. He also feels that a press man or a PR man can't do this, because he spoon-feeds the stuff we want the press to know, and that the effective salesmanship in this area comes from the unexpected source. He also made a fascinating political point, which is that there's nothing wrong with having certain elements against us. He made this in the context of the press conference and its adversary nature, which he thinks is good. His point



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is that the basic political rule is to pick your enemies carefully, and then hang on to them, but be sure they're always the same ones. This is something we haven't consciously or adequately done.

End of January 11.