



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

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Monday, February 1.

Virgin Islands, and then to DC in the evening. No contact with the President until we boarded Air Force One. And then we got into a general discussion on the plane of odds and ends. He was in great spirits, didn't have anything particular in mind. Went through the briefing folders and FYI material we had stored up for him over the weekend. Didn't seem particularly concerned with any of it. We discussed the question of the VP speech attacking the press, and I gave him a recommendation that it not be given, at least at this time, because of the developing trend in the news on the Laotian buildup. He agreed with this, and so we'll hold up on it, at least for now.

He made the point that we've got to get to work on the State of the Union follow-up now, to try to develop a good case on what's in it for me, rather than just the big plans about which no one has any concern. He reflected a little on the war and the fact that the general public just doesn't realize how hard it's been to make the decisions that have to be made. They're just happy that we're getting out. This leads him again to the need for someone sitting in on foreign policy who has PR sense. I made the point that Connally would basically fill this need, and he agreed.

We discussed general schedule items. He's going to do a press conference on Friday, and probably will do it in the office, although he discussed the various possibilities as he tried to figure out whether that was the thing to do or whether he should go into the press room with cameras. Most of this would depend on Laos, because it may be that he'll want to get his answer on the Laos thing clearly on the record and, therefore, will want to go before the cameras. He's even considering the possibility of actually-- of doing a live telecast at news time.

He wants to get started on the one-on-one interviews on the networks. And he talked a little about plans for Florida on the Lincoln/Washington Birthday weekend. He got into a long discussion of polls, etcetera, as I gave him the updating on our poll, principally the trial heats. He concludes that the TV appearances really don't affect the poll, although he concedes that they may be valuable simply in maintaining our position, even though they don't do us any good in moving us upward. He also talked some about the State of the World message. He's absolutely



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horrified at Kissinger's insistence on going with 60,000 words, which is at least twice too long. He was reluctant to do anything on television with respect to it, but did agree, after we talked about it, to go on for ten minutes live and hit the highlights. The argument I used with him on this is that foreign policy is still our strongest suit and that it is foolish not to do everything we can to keep that strength built up, and that his live TV appearance would be the best thing we could do in that regard. He insists, however, that Safire write it, and that the outside word count is 2,000 because he doesn't want to go over fifteen minutes and hopefully will stay at ten.

End of February 1.