



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

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Wednesday, February 17.

The President was holed up at the EOB all day, getting ready for his press conference, and had hardly any interruptions. He did call once and was particularly interested in talking about the results of a youth poll reported in the news summary today. He was intrigued that it showed that youth want stronger leadership, more family ties, and they recognize the need for hard work to achieve success. He feels there's a real problem for us in it, in that their most admired men are JFK, Martin Luther King, and Bobby Kennedy, with Nixon coming in a poor fourth at 9 percent. He felt it was interesting that Teddy was not in this list, however. He thinks this whole study shows that youth is a very vulnerable target for us, and that we ought to be concentrating on our opportunities to reach youth. He also wants us to get going on our poll covering these areas, as well as a thorough analysis of this Gallup Poll.

The press conference was very successful, ran for about 45 minutes in the office. There were about 50 press there. The President did a superb job of taking the questions and encouraging follow-up questions. Practically the whole thing was on Laos and Vietnam, certainly for the full first half. The only domestic questions were on meeting with the black Congressmen, where the President said he hoped it would be worked out; on the integrated housing question, where he said he'd have a recommendation on the Blackjacket issue in 30 days. And that then he tried to explain the difference between human rights and economic integration, making the point that we will enforce the law requiring that any human has the right to buy or rent a house where he wants to, if he's able to do it; but we will not use economic force to bring about racial or economic balance within a neighborhood, or to upset the zoning planning for an area. On the economy, he was asked about the construction unions, and made the point that Hodgson is meeting with them over the weekend and will recommend it to him-- recommend action to him on Monday, and that there will be some action. He said the construction business is a sick industry because it has too rich a diet, and made the point that the federal government has \$14 billion in expenditures in construction each year and, therefore, we must get into the question.



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On Vietnam, regarding the negotiations in Paris, he said they've got to recognize that time is running out if they expect to do any negotiating with the US, because we are about to be out of the war. And he said there would be no more concessions from us at the bargaining table. He covered all the usual questions with the usual answers. There was one question as to whether he was disappointed regarding Congressional reaction to revenue sharing. He said he wasn't disappointed at all, that all reforms have tough sledding, that all institutions and establishments are reluctant to give up their power; but the people are for revenue sharing, so it will eventually be approved by Washington. He said he was surprised at the favorable reaction at the grass roots; it was much greater than he had expected it would be. He let the press conference go on even after they tried to close it off, and it ended, I think, with a very good feeling.

I had a session this afternoon with Mitchell and Finch on political structure, trying to get Finch's role pinned down. I had had a long meeting with Finch this morning on the same subject. It's very tough to get him down to specifics, but Mitchell laid out the basic format very clearly, and I think we at least made some progress.

Henry was in, agonizing over his TV problem. It appears that Klein wants somebody on for a special full hour of *Face the Nation* after the State of the World next week, and Henry, of course, wants to go on himself but professes to believe, as I do, that he can't. He's obviously violently opposed to Laird and/or Rogers going on, not for any valid reason, but because he's afraid they'll louse up his report and/or take credit for it. Unfortunately, there's no way of talking him out of this line of thinking, and the net result probably will be that we won't have anybody go on. We'll try to use the time for domestic policy.

End of February 17.