



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Sunday, February 28.

After a late breakfast, the President called me over to Aspen at 11:00 for about a three-hour session mostly on odds and ends, as he went through his background and briefing folders. We did get into a number of specifics on the plan for the trip tomorrow and the one later this week, and a number of general schedule items. He isn't too pleased with this whole trip business, and said so. That led him back into the general PR subject, the question of whether we ought not to just forget all the stuff we're trying to do and take things as they come, which of course, I argued with, and his feeling that the image is set now and there's nothing we can do to change it. A lot of this, I think, is the reaction to the Gallup Poll which I reported to him yesterday, which holds at 52, not very good.

He did get into a number of points on press plans, questioning the frequency and format of press conferences. He wants to do the upcoming one this week on foreign policy, which Ziegler argued with a little yesterday, but which really is a better idea. Then he'll do the next one in the office, or in the press room, all on domestic policy. He got into some other general schedule questions and then got back to work on his speech material for tomorrow.

Connally, Ehrlichman, and I had a meeting in Laurel for a couple of hours after that, mainly discussing the whole PR question. Connally made the point that he had seen recently in some news report that the President clearly understands the use of power. Connally thinks that's a very good point to get across. That we should portray the President as a student of the Presidency; that we should recognize his weaknesses and let those be pointed out from time to time too, but make the strong point that he understands the uses of power. That Laos and Cambodia, for example, are demonstrations of his perceptive use of power, and that we should get other illustrations. Also, his recognition of economic power the mobilization of the government to use this power, internationally. That he recognizes that the Marshall Plan concept is a thing of the past; that the Nixon Doctrine is a policy of power. That what he's doing is far-reaching in concept; that over a long-term basis, he's laying a foundation. Then we should weave in revenue sharing, family



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assistance and so forth that he has found because of his compassion and concern. And also, he and John feel we should do the Postal reform story, which is really a remarkable accomplishment, get some credit out of that. That perhaps instead of meeting with Herrera of the Latin American Development Fund, that we should have turned down the request for the meeting as a cold political move, making an enemy of him on the basis that he's going back to Chile to teach in a Marxist University.

He feels we should look for examples of this kind, never using false issues, but on a positive calculated basis, create enemies that will be useful to us. All of this must be done by others, however, not by the President. He thinks we should look every day for ways to build his credibility. He feels very strongly that the thought of emulating de Gaulle is absolutely wrong. He feels we need to do a lot of work in building-- rebuilding our business support. That we've disappointed a lot of our natural supporters, and we need to reestablish our support there.

End of February 28.