



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

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Friday, March 12.

David's commencement exercises from OCS at Newport. We flew up in the morning with the family. The President delivered the address, which was extremely good, had been written by Neil Cook. And the President, too, was very pleased with it. I think it will get some pretty good reaction, although it won't get a lot of especially good coverage. The only flaw in the ointment up there was a gathering of some eight or nine hundred hardhats and Catholics who were combined in some sort of protest. The President wasn't even aware of it, but it got thoroughly covered, of course, on the TV news. On the plane down to Florida, he had me up for quite a long discussion, mainly on general PR. He had a pretty good point that we had put in an urgent phone call request for him yesterday on calling Alf Landon because he was in town. But nobody had suggested that he call the twenty one year old policeman who was shot that afternoon and left a widow and a two year-old child, and his widow was about to tell him last night that she was expecting another child. This, of course, had great human interest value. The President saw it in the paper and made the call on his own, but someone should have gotten it and then should have found a way to get it out. This, he feels, shows the whole failing again just as the Connally thing does. For example, he needed someone last night on the Barbara Walters interview to really crank things up and build some enthusiasm afterwards, but nobody did. He wants to be sure we get someone doing that with Howard K. Smith before the interview with him, so he can build it up. His point is that with the unfavorable press that we've got, we just have to have someone around the President who isn't cool, pragmatic, and organized, and who will really catch a hold of these things and get them charged up instead of just plodding. He also wants Carruthers to expand his project of what we do on TV. And he's reacting some to Hallett's memo and the things that he thinks we should not do, but makes the point that even though Hallett didn't like them, Al Capp did, and that there's a difference between what the intellectual wants us to do and what those who don't read the establishment press think.

He also got into a lot of funeral-- or a lot of schedule things on the plane, and we discussed his participation in Whitney Young's funeral. He feels very strongly he does not want to go to New



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York because of the demonstration problems, and we've got an excellent excuse because of the State visit from the Prime Minister of Ireland; so he felt he would much rather go to Kentucky for the burial than to New York for the memorial.

After we got to Florida, he called a couple of times, got very upset because unfortunately he saw the CBS news coverage of the Newport affair and didn't like it very well; so he wanted a lot of action taken. He wanted me to call Colson, Magruder, etcetera, which I did, and it was a good thing because he called later to check up on them. He did feel that it hadn't been done well, and actually it wasn't wildly enthusiastic, but it was certainly fair and objective coverage and hardly worthy of a complaint.

End of March 12.