



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

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

Saturday, April 3.

The President got to working on the speech this morning and has changed substantially the approach that Henry was originally taking. He's going to go fairly quickly through the basic detail stuff he has to cover regarding Vietnam, Laos, and the troop withdrawal and then get more into a general approach to the situation that we now find ourselves in regarding the war, the need for national defense, and the general public attitude towards all of this. Everybody, including even Henry, seems to agree with this basic change of direction.

Then he got into quite a discussion on the general thesis of tactics on how to approach all of the events that affect the polls. For instance, his announcements regarding the war at various times. That after each of them we've had a substantial improvement in public opinion, but Laos, where we had no announcements and no television appearance by the President, the public opinion dropped radically and has stayed down. He feels that this indicates some need to change our schedule planning, to drop the trivia and to make more effective use of TV. We've got to get through the symbolism of contact with a lot of people by working out a schedule which shows a lot of contact, but doesn't have so many actual meetings. In other words, one a day makes the point; there's no point in adding a lot of others.

He feels we've spent too much time on therapy with the Cabinet, the staff, and the Congress, and that it doesn't do any good and that we should, from now on, concentrate only on our hardcore enthusiasts, where we can get some mileage out of them. In the same context, he wants to cut down on open hours, and so forth. His main point is that we have to dominate the dialogue, so we should go back to looking at ways to do this. He sees that as one prime time press conference a month, plus one other major prime time television appearance, a speech or something else, and that we should get rid of all the nickel and dime stuff, except for one such thing a day. Use the rest of the time to make the big plays and to prepare for the television appearances. He does feel we need more visible indications of Presidential leadership, and that we've got to get away from the little stuff in order to get to that appearance of leadership.



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We got into some discussion of Congressional things, but MacGregor says we've got a new problem about to crop up because Goldwater and Hatfield have united in the Senate to oppose any extension of the draft, on the grounds that we can now move to a volunteer army. This will pose a whole new problem. Even though it was Saturday and a sensationally beautiful day, the President stayed in the office all day, going over these things with me plus reviewing periodic speech drafts with Buchanan. This should get him in shape to take tomorrow off, and we'll see what happens.

End of April 3.