



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

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Tuesday, April 6.

No schedule except for a quick filming and message signing. The President spent the whole day at the EOB working on the speech. He had me over first thing this morning and obviously wanted to have a long chat. But I had to leave to go to Ann's school, Father's Day. He did get into a few items, and it turned out that what he wanted to talk about was his concern about jittery members of the staff. He feels that this is the time that we should ruthlessly weed out all of those who will not stand strongly behind us. He specifically mentioned Finch, Rumsfeld, and MacGregor. He asked that I have Colson delay bringing Scali on for a week, that he must not come on the day of the speech, and that we should give him the chance to pull out of the commitment, if after the speech and its reaction, he isn't as strong about coming in as he was before. He feels that people are in an unstable frame of mind at this point, and they'll jump at anything. He made the quote that, "None of the staff are here because of what they did, they're here because of what I did; and therefore, there's no reason for anybody on the staff to be strong in a tough time like this." He then stated very positively, "I shall not go forward with anyone who has shown weakness in this situation. I want them all weeded out within thirty days."

He said the Cabinet is a different problem, and he doesn't quite know how to deal with that. Rogers has stood pretty well on this situation; Laird has not. He said it's a question of those who are so emotionally disturbed about situations and serious events that they'll have to desert us, and we can't give them that opportunity next year. We've got to weed them out now. He made the point that he didn't think I see this as clearly as he does, but wanted me to be thinking about it in any event. He also decided not to put Gates on the McCoy Commission, because he doesn't want to have any establishment people any more. He wants to use Midwesterners or Southerners, people who will stand with us. He asked me to get instructions to Agnew to do nothing in reaction to the speech until after the weekend and we see how things have set in. I left then, because I was late for the trip to Ann's school.



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This afternoon he had me over again and asked how everything was. He was in kind of an introspective mood. Discussed a few of the minor logistics regarding the speech, and then settled back and said he wanted to read me the speech. He made the point that he was not showing me a copy—so that I would be able to say I had not seen the speech—and use that as a backup argument for not letting anyone else see it. He then read it through quite quickly. He feels it'll run 18 to 20 minutes as it's now written, but it only took him 12 minutes to read it to me, even stopping to make a few notes from time to time. It comes off very well and makes the case exactly as he should. It's my view, at least, that it will be pretty successful in accomplishing what he's after. He had the OAS white tie dinner tonight. All of the key staff were at the Finch's for dinner, as sort of a farewell party before they and the Rumsfeld's leave on their European trip.

End of April 6.