



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

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

Wednesday, February 9.

By now, my *Today* show thing has really escalated into a super confrontation type of thing. President is dealing with it very well. He makes the point that Muskie's now trying to hit him on the basis that his call for silencing critics doesn't make sense because he attacked Vietnam in '66 and '65. President makes the point that Muskie can't get away with that, because RN didn't attack anybody in '68. He also can't get away with the point that I didn't qualify my statement, which he says is the case in trying to say that I was speaking for the President.

The President taped his State of the World announcement today and in the speech wrote in a paragraph of his own that basically answers the attack on me, and Ron and I went over that for quite a while this morning. He sa-- President says he woke up at 3:00 in the morning and wrote-- dictated this section, which is a strong defense, really, of my position. President made the point that I stand behind my people when they make a mistake, we must lay the groundwork, so that if the negotiations fail, we can blame the failure on them, which this will do.

He had me call Bebe to suggest that he talk to George Wallace's cousin, and point out that he has a real opportunity in Florida for Wallace, so that he's not just a one issue man. That Muskie has opened himself up now, and Wallace can say that he didn't criticize Johnson, just as Nixon didn't in '68, and he can take Muskie on for undercutting the President, and the chances of peace, and calling for surrender and so on.

After Ziegler's briefing and the talk this morning, President concluded that we're in a good position now, this keeps the issue up there and in the right context. He told Ziegler to whack the staff for hitting me. Made the crack in reviewing the press list of whether there were any non-Jews going in the press corps to China. Got into some other items on making sure we have some of our blacks in the Secret Service, the stewards, and so forth, on the trip.

We had several discussions later in the day about the whole situation of my attack, and it's obvious that he's concerned about it, but is hanging very tight on it.



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President went up to Camp David this afternoon to work tonight and tomorrow on preparation for his press conference tomorrow. Ehrlichman, Mitchell, and I met with Don and Ed Nixon to go over the Don Nixon problems. Had a rather rough two-hour meeting that at least opened Mitchell's eyes to the real problem we've got with Don, and it's just incredible, because everything that we get cleaned up uncovers something else in the process, and it just seems to go on and on. He just has no realization of the position he's in or the super care that he's got to exercise. He's clearly not badly motivated in any way, he's just not smart enough to exercise the super caution that he should exercise. Ed Nixon, while playing an adversary role in the meeting, got Ehrlichman afterwards and said he'd work with us to handle it, that we'd gone at it just right, and we should keep Kalmbach in as the contact, and so forth.

End of February 9.