



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

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Monday, February 26.

The President had Steve and me come over this morning for a meeting on schedule planning. He spent most of the day working at the EOB on preparation for his press conference tomorrow. He had a lot of odds and ends for schedule, nothing very important. Went over the details and general plan of how he wants schedules approached. Reopened the question of his POW party, the State Visit plans, some follow-up on other general odds and ends, use of phone calls and all that.

He then got into Congressional strategy and feels that he's at a loss as to what we can do. That he's concerned that we have to straighten the Timmons thing. He's a Harlow, without Harlow's gift of mystique. Told me to ask MacGregor about that maybe using Jack Marsh. Maybe keep Timmons on, but have Ehrlichman take responsibility for domestic and Kissinger for defense. So Kissinger and Ehrlichman handle the Congressional BS, and let Timmons be the operator, but not the spokesman. I would then have to program Kissinger, Rogers, and Richardson on the Congressional stuff. Ehrlichman would handle the whole deal on his side.

This merged into some general PR discussion also. He questions whether Ehrlichman is too valuable to make forays out into the country. He can get a better press here and shouldn't go out to Detroit and so on, because he's got too great a substantive and advisory responsibility. On overall PR, he wants Kissinger, Ehrlichman and me to get together and work out goals. Kissinger indicate our goals for the first year and the four years, what is our benchmark, what are we trying to accomplish, Ehrlichman the same for domestic, and me the same for political and PR with Price's help. Then he wants me to form a kitchen Cabinet of MacGregor, Harlow, Bush, Brock, and Mitchell, and he later added John Scali to that. He's concerned about figuring out what we can accomplish and getting them going. He feels, however, that we are in good shape now versus four years ago, but we have our major weak spot of how to package and sell what we've got. We've come a long way so far because of the big plays, but we now have to go a long way on



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three yards and a cloud of dust, there won't be any wallbangers from here on. He wants to use Billy Graham also in the kitchen Cabinet.

Then he got into Gannon's memo, says he seems very thoughtful, better as a memo writer than as a speechwriter, and on the next weekend he wants the memo back to read. Also, he wants me to reread it, because he thinks it's quite a perceptive analysis. He says look at Fairley, what the Kennedys did in PR, they had a game plan and they carry it out, and he thinks we can do likewise. Maybe, have Vermont Roister and Price sit in some of the sessions. Also, he wants to talk with Ehrlichman, Price and me for a couple of hours, reviewing goals and thoughts, especially regarding the Gannon memo, which was logical and broken down as to what are the things that people care about: crime, prices, environment, quality of life; not reform, reorganization and so forth, those don't interest people. He feels the major problem now is the desire of a lot of our people to get along with everybody and avoid confrontation. We must recognize that it isn't us that's confronting. He does agree it's a mistake for the President to take on the press, because that just unites them, instead he should do things to get the message through to them.

In terms of vetoes and so on, he wants to be sure the messages are read very carefully and that we get Harlow's judgment on tone. That certain words unnecessarily infuriate Congress, and we shouldn't use them. We should get these messages in further ahead of time so the President can read them. The Kennedys operated on the basis that it's one minute to midnight, which it is somewhere in the world at any point.

He then got into Kissinger and the point of his old line, "that we would sure destroy the libs when the war was over," and now he isn't doing a thing about it. And his question of whether Scowcroft is strong enough to handle the Kissinger job. He detects signs of weakness and collapse already and feels that we'll probably have to make a change there. Also feels that there's a real question as to how long we can take Kissinger, too.

End of February 26.