



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

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

Thursday, March 8.

The President had a super-loaded schedule today, starting with breakfast with Senators McClellan and Young. Roaring through an NSC meeting with the Pakistani representative, some staff groups, Toni Martin, Bob Hope, Newbold Noyes, freshmen Congressmen, and a few other odds and ends thrown in in between. I got a lot of things caught up, made a number of calls. Talked to Mel Laird to take a stab at the President's idea of having him coming in and overseeing Congressional relations. I didn't raise it with him, because his plan is to leave for Mexico next week for two weeks, and says he doesn't know yet what he wants to do. He's taken on the Chairman of Wolf trap because he couldn't turn Packard down. And he is going to stay in Washington, but he hasn't decided what his plans are yet, so I figured it was premature to raise the President's idea with him.

Talked to Richardson on his personnel problems, told him he wasn't going to get Cooper that Kissinger was taking him. That on Marsh, he's got to make him an Assistant Secretary, which he says is a real problem, because it downgrades the other posts and the tough Hill jobs can't be done by that office anyway. Although he agreed they need better generalship and coordination in dealing with Congressional resources. Also, told him he couldn't use Jonathan Lure as his White House contact, because he doesn't have the confidence of either Kissinger or the President.

At the President's request I called the two POW leaders, Captain Denton and Colonel Risner, to get their reading on when to have the POW event, and also to check out whether they would be able to come in and see the President. Denton said he did believe we should avoid the piecemeal thing, of the President seeing prisoners on an on-and-off basis. So we should quickly get the word out that the President does have a plan. He then raised some schedule things that they were pushing him on, and asked whether he should take them or not. He said he was awed by the President's effort so far successfully to resolve what has up to now been unresolvable, and that he would be ecstatic to see the President. He's obviously completely overwhelmed by the thought. Colonel Risner was less overcome by the whole thing, but had somewhat the same view,



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although he thought maybe the deal ought to be sooner than the June 14 day we're figuring on, because Ross Perot and others are suggesting reunions of various kinds and this should be done first. He too was obviously most anxious to come and talk to the President. Said that the POW dinner with wives idea of the President's was excellent, that they would all very much want to do that.

Also talked to Malcolm Smith, the author of the *Kennedy's 13 Mistakes* book tracked him down at his home in Long Island. He said he couldn't get the book published, so he did it himself, ran some ads and got a pretty big response. Then did get a publisher to agree to handle bookstore distribution, but at about that point Robert Kennedy was assassinated, so he pulled the thing off the market. He says he has 2500 copies and is going to send me a dozen of them. That he's thinking now of starting a conservative citizen lobby like Gardner's. Says that the book is very accurate and the only thing that has been challenged was something about Chile and copper, where he made-- he reported a quotation accurately, but the quote itself was in error in some way.

The President had Bob Hope in today. And had me in to talk with him about the plans for the POW TV show on closed circuit or network with the fundraising dinners. Also he wants Hope to do the POW dinner at the White House do the show for that. So we talked over some general plans on how that might be approached. They'll do that as Bob Hope's last Vietnam show, and the other one we ended up with a series of dinners around the country connected by network television, and then the program on TV being a sort of telethon thing with a lot of talent stars, but asking for money, as well as getting money from those who go to the dinner.

The President had me in at midday for a short run. He's going to do a press conference next Thursday. Wanted to see Denton and Risner next Monday in the afternoon. Wanted to be sure-- I told him that I talked with Connally at the dinner Wednesday night and that he is going to switch, and the President wanted to be sure he did his press conference in Washington rather than in Texas. Connally said he plans to do it just as a straight press conference rather than trying



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to work any other kind of gimmick into it. He had a couple of ideas on White House entertainment. That was about it.

End of March 8.