



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

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Tuesday, March 13th. The President went into the Watergate question this morning. Wanted to know if we had any polls on current reaction as to who it affects, analyzed by voter breakdowns and all, which we don't have. He thought it'd be a good idea to get that. Also we had, he had a meeting with John Dean for a long time at midday on the Watergate thing. Primarily at my instigation, because I wanted Dean to raise with him the plan he discussed with me about having Bill Sullivan go ahead with the testimony he'd like to give to the Senate committee on what the FBI did under past administrations, which would pop the bubble of our supposed political corruption of the pristine Bureau.

Later in the day he had Ehrlichman and Ziegler in, and gave Ziegler some guidance on Watergate. Said that he should say, in answer to any questions, that there's been complete White House cooperation in all the investigations up to now, and there will be with the Senate committee, but there will not be appearances by White House staff people. Sworn statements answering any questions they may have will be provided. But Ziegler should start with the point of complete cooperation and furnishing information. He should refer to this as different from the usual way of doing this. For example, Truman, in the Hiss case, issued an executive order, ordering no cooperation at all from any Executive Branch Agency with the Senate Committee. On the other hand, we will provide sworn statements, which is a major step forward.

He also got into Ehrlichman's State of the Union wrap-up address idea. He wants a prospectus this afternoon from John on what he ought to say. And then I told him John had the, someone do the speech draft and we could get that to him which he said would be fine. He then discussed that further with me saying that he is, his general feeling was not to do it, and that if he were going to do any speech, he would go for something he didn't read, but rather a philosophic speech that would be delivered directly to the people without worrying about the writing press or the Congress. He talked about that with Ehrlichman later, said his concern is that there won't be any



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positive reaction from the Congress, and if you want to get the meat of the speech across, we shouldn't do it to a live audience.

He came back to the news analysis again that he'd discussed yesterday. Said the problem with it is that it deals exclusively with the obvious in pointing out things with alarm, whereas what is needed are: first, what defenses we should erect on these problems, and, secondly, what are the positive issues we should ride for our own benefit? In other words, we should be considering how to throw for the touchdown rather than just intercepting a pass. He feels mood in this thing is important. We should be looking at where are our opportunities. We should be attacking the media, and so on, rather than being on the defensive.

He got into the ambassador question again...

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...agreed with Rogers's analysis that Vale is too dumb to handle Germany, and decided we should shift him to Argentina instead, and told Kissinger to try to work that out, and then put someone else in Germany.

He got into the question of the POW party again, and I called Bob Hope to work it out with him. The President's plan was to do a Presidential briefing at the State Department in the afternoon



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with no press or any text. And then he worried about how we'd keep the press away from him at the party, and decided we'd just use the line that the President won't exploit it, that it's their party, and there'd be no press or television there. We're not doing it for publicity, we're just doing it for the POW's.

The question of the date, and we basically zeroed in on May 24, which Hope agreed would be okay. The President may announce it at his press conference on Thursday. He figures that, he thinks we've got to figure out a plan on how to stop nickel-and-diming the POW's, and wants me, or someone, to sit down with the top people and set up a way to handle advice for them, so they aren't just exploited. He does think Bowie Kuhn should be urged to have Denton throw out the first ball as the first POW to return, and that this is using them properly rather than exploiting or using them cynically. He thinks that Parker should get in on this, as to how they're scheduled and so on.

He got into an analysis of his own schedule, making the point that he's done a fantastic amount of activity in the last four weeks, covering the entire range of business, personal, human, ceremonial, etcetera. Yet it's gained us nothing as we've gone steadily down in the polls, and see no tangible result of it, which proves to him the lack of merit in following this kind of a course.

End of March 13th.