



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

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Thursday, March 15.

Discussion at the staff meeting this morning about the Hill's counterstrategy on our budget plan. They now plan to agree to a budget ceiling, or to the idea that 268 but not only as a ceiling, also as a floor, on the theory that we've gone to that as a full employment budget on the basis that the economy needs government spending at that level in order to maintain the economic growth level. Therefore, they will cut defense and then take the money that's left and spend it on social programs, which we've got to figure out a counterstrategy for.

The President had his press conference this morning, and over half of it was devoted to Watergate questions. He got into quite a discussion with me this afternoon about that, and his concern, which he's expressed continually, although tries to stay away from it with me, that we're in a bad position on Watergate. He keeps working with Dean every day on trying to develop ways of finding some statement that we can put out that shows that we're not just covering it up.

He went over the questions that they didn't ask at the press conference on all the major issues, including no questions on the announcement of Bruce to China, which he made at the beginning of the press conference. And he raises a question maybe whether he should do these press conference more often, even weekly, which Ziegler strongly disagrees with.

End of March 15.