



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

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Friday, December 12.

Another breakfast, this time McCormack and Albert. Then a meeting with POW wives, who really impressed the President. He now has a great interest - amazing what a little personal exposure will do. He now wants all sorts of action. All this got the morning schedule pretty well screwed up, and had to juggle because of appointments. President pretty upset that we let it get screwed up. Overlooks fact that he added the breakfast, which was what threw it off.

Kissinger's plans proceed apace. Stockwell met the Chinese at their embassy – first time for an American – and while no major breakthrough – it was at least a new step. And the Romanian is on his way to meet Kissinger here Tuesday. Then a feeler from North Vietnam – to meet Kissinger in Paris – which also may develop. Kissinger really in his element. Loves this.

President had Kissinger, Ehrlichman and me in for general discussion. Lot of it about question of doing the hour TV with the anchormen. President felt this was not the time and ultimately we all agreed - on basis it would be more effective and more needed right after the first of the year. Loses the value of year-end wrap up impact, but gets us in the driver's seat before Congress comes back. Also things are pretty hectic at this period and there's not really adequate time for preparation. I do hope we've got him convinced to do it, it would be a real smash.

All signs continue good - and President's position in polls, etc., should continue pretty high. Looks as if he's bought adequate time to pursue his Vietnam course - just hope we'll get a break on the negotiations. The Congressional battle is in reasonably good shape - as his threat for a special session has spurred them into some frenzied activity. The Tax Bill is all screwed up, but he doesn't really care. Will at least get appropriations done.

He keeps grinding away at the budget, in one and a half hour sessions, Department by Department. Good process as he's forced to learn a lot about what's going on. Is determined to cut, especially excess personnel. Keeps issuing brave orders about 25 percent cutbacks, etc. - don't know how far he'll get.