



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

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Wednesday, February 25.

Governors Conference. Morning kept clear for preparation, and afternoon after speech kept clear as usual on Wednesday. Screwed up the speech preparation - and he had to crank up his own. Even so spent until 11:30 this morning in staff session of two hours, one of which was with me alone on subject of last night, and State Dinners in general.

Peggy Lee was apparently a disaster - everyone agrees. Also quite a few minor gaffs. Decided to change format - eliminate after dinner guests and dancing. Just have dinner group plus official parties for entertainment. Went through a lot of other details, which I covered in staff meeting later.

On speech, he rejected Safire's stuff as too flip and cute. We got some other ideas cranked up, but he didn't use them. Spent two hours on it himself, and ended up giving a twenty minute talk instead of ten. It went quite well.

Discussion with Ehrlichman regarding DC city council political implications. Decided to leave on the holdover Democrats, so we don't take responsibility - can't win. Also HEW veto problem. President doesn't want to veto and be overridden, so feels we should base our decision on "what can be done" and inclined to go ahead with final compromise.

Had Mitchell in regarding McClintock question. Pointed out it involves direct confrontation with Cabinet officer. John M said on that basis President has to back Rogers - President agreed, but wants to play it out as far as we can at Ehrlichman level - and try to keep it away from President, and keep Kissinger out of it.

President went to EOB after Governors Conference, alone for about two hours. Then Ehrlichman and I over. Ehrlichman outlined Finch idea of proposing a Constitutional Amendment about the school problem. President intrigued, and wants it to be developed. Then some general discussion of possible press conference Monday. Ehrlichman opposed because would have to answer school questions, and he feels should leave that at low profile and let Agnew work it out with Governors



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through his committee. Also problem of getting into Laos question - which we discussed at group meeting this morning. I suggested deep background disclosure because everyone already knows unofficially.

President to French Embassy for dinner tonight. Historic first.