



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

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Saturday, March 21.

President in early, to EOB, to work on briefing books. Had to spend quite a little time on postal problem. The settlement didn't work - because rank and file won't go back, have rejected leaders, and now SDS types are involved, at least in New York. Walkout has spread to many other cities - including Chicago, where they noted a strike. Real danger of national strike - with need then to call in troops to deliver mail, and police to disperse pickets. Strategy is to do the least we have to do, but to insure the delivery of the mail.

President had a press conference in the Oval Office at 11:30. Opened with statements regarding mail strike, Middle East plans and plan for school statement on Tuesday. Then took a lot of questions - Vietnam, Laos, etc. Very good. Really threw press off balance.

Canceled plan to go to Camp David - to stay on top of mail crisis. Have alerted troops, and will move hard if not settled and back to work Monday. Spent the afternoon on the school statement (I went to UCLA basketball game), and called me to say it was in good shape - would have final draft tomorrow afternoon. Very pleased with the press conference - and anxious to take positive action on the postal problem. Says he'll bring all the troops home from Vietnam if he must to keep mail moving.

Threat now is of radicalization, a national strike, other walkouts, i.e., Teamsters, Air Traffic Controllers, etc., to cripple whole country at once. Would provide a real opportunity for leadership, but how to handle it? Overreaction could bring a real disaster.