



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

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Friday, July 17.

Again no schedule because of planned press conference, except for Heard meeting in late afternoon. Then the big ball for Prince Charlie tonight, and President's dinner for the Annenbergs in the Roosevelt Room.

Lot of notes reacting from last night's boat dinner with the fat cats. Nothing very significant.

Decided he wants Scranton Commission to go ahead with open hearings, because it keeps the student unrest issue alive through the summer and works to our advantage. Wants to be sure we get some really horrible types to testify. Then need to get our right wing types to blast the whole thing. Gets a little involved but should work.

Strongly feels we should go on a strong overall offensive now. The economy is with us - at least for the moment, so we can really hit the prophets of doom. Hit the crisis of confidence, etc.

Decided to scratch the July trip to California. Just doesn't feel good about going out there now. Too much on the plate. Not really true - but he thinks so. Does want to go ahead with weekly trip into country in some form.

Had a big noon meeting regarding plan to send message to Congress regarding deficit spending and need to veto. Got into whole question of campaign strategy. Harlow points out this move means a total declaration of war on Congress and we should be sure it's what we want to do - and is fully orchestrated when we do it. President argues that we must be "against Congress." Have to give our candidates, who are not now in Congress, a clean issue on which to hit - either you have the spending issue or you don't. Finch argues can't veto Education Bill, so should hold off. Key is we have to hang the deficit on Congress, not Administration. Also have to fight hard to sustain vetoes - even if we know we'll lose. So decided to put out low key statement now, then probably let Education Bill become law without signature, but call in leaders, bipartisan, and announce we're cutting 400 million in other programs to compensate. Then veto all the other overage bills and fight to hold it. So will hold all out assault on Congress for later.