



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

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Thursday, February 18.

The Colombo visit. The President had a break-- his second breakfast for the Democratic Congressional and Senatorial group before the visit, then the usual arrival ceremony and private meeting, which occupied most of the morning. He was concerned about the writing staff in preparation of background and remarks for State visits and wants Ray to go to work on trying to do a better job of getting the really best man we can find to handle this kind of thing. He didn't feel that the remarks he was given, either for the arrival or the toast, were adequate. The dinner went very well with an almost all Italian guest list. And we should have made substantial mileage in the Italian community. The President seemed to be pleased with the whole thing.

During a lull in the early afternoon, he had Buchanan and Ziegler in, mainly for a discussion of whether the press conference yesterday had been worthwhile. He keeps coming back to this and trying to analyze whether this is the best use of his time. The thing that bothers him is that he has just as much preparation work to do, almost, for an in-office press conference as he has for one on TV, and the question is whether he gets anywhere near the mileage out of the investment this way. My argument, of course, is that he doesn't, but that it's still a good thing to do as a way of changing pace. Buchanan and Ziegler had both felt basically the same way.

Later in the afternoon he had Shultz and Ehrlichman in for a general discussion and got into the whole basic problem of release of data. We've got the Consumer Price Index coming out tomorrow, and it's only up 0.1 percent, which is the lowest rise in four years. The President was concerned that we make an all-out effort to make sure we get the press coverage on it handled right, particularly that we just make two basic points. One, that this is the lowest in four years; and the other, that food prices haven't risen in the last 12 months, and use this as a base to state that our policies are working. He put this pretty hard to Shultz, and I think, got his point over pretty well.

He did the dedication speech of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Studies at the Smithsonian late this afternoon. And it went over extremely well. It was a good, short speech,



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written by Safire. The President had-- had him rework it to get it down to a single central theme and only ten minutes long, and it went beautifully. Humphrey introduced him with a 20 or 25 minute speech, and the President's was great partly because of its shortness. He was very pleased with this and felt it was an outstanding example of the value of a short speech on one single subject that leaves a message behind. Unfortunately, it was too late in the afternoon to get any decent TV coverage, but I'm sure it will be picked up on the morning news tomorrow, and get some mileage that way.

Dean Sayer, of the Washington Cathedral, who is Wilson's grandson, told the President it was the best suma-- summation of his grandfather's idealism that he had ever heard, and asked the President for-- for the original text, which the President agreed to give him.

End of February 18.