



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

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Saturday, March 6.

The President at Camp David all-day. Called several times in the afternoon, mainly on some follow-up on the press conference and projects that he had initiated. He's made a lot of the phone calls that Colson set up for him to make, and is getting good reaction from them; so he thinks this is a good idea. He has some other ideas for additional phone calls. Continued on other--

[End of tape reel AC-05(A)]

[Begin tape reel AC-05(B)]

Continuing Saturday, March 6. The President got into an analysis of the various forms of press conferences and other TV appearances. He feels that he can make the press conference more conversational and thus meet the feeling that it has versus the conversations. He thinks he can keep in the good humor, the personal, and the low key thing. His real question is, which has the best effect on the audience, the hard, fast, antagonistic thing or the low-key calm approach?

Maybe most people don't like him being too sharp, maybe it's better to give long answers rather than short, clipped ones. The real question is which gives the greatest sense of confidence and communication and which affects the most people, especially which affects the swing voter. He made the point that if you read about war, you find that the great failures are by the commanders who can't make hard decisions, make the hard decision of concentrating their effort. In other words, doing the prudent thing down the middle always loses. You've got to take the big steps, you've got to put all your weight against what really matters, and have it work out.



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This conversation led him into wondering what Dick Moore thought about it. He obviously called him and then called me a little later, saying he had talked to Moore, and that Dick felt that the conversation on TV is the best because it shows the man; and he thinks that far more important than all the programs and substantive material is the man. For instance, he referred to the Buchanan "worst horn?" memo as being an outstandingly good thing.

Also, of the two press conferences, Moore prefers the December one that was clipped and banging 'em out, although he liked the idea in Feb-- in this last one of going over the heads of the press and talking directly to the people. He prefers not limiting the press conference to one subject, though.

Then he talked to Rose who said it was hard to say which one was best. That our friends liked the idea of his putting them down in December. But this time the press was more respectful, so the President talked more to the people. The question still is: Do the people want to see a fight or do they want to get the direct message? Moore also made the point that we have too much on the plate now, that the people don't understand or care about revenue sharing, and environment and reorganization and so forth, and we're inundating them with all of this stuff which they can't grasp. The fundamental point is that there are only two or three main issues that matter, and we should just ride those. Moore is very high on the use of radio, feels we ought to do that on weekends, and he likes the aiming at special groups on radio. This gets to the question of whether we're overdoing the process of dominating the canvas, and whether we're-- we are inundating as Moore says. We've got to make clear to our own people that the domestic subjects are only holding action at best. They don't gain us any political mileage. We've got to build on the human interest and "Nixon the Man" things, but we've got a long ways to go in doing that.

End of March 6.