



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

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Friday, February 5.

The President didn't come in until late because of his sessions with Mansfield and Albert. Apparently, he made no headway with Mansfield and, of course, didn't expect to; but Albert came along all the way, and the President was very impressed with his attitude.

He got into a long discussion this morning of general PR again; dash-- that's a result of his having another day with nothing scheduled. We had originally planned a press conference and had cleared everything for it, and then didn't fill it because of Laos; so he didn't have much to do. He did cover a lot of odds and ends. A meeting with Ambassador Bunker; a farewell session with Lyn Nofziger, which turned into quite a long chat, and he dropped into the Domestic Council meeting just to pep them up a little.

Anyway on the PR thing, he got going again on the fact that we've done so much and gotten so little credit. And wants me to have Connally come in right away after he's confirmed, to unload on our top staff; just say he's shocked and horrified and really hit them on the basis that they're not getting across the "Nixon the Man" idea. Then he wants Connally also to do the Cabinet a couple of weeks later. Praise Romney and Richardson for their magazine article follow-up, but hit them on the need to keep going on this. He thinks the reason for our "thin support" is that people forget what you do; they only think of the man, and we're not getting that side of the story over. He also obviously having a problem with Mrs. Nixon, who isn't getting any of the wire stories or other coverage of her activities. She was disturbed about no TV coverage of the Jackie Onassis dinner the other night, which was a real coup; and also she had the whole Peruvian relief crowd in and didn't, apparently, get any coverage on that. Connie just doesn't keep her posted, which is the real problem. So we'll set up a plan to handle that.

He wants to have a big dinner for the astronauts when they come back, having ground crews, suppliers, and all that sort of thing, rather than just the little family dinner that we've had for the other crews.



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He had some other ideas on Finch following up on the whole youth thing. And he called Colson in for a brief chat on that general area since Finch was out of town.

Laos continues on a pretty even keel today. There were a few flurries here and there, but the embargo's lifted and the news is out, and it doesn't seem to be creating nearly the stir that people were afraid of. I think we'll come out extremely well on it.

Everything went very well at the WSAG meeting today. There were no particular problems. Henry was afraid we were getting stuck still with Rogers and Laird doing their Committee briefings on Monday, this time in executive session, but I joined with him to shoot that down, and it turned out that there was no problem. Rogers immediately agreed to it. We have another meeting at 10:30 tomorrow morning.

The President was planning on going to Camp David tonight, but the icy rain made the weather conditions bad so he couldn't fly, and he decided he didn't want to try to drive. He will probably go up tomorrow instead.

He ended up the day with a-- an EOB session with Weinberger and Ehrlichman, on the need for Weinberger to get more into the political side of things. We just sat around and talked for quite a while, and out of it came an idea first to have Ehrlichman and Shultz do briefings of the Democratic conference and caucus in the same way that they've done the Republicans, which would be a real coup. The President then stepped in and said why didn't he have breakfast for the Democrats like he did for the Republicans last week; so we're going to go ahead and set up two much larger breakfasts to bring all the Democratic members down and do the same kind of thing. It'll be an enormously effective step, I think, because it'll catch them completely off-base, and it will be especially desirable right after the Laotian operation. That should finish up next week pretty well, so that he can take off for Florida on Thursday with no problem.



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The only trouble now is the scheduling of a press conference, and we keep putting it off week by week. His inclination now is to pass on it next week also and probably do it the early part of the following week. This may be okay, but we're getting pretty touchy in putting it off much longer.

End of February 5.