



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Monday, March 1.

Des Moines trip day. President didn't come into the office. We went right from--he went right from the Residence to the helicopter and out to Des Moines. Back this evening for the Apollo 14 astronaut dinner.

The Des Moines trip went well in general, especially the appearance before the State Legislature which was a very good move, and the President did an excellent job. The only flaw was a fairly substantial number of quite militant demonstrators at the Capitol, who then came over to the hotel for the latter part of the day. They were chanting the usual obscenity and had some pretty bad signs, etcetera. They appeared to be pretty much college age. We had been expecting a hard hat demonstration in protest against the construction workers' problem with the Davis-Bacon suspension, but had not had any advance of plans of student anti-war demonstrators, but that's what turned up. They threw some rocks and other things before the President came out, but didn't create any problem with him. By shifting the motorcade around, we confused them a little but probably made the situation somewhat worse, because we caused them to run across the lawn, thereby looking much more dramatic than they really were. It actually wasn't that big a number. It'll be interesting to see how the press plays it, and I'm sure they'll give it a pretty fair buildup, but it was not really that significant.

The other big news of the day was the bombing of some office areas in the Senate side of the Capitol, and the President was quite concerned that we had not moved quickly to get his action and reaction recorded along with the original story on it. We did get pretty good follow-up, as he's offered training for the Capitol Police and any other help that we can provide, plus of course, a full investigation by the FBI of the entire thing. There had been earlier threats from the Weathermen, and they may very well have pulled this. The demonstrations in Iowa were basically SDS, and all of it could very well be part of a general plan leading up to their April 24 demonstration and then their May Day plan to close down Washington.



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The only time I had with the President today was a couple hours on the plane going out and back, and most of that was on some minor schedule details and trip operations, plus getting back into the whole general PR question again. He had sent me some memos that he had dictated over the weekend, but I hadn't gotten them before we left. He was back on the point that we had struck out on so many of the really good things like the Woodrow Wilson speech, the Adams portrait presentation, the office press conference, his comments at the Physical Fitness Group, and his remarks at the Prayer Breakfast. And he feels that it's probably too late to do much with most of the things we've blown, but that we could still salvage something on these. He at least thinks we ought to go back and catalog all of these color stories and see what we can do with them.

This is obviously a matter of great concern to him, because it keeps coming up all the time, keeps replaying it in different ways. The only thing I can figure we can do is to move better from here on out and merchandise with him what we're doing. Actually most of these stories have been played better than he realizes but still not nearly as well as they should be. The other thought he had was that he wanted me to have Connally write a memo for his file, giving his recollection of the breakfast and the luncheon that they had, and the other conversations prior to Connally's appointment. He also wants to be sure that we keep up the attack on the Senate doves, as we had raised over the weekend, so that we drive them as far out on the left wing as we can get them, and then be prepared in a couple of weeks to saw it off when Laos solidifies.

He was obviously pretty tired on the way home and still had the dinner ahead of him, so tomorrow will be probably not too good a day. He's pushing for loading things into the schedule tomorrow, which doesn't seem to me to be a very productive idea, since we're still shooting for the press conference on Thursday night. We may have to shift that because of Israeli developments, but I heard nothing from Kissinger today on the trip, so I assume things are probably going pretty well in that area.

End of March 1.