



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

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Wednesday, February 14.

The President got into the POW follow-up first thing this morning, making the point that some of our idea staff should have thought of the two key things that he came up with that have been most effective: the idea of the corsage to each of the POW wives, which has worked extremely well in pictures in the paper, on TV, etcetera; and the idea of raising the flag to full staff on their return, which also has had a very positive effect. He wanted to be sure that we were in touch with Ross Perot; and had him involved in some way since he's been so interested in the whole POW project.

He then got into a long critique on speech writing in connection with his speech today on the State of the Union message on environment. He made the point that he'd done some editing and wanted the writers to review it for consideration for the future. They should look at the clarifications that he's made and the style changes. For example, you don't need transitions in speeches, you have to put it the way people talk, so we need an editor that goes through and does this. You should never say "I want to conclude by saying," you just spell out the points. You never start a good sentence with "but", because that rules it out as a quote. The quotes they select still don't make it; they're not quotable lines, they're colorful language. For example, his line that "you need a fair shake for American products in the world" is the kind of thing he's looking for. Ziegler in this regard is not a phrase-maker he just picks out their leads. Instead, you need a creative type who's a speech doctor to goose it up, put in the colorful quote. Unless you have a quotable line it won't be remembered, the things that people can see; otherwise, you can have all the beautiful words and still make no points. Can't we get a speech doctor as such? There are such people. Which guys that we have now have the colorful phrases? That's really the editor's job to break up the distended sentences, put it in speech form, drop out the transitions, leave out the things of "that reminds me of a story," just tell the story. Always work in something timely, such as his idea of China a year ago with "America the Beautiful", which also reminds people of our good points, like China, and the POW's and so forth. We should always go back and bring in



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the big issues; think in terms of audience interest, anecdotal timeliness, so that it's not just a gray exercise in good management. His usual, complaint.

He talked a little about the problem with the blacks and how we work on that, reacting to the *Newsweek* cover story this week. He feels that there is a need for us to show that we love them in some way, and maybe that we need a Presidential speech on this to do the kind of thing the Kennedys did, which is to give it lip service. On PR, he's concerned that we still don't get enough out of the Ziegler operation, in terms of getting a lot out of a little, the way the Kennedys did. We especially need the McCrary-type approach—which we don't really have—that is based on an understanding about how people feel, emotional reactions. He asked who our best person is who senses how people feel, and I said Warren Herschensohn. He said that concludes that we're weak in this area. That Ehrlichman and I should contribute to this, and we need to get others to work on it.

He then got into the question of the schedule for the Stans dinners; he's worried about having the same people at those as we have at the State Dinners, and the problem of just hauling in contributors. It's better to get them to "Evenings at the White House" with small dinners ahead of time that Cabinet people give, plus as many as possible for State Dinners and all. He did agree stag dinners with Stans' people would be okay with a briefing in the afternoon first, and then have the wives for "Evenings at the White House", and a few of them at the big dinners. Tell him that the stag dinners will have their wives later. Go to maximum capacity around tables, have a full four-course dinner that takes plenty of time, so the President doesn't have to talk to them too much.

He met this afternoon with Bush and Armstrong for a general political discussion, mainly involved in Bush giving them a sort of a progress report on what he's doing, how he's setting up the committee, how he's approaching things with the effort to build Congressional candidates to work with Bud Brown instead of Bob Wilson, and so on. George went through a lot of his



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problems and I think, gave the President a more negative impression than he really intended to, but basically he's in pretty good shape anyway.

End of February 14.