



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

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Sunday, August 15.

The working group started again at breakfast this morning. Got things wrapped up pretty well, and then went over to Laurel for posed pictures with the President. He was in pretty bouncy shape and set up the various shots that he wanted. He decided not to go back with the group. He wants them to go on ahead. He got into considerable discussion on various arrangements and details regarding the speech and the follow-up. He has decided not to release a text until after it's delivered. He wanted them to call the automakers today and see if they would agree to reduce their price \$100 per car, in addition to the excise tax reduction. That later proved not to be successful. Connally tried, and they refused to do it. I told him we were setting up a staff briefing this afternoon down at the White House after we got back. Regarding Wilbur Mills, he said to tell him that the President is going to make a statement, that you'll like what he says about taxes, and that he would like to talk to you tomorrow-- that we would like to talk to you tomorrow, that this incorporates some of your ideas. He doesn't want us to brief any Congressmen in advance, wants to really make the Republicans stand up.

He said that on the follow-up stuff, we ought to build a mythology, restrain Safire and let that come out later. On the question of who won, give Connally great credit: he was the quarterback, the President was the coach. Connally developed the plan. Only Nixon and Connally knew the whole thing. He also wants to build Burns up. He had been extremely helpful all along in developing this as an advisor. He decided not to try the TelePrompTer. He still wants to move on Peterson as the head of OEP. We all then came down. The President called from Camp David and said, in addition to the calls Arthur Burns is planning to make to the bankers, it's more important in the immediate sense that he talk to the people in the writing press that have great influence, like Hobart Rowan and Ed Dale. He should take these as a first priority and put his enormous influence into them. I talked to Arthur about this, and he agreed to do it if they called him.



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We had staff meetings this afternoon, a good briefing and then I—by Connally—and then I went over the logistic plan, both with my operating unit and then with a full staff unit. I think we have everybody tracking extremely well. The President stayed out of touch until time to go on the air. He called me right after he went off. Seemed to feel pretty good about it. He said he was trying to get some emotional lift into it. He especially liked his line regarding what the guy had written in 1775 about America having seen its better-- best days. He liked the line telling the people everything depends on you, but he had the real question of whether he'd made the impact he should have, considering all the work he had done on it. We got a lot of phone calls in, and all of the initial reaction was very strongly positive. So it would appear that we're in good shape.

End of August 15.