



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

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Tuesday, December 2.

President didn't come in this morning, left right from Residence at 10:00 for Hunger Conference. Went pretty well - no boos, and adequate though not overwhelming applause. At least it's done. Skipped morning budget meeting to have a long session with Ehrlichman and me, first on miscellany, then got down to the point - concern about speechwriter.

Feels he just doesn't have the right guy. Needs a Sorenson - a real craftsman who can produce compact, well organized literate speech. Says he must have the knack of organizing a structure, making it speak well (not just read well), add the gimmicks for memorability and emphasis, and finally give it moving power. Feels our people are all too intellectual and are ashamed of using the devices and approaches that move people. Need is to reach folks, not intelligentsia.

Regarding State of the Union - wants to hit the lift of the '70's, build in human spirit and character. Has to be demagogue, get cheer lines. Get the feel of a lift of the national spirit. Some discussion of California plans, in this regard.

After a Joe Alsop meeting, a budget session, and a bill signing, President had to cancel group of Congressmen because they still had a floor vote, so he called in VP and Mitchell. Mainly for therapy. Wanted to buck John up, regarding his problems with wife's interviews, etc. Lot of talk about My Lai again. VP to give speech - hitting the press overplay and irresponsibility on the atrocities story. President had a lot of guidance for him, and had me get him all the poop regarding Hué etc. Some political talk of need to screw the seventeen GOP Senators who went against Haynsworth. President really pleased afterwards with the VP's attitude and approach. He really relishes taking on a fight, and he does it very well. President is concerned, though, about letting Buchanan run loose with VP because he's almost too willing to take up the cudgel. But, as President agreed, this is the kind of guy he's been trying to find, especially in RNC Chairman, but Morton just isn't the type for attack, is really tops on the positive side.