



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

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Saturday, February 28.

President came in late, brief meeting with me on miscellany before conference with group Moynihan assembled regarding black problem.

Very interesting session - three hours in Cabinet Room, with professors from Harvard, Berkeley, Columbia. President in good listening form as well as participating. Several good side notes:

- "The way you exert leadership in this office is to make little notes in margins that eventually leak into columns."

- Story regarding Jack Kennedy's advice on politics - you can't move so far from your hard core support to the center that the umbilical cord breaks.

- "The easiest part of the Presidency is making decisions based on options presented. It's much more difficult to take an issue like this and then find what is the right thing to do and then figure how to lead the people."

Group all felt President should shift policy to helping and backing the strong, instead of putting all effort into raising up the weak. Felt the public needs a clear statement from President, but no real agreement on what it should be. Said we have to give the black middle class a cultural legitimacy. Said blacks, as things get better, feel small slights more.

Concerned that we are not capitalizing on our opportunity. Say Nixon can do less and get more credit than a Democrat. Think President is now to the left of the country, but need some symbols to indicate this. Also made point that someone is going to have to act like parents or there won't be any children.

President had me in for another hour and a half alone, with no lunch. Wants to consider a major speech on the whole business of permissiveness. Some more regarding Helene Drown – now faces inevitability of her visit – just trying to figure how to minimize the agony. Wants to have some more stag dinners this week while Pat Nixon gone on tour.



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Says he's decided to get really hard-nosed regarding priorities, must do better on the high priorities so will cold bloodedly eliminate the secondary. Will send revolutionary memos to Kissinger and Ehrlichman, i.e., wants Kissinger to cut out everything about Africa, Latin America, etc. Only cover Russia, China, Vietnam, Middle East - the ones that matter. Eliminate all he can't do anything about.

Then President off to Camp David about 5:00.