



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

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Tuesday, January 19th. Cabinet meeting this morning for three hours to cover the State of the Union presentation. Ehrlichman and his crew ran the show and did an excellent job of presenting our general budget plans and then reviewing the main new programs in revenue sharing, executive reorganization, health, and environment. Then Ed Morgan did a pitch on how the whole plan is to be sold. Cap and Shultz had some darned good comparisons on the budget thing, showing the shifts from defense spending to human resources, the increases in expenditures on pollution, crime, and medical, all of them very effective. The revenue sharing pitch was pretty well done; executive reorganization, also very well done. By the time they got to Richardson on health, and then Train on environment, things were lagging along a bit, and it didn't go too well. The point was made by Shultz, in regard to reorganization, that the suggestions we were coming up with had, in one form or another, been proposed frequently by earlier commissions and councils, but no other President has had the courage to do anything about it until now. In the middle of the health presentation, the President made the point that we should not provide full free health care because, most of the time, when someone's got a pain, he'd be a hell of a lot better off not to go to the doctor, it'll just make it worse. At another point in the discussion, the President urged putting this together in very brief and simple form, saying that most Congressmen and Senators won't have time to understand this, even if they had the capacity. It became clear, as the presentation went on, that our biggest problem at the moment is the lack of a handle for the whole program, and we've got to develop one.

This afternoon, Zig--, Ziegler was in to get some guidelines on how to handle Cambodia. We're being accused in the press of a credibility problem again, because we have stepped up air activity and they're trying to pretend that this is a change in policy. The President told Ron to hit the credibility question directly and to hit it hard. Make the point that the press constantly tries to raise a straw man on this that the President has done everything he said he would do and is going, is doing in this instance. We've already clearly pointed out there would be no American ground action and no American advisors in Cambodia. We said we would assist Cambodia, and



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this was okayed by Congress with dollars and logistic assistance. We also said we would continue air activities, where necessary, for the purpose of inhibiting the enemy from reestablishing their sanctuaries. That was presented to Congress and was written into the legislation. He wanted Ron to refer to the Stennis-Fulbright colloquy on this. He's always said that US activity would be limited to air and only where necessary to prevent reestablishing the sanctuaries. The President wanted to be sure Ron hit this hard, making the point that the Pres--, the press, at another point, had said that the bombing in North Vietnam was new, which was not true. The President had said it November 3rd and eight times after that. Yet some of the press wrote that it was a surprise, which they knew was not true. He also told Ron to get out the line of the President's frequent contact with Rogers to try to shoot down the New York Times series that's implying that all the control has shifted away from State and to Henry Kissinger's operation.

A little later, Kissinger was in and there was quite a discussion of Muskie and the results of his trip. The President obviously is not pleased with the reception Muskie was given by the Soviets and by Willy Brandt. He wants to have Muskie hit on the total irresponsibility of his statement, or his proposed statement, on a standstill in the nuclear, or in the disarmament talks. He should be hit on his amazing ignorance. Say it's unprecedented for a Senator to do this. We should get a Senator to hit him when the proposal comes out. The President's also decided that Ambassador Beam has to go. He played Muskie's line too much while he was in the Soviet Union. He made the point that we've got to recognize that the Soviets will play a role in US politics. They definitely want to get Nixon out, and will do what they can to see that that happens. Kissinger argues that they have to balance this against their fear that Nixon may win and they'll have to live with him another four years. The President says, I'm willing to try the negotiations and so on...



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...but we can't believe them and it's better to turn on them now. The President raised the question of whether we shouldn't accept the Chinese invitation, but Henry po--, points out that the problem of having to agree to some change on Taiwan, prohibits that.

We got into the polling question. The President is disturbed, obviously, by the Gallup Poll, which only shows him up 4 points while our poll shows an increase of 11. He's suggesting now that we should probably build our own established poll, such as ORC, on a continuing basis, so that we have a third poll that's taken regularly to counteract Gallup and Harris.

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Continuing January 19th, 1971. I was commenting on the President's feeling that we need a third established poll of our own to counteract Gallop and Harris such as ORC who we'd use on a continuing basis. He makes the point that the results of the polls directly affect our ability to



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govern, because of their influence on Congressmen, foreign leaders, etcetera. And that it's important that we keep the published polls honest, and that we know ourselves exactly what the actual poll status is.

The President went over to the EOB in early afternoon and worked for a while on the State of the Union. Then called about 4:15 to say that he had sent it back for another draft, and wanted to get Finch, Rumsfeld, Ehrlichman, Shultz, and Weinberger in for a general discussion in the EOB office, which we did. And it lasted for a couple of hours. Mainly, he got into the follow-up on the discussion this morning and the need for getting ready to follow up further on the State of the Union. First, however, he got into the point of whether we ought to have some sort of thing tomorrow to celebrate the second anniversary of January 20th. He suggested a group in the Oval Office, or something like that, that might be spontaneous. We ended up with a general staff briefing in the theater, at which the President would drop by, allow press coverage of his remarks, which would be along the same inspirational nature as his closing remarks at the Cabinet meeting today, which were really extremely good. He had made the point there, and will again tomorrow, that this whole program we're presenting in the State of the Union is the most substantive State of the Union ever presented. And that if Congress steps up to what we're giving them, they could become the greatest Congress in the history of the nation. It's the first time we've turned the direction of government back to the people, away from Washington, and it really can have quite an effect if we get it going right.

That was the reason for his wanting to discuss the necessity of all of this group really getting into the selling activity, and the rest of the meeting related to that. He strongly made the point that Finch and Rumsfeld should take on, as their major task, the need to be as public as possible, especially on TV. They should concentrate, however, on building up the President's ideas, not the programs. We also talked about the need to find ways for Shultz, Ehrlichman, and



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Weinberger to use public appearances. But then agreed that Ehrlichman probably fell into the same category as Kissinger and should not be used as a public spokesman, but could be used intensively for backgrounders of the press, Congress, and our own people before they go out on the road. The President then got into a discussion of setting up locations for conferences, small meetings, meals, cocktails, etcetera and wanted them to start using his EOB office and everything else. I talked him out of that, but he did agree to let the outer EOB office be set up as a conference room, and also to make the library and the theater in the Residence available for Presidential staff to use in holding these briefing meetings.

In reviewing the whole thing, the President made the point that our economic policy is just riding on a wing and a prayer, it either will work or it won't. We think we're right, but we don't know. We have to ride with that. The places where we can effect change are in these new programs, and we've really got to put them over. He makes the point that this is the first significant change in the structure of government since the country began, and this is the kind of thing we've got to develop the ways to sell. Our biggest problem, still, is the need for a name for the whole thing.

The President had a dinner in his honor given by the Cabinet at Blair House tonight, as they did last year on the anniversary. We'll have our White House thing in the session he has tomorrow morning.

We launched Pete Peterson today as Assistant to the President for International Economic Policy.

And, that does it for January 19th.