



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

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Friday, May 21.

The President was in at 7:20 this morning. He was also in early yesterday morning. Apparently still cranked up from the whole SALT deal. Last night, he decided after dinner to drop by the Tulane University Alumni Dinner being given for Hebert, Boggs, and Ellender. And called Steve Bull to say he wanted to go to the Ellender dinner. Nobody even knew anything about it, but they finally found out where it was. The President shot out and went over. Fortunately, the Army band was there; they played "Hail to the Chief," he came in, gave some apparently very good remarks and left, scoring another pretty good hit.

He had buzzed me in at 7:50 and discussed a little bit about dropping by staff meetings, but decided not to do it this morning after all. Then Henry dropped in and persuaded him to do the Intelsat signing ceremony today; so we slapped that onto the schedule at the last minute, squeezing it in between his meeting with the SALT delegation and a couple of other morning sessions that he had. His main concern today was naturally the follow-up tactics on SALT. He feels that Scali and all of our crew have got to push hard on the point of the President's initiative. And therefore the Congress has got to give the President the tools to continue this kind of leadership. That-- his point is that we need to buy some time in Congress. We've got to be sure not to gloat about the deal itself, but to praise the President, making the point that those of us who have had confidence in him are now totally justified. We need to answer Humphrey on the point that he's a little late in coming along now, that the President's initiative began in January.

He doesn't feel that any of the stories have gotten through the Presidential initiative point, and I think he's basically right. He says the line to take is that we have to understand where Communist nations are concerned; statements and all have to be brokered at the highest level. They don't work at lower levels where it involves national security, because of the nature of the system. Therefore, the President, instead of the usual channels, took the initiative, understanding the Communist system as he does.



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He then listed four points that he considers to be the points to emphasize and to be pounded home. First, the deadlock was broken by an initiative taken by the President on January 8 on his own, with the leaders at the highest levels. Second, this plan includes simultaneous agreements on both the ABM and the offensive weapons. He makes the point that the *Times* was misleading in their point in concentrating on ABM today. Third, the whole initiative would have been impossible and will be aborted now except for continuation of the ABM program. Fourth, the President is personally assuming responsibility for achieving the goal of an agreement this year. We're optimistic that goal will be reached. Fifth, this is by far the most important foreign policy achievement since the end of World War II. He wants to be sure all of our crew get those points across.

The President continues in a kind of bouncy and detached mood as he was yesterday afternoon. I think basically in reaction, now that he's finally got the SALT deal settled. Bebe arrived late this afternoon, and the President was bouncing around touring him in offices, sort of like he was touring the Treasury and East Wing offices yesterday. He then went over to the EOB with Bebe, presumably to have dinner with him over there, and thereby escape the Grahams and the rest of the group assembled over at the Residence.

End of May 21.