



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

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Saturday, February 5.

President had me come over for about three hours today and wandered through a number of things. When I arrived, he was just taking a phone call from Henry in which he had a long discussion about the Vietnam military plans that he wants. He told Henry that he wanted some non-routine approaches rather than the usual military thinking. For example, a 48 hour stand down all over Vietnam, and then a 48 hour total force attack against one area. For instance, hit everything there is in the B-3 area.

In talking about this, he referred to the historical battles of various wars, and what ought to be done, and said after the Air Force does this, then they can go back to their usual milk runs and air medals. Told Henry to make Haig follow-up daily and make sure these things happen. Said the Air Force and Navy are to follow this with no compromise whatever, not in a routine way. That he wants to superimpose civilian judgment over the conventional military approach.

We got back into the Rogers-Kissinger problem again, President making the point that Rogers does want us to win in the election, and that Henry has no generosity towards other people's ideas, so the President has got to be the front man on China, and that we've got to work out the problem with them, which will be monumental on the China trip.

He covered the Muskie-McGovern attacks, and the need to follow-up but is concerned that we must avoid the position where they're against the war and we're for the war. He got into quite a bit of general discussion on political strategy and scheduling and so on. Thinks that we need a lot more surprise appearances and less scheduled things, for example, the athletes deal on Thursday. It was perfectly planned and got lousy television coverage. Whereas the surprise things that aren't announced get good television coverage. He got into the question of campaign strategy as to whether we should consider more appearances out in the country to coun-- counteract the adverse media. Thinks that maybe our campaigning in the country will be indispensable to combat the slanted coverage that we get on the media side. Then he wanted us to go back over '61-'69 and record-- make the record as to when the networks provided equal time or fairness to



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Republicans other than State of the Union. The record will show, I'm sure, that they provided none. He's also concerned about Colson not getting in the position of repression of the networks, and he got back to the idea of moving out into the country, and said he veers away from Price's concept of serenely soaring above the battle. He reiterated the speech writer problem, the PR problem, says he thinks we ought to get Gyley or McCrary or someone like that aboard to get a different approach from our limited group. He's worried that we'll get position as old hat, predictable and boring.

We had some discussion of Connally's theory of uncertainty, and the President was quite intrigued with it, and thinks that's something that we need to give some thought to. Out of that came his feeling that our flaw may be that when we advance new programs that in itself says in effect that things are in bad shape, and therefore plays into the opposition's hands. Like a doctor with a pill for every ill, it's a bad way to treat a patient over a long haul. He thinks it's clear that going into the country is good for the people, particularly regarding the uncertainly question. He does agree that the President must, at all costs, maintain a strong, calm, serene attitude above the battle, however.

End of February 5.