



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

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Friday, April 23rd. I had several conversations with Rogers today. The President told me to get to him after his press conference and tell him to move on Volpe going to Italy as Ambassador. I thought I'd have a big struggle on that, but Bill saw no problem in it at all. Then we got to the question of his talking to Hardin, and at first he didn't want to do it. But then agreed maybe he could open the question with him and see if he wanted Bill to raise it with the President as to whether he would be disturbed if Hardin were to leave to take the Purdue post. Rogers felt his press conference had gone pretty well, but looking at the paper it turns out that he dropped a lot of hot news on the Middle East and nothing on the President or Vietnam.

The President made the point at some stage during the day that we were going to have to drop the agriculture reorganization idea, because it really presents an insoluble problem. We're not gaining as much as we lose, and there's--, we need a way to get our people off the hook in some way, as a, in a fallback position, negotiated now. There's no other constituency as strong as agriculture, and we need the farm state Senators' support in order to wheel the rest of the reorganization idea.

Kissinger was in this morning and discussed the problem of Mansfield going to China.

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Audio Cassette 7, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 10 [AC-7(A) Sel 7-1]
Duration: 7 seconds

He now has an invitation via Sihanouk, from Chou En-lai, to come...



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...at his convenience. The President feels we've got to control this, and so Kissinger's going to try to make contact via Romania and get the invitation cut off, even though we have to appear tonight to be endorsing it.

The other big thing with Henry was his meeting with Dobrynin this afternoon. He had lunch with him at 1:00 in the Map Room, came into the President's office about 20 minutes after 3:00 to report. It turns out he's got the SALT Agreement at least 90 percent okay. The only question the Russians raise is that they want to go back to the Washington Plan rather than the Safeguard Plan, whereas we've just shifted from Washington to Safeguard. The President agreed we could work that out, not in the open agreement, but under negotiation.

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The other problem is that they have not set a date for halting their construction of offensive missiles and we will insist on January 1st, but that too will go into the negotiating area.

The President wants to announce this quickly while Rogers is away, and his idea is to do it next week instead of the press conference. My idea is to wait until the following week, when Rogers will still be gone and we can do it out of California. We'll have to see what develops on that.



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The summit thing has stalled on the problem of the Berlin settlement, and the Russians will not announce it until they have something worked out on Berlin. Henry says they're in complete agreement on it. They like the idea of September instead of August, so we've won that point, and they are pushing hard to get the President there. So he thinks it's going to work out, and that we don't have any real problem in keeping them hanging in on it.

We got into quite a discussion of the media problem. They're really killing us because they run the veterans demonstration every night in great detail, and we have no way to fight back. It's a tough one, and we've been trying to figure out some ways of getting back at it. One thought we're going to try is to have Rainwater of the VFW call all the network presidents and ask if they'll assure him of equal time for veterans in favor of the Administration's position on the war, next week. Obviously, they'll turn him down, and at least that will give us an arguing point. In the meantime, we're getting pretty well chopped up.

We also got into the analysis of our quick poll last night, which shows a drop in Presidential approval of about 3 points and a switch back to disapproval on Vietnam from our previous position of fairly strong approval. It's a hard one to figure, because since we last polled, we've had the ASNE appearance, the DAR speech, the Governor's conference speech, all the developments in China, the good economic news of last week, and really no bad war news except the veterans demonstration, and still we go down. The only conclusion can be that that's, that the veterans deal, and the coverage of it, is the cause. So we've got to see if somehow we can't make the media the issue. We'll probably have to crank up the Vice President again and get him going on it. In any event, we've got to work out something. The President took off by helicopter for Julie's house in Virginia Beach. He called me after he got there to check on follow-up on the above things and also to urge that we get some mileage out of the great picture



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he thinks they got this afternoon of the little deaf kid in the office. He goes on to Camp David after dinner tonight with the family.

End of April 23rd.