



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Monday, April 27.

President started right in on Cambodia this morning. Called me in at 8:30, and I was there until 1:00, moving over to EOB at 9:15 with a detour to look at the crabapple blossoms in the Rose Garden. Canceled NSC, left other minor items on schedule in early afternoon. Had a few notes from over the weekend to clean up first. Then to EOB - had Kissinger join us. Went through a review of need for a strong offensive on Cambodia announcement, which will be Thursday night. Decision made last night after meeting. First, move today on Parrot's Beak (later moved to Tuesday). Second, move on COSVN Thursday, and President goes on TV to announce. Wants Rogers to follow with strong speech - especially hit press for double standard, point out who is aggressor.

President really hit Kissinger hard on no more negative talk - he knows there are problems, etc., only wants to be told once. Told Kissinger to play Rogers and Laird as if they're with us, a tough decision and President has stepped up to it. Said to Kissinger - looking back on the past year we have been praised for all the wrong things - Okinawa, SALT, germs, Nixon Doctrine. Now finally doing the right thing.

President called General Wheeler and really laid it to him after learning from Defense that the commander of the COSVN strike was due for replacement on May 5. Said this is not business as usual - cancel rotations, no replacement, no fat-assed people. The military is really on the spot, and if they blow this you've had it. Act as if you're about to win the battle.

Gave me a rundown on follow-up - wants all out mobilization. Separate men from boys, etc. Get VP, et al., in. Have VP take on networks in two days if they blast us, as President expects.

Then Kissinger reported Rogers disturbed by decision - wanted to call President. President called Rogers, said decision was made, but OK to come over right now. Had me call Laird to come too, since Rogers said he was also disturbed. See report opposite.



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Later had Kissinger get Senator Williams over for briefing. Then got report back from Abrams confirming his full support. President had Kissinger and Mitchell over to EOB from about 6:00 to 9:00. Canceled planned meeting with Helms and Wheeler, will have it tomorrow.

Called me at home - wants to use Map Room for speech Thursday night. Historic significance, etc. I don't think that's a great idea.

Meeting, President, Rogers, Laird, Kissinger, EOB 11:00-11:53

Rogers opposed to COSVN decision, taken without consultation. He clearly tried to hang Kissinger for inadequate information to President about consequences. Feels will cost great United States casualties with little gain. Not significant, not permanent base, not a really crippling blow.

Laird not really opposed to COSVN, but very upset regarding NSDM making WSAG responsible for implementation, says that must be Secretary of Defense responsibility. Did try to say Abrams opposed to COSVN, but waffled several times as Kissinger answered back.

Became clear on questioning by President that Rogers' real problem was his testimony this afternoon on Hill. He doesn't want to say we're sending United States troops into Cambodia, but he can't say otherwise with NSDM out without lying, which he won't do (President agrees). Rogers obviously quite upset, emotional, mainly played on high casualties, little gain.

Kissinger laid low, injecting only factual points regarding Abrams views, to correct Laird. In each case Laird backed down.

President raised question of alternatives. Made clear his position that Parrot's Beak alone not adequate. Willing to consider an alternative to COSVN if all agree, including Abrams. Problem with alternatives is all would require United States troops but would be lesser benefit to us.



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Rogers and Laird reiterated their arguments several times. Rogers saying if decision made he'll support it, but feels all these decisions are being made without adequate consultation and he doesn't like it.

After meeting, President told Kissinger to suspend orders for 24 hours - cable Abrams and get his true views and recommendations - convene meeting of group tonight to review again. Said he's committed to two operations, but will consider alternatives to COSVN, if Abrams recommends. President made clear he understood basis of both Rogers and Laird in meeting. Rogers playing against any move, in reaction to Senate, establishment press, etc. Laird trying to figure President's position and be with it, without his prerogatives cut. Kissinger pushing too hard to hold control.

Kissinger said afterward Helms warned him Rogers would not go along. Kissinger takes whole deal as test of President's authority, and I think would go ahead even if plan is wrong, just to prove President can't be challenged. President recognizes maybe need another look. Even if change plan, will still do two, and his authority is maintained but he shows he's willing to listen.