



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

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Wednesday, May 20.

Some general things in the morning. Jumped on the FSO's who protested Cambodia again. Feels strongly they should not go to Vietnam. Wants me to handle with Alex Johnson. Johnson feels wrong to change their orders because upsets department discipline and shows protest is way to get assignment changed.

President had two hour meeting with black college presidents. Ehrlichman felt it went well - but they opened with the usual list of attacks and demands and that's what got the publicity.

Had me in for hour and a half afterwards. Talking about PR, now reversing yesterday's view, thinks we need to get out background about President's meetings. Obviously felt he had done well with blacks and wants the story out. Also the variety of meetings he has, and how well he handles them. Then says maybe it's impossible because of staff weakness, or possible obstinacy. Reviewed bad Cabinet officers again. Disturbed regarding Mayo's blowing of budget story yesterday. Then mused, "How do we survive the economy problem, the war, and the dissent, and still have any support?" Pushing Flanigan hard about getting out positive word. Wants to take on Mansfield, since he's now crossed us completely.

Talked with Harlow regarding Senate votes. Wants a group to run it, keep the talk going - no compromise, no vote. Wants time to get his own story out first. Then a long thing regarding now is time to hit on Cambodia - the tide of battle ebbs and flows, Monday was watershed, we can now really make our gains, but have to take all-out offensive. Especially wants VP to strike out now. Got our latest poll, shows great majority disapprove of student protest - so President wants to take that on hard.

Some deep concern regarding his lack of leadership within the Administration. Feels he's got to fire someone and stop letting everyone get away with disloyalty, etc. Wants Ehrlichman and me and Rumsfeld to ponder this problem and meet with him tomorrow about recommendations. I think we have to start cracking down, or we'll lose control completely.



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Called tonight and really chewed me regarding Flanigan's failure to get a positive story out of Burns regarding budget; the lousy press on black meeting; and Kissinger's whining attitude and bitching about Rogers and Laird. Told me to handle all these - then kept calling every few minutes to follow up. Pretty miserable mood but did cool off.