



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

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Tuesday, January 30.

A number of meetings during the day today, while he was supposedly getting prepared for his press conference, all basically on Vietnam. He had read the news summary and felt the most significant thing is our problem regarding Kissinger, as evidenced by the Schecter piece in *Time*. We have a necessity to develop a real plan regarding the handling of the war, the themes, and so on, and who gets them across. What do we want to have come out of this? The positive points, the attack points, or the personal points? He had written this out over the weekend and handed me his handwritten sheet which he had originally intended to dictate. He had me make a Xerox, which is in the file. He feels that there's a bad line of Kissinger's on the motives of others, his answer to the bombing question. Kissinger must use the phrase "peace with honor", that we should look at how the media rewrote the '70 elections and see that they're doing the same thing here. We can't leave it to the good judgment of the people. Kissinger should hit the bombing question straight out -- "I recommended it, supported it, and it worked". We need a plan of what goals to get across, then how to do it. Collect a list for those to see. For instance, we should do Crosby Noyes instead of Craslow, or Smith Hempstone instead of Craslow. Ziegler should make a list of all the good press people on Vietnam; Crosby Noyes, Smith Hempstone, Roscoe Drummond, and so on. What is the media objective and how do we change it? His concern is that we've leashed our people so tightly that we're not getting any of the things out. Where are the good editorials and columns? Is there any indication of success of our plan? We should activate Haig, Scali, Klein on a crash basis and get them doing background pieces. We're still in a campaign, but we may have battle fatigue. Henry's got to avoid nit-picking the agreement, rolling his eyes about the motives of North Vietnam. Look at the Schecter piece about Henry trying to keep his feet in both camps. The press realizes that he's doing this. I should tell Kissinger that I just reread his messages and scare him on that. We should say no on Kalb, because all Henry does is build himself up by knocking down the President. He then changed his mind and said we should go ahead and have him do Kalb, but he's concerned that Henry won't take it on, except in the presence of a superior who agrees with him, like the President, so we've got to convince him



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to approach this on how the President did it, not Henry's books and articles for background, but the President's.

We need to give Henry six points that are musts on one piece of paper. Here's the checklist. Forget the process. CBS is after the process plus Kissinger's role in downgrading the President, so you have to prove otherwise. Remember that you're talking to average people and not to Marvin Kalb. You have an obligation at this point. At the present time it looks like you're building yourself at the expense of the President. For instance, your answer on the bombing, which should have been a simple answer. The theme of the left has to be: one, that it's all going to fail or, two, that Nixon didn't do it, Kissinger did. For once, we should get away from self-glorification of Henry. He doesn't mean it that way, but that's how it comes out. You've got to choose. You can't be a friend of everybody; the time has come to take sides. He wants Colson to gin up some letters to Kissinger of outrage on the point that he should be supporting the President, not taking all the credit himself. Your briefing was brilliant, but you lacked any mention of the President who made all this possible. The President's courage was the indispensable element. Also, Henry's got to use the word "Communist". He never will do that.

The President then pointed out that we really had three options: one, we could continue to fight, escalating the war, which would have been hopeless; two, we could have bugged out and turned over Southeast Asia to Communism; or three, we could do what we did, which was find a way for peace with honor.

He also wanted me to [unclear] -- the President wanted me have a heart to heart talk with Haig and have him sit in on how to handle the Kissinger problem. That we have to establish an absolute rule that Kissinger has no press on the trip and that it's not to even be raised. That's his Hanoi trip. Thinks we ought to get an article on the shocking attitude of the press, that they were yelling for peace all this time. Now they refuse to concede that maybe the President showed some character in bringing it. The question of where the British editorials are, and can we get those mailed out? The question of strategy in dealing with the press and whether it does any



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good to have social contact with them. He feels it's better to have reasonable question and answer contact, plus an occasional special interview, but nothing from the social standpoint because it just doesn't do any good.

He got me over again late this evening and then back to the whole Kissinger problem. By then, I'd had a meeting with Henry and had spent a lot of time working out the basic notes of the six goals he ought to cover, the analysis of the problem, and so forth. Those notes are in the file, but he makes the point that we should tell Henry that the President's going to listen to the TV and see what he does. The points I made in my notes to Henry were that, first of all, the problems we face now are: one, that Kissinger is divided from the President -- they're making it appear that the President pulled Kissinger back from peace, that Kissinger opposed the bombings, that Kissinger was compromised by the President, and that he's being forced to conduct three-way negotiations between Hanoi, Saigon and Nixon; second, that the agreement won't work; third, that it wasn't worth the cost; four, that the President didn't do it; five, the appearance that Kissinger is building himself at the expense of the President. The media is trying to build the Kissinger role and downgrade the President's role. For example, Schecter's analysis of the bombing answer, and the point that the agreement was done by Kissinger over the President's dead body; and six, the appearance that Kissinger is keeping a foot in both camps. He's got to change that, take sides. You can't be a friend of everybody. I made the point that we have four broad goals. First, to establish the President's role in bringing peace. Kissinger's negotiations may have been essential, but without the President's courage, they would have been useless. Also, the President's long-range concept going way back on Vietnamization, which he was discussing in the '68 campaign, long before Laird raised it. Also the China opening, which he wrote about in 1967, long before he'd ever met Henry Kissinger. And third, the Soviets' role, which he had been discussing for three or four years before he was elected. The second major goal is to establish the validity of the tough decisions: November 3rd, Cambodia, Laos, May 8 and December. That Henry's got to give a simple answer on the bombing. I recommended it, supported it and it was right. Third, we have to confirm without question that we have "peace



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with honor". And fourth, we have to destroy the liberal establishment, kill the critics, because they said it couldn't work. Build our credibility because it did work and build our equity for the future. Given those goals, I argued that Henry's approach on TV should be to forget the process and the details. Talk to the average person, not Kalb. Watch the nuances, evasions, eyes rolling, and so forth. Be formal, not chummy. Call him Mr. Kalb. Don't worry about defending the agreement. It'll either work or not. What is said at this time won't matter. There's no need to explain the agreement any more. The need now is to solidify support of the President. So, he should establish and sell six solid points: One, we have achieved peace with honor. We preserved the credibility of the United States in the world with our allies, our enemies, and the neutrals. It's essential to our role as a force for peace, and we have a peace that no one thought was possible. Two, the courage of the President was the essential element. In spite of unprecedented opposition, pressure, hostility, vilification, in spite of Congress, and media attempts to undercut him. His courage, calmness, wisdom, guts to hang in prevailed. Third, the tough key decisions made the difference: November 3, Cambodia, Laos, May 8 and December -- all unpopular and all attacked by the media. Four, the bloodbath consequences of a bugout. We would have gotten the United States out, but we would have doomed Southeast Asia first, to a bloodbath and second, to a Communist takeover. Five, the December bombing worked and was right and it worked. It broke the deadlock, there was no division between the President and Kissinger, it was not terror bombing, we struck only military targets. And six, the liberal establishment critics were wrong. The establishment is now badly damaged, their credibility tarnished, performance in question, failed to stand firm in adversity. All their predictions failed to come true. The President's peace with honor was despite little support from within the government, active opposition from the Senate and some in the House, overwhelming opposition from opinion leaders, press, religious, education and business. Their approach would have left the war going for 50 million people, left South Vietnam for a Communist takeover, destroyed respect for the United States among our allies, encouraged our enemies and dismayed the neutrals.



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I discussed this whole thing with Henry and convinced him of some of it, but it's clear that his main concern is his own position and he is afraid of that. He thinks that he's lost the President's confidence and doesn't like the tenor of the atmosphere around the White House now. He's still convinced that some of us launched the effort to do him in and/or separate him from the President, and he's trying to figure that all out.

The President talked with him after my meeting and felt he was very serious and somber and wondered what I had done to him, so maybe I did shake him up a little. Ziegler hit him the same way, and he's agreed to do the Kalb interview on Thursday night, but we'll see how it comes out.

End of January 30.