



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

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

Monday, February 8th, the day after the Laos move. Everything went okay last night, and this morning the follow-up fell into line just as it was supposed to. The President seemed in good shape as the reaction and plan generally fell together. He, of course, wanted to push hard on getting our side of the reaction going. He was very upset with the quote from Senator Aiken saying that Rogers didn't know what was going on. Wanted me to call Rogers and work out a plan for how to shoot this down, which I did. Rogers made the point that the real problem is that all these people get briefed by Kissinger, and it creates the impression in their minds that Rogers doesn't know what's going on. The net result was that the President wrote a note to Aiken straightening him out on this.

The President is very anxious that we not let the Democrat, Democratic candidates look good on this issue. Muskie has moved out in opposition, and he wants to be sure we keep him out on that limb; and push hard to make an asset out of this, get credit for the success, and leave the others outside on the other wicket. He wants to be sure we don't take a soft-handed defensive position. We should whack the opponents on patriotism, saving American lives, etcetera, and really go to work on it. He also wanted to get Senator Cooper to move today on the floor, because he's taken a good, strong, positive position. The President got pretty cranked up about the whole thing last night; called Joe Alsop, and a number of others, and there was all to good effect. Alsop had a sensationally good column in the paper today.

We got the dope on the volume of troops and food and ammunition that's moved down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The President wants to make a strong point of the real significance of the trail so that we build up the significance of the Laotian operation. And he wants to really push the strong, positive points. He also had an idea of making a positive out of the anti-press on the blackout or embargo, by making it a point that the alarm and confusion and uncertainty that the press has been talking about was in the press, not in the people; and that the embargo actually



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was a brilliant act that created alarm, confusion and uncertainty among the enemy; and that obviously we wouldn't telegraph our punches to the enemy; and thank God we finally planted some alarm among them, etcetera. In other words, again taking the positive approach.

Later in the day we got into a huge flap regarding briefings because Kissinger and Rogers had agreed that there wouldn't be any briefings, and then Kissinger let Colson, et al., set up a late afternoon briefing session for him with about 15 top conservative columnists. When he realized what he had done, he realized also that he'd have to cancel it, so we ended up with a pretty awkward situation which was unfortunate. But they did cancel the briefing and kept the commitment to Rogers.

The President got into some discussion with me about the problems of Henry's briefing tactics. He feels that he does too much of a good job of telling the people what they want to know, rather than what we want them to know, and thinks that we've got to work more with Henry on determining what the line is and going with it, rather than giving them such a thorough background and education as he does.

Then he also got on the point of the need for Kissinger to be more discreet regarding his glamorous young women, especially in public and especially in Washington, DC. He feels it's okay for Henry to be a swinger in New York, Florida, and California, but he should not be in Washington; and he wants us at the White House dinners not to put him next to the most glamorous gal anymore, but rather to put him again near some intelligent and interesting woman instead.



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The President had a whole bag full of miscellaneous notes coming out of the weekend, particularly the church service; a lot of people he wants to get in; some question as to what happened on the new picture we had made of him in California; some ideas on briefing the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet; concern that we get our letter program worked out; that we hit Muskie on busing and some of the other things. He's especially anxious that we not give Muskie the chance to get well on any of the left-wing positions that he's taken. He had some guidance on the State of the World speech. He wanted to get going on a salute to agriculture, got back onto the mail-handling thing again.

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Audio Cassette 4, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 18  
Duration: 10 seconds

Also, into a discussion of Rose and her problems. He's convinced that she does have some physical problem, and that Tkach may not even be aware of it.

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Billy Graham had a lot of dis--, ideas on how to use television better. He's especially pushing for the President to use a teleprompter when he does a read speech.

And...

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DECLASSIFIED - E.O. 13526, Sect. 3.4: by MS, NARA, June 12, 2013  
Audio Cassette 4, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 19 [AC-4(A) Sel 12]



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Duration: 15 seconds

...Henry came running in in the afternoon with a report that Lon Nol has had a stroke, but nobody knows it. They're keeping it a secret, which is, could pose a real problem for us in Cambodia.

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We got into some schedule juggling as we tried to decide how to set up press conferences, etcetera, for next week.

End of February 8th.