



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

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Thursday, February 11th. He was pretty fully occupied this morning. He didn't come into the office before going over to the State Department to sign the Seabeds Treaty. Then, when he got back, he went full tilt through the Kennedy swearing-in in his office, the Connally swearing-in in the East Room, a number of other meetings preparatory to departure for Key Biscayne.

At about noon, he decided not to go to Key Biscayne, because he had heard the weather was cold and didn't want to get caught down here like he did in California a while back. After doing some further weather checking, he finally decided to come on down with the possibility of going back to DC on Friday held open.

The principal problem arising this morning was in relation to the Vice President, who apparently called the President on the phone from California to object to the health message as it's presently contemplated. The VP feels there's some serious mistakes being made in this, and that adequate consideration hasn't been given to them, and also that he was misrepresented in the option paper going to the President. This, of course, created quite a flap, resulting in a session on the plane with Weinberger and Shultz to discuss the whole thing. The President felt the, the paper probably hadn't been adequately staffed, but his principal was concern was that the Vice President would come to him on it, rather than working it out with the staff. He feels that we've got to keep the VP out of substantive policy development, that we cannot have him fighting the White House staff or the Cabinet, that he must not get involved on policy because he tends to zero in on one feature and jump on it, rather than looking at the whole picture. He feels we need someone on our staff who has the confidence of the Vice President who can hold his hand, and he's decided Weinberger is the one who should do this. He also has concluded that the real problem is that the Vice President's staff is not strong enough, and we have a need to build it up, which we've discussed at other times. Weinberger agreed to try to take this on, and also to try to untangle the



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current problem by meeting with, or talking with the Vice President and trying to get it all straightened out.

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The other big thing today was Henry's meeting last night with Dobrynin, which apparently went very well. He was tickled last night by the fact that the meeting was still going to be held. He had felt sure that Dobrynin would cancel it after the Laotian move, but he didn't. Today, he was practically ecstatic because Dobrynin said they had agreed to go ahead on the SALT settlement and on an exchange of Nixon-Kosygin letters that would lead to a July or August summit meeting.

All of this brings to fulfillment, if it works out, Henry's whole linkage plan since he's been using Berlin negotiations as the lever or club to pressure the Russians, and now he's got Berlin, the Mideast, Cuba, Vietnam, SALT, and the summit all tied together, which is exactly how his linkage thing is supposed to work.

It now appears that we can have the letter exchange right away, then go forward with our, go forward with the SALT settlement, then our minor announcement of the troop withdrawal, then the announcement of the summit meeting: all this through March and April. We can then have this summit meeting in July and then in November after the Vietnamese elections, we can go ahead with a massive troop withdrawal announcement. All of which should give us some momentum to carry us nicely through this year and into next year. Hopefully, we'll have a return summit in April of next year and we'll be in great shape.



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Obviously, there is all kinds of potential slips in this, but it's a terrific plan as it stands if it works out. And, uh, Henry is really elated.

An ironic twist to this is that on the plane coming down to Key Biscayne, Rogers asked me to sit down for a minute and made the point that since there was clearly really no chance of a SALT agreement this year, the President's desire to visit Russia could not be carried out. He therefore had an alternate plan which was to wait until after the Soviet Congress at which Brezhnev will be named clearly the number-one, top man. And then invite Brezhnev over here for a visit, which would one up the Russians and our enemies here all the way around. All of this, of course, without any real--, he is proposing all of this, of course, without any realization of, uh, Henry's meeting last night.

There was some concern about, on Henry's part, about the NSC meeting which was wedged in this morning, because he was afraid Rogers and Laird would nit-pick his State of the World message; but it turned out to be okay according to Haig, and no problem came up. We had a brief session with Rogers and Henry and Ron Ziegler on the plane coming down, mainly to discuss the PR approach to this weekend and the build up for the State of the World thing. The President made the point that all our reports now should emphasize our overall success in foreign policy, such things as: the progress in SALT, Cuba, the new China policy, the Mideast, Europe, Okinawa, germ warfare, etcetera. And we should stay on a very positive basis at all times.

He seemed to be in pretty good spirits, and if the weather holds up here, we ought to end up with a good trip. If the weather doesn't hold up, we're in real trouble.

End of February 11th.