



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

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Wednesday, April 7.

The day of the latest Vietnam speech. The President spent the whole day at the EOB working on the speech. He had a session with Laird and Rogers at noon and then a bipartisan leaders' meeting at 7:00 to brief them on his withdrawal announcement plans. He had me come over a couple of times for general conversation, as he had his drafts finished and was sort of relaxing.

At one session, while Henry was there, he said he was going to let me in on the secret part of the speech, the ad-lib closing, and he then read me, from his yellow pad, his notes for the closing. As it turned out, they were almost verbatim what he used on the speech, and he obviously had been working very hard on putting them together. They related to the Medal of Honor incident when the little boy saluted him. He had asked me some weeks ago, then a little more recently, then again today, to verify the data on the incident.

The general reaction to the speech was extremely good, especially to the closing segment because of its emotional quality. There is, of course, considerable disappointment and concern because the withdrawal rate has not stepped up far enough, nor is there any fixed terminal date. But the sincerity, conviction, and basic emotion of the President's presentation seemed to override this with most people, and I think overall, we'll end up with a very positive plus.

In the middle of the day, I got the poll report from our interview on Monday and Tuesday, and it came out extremely well. The President's up from 41 to 54 in approval; so although he had told me he didn't want to see the poll before the speech, I decided he ought to know about it and went over and gave him the results, which of course, cheered him up considerably.

The only real lack of enthusiasm within the staff for the speech was from MacGregor, who was very dispirited and disappointed because the withdrawals weren't high enough, and he'd been taking the heat from Congress. The President was very much attuned to this all day and also in the evening after the speech on the phone, and wanted a very cold-blooded evaluation of all the staff people, as to which ones were standing firm and which ones weren't. He feels very strongly



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that we've got to get rid of all those who don't really hang tight, as he went through with me yesterday.

The Calley case popped up again this morning in the form of a release of a letter to the President from Captain Daniel, the prosecutor, which created a substantial flap. The President wanted me to call Laird and tell him that he wanted Resor's resignation by May 1, because he had another man in mind and he had some information that Resor stirred this up with the prosecutor. He feels that the prosecutor must have had higher clearance in order to have made this overt move. He was also distressed that Ehrlichman didn't go out and answer this head-on, and he called John to say he should do the briefing; but John talked him out of it on the grounds that it was a one day story, and that would only accelerate it. I'm not really sure that's the case.

Later in the afternoon, we had a long general talk about Connally, and staff, and so on, the President's dissatisfaction with the Cabinet, primarily because of some of Henry's comments about the fact that none of them had called him up before the speech to wish him well, or anything of that sort. The reason, of course, is that he's never encouraged that kind of thing, and none of them feel they can call him up. In any event, he expressed considerable disappointment in this situation, and then got to talking about Connally and the Vice President and revealed his thought that the way out of the whole deal is to have the Vice President resign later this year, which then gives the President the opportunity to appoint a new Vice President under the new law of succession; this, subject to a majority approval of both houses of Congress. He would then appoint Connally, which would set him up for succession and probably would work out extremely well. He was up late tonight and on the phone to me even after I got home, three or four times, in the usual follow-up kind of activity. Even though he said he wouldn't take any calls, he did take a number of them and made several himself.

End of April 7.