



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

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Thursday, May 13.

Kissinger and I were in for a fairly long session first thing this morning, since the day had been kept clear for a possible press conference. The President got into a review of Laos, and the fact that casualties were way down now since Laos, just as they were after Cambodia. That there's been no spring offensive, despite the largest materiel input ever in Vietnam, including at Tet; and that it's really remarkable proof of the effectiveness of the operation, but doesn't give us any credit. We also got to talking about China and the whole plan for possible follow-up on the initiative. Henry's ecstatic because he's heard back from the North Vietnamese, and they want to meet with him in Paris on the 30th; so he's going ahead with that plan. He still thinks the Chinese thing's going to work out, but there's been no word, of course, from them and won't be for a couple of weeks.

Then we got into the problem of Rogers and the SALT agreement, since that's now set and will be announced next Thursday. The problem is how to fill Rogers in ahead of time without his feeling that it's been maneuvered behind his back, which of course, it has. The President's very sensitive to this, but doesn't seem to have any fixed ideas on how to deal with it.

Later the President got into his concern on welfare. He wants to be sure that anything Ron and any of our staff says on it makes the point that we're going for welfare reform and for harder work requirements, etcetera, not for the expansion of welfare, which is what it looks like now. We should make the point that this is a substantial improvement, because it has the reform element. He wants to emphasize the hard side from here on out, not the family assistance idea, and he's concerned that everybody make that point strongly in all their references to welfare.

He got into the-- a discussion with Ehrlichman later in the morning on the need to think regarding goals, rather than programs, and got into quite a session with John covering the same ground that I'd been pushing on, trying to shift the emphasis of the Domestic Council's approach. The President pointed out that we've got to personalize and conceptualize in broad visionary terms regarding goals, instead of just developing programs and legislation. He told Ehrlichman



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to pull himself and Shultz away from operations and start thinking of PR opportunities and new ideas, in terms of new ways to present what we now have. He says all our programs are based on "how do you run it". None of them gets to the question of "what's in it for me", in terms of the ordinary guy. So now he wants to go for goals, great goals, even though we can't achieve them, like: 100 million jobs; or increasing family income by \$10,000; or 2 bathrooms in every house; or whatever. He said, politically the "New American Revolution" is a dud. The people don't care how you run the government; they only want it to cost a little less. He wants to go for water, education, narcotics, street crime, and whatever positive issues we can develop on what the country is going to be like.

He then got back into his description that he covered with me the day before, on the television show that glorified the homosexuals, and covered that with John, making the point that homosexuality, dope, and immorality are the basic enemies of a strong society, and that's why the Russians are pushing it here, in order to destroy us. He wants everybody here now to start thinking politically, instead of worrying about running things well. He said we have a problem in that we have a lot of PR people, but no PR ideas or phrases, and those have to come from the people who are immersed in the problem. In other words, the man working on the program has to develop the idea, not an outsider. He has to think more of how to sell it, then bring the PR types in with him to work on it. He says more important than the program is how you sell it, and this won't come from the outsider.

He told John the State of the Union should be a brief, high-level goal statement, and use the budget as the effective platform. He doesn't want to worry about new initiatives except maybe tax reform. He does want to try and move some targets before the first of the year. Ehrlichman raised the point that he has a dilemma of running as President and still not looking-- looking political, which is why the President says he wants highfalutin things rather than specific legislation. The President told John to bring in Safire, Price, Scali, and Moore for their creative sense.



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Later in the day he got into the question of the SST and concern about who's in charge of it, with Magruder off in the Virgin Islands. He feels that we've got to hit the Senate hard on it now, before they make up their minds, and not just let the thing wallow around, with people becoming committed against us on invalid reasons. He then went through some specifics of what ought to be done to carry that fight.

John Mitchell called and wanted to come over to talk to Ehrlichman and me. It turns out that he's uncovered some payoffs to Bob Brown and other government people from the Watts Manufacturing Company, and wanted to let us know and to determine how to go about investigating it. We all agreed that the FBI should move fast on it and get a report back to us as quickly as they could.

End of March-- May 13.