



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

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Monday, July 19th. Today was the day of the meetings, starting with the breakfast with Mansfield. I haven't had any report on how that went. Then the bipartisan leadership meeting. The President made the point there that we need time for setting up the China meeting, because it's regarding substance; it's going to take a lot of planning, which is completely different than a goodwill trip. He says, we can't tell you about the whole thing, and we'll not put it all out for you today. Without secrecy, there would have been no agreement for a meeting; and without secrecy, there will be no success at the meeting. And he made the point that in negotiations, even between friends, there must be trust, and you can't do that by negotiating in the newspapers. When you're negotiating with someone you don't know, the element of trust is lacking, so you have to establish secrecy. The process won't work unless there's a considerable amount of secrecy, and we're working only for success.

He then had Henry give a review of the process, which took ten minutes. He reviewed the history leading up to the meeting, described the secrecy and the sequence of meetings in Peking. Made the point that only the President, Bill and I knew the whole picture. He said this is the beginning of a relationship between people who have had no contact with each other, so there's an enormous amount of underbrush to clear away. There was no pre-established agenda, and no protocol set up. They were very concerned regarding too much public speculation, and we have to stress that we're just at the beginning of a relationship. The greatest amount of self-discipline on our part is essential. It's essential to create an atmosphere for the trip, and for everyone to recognize that the objective is world peace.

Then Rogers took over and went for about fifteen minutes, again emphasizing the concern re--, for self-discipline, saying we can't operate in a public way, with the Congress or with other governments, and speculation of any kind will put the visit in jeopardy, therefore, nothing should come out of this meeting that could damage SALT and the Mideast, as well as the China trip. He



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urged them all to be very cautious regarding what they say. We need to convince other governments that we don't have a secret agreement with the Chinese, and there's a problem of getting the views of the members of Congress, but if they're publicly expressed, they'll jeopardize the thing. The President interjected to say that we'll set up a procedure for Congressmen to come in on a private basis, not a TV extravaganza. We do want your views, but they must be conveyed privately. The President has to say very little; anything prior to the meeting will break the understanding. Therefore, he'll have no press conference for a while and no public speech on this.

Rogers then reviewed the reactions of other nations, especially the strong support of the Asian nations and NATO. He touched on the problem of Taiwan, said we have to handle this in a very diplomatic way. The treaty will continue, and we will have to discuss the UN representation question with them, but we will vote against a resolution to expel them. The President said that Bill Rogers would inform Congress on the UN question. That it's very important that Rogers have the opportunity to check other governments to see what position is viable, and we've got to give Rogers time to continue his talks. Rogers made the point very strongly that in spite of Kissinger's trip, the UN position was doomed to fail; that is, are you in a position of keeping free China in. We would have lost the vote this fall; the People's Republic would have been admitted, and the Republic of China expelled. We were faced, therefore, with this reality, and we have to decide with the Republic of China what position to take.

Rogers again emphasized that nothing should be said regarding this meeting, especially the UN question. Carl Albert said we will, he will say that he will let the Administration speak for itself. Ellender said the purpose of the Kissinger meeting was to lay the groundwork. Fulbright raised the problem of, regarding the hearings he's holding regarding China at the Foreign Relations Committee. He said, I completely agree with what you're doing; I don't want to do anything to



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handicap you, but it's impossible to stifle the committee on an inquiry or expressing their views. The President urged Fulbright to keep in touch with Rogers. The President said we've got to cover this very cold turkey. If any of you say publicly what the President should do, you can see what the effect will be, that is, a resolution by Congress or a committee regarding what the relation should be. Instead, let us know your views privately. We must not let the Chinese feel we're using them for the purpose of frying some other fish. We've got to look for the fundamental point of why do this at all.

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There was validity ten years ago to playing the free nations of Asia against China, now the situation has changed. That is, the Japanese, who are unarmed, the Koreans, the Indonesians have no capability of self-defense. And while the Asian world will continue in a flux, we can play a more effective re--, role by working with the Chinese than without them.

Kissinger made the point that any speculation regarding Vietnam in any way would be totally counterproductive and would defeat any by-products of the meetings. Rogers said if we talk in public now, the trip may not come off. Albert said the problem is a lot of people want out of Vietnam now, and any move that doesn't do that raises hell. So the first question we'll all get will be, does this contribute to Vietnam? The President said to say the purpose is a journey for peace, and you think it will contribute to peace. Fulbright said the current hearings he's conducting are historical in nature, they won't hurt the trip, they should help, and others agreed. Kissinger said it's important to express personal views, not to say what the President said. Stennis said, you've



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made a good move; I'll say it's up to you to carry it out, and I back you. We need self-discipline around this table. The responsibility is on the right man.

The President said there is a chance for peace, but speculation could harm it. He views this without euphoria. He has the least euphoria of anybody who's ever sat in that chair, but by necessity we have to find a way to talk. We need to look down the road at the historic perspective in terms of peace in the world. It's difficult with any great power with a different interest. It's impossible with a great power outside of communication. Mansfield said, you're walking on eggshells on both sides. The attitude of this group is one of understanding. The best answer to any question we get is, no comment. If we have to say anything, we should say that it's our own opinion. There's still a lot of groundwork to be accomplished, because of the delicacy and the promise of this situation; we've got to be careful. We're moving out of an old era, into a new one. It contains promise, but it takes understanding and negotiations. The President said again that we'll welcome comments privately, you should decline to speculate on the effect with other countries, any such would not be in the interest of success. That the purpose of these meetings is between the US and the People's Republic of China, not for third powers.

Bipartisan meeting was immediately followed by the Cabinet meeting, and there the President emphasized the necessity for total discipline on what we say, that without secrecy, the meetings will not succeed. That we have long and torturous discussions that we've already been in, that we'll continue to be in now, and will be in after the meetings. There must be discipline through all the Departments. It's essential that we don't speculate. The theme to be used is that this is for world peace, and anything for world peace is good for all nations of the world. Rogers made the point of the serious problem of self-discipline, especially important that no one from the Administration say anything to jeopardize this. There's a lot of things you would normally say



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that, in this case, could have serious damage. The President said, especially any reference to any favorable political effect.

Rogers said anyone who causes this to fail will be in deep trouble. We've got to work in three areas: Congressional, our own family, and other nations. The President made, said that the points to underline are the questions on: how it affects the Russians, this is not directed against any country, how it affects Vietnam—we won't speculate. The purpose is US and China. How it affects Japan, India, etcetera, again, no speculation, this is between China and the US Any new relationship can contribute to the peace of the world. In the meantime, everybody's to shut his yap—accept what the President says. This is not a goodwill trip, it's not cosmetics, it's not to see China, but to see the man or the men. That you have to consider the alternatives. If we were to work with the Soviet and Chinese neighbors, with little *détentes* here and there, such as arms control with the Soviets, it is worthless if China is outside the communications orbit. In 25 years, you can't have a fourth, a quarter of the people of the world isolated and have any chance of peace. The answer regarding becoming soft is that no one is less euphoric than the President, especially on the US versus the Communists. No one can be more pragmatic in this matter, but the US can't just stand by without trying to affect the world.

No one knew about this, because it was not possible to bring it off if they did know. Even then, we were worried because we might talk in our sleep. You must exert tremendous discipline over your people. They'll be sucking around everybody in the government. Any little blip can be disastrous. We have not established trust and confidence yet. The Chinese must feel that they can talk in secrecy. Our preparation must be thorough but roundabout. We'll have hard, tough discussions, and we'll go as soon as we're ready. Nothing as momentous as this has ever been discussed in this Cabinet room, in terms of its effect on the world. The irony is that the US is the chosen instrument of China for ending their period of isolation. We can't blow it by yakking.



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Laird said we've got to maintain the other pillars of the Nixon Doctrine. He's concerned that some will read in this the wrong points regarding the need for preparedness and a strong national security position. We must not have negotiation as the only pillar. The President said this is the beginning of a dialogue, and it does not change the power position in the world; we must maintain our defense posture.

Rogers said the problem is everyone's going to want to say something. We've got to quit making statements. If we do, let the President authorize them first, and do it only in a planned way. The President says this is the same problem in the domestic field: we blow our opportunities by yakking around. We're going to stop briefing Congressmen and Senators.

The President then said to Laird that the line is terribly important, the tone and the mood. These talks will take place, but nothing's changed regarding the need for defense. We will change only when the situation changes, but the Chinese are very sensitive to tone, nuance, and timing. We have to avoid building up great hopes. We have to be very careful not to go beyond what the President said. Don't interpret it. It's time for the Administration and our Republican friends in Congress not to assume the President is so dumb. Assume we're doing something, not just with China; and people coming in saying we ought to do this so-and-so just makes it impossible for us to do it. He's not suggesting that anything's going on regarding Vietnam, but just don't assume that we're dumb. Anything that anyone says will not help with the Chinese; they only want to hear the President. Anything we don't say could help with others, because they'll think more is going on than really is. The problem is the compulsion to talk and appear smart; that makes it hard for a free government to operate.



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Rog Morton made the point that we ought to be prepared for a political onslaught on domestic issues to counteract this from the opposition; so, we'll have plenty to talk about. We'll have to be more unified on the domestic issues. The domestic attack will escalate. We have to be together and attack and join the battle.

The President also came into the staff meeting and practically drove Henry nuts, because he said he was only going to stay in for a minute and a half, and he stayed for twenty minutes, giving his opening remarks. During the process of which, Henry got more and more nervous, and finally broke his pencil, he was so distressed. The President's key point was that this whole thing is in our vital interest and in China's, and those vital interests may in some areas coincide, but we are both consulting our own vital interests. Henry then gave his same pitch. There was nothing new raised in the staff meeting of any importance.

The Connally flap, I guess, was settled today. The President had a two-hour talk with him over at the EOB. He called me afterwards and said he had a good talk, that he took him on the mountaintop, by which he meant he talked to him about the vice presidency. It turns out that another incident was rubbing Connally, which was one on the hiring of a secretary. Connally told the President he had total confidence in Ehrlichman and total confidence in me, and that he thinks that Peterson is okay. He said this thing just kind of built up; that he had no complaint at all regarding me. They did get into the Vice President thing. The President said there's nothing I should do to follow up now, but sometime I should give him a call, tell him the President filled me in on their meeting, and if there are any more picayunish things, he should call me. It was emphasized that any problems he has substantively on domestic policy, he should talk to Ehrlichman; any other problems, he should at all times talk to me.



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End of July 19th.