



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

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Tuesday, October 12th. Press conference today to make the Soviet Summit announcement. The President stayed holed up at the EOB all morning. Came over at noon for the press conference in the press room with film coverage, but not live. He opened the conference with the announcement of the Russian Summit, reading the joint communiqué, and then took questions. They asked 18 questions, almost all of them on Russia or Russia related to China. There was one question on the economic policy, two on Vietnam, two on the Supreme Court, and one on the question of a textile agreement. That was about it. He was up pretty tight during the morning getting ready for it but, and evidenced that by his reaction to the story over the weekend killing the, the story yesterday killing the Byrd to the Supreme Court story from the weekend. He was very upset and wanted to be sure that the Byrd story still rode. He had a chance to cover that at the press conference and did it with a vengeance.

He felt strongly that, after the press conference, we should really go to work on playing the Man of, Man of Peace issue all the time. Move all the other issues to a lower level and really build that one up, because it's our issue and we have to use it, and we have to shift the ground to our issue.

He went briefly up to the Hill to unveil the Hebert portrait in the House Office Building and then was back for a late afternoon Cabinet meeting.

He had Shultz open the Cabinet meeting with a report on Phase II, and George made the point that the freeze is still on and explained the development of the labor participation, which they agreed to do after the President okayed a memorandum outlining the role of the Pay Board. Laird then made a pitch that employment was the real problem and that DOD is letting out over 400,000 employees, and jobs are more important politically than inflation. The President then



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emphasized that we must keep the heat to the Senate on the tax proposals, which do relate to employment. Politically, if we can make this work by fighting labor, we'll be glad to do it. Meany's overplayed his hand, and that's why he came back, but no program can work without labor cooperation. Their cooperation will not be total. They'll drag their feet, but they now assume part of the responsibility for dampening down the wage-price push. They may blow later, but it's still better than nothing. We can't take a strike at this point as a result of the roll back, because the economy would be chilled, and a strike would be a strong possibility if labor weren't cooperating. So, our public posture must be that we welcome labor's willingness to assume responsibility and we recognize that now they've got to play.

The President then turned to the Russian Summit. He made the point that this did not develop out of the blue, that there have been discussions in detail over the past two years. That there could be no meeting until there had been progress in other areas to indicate that a Summit would be useful. Gromyko brought the invitation this year, and we accepted it. You have to realize what has happened up to now in foreign policy, such as the sea beds, the completion of the nonproliferation treaty...

DECLASSIFIED - E.O. 13526, Sect. 3.4: by MS, NARA, June 12, 2013
Audio Cassette 14, Side B, Withdrawn Item Number 8 [AC-14(B) Sel 7-1]
Duration: 6 seconds

...the elimination of biological warfare, accidental war agreement, the hot line agreement...



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...and most significant, Berlin. What about Vietnam, Middle East, arms control and trade? That all depends on the situation at the time. Those are all possible areas of discussion with the Soviets. The agenda will be determined by developments between now and May. There will be a very limited group going with the President; it'll be a working visit. Regarding China, each of these trips is separate. We're seeking new relations with China, and we're seeking to continue our negotiations with the Soviet. We're doing neither at the expense of the other. We're not playing them against each other. Regarding our allies, on questions such as mutual balance force reductions, etcetera, we'll discuss with them in detail first before we take any steps with the Soviets. What it really means to US defense is that the fact of the meetings is itself a hopeful sign, but we recognize that our differences are very deep and very broad. We will continue to have different views, but, and we've only agreed to discuss those differences. For some to conclude naively, as they have, that the whole world has now changed, and so forth, is ridiculous. None of that type of thing is true. We're aware of the differences, but we should talk about them.

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Duration: 20 seconds

Regarding the Soviet Union, they now are well ahead of the US in military strength on the offensive side, and are still building, so the US must continue its own program until we have an agreement on both offensive and defensive weapons, that doesn't put us in an inferior position.

We welcome the opportunity to talk, it could be hopeful, it can change the relationships, but there is no reason for euphoria; there is no real change in either attitude. But the big fact overall



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is that the superpowers know that if there's a conflict, there are no winners now, only losers. And neither of us will allow the other to gain an advantage. So if SALT breaks down and the Soviet continues their buildup, then the US must also build up. So the two great powers have a common interest in limiting the arms race and negotiating the areas where they rub, such as Berlin, the Middle East, South East Asia, Caribbean, etcetera. We look to this period to continue to maintain our strength, to continue to negotiate with the Soviets, and to work on a new relation with China. We're on a very high wire. We're trying to stay there vis-à-vis the Soviet and China. Ironically, we're in the position that each of them rates the other as more of an enemy than either of them rates the US So we must handle the whole thing very evenhandedly.

Rogers then made the point that it's very important that no one attempt to express substantive views, that there's no need to add anything to what the President has said on the subject. He said that he felt there were four ideas that we should consider. First, that there's no time in the history of the US where a President has undertaken such a comprehensive effort for peace, no President has ever tried so hard before. Two, the world is a more peaceful place now than it was two and a half years ago, what the President has done has been effective up to now. Number three, everything the President has done is consistent with what he said since the beginning. In other words, it's an orderly foreign policy. It's hard to handle and anticipate, and the way the President has managed it has helped in being able to do this. Number four, as a result of all this, it is an era of negotiation. So you add it all up, and it's clear that the President is the world leader for peace. People will come to appreciate this. The kind of leadership the people expect. Other country leaders all say this, and it's time that we started recognizing it.

The President then turned to Laird and suggested that he be in Vietnam at the time of the inauguration of Thieu. Laird frantically made a pitch that he's not the right man to do this, but the President then noted that Muskie or Humphrey had said in a deriding tone regarding the new



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prosperity, that what was wrong with the old prosperity? The President says that the answer to that is war. The President closed by referring to the Hebert picture ceremony and said that one of the other Congressmen there had made the point that the President, a great sports fan, had given up the World Series ball game, and he thought it was quite significant that he would give up a ball game to come to a hanging.

The President called this evening, very much interested in how the TV had played the coverage of the day, and we did very well since he led with the first four stories on both networks. Lead being the Moscow announcement, then the Labor settlement because he announced this afternoon that Meany had agreed to join in the Price Board. Third was the textile story, out of the press conference, and fourth was his answer about the Supreme Court, that he was considering both Byrd and two women.

End of October 12th.