



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

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Thursday, April 6.

President had me in this morning for quite a long discussion at the EOB on PR problems. He feels that on the property tax we've missed our boat, we need to demagogue on a general basis. The Domestic Council doesn't recognize the necessity of PR, therefore, we're losing the initiative on all the domestic issues. He feels we've really got to hit Kennedy hard on his Vietnam line. We need to get out the record on the peace talks again, try to get Rogers to do this. We've got to decide on whether to have a press conference Tuesday-- I mean on Wednesday, but decide on Tuesday, whether to have it. It is probably too risky because of the Vietnam thing.

He then had me stay in when Henry brought General Vogt in to discuss his shift. The background of this is that in a briefing the other day, Vogt mentioned to Henry that he was terribly distressed with the way the military and particularly the Air Force were handling the Vietnam situation, and particularly their failure to carry out the Presidential orders and their even worse failure to come up with any ideas of their own on how things ought to be handled. Vogt made the comment to Kissinger that he would like to give up his 4th star he was about to get for going over to NATO and be assigned to Vietnam and get the thing straightened out. As a result of this, Kissinger suggested exactly that to the President and he bought the idea. And Vogt is being transferred to Vietnam, although he's still getting his 4th star and he's going to go out there this weekend.

President called him and really laid it to him, saying that he was making this change because it had to be done and that this was-- that he was very upset with the military, that things weren't being handled right out there, and that he expected Vogt to step in and really take it over. He then made quite a dramatic point of the fact-- or his view, that this may very well be the last battle that will be fought by the United States Air Force, since this kind of war probably will never happen again, and that it would be a tragic thing if this great service would end its active battle participation in a disgraceful operation that this Vietnam offensive is turning out to be. Problem being, of course, that the Air Force is relying on weather problems as an excuse for not



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moving in on the attacks that the President has ordered. Vogt said he understood what the President was saying loud and clear and that he'd move in and get it solved. The President told him to bypass Abrams, that he did not have confidence in Abrams, that he'd been a great commander in World War II, but that he was over the hill now and that Vogt was to get things done. If he had any problems he was to let the President know, not just let the thing simmer.

He, Vogt, then raised the point that his hand would be greatly strengthened if he were made Deputy Commander out there instead of just Air Commander and the President said that is to be done and ordered Henry to get it done. It was quite a dramatic meeting, and I think undoubtedly had a dramatic effect on General Vogt.

The ITT hearings are the other big item today. Problem there is the failure in the committee to work the thing out right. We were playing with getting a compromise-- or playing with trying to kill the hearings today but that failed and now it's put off until tomorrow with the idea being that we'll work up some kind of compromise, like a letter from the members who want to terminate the hearings, to Mansfield separating Kleindienst from ITT, or an agreement to open San Diego and go for six more days and set a date for floor debate on April 24 or something like that. I suggested a strategy of our boycotting the hearings and hanging the boycott on the fact that they're no longer germane. In any event, our strategy is for the moment at least, up in the air.

The President did his Catholic speech in Philadelphia today and it was apparently very successful. They-- he got a very good reception, lot of interruptions for applause during the speech. He said what they wanted to hear, even though it was heavily watered down to meet Connally's and others' requirements that we not make any commitments.

We virtually got an endorsement from Cardinal Krol and had a very good talk with Mayor Rizzo. So he's quite pleased by the trip and by the outlook in Philadelphia. We went from there on down to Key Biscayne for the weekend.

End of April 6.