



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Tuesday, April 25.

Back to Washington, the President spent the whole day at the EOB. Had me over several times, started at 9:00 with Kissinger and Haig discussing the approach to the speech Wednesday night. He had Andrews-- Johnny Andrews and Winston Lord come in, told them that he was going to make the speech tomorrow night at 10:00 on TV, ten minutes regarding Vietnam. He wanted Andrews to follow the President's outline carefully: don't deviate from the rhythm, the phrases, or the order. President dictated a detailed outline for John. He said-- told him to avoid his own ideas, except for side note suggestions. Said the President will work in a couple of vignettes himself at the end, so you ignore the fact that there's no conclusion. Then he outlined how the speech should go: that I'm reporting on the situation in Vietnam, the role the US will play, the efforts for peace by negotiation, review the situation when we took office, what we've done, the troops, casualties, etcetera., the most forthcoming peace offers, and describe those generally. No Mickey Mouse stuff about being too accurate on that. Their answer was a massive buildup, the President showed restraint, then the Easter massive invasion. Then he wants him to get the number of men who have actually invaded into South Vietnam. South Vietnam resisted, the US posture was, no ground forces but heavy air strikes, now report from General Abrams the general air strikes have been essential. The ARVN are fighting. We can expect another month of hard battles, with some losses. His estimate is that the South Vietnamese will be able to contain the invasion. What am I doing as President? First, I will continue the troop withdrawal with 20,000 to be withdrawn before the 1st of July. Second, I'm directing Porter to go back to the negotiating table in Paris. Third, I'll continue the air and naval attacks on North Vietnam. Then review why we had to do the bombing, to protect American forces, to prevent a Communist bloodbath. Kissinger recommended that he add some threats there. The President said that he would put this in his conclusion, not leave it up to these people, referring to the speech writers. He said the conclusion would be damn frightening. He said we must have the point that this is an invasion, and that our bombing will continue in the North until the North stops the invasion. There is no privileged sanctuary in North Vietnam as long as Communists invade the South. He emphasized



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never to say, "the other side", always to use, "the enemy," "Communist", "invaders", and Lord and Andrews left.

The President then got into a horrendous blast at the military strategy in the central highlands, making the point than any simpleton knows that they should not have allowed themselves to be driven back across that area, that when you have minimum troops occupying unwanted territory, facing a superior force attacking them, they shouldn't allow themselves to be driven back, they should pull back to a grouping point, draw the enemy in, then encircle him and cut them off. Haig said the problem is that Thieu can't write off people in the territory, so he can't just give ground away that way. Kissinger said they will run out of steam by the end of this week. President kept lashing and lashing on what did they hit and so on. He made the point that my job is to see that the services get out the positive stories, to go to work on Bradshire and the other reporters who have been filing bad stuff, get the PIO's out there to do something, but don't let the press go in with the South Vietnamese units. Use the Scalis, Kleins, Henkins and so on, get out horror stories, atrocities on North Vietnam, what they're doing to refugees and all that. He feels that we've had the most brilliant foreign policy in this century, but we've sold it the worst, because we don't have a C. D. Jackson and we have an iron curtain in the press, but the problem is we aren't working on it enough.

We then got into a discussion of the notification process again, who was to call whom at what time. The President emphasizing again that he has rejected the North Vietnamese demand to stop the bombing before resuming talks, and told Henry to emphasize that at the 5:30 briefing that we will continue to bomb the military targets in North Vietnam as long as the Communist invaders are killing the South Vietnamese and Americans in South Vietnam and that the President will say this tomorrow night. He covered the vital importance of follow-up using all our big guns, something out every day, call the networks, start a march, all out massive offensive, start attacking the media again with an Agnew assault on how to handle the speech. Vicious calls to the *Post* including Kay Graham. Demand a correcting editorial, which Henry did call and do. Suggested that-- he also came up with the point that all the Republican candidates who are



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running against incumbent House and Senate Democratic doves, should immediately fire a wire-
- file a wire with his incumbent opponent demanding that he repudiate Madame Binh and her
letter. He has a Congressional dinner tonight, which is good timing, and then be getting ready for
the speech tomorrow and down to Florida tomorrow night right after the speech.

End of April 25.