



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

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Monday, December 18th. The President was up at Camp David all morning. He came down at noon, and had me come over. He is concerned about Kissinger and his reaction to the bombing thing and all that, because Henry feels we're at another crisis point now and is going through his usual reactions on that. Later in the afternoon, he had Henry and me come over, and got through, went through the long discussion of the whole rationale, how we got where we are and what the current situation is, how we should be dealing with it. Mostly an exercise on the President's part to try to buck Henry up, because he feels he's overreacting to the press, and so forth, as a result of his concern on the whole bombing deal. The President made the point that we've been around this track before. We have a lot of friends in the country, and we shouldn't be too worried. The key is that we all must show confidence. He also thinks we're in a good position because of starting the bombing just a week before Christmas. He's very concerned about any second guessing, but Kissinger's covered everyone, and they all were for it, so he doesn't think we'll have any real problem there. He wants two or three B-52s today and the President asked Henry whether the Air Force wants to pull back now. Henry says no, that we're doing the right thing, and it's, the President says it's funny how these things work out, that we could have stalled this a few weeks, but it's much better to be going at it now. Henry makes the point that the President's best course is brutal unpredictability.

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Audio Cassette 28, Side B, Withdrawn Item Number 28 [AC-28(B) Sel 15-1]
Duration: 55 seconds

And Henry reviewed the problems of the talks again, the North versus the South and the way we were being whipsawed. He said we've learned all the way along that the way to handle treaties is to ram them through and then run them, as we did the Shanghai Communiqué and the SALT thing. The problem on this one is Thieu balking before the election, when we were caught with



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the political problem. The real problem now is how we handle the bilateral deal if we have to do it and whether we'll be able to maintain the economic and military aid for South Vietnam under that. Henry says we'll have an answer from Hanoi within a week, whether they'll go for more talks. If they say no, we're up against the hard place. Also Thieu may say no, in which case we'd have to go on a bilateral basis.

Later the President talked about Henry again, the whole problem of dealing with him, and the kinds of things like his concerns today. Obviously, the President's concerned that we maintain Kissinger's dauber at the best possible level, and sees that as a continuing problem. I actually think Henry is getting around to better shape now, although he says he's had a lot of press calls, so and he did come bouncing in today...

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Duration: 19 seconds

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...and that's obviously got Henry worried. He thinks some of the talk that's leaking out about a split between the President and Kissinger has been inspired by us and so on. He knows that's not the case, but he gets doubts in his mind as he reads this kind of stuff.



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We had a long personnel review this afternoon with Ehrlichman and the President going over a lot of Under Secretaries and Agency heads and so on. He agreed with putting Borman into Protocol and wants to see if Eberle will take the European Community, and then he'd give him NATO and to add to it when Rumsfeld moves out. Also, he wants to move on that Secret Service change on the Presidential detail, moving Duncan out and making some other shifts there, so we'll go into that a little later in the week.

End of December 18th.