



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

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

Tuesday, no, a, January 16th. The President had me over in, at noon today, later than usual, because he's apparently getting to work on the Inaugural address now, and spent some time with Price this morning before he had me come over. He got into the Fairlie book which, on Kennedy, which I suggested he read and sent over to him yesterday. He made the point of how much the Kennedy's made out of nothing, and how they turned their liabilities into assets, such as in Cuba. And says our weakness is in Kissinger handling everything all to himself, and not briefing people to go out as spokesmen, therefore, we should get Haig to brief our staff on the Vietnam thing next week, especially those who talk to the press: Ziegler, Scali, Safire, Finch, Klein, Keogh, Buchanan, Price, Colson, Baroody, Timmons, and the Congressional group. So they'll have a line to get out and peddle, and that we should get a talking paper to them on this. Such is the way Schlesinger built up Kennedy; no one does this for the President. Finch's argument that the Kissinger briefing is right, in saying that Kissinger is the wrong one to do it, but he's right for the wrong reason. The real reason is that Kissinger is a lousy briefer for building up the President, not that he has destroyed his credibility as Finch feels. So I have the responsibility, he feels, to get Haig to brief all of our communications staff, to get a lot of people out selling our line, and that we should do this Tuesday afternoon, while Kissinger is flying back from Paris. Mainly, we should establish the four points that should be emphasized, then we should run an all-out effort with inspired leaks, and so forth, to establish our line. Also, regarding the budget, he got into the thing of Fairlie look at the Peace Corps and says he's now even more convinced that the Peace Corps has to be flushed and that it's a bad instrument of foreign policy, a total waste of money, so we should flush it to the extent possible; also we should dump VISTA.

He then got into the thing of stopping the credentials presentation again. He had raised it the other day, and said he'd been thinking about it and decided to receive the credentials. It should be the Secretary of State, not the Vice President, as the delegation from the President. That we should check around the world and find a way that other nations do it that we could pick up. And



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that we should have all the credentials presented to the Secretary of State, then the President would occasionally see a major ambassador privately from time to time.

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DECLASSIFIED - E.O. 13526, Sect. 3.4: by MS, NARA, June 12, 2013  
Audio Cassette 30, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 2 [AC-30(A) Sel 2]  
Duration: 16 seconds

Also, he wants to be sure Rogers treats the Australians and so on with total coldness and doesn't let them get well with us. They should get the cold treatment, although we should not show anything publicly.

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Then he called on the phone this afternoon and made the point that he had read the Rossiter book, which he thought had a fascinating point regarding Eisenhower, which is that, in terms of great leadership, it's better perhaps to have half the people like a leader and the other half hate him, than it is to have the great center who likes him and only a small fringe on either side who worship him and hate him. He also said he had checked the Constitution in Rossiter's book on receiving ambassadors and is afraid that he is required to do that job himself, constitutionally. He raised some questions on the FBI and other minor matters, and then said someone should be working on the POW project: how they return, what should we do, who welcomes them, and so on, because it's a very emotional issue and we should develop a contingency plan to deal with the whole approach on it. He said I've got to keep everyone from being discouraged about current developments and so on.

End of January 16th.