



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

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Friday, January 29th. The President made the mistake of following his daily Cabinet call routine, and Romney was the one for today, or last night, I'm not sure which. In any event, he got into a long harangue about not understanding his assignment as the lead man for the Cabinet on the State of the Union follow-up. He said that things weren't working out the way Ehrlichman and Haldeman had discussed it with him. The problem is, I, at least never discussed it with him at all. He doesn't know what he's supposed to be doing, and the President wants us to really put the pressure on him not to get bogged down in details, but rather to spend his time charging up the Cabinet and getting out in public doing something. The President wanted to be sure that that was followed up, so we could get him out of his hair, and wanted to use the example of how the President's not bogged down and the advice he gave Dole on the same subject.

Buchanan, the Vice President, Kissinger, and I were called into the President's office after the few morning schedule items that he had, and before we departed for the Virgin Islands. And the President first reviewed or had Henry review the plan for the Laotian move and get all the things set on that. Henry's still not sure we're going ahead with that step, but they're working on the plan for it in any event. He then, the President, said he wanted to get a meeting either Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning with the...

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...usual attack group—plus Connally, Mitchell, and the Vice President to discuss the plan in final form before they get into it at NSC. No, correction, he wanted to discuss it with Mitchell,



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the Vice President, and Connally before he discussed it with the attack group, so that he was sure he had them lined up to back him up.

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He then got into the purpose of the meeting with Buchanan, et al., which was that he feels the Vice President should go for a big play on live television to comment on the recent press coverage of Southeast Asia. He feels he should speak more in sorrow than in anger, and should not be defensive re Cambodia. He should work from Bill Rogers's testimony and make the points that the press attacks are unfair, irrelevant, and inaccurate as well as conflicting; that we would think that they were writing about the previous Administration. They ignored the total difference between what we're doing and what LBJ was doing in Vietnam. Make the point that we've kept every promise we've made and cite the examples of the sanctuaries and no ground or air support in the sanctuaries and so forth. But really dramatize this, hitting the time after time that the President has made these promises on television. Then make the point that we will stay within the legislative requirements that we haven't and will not use ground troops; that we have and will use air support in all aspects. And if it's necessary, to prevent re-establishment of the sanctuaries and to protect American lives. The President made the point that we need to do this, make this speech to prepare the way for doing more. Then he wants him to say, that in reference to Muskie but not naming him, that one of the candidates in the Democratic Party has said that the President showed an utter disregard in his move in Cambodia, but that anyone who would deny the President the right to use air power to protect American lives, to protect American troops, shows an utter disregard for American lives. Then make the point that troops are down, casualties are down, and this can continue only if the Nixon Doctrine continues to be applied. Then make the point that the press has a vested interest in seeing us fail because they predicted that we'd fail. He doesn't want them to use any personalities or names. He feels that tone is very important, and everyone agreed that there is a need to soften the press in advance of the stepped up activity next week, which will drive them right up the wall.



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On the plane en route to the Virgin Islands, he had me up for a couple of hours covering an enormous range of odds and ends. He wants to go ahead with the *Fortune* editors meeting, he wanted a wire sent to Volpe to charge him up for the Republican meeting tomorrow, then he decided to call him instead from the plane, which he did, and talked to his secretary since John wasn't available. He had some ideas for Ziegler on lines to get out about the importance of the President doing non-routine things, like his talk this morning at the Morton swearing in, and last night to the new Congressmen. The decision to send a cable to the news summary group, some concern about follow-up on the activity of the President—especially in the period since before the trip to Europe. The need to keep the heat on the "New American Revolution", and the "Open Door". An idea of having a State Dinner for Prince Rainier and Grace if the Kennedys didn't do one. A wire to George Allen on his trade that was announced today in conjunction with the football drafts. The decision to make the Italian dinner white tie, and be sure the guest list includes all the Italians. Some more advice to Buchanan on the speech content. A decision that if the Dow Jones reaches 900, he'll go to New York drop by his old law office, and then have lunch at the Stock Exchange. Some more ideas of the mailing of the NAM folder. A question as to whether we should bring Kilpatrick in as the house conservative, and also let him write the definitive book. A general discussion of the political organizational structure, and how Mitchell was doing on that. Then he got into reading some sections from the Disraeli book he's reading now, which made some fascinating points regarding Disraeli's recognition of the importance of form rather than substance.

The only activity after we got into the Virgin Islands was a call from Buchanan, who's all distressed about the TV news tonight that reported the appearance of a major buildup on the Laotian border of ARVN troops ready for an attack. Apparently, this arose out of Rogers's news conference and some observation of troop activity along the border. Pat felt we should rush to



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the President with this, but of course we didn't. The President has gone for a swim and holed up in his cottage here and appears to be very pleased with the setup so far.

End of January 29th.