



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

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

Saturday, April 17th. The President was in early this morning because of a long series of morning meetings on foreign trade that Peterson had called, basically textile, plus he had a session with Mike Mansfield, and a dentist appointment later on in the morning.

Apparently, P.N. was sick last night to the point that, after examination at the White House, they took her to the hospital for X-rays. They had feared it might be a collapsed lung, but it turns out to be a minor pleurisy problem, and she seems to be at least resting comfortably today. The President got into a review of the ASNE last night. He felt that they had gone well in general. We talked about the questions and that kind of thing. His reaction was that the editors hadn't done too well on their questioning, and he was glad that the thing hadn't been on TV. I don't share that view. I think it was a superb performance and would have been excellent on TV. He was pretty funny in commenting on the first question, in which the editor asked him if he ever woke up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning and what he thought about at such a time. The President had answered it saying he thought about working for peace, and so on. He said this morning he wished he had answered with what he really wanted to say, which was, he thought about going to the bathroom just like everybody does when he wakes up in the middle of the night.

He also raised the Kissinger-Scali problem. He wanted me to meet with the two of them today and make the point that Henry spends hours with individual columnists, and that even the best of those has only 100th, has only 100th the effect that Scali would have, because Scali would ripple out to at least 100 columnists and other people. In other words, Henry should spend at least an hour a day with Scali before he starts spending time with all these other people. This will be hard to sell, but I did talk to Henry about it later this afternoon, and he gets the general point, and, I think, will go along at least to some degree.



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Late after the morning appointments we had a long, typical Saturday afternoon gab session. Henry was in for a good part of it, and some of the discussion was on China, in fact most of it. Mansfield's appointment this morning had been for the purpose of trying to work out arrangements for him to get Presidential endorsement of his request to Chou En-lai that he visit China. And not let into my feeling that we should also have Hugh Scott go, because obviously the Democrats are all going to try to jump on this, and they'll succeed in turning it to look like it was their accomplishment to begin with unless we get on top of it. The President made the point that regarding China he's already accomplished what no one else could do just in getting it open this much, and that we do have an amaz--, a major accomplishment here and need to be sure we get the advantage of it. We got into some discussion on Henry's backgrounding of Osborne and the point that he had made regarding China, which was, this was a prime example of the efficacy of the way the President operates. He could have made a speech and made a big deal out of it a couple of years ago when he started doing something about China, but instead he said nothing, worked very quietly behind the scenes step-by-step and has gotten something accomplished, instead of making a lot of noise and accomplishing nothing. Henry feels that what makes the President so formidable in his dealings with the Communists is the fact that he has turned their theory of protracted war against them, and apparently the Communists have that same feeling. He wanted to give some thought to letting the ping-pong team come in, just as another hypo to the fact that this was what was done. Henry's basically opposed to that and doesn't want to overplay the China thing until we get something more going.

We had a long discussion of our long-range strategy regarding SALT and Defense and the Soviet ABM, making the point that we have to get some of these things done in order to break the back of the present establishment, Democratic leadership, the Clark Cliffords and Ramsey Clarks, and so on. But that we can't do much about building a strong defense for the US during this term, because Congress won't support us. What we have to do is get reelected and then move into the defense setup at that time.



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DECLASSIFIED - E.O. 13526, Sect. 3.4: by MS, NARA, June 12, 2013
Audio Cassette 7, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 4 [AC-7(A) Sel 2]
Duration: 26 seconds

Henry's obviously very concerned about the Soviet missile buildup and the fact that they're concentrating their missiles within a radius of Moscow that will enable them to protect them by the Moscow ABMs. All of this may affect what we will ultimately decide to agree to in the SALT discussions. But Henry thinks that our present offer is still acceptable.

Another point that was made was that the whole China thing has given us maneuvering room with the Russians, because now we're not backed against the wall. The problem now is that we've got to avoid making too much hay out of China, because they might pull the rug out from under us and we don't want to get our neck out that far. The President's concerned that we still keep the heat on the opposition. They've all joined with us on the China thing and that, in a way, is not as good as when they opposed us such as in Laos. Teddy Kennedy is scheduling hearings this week, and the President feels we need to get Rogers to testify up there and really hit them. He also wanted to check on whether Hubert, Teddy, or Muskie had made any statement regarding China. As far as any of us could remember, they had not.

We had also talked a little about McCloskey, and I filled the President in on McCloskey's tirades and temper tantrums in Laos. It would seem that he's really not very stable or rational, and this is something we may be able to take advantage of. We're set to counteract whatever McCloskey comes up with on his TV interview tomorrow.



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End of April 17th.