



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

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Sunday, April 25.

The President's still at Camp David; he stayed up there all day. Rogers called this morning. He leaves on his trip tomorrow. He wanted to urge that the President in his press conference this week start claiming credit in the Mid-East, and make the point that he sent Rogers out, in his quest for peace. He thinks this will help to overcome the view that the President isn't interested in the Mid-East if he says that he asked Rogers to go even with the diplomatic risks involved. He could also point out that this is an historical trip, and that no Secretary of State has ever before visited a country that we don't have diplomatic relations with. Also, he thinks it would help with Israel to show that the President is behind Rogers, because the Israelis always say, "Yes, we know what you think, Mr. Rogers, but we also know what the White House really thinks about this."

The Vice President also called wanting some guidance on the line on the Supreme Court decision on desegregation. He's very disturbed, because he thinks this whole decision harks back to the dual system and is going to create very major problems for us. The President's principal interest in his calls today was the whole PR question, primarily of press conference timing and the counterattack to the demonstrations. He went back over the same points he'd covered yesterday about the press conference, going into some more detail. He has the feeling that the only plus in going on is to show he's standing firm during a week of turmoil, but the minuses of having to talk about Vietnam and the Mid-East, etcetera, that we don't want to talk about outweigh this. Also, he thinks there's a problem of overexposure on the Vietnam issue; so he strongly leans to doing it on TV, but at the news hour. He also wanted us at the staff meeting today to get into the whole question of a general counteroffensive by Agnew, Connally, Rogers, Laird, etcetera, to try and get our side on. Also, to make the record regarding TV's coverage of the veterans, etcetera, in a totally unfair way. He feels the networks will pay no attention to our Marine deal on Friday, but that it will shake our people up and maybe do us some good that way. He also wants to be sure we're alert to handling the violent demonstrations when they come up.



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The staff meeting went pretty well; it lasted three hours this afternoon, and the general feeling of the group there was that we had not taken any real beating as a result of the veteran's movement or yesterday's demonstration. They generally felt there would be some impact, but it wouldn't be really bad, that it won't have much effect on Congress, that we did lose some ground, but only marginally, and it's not important. It came across in the process that the Administration didn't push them around, and that works as a plus to us. We had a lot of discussion about the upcoming demonstrations with the feeling that we've got to maintain the same kind of tolerance, until they take the initiative in getting violent, and then, of course, we'll have to move. There was a general feeling that we should try to do something with the pro-Nixon veterans, such as bringing a group in for a Congressional hearing and a visit to the President or something of that sort. We'll see if we can't work something up on that tonight and tomorrow morning.

Regarding the press conference, they were all opposed to the 7:00 time because of it being just a complete waste. They all felt if we did it on TV at all, it should be at 9:00. Moore and Buchanan both generally felt there should be no press conference at all. Scali felt it was pretty much a toss-up between 9:00 or an in-office press conference without TV. The others were basically in favor of 9:00. They did think we should make a big point of keeping the Vietnam answers short, and that we should try to provide a hard lead on some other point. The general feeling was that we should let the nuts sort of hang themselves in the next couple of weeks, and that we should basically stay out of the war business.

The President called later in the evening. He had talked with Billy Graham, who thought that we ought to get 10,000 of our veterans to march, and that we need a good positive announcement of some kind from California while we're out there. We of course, will have the latter if we can get the SALT thing buttoned up, but the President's not sure we're going to be able to get a deal made by then. He got back on the press conference and still feels unhappy about going on at prime time; so I have a feeling he probably won't do it, but he agreed to wait until tomorrow to make the decision.



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End of April 25.