



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

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Friday, October 3.

At Key Biscayne. Day dawned bright and clear, hot and humid, after last night's storm. All quiet through the morning - then President called Ehrlichman and me over for about a two hour session at his house. He was in trunks and a sport shirt. Sort of one of those mystic sessions, which he had obviously thought through ahead of time. Said for next six weeks he'd have to concentrate on foreign matters - and we would have to handle most domestic without him. Wants all staff to understand, and wants large free chunks of schedule time to work on Vietnam decisions. Long general talk about all this. We reviewed our plans and ideas, especially regarding need to game plan Vietnam alternatives and start buildup for whatever actions he decides to take.

Then had session with Kissinger - and he is of course very concerned - feels we only have two alternatives, bug out or accelerate, and that we must escalate or President is lost. He is lost anyway if that fails, which it well may. Kissinger still feels main question is whether President can hold the government and the people together for the six months it will take. His contingency plans don't include the domestic factor. Ehrlichman feels strongly we can and should pre-program several routes on a PR basis, and start getting ready. It's obvious from the press and dove buildup that trouble is there whatever we do.