



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

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Thursday, October 9.

Bipartisan leaders meeting about DC crime started out a little rocky as Tydings was the only Democrat to show up - but Mansfield and Natcher arrived later. Was a good idea to dramatize Congressional inaction - but didn't get the coverage hoped for. Ehrlichman felt that it went well anyway. Then a Congressional Medal of Honor ceremony for four men on South Lawn, and meetings with Prime Minister of Italy and President of Cameroon.

Still stirring regarding yesterday's TV, even to calling me at home again tonight to see how the film came out, but I can't see it until tomorrow.

Had me in at lunch time - long talk about things in general, especially Kissinger's concern about Rogers and his obsession with total compliance and perfection, which needs to be modified somehow. (Kissinger had talked to me earlier - felt maybe we were trying to ease him out, had heard rumors he was leaving and thinks President has decided finally against his plan for Vietnam). Then on to whole Vietnam problem - he still is pondering the course. Does not yet rule out Kissinger's plan as a possibility, but does now feel Laird-Rogers plan is a possibility, when he did not think so a month ago. Low casualty rate now has changed his mind. (Also Kissinger still thinks Hanoi may negotiate this month). President discussed the alternatives - ruled out the dramatic cop-out blaming the dove Senators. Said that would be a great way out for him, but terrible for the country. Worry about Kissinger's plan is that it will take six to eight months, and fears can't hold the country that long at that level, where he could hold for some period of withdrawals.

Wants me to work with Kissinger and try to keep him on an even keel - and stop his worrying.

Ehrlichman and I spent most of the afternoon in PR meeting with Cliff Miller - mainly regarding Vietnam plans and alternatives. Agreed we have to concentrate all efforts on maintaining President's credibility, so he can move the people with him when he is ready to make the overt move on Vietnam.



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President met with Democratic House leadership at 5:00, regarding the domestic program shopping list. Does Senate tomorrow. Decided to drop World Series visit - bad PR - will do Joint Chiefs of Staff at Camp David instead.

My guess as of today on Vietnam outcome:

President will go on TV November 3, with some prior buildup regarding major announcement, and will enumerate all the secret moves he has made for peace, with names and dates. Point out he's done everything possible to resolve with Hanoi to no avail. So has ordered Paris talks ended and brought team home. Will send personal envoy to Hanoi if they want to talk. Will also announce no further United States offensive action, and withdrawal of troops in December, about 40,000. And continuous United States withdrawal until all are out, at fastest rate South Vietnam can handle.

Will then sit tight for two to four weeks to await reaction. If they continue lull or de-escalate, we withdraw. If they escalate heavily we move fast to heavy retaliation - mining, etc. - with this bad faith as basis. Could then probably bring United States opinion around to support level of fighting to get military victory in three to six months. We'll see!