



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

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Thursday, October 16.

The day after Moratorium Day, and a great sigh of relief because it wasn't nearly as bad as everyone had feared. Great debates rage on the tactics for the future and analysis of how this one was handled. Basic lines are drawn on question of whether VP should have used the Dong letter and called for repudiation. Many feel this was the prime factor in toning the whole thing down - the others feel it was the final step in coalescing the opposition - as follow-up to President's press conference that he wouldn't be affected in any way.

Bill Rogers called in morning, we had several talks, then I talked to President regarding Rogers' view that he should make a statement regarding our pleasure that demonstrations had been peaceful and that it showed country is for peace. I made the President's pitch regarding need for hard line and uselessness of making concessions. Rogers argued that there were many in this who were honestly for United States but want end of war, and that we should not reject them and thus drive them into the arms of the radical left. President agreed with his basic premise and wants him to try to work out approach that separates good from bad without losing our supporters in the process.

President had busy day, with several things added along the way. Nothing important. As has become the habit, had me in for several long talks about things in general. Still pondering how to handle press and TV. Realizes press conferences are the most effective vehicle we have - and feels need to get to people via TV at least twice a month in order to keep opposition honest, supporters charged, and press satiated. But is worried about over-exposure and danger of "routinizing" the press conferences so they lose their excitement value. Have to find the right balance.

Got going again on necessity for hard line and no concession to the left. Yet sees merit of Rogers' view. Moynihan goes much further, and is especially concerned about the November 15 exercise. We have to start preparing, because it may be a real disaster. Problem is still to separate the good guy dupes from the hard-core organizers.