



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

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Tuesday, December 16.

Christmas Tree Day. First breakfast with the bad guy Senators, regarding ABM vote due today. But the vote came yesterday instead - and we won handily in spite of Harlow's grave predictions. So President covered the fiscal problems, etc., instead. Then a session with Rog Morton, to talk him into staying as RNC Chairman, instead of running for Senate. Several other meetings filled the morning.

Then this afternoon, later, President lighted the National Christmas Tree. Not very anxious to do it. Cold as the dickens, and windy. Fairly large group of peace demonstrators in the crowd with Viet Cong flags, etc. Started shouting when President started to speak - he plowed right ahead, ignoring them, but it was pretty bad. Called me in as soon as we got back - felt strongly we shouldn't have gone, will either do it by remote, or not at all, in future years. Feels, and rightly, that President of United States should not be subjected to this kind of indignity. Problem is there's really no way to control it - and you can't just stay locked in the office. Actually he took it pretty well in stride, but it obviously rankled.

General reaction to speech last night has been very good, but not too many people saw it because of the early hour. Seems that President has pretty thoroughly gotten into the position of calming down the war opposition, killing the mobilizations and assuring the people that he has a plan and that it's working. Can probably keep it that way for a while. Problem will be if VietCong mounts a big offensive, or some other turn-around. Surprising thing is that My Lai has not had a greater adverse effect, even with enormous television emphasis that goes on and on. They won't let it die, but public seems to have taken it pretty well in stride and then become bored.

Kissinger is still cranking on his meetings with the Communists. Tomorrow is the Romanian emissary, still no clue as to what they, the North Vietnamese and the Chinese are up to, but it still looks as if there's some pattern.



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Big problem persists on oil import quotas. Have to make some decision, and can't win. If we do what we should - and what the task force recommends - we'd apparently end up losing at least a couple of Senate seats, including George Bush in Texas. Trying to figure out a way to duck the whole thing and shift it to Congress.