



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

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Wednesday, March 11.

Kissinger finally got in - after not seeing President at all yesterday. He's still shook regarding Laos, and credibility story is still riding. Kissinger wanted to do another backgrounder, on the theory that he could straighten it all out and get the subject back to the merits of the case instead of nit-picking statistics. We said he shouldn't, at staff meeting - then he took it up with President, who also shot it down. Later in day President had Ehrlichman, Kissinger, and me in for a little lecture about how we all will have problems and we must take them in stride, etc. All directed at trying to get Kissinger to quit beating a dead horse and move on the more constructive efforts. Trouble is, there really is a problem. Epitomized by Laird's statement yesterday that Defense had given President the wrong figures on Laos casualties on purpose, to cover up secret operations. Pretty shocking.

Kissinger is in pretty bad shape - feels he goofed and thus let President down, and was taken in and had by both Defense and State - and has lost President's confidence. The lecture was designed to undo this, and to get him back in gear, but I don't think it worked. Will probably have a continuing problem on this, and will just have to play it day by day.

The whole situation occupied most of the day for most of the key staff.

President decided to go see Senator Mundt at Bethesda - with no notice or press. Caused poor Ziegler a real problem, as we left and returned with no notice. Now doesn't know whether to announce or not. President had me go along in the car and talked most of the time about the Kissinger problem, and the need for the three of us to ride through each day's problems and go on to the next. He realized the whole thing is a bit tense, and is trying to lay groundwork for handling it - but it's not his cup of tea. He really enjoyed the drive - doesn't ever get out like that without escort and fanfare. Nice early spring afternoon.



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He had to do State Department drop-by and GOP fund-raiser dinner tonight. Is pushing for more free time to work out his civil rights/school position. Has Ehrlichman pulling material together and Price doing draft. Will try to wrap it up early next week.

Another Moynihan memo leaked today, and President wants me to clamp down on leaks. Problem is how. He's extremely well controlled on this - but doesn't think we should just let it go on. Wants to try the five men against a wall technique.