



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

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Friday, April 24.

He's still really driving about Cambodia. Had Kissinger assemble Helms and Moorer and Cushman at 7:15 this morning. Has told them to go ahead with planning for second phase next Wednesday, following Phase I on Sunday - which moves South Vietnamese troops into Cambodia to cut off the Parrot's Beak - with some tactical air support. No great problem because no United States troops, at least at the outset. But it only cripples North Vietnam, doesn't really knock out their sanctuaries. That comes with Phase II - which does use United States troops, and could be a real problem. Kissinger thinks President will probably scratch it, although Kissinger feels 55-45 that it's a good move. Would force a decision one way or the other. Kissinger says it would result in our either winning or losing this year, depending on what Hanoi decides to do.

Kissinger was very worried last night - and still is to a lesser degree - that President is moving too rashly without really thinking through the consequences. Also Ziegler disturbed because of his problem in getting adequate briefing from Kissinger so that he's prepared to handle questions.

Quite a discussion in staff meeting this morning regarding President's loss of momentum and leadership in public eyes. Ehrlichman and Harlow and Ziegler and Klein all feel there is a substantial problem, and that President's theories of isolation and remoteness are badly aggravating it. Hard to get them to come up with positive ideas to counterbalance this, but they do feel strongly. They argue for more public Presidential presentation - press conferences, speeches, review trips, etc. Not so much to sell programs but to demonstrate President cares and is interested and will try to do something. Whole thrust is on need for appearance, not substance.

President had a two hour session with Moynihan's National Growth Policy eggheads which I guess went pretty well.

Took off for Camp David with Bebe at about 3:00. All quiet.