



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

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Wednesday, May 6.

Another day of watching and waiting, except for a meeting with Arthur Burns and a group of Kent State students.

Plan was to convince Arthur regarding yesterday's decisions with economic group regarding not to try to balance '70-'71 budgets and not to raise taxes. Ehrlichman says Arthur took exactly opposite view and President agreed with him, so now we're on both sides of the matter.

The Kent State six was good group and meeting went very well. No concrete results. Their main pitch is need for better communication and more student participation in major decisions. Did confirm that Cambodia was not the basic cause.

President spent the morning in office - with these meetings and long planning session - partly with Ehrlichman and partly with Kissinger. Wants VP to stop saying anything about students. Very disturbed by Rogers-Laird story that they disagreed with the decision. Called Rogers and told him - tried to firm him up, not very successfully as Bill cited all the negatives. Wants me to follow up with Rogers - once decision is made, all go along - once we start, don't build fall back positions, go all out. Likes the line "Our purpose is not to defeat North Vietnam, it is to avoid defeat of America."

As day went on, concern from outside regarding campus crisis built rapidly. All of us had lot of calls and memos, etc. President came to grips with it this afternoon. Obviously realizes - but won't openly admit - his "bums" remark very harmful. He agreed to plan of action - meet university presidents tomorrow; press conference Friday night; call in all Governors Monday. Wants to hold off on appointing special commission regarding Kent State. Feels it may be a mistake, so wait a little.

Very aware of point that goal of the Left is to panic us, so we must not fall into their trap. Had Kissinger and Ehrlichman over to EOB (spent all afternoon there, and I was there from 2:45 til about 6:00) from about 4:30-6:00. (I missed meeting they had with Stanford group - apparently it



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went pretty badly.) Reviewed overall strategy. President realizes he's up against a real tough one. Kissinger wants to just let the students go for couple of weeks then move in and clobber them. Ehrlichman wants to communicate, especially symbolically. All agreed to the plan - but Kissinger very concerned that we not appear to give in any way. Thinks President can really clobber them if we just wait for Cambodian success. I disagree, because then there'll be a new excuse.