



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

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Tuesday, May 19.

Back to DC and the routine. A hot and heavy schedule today. Leadership meeting regarding Senate anti-Cambodia resolutions first. All the leaders who have been out in country say support is strong for President. Most of them want to extend the debate instead of compromising, feeling time is on our side and that we can always give in later if necessary. Scott still intent on maneuvering a compromise with Cooper. All agree that Democrats are only going for political benefit of appearing to have forced President out of Cambodia, when he's already going to get out anyway.

Then a Cabinet meeting under rather strained conditions, as Hickel still much in the air. President did a masterful job of talking to Hickel indirectly through the Cabinet regarding not trying to affect policy by making a speech outside. A lot of discussion regarding role of Cabinet under reorganization. Rogers led argument for need for discussion before decisions - fear of cutting Cabinet out, and becoming just pro forma. Laird made strong pitch against the line that President made hard lonely decision - this does not build President. Good briefing on background for Cambodia decision and progress to date.

President had me in for couple of hours at lunch time – got into long harangue about his revised views on PR. Now feels he was completely wrong in his original concept regarding building mystique and image. Realizes this is impossible when press is against you. Roosevelts, etc., only succeeded because they had press with them (not sure that's true). Feels we should give up the struggle and just present our case via President on TV. Realize Nixon will never have good public image, so don't try. I think he's partly right - but that's no reason not to keep trying. But it would work a lot better if he would quit worrying about it and just be president.

He says let's face it, we're a square team like Howard Jones - can't try to be razzle-dazzle T-formation. Wonders what kind of a figure of Nixon they're going to create. Is more inclined to Kissinger's idea of mystery and aloofness. In any event determined not to make LBJ mistake of not mobilizing our friends and not using TV.



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All this he says is result of lot of thought over the weekend. Not too concerned - sort of reflective. I think he's realizing he has been pushing all this too hard, and if he'll go back to the original approach he'll do better. All that really counts is that he make a few good big moves - the rest then will fade away.