



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

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Wednesday, March 3rd. No schedule today because the President was preparing for the press conference tomorrow night. He spent the whole day at the EOB, had me come over at noon and again at 5:15 for a couple of long talks.

The big problem is still the Kissinger-Rogers situation. Henry came in this morning and was not at all upset, as he has been in the past, but was talking about his frustration over the fact that we're going to go ahead tomorrow or Friday with a Big Four blast at, or, I guess, an agreement for a Big Four meeting and a Soviet-US blast at the Israelis for not cooperating, probably. In any event, we have given away this Four Power talk and the blast at the Israelis...

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...for nothing when we could have used it as a major bargaining chip with the Soviets. Henry feels that it would have even an agreement to do this somewhere in the indefinite future would have cinched the summit meeting if we'd used it as a trading point rather than just give it away. He feels that we're making major mistakes in the whole Middle East question, but that doesn't bother him nearly as much as his feeling that we're losing our strength vis-à-vis the Russians.

I then got into quite a discussion with the President on the same subject. He's still searching for the right solution, recognizing that he's got to deal with the problem. He repeats again his recognition that Henry is far more valuable than Rogers; and as he evaluates Rogers, he is being more realistic than he has been sometimes in the past, recognizing that Bill's vanity is overriding,



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also that Bill doesn't have nearly the loyalty that Henry does. The President made the point, for example, that if we got to the stage where somebody had to fall on the sword in order to save the President, Henry would do it, but Rogers wouldn't. I made the point that I agreed with that, but that if Henry did do it, he would do it with loud kicking and screaming and make sure the blood spurted all over the place so he got full credit for it; but he would go ahead and do it, whereas Rogers would find a way to avoid it and get someone else

stuck. This is the essence of the problem with Bill, and the President is fully cognizant of it.

He made the point that we had to be very careful with Henry, however, too, because we have to be sure that his ego isn't overblown. This whole Symington thing yesterday, Henry seems to be taking in very good stride, and the President feels it's because at least he's getting some attention which is what he really wants. We've got to make sure that he doesn't think he's getting away with any of this. It's my view that it can't be attributed to Henry anyway, so there's no problem of trying to prevent him from getting away with it.

The President's conclusion seems to be moving more and more to the point that somehow he's got to get Rogers out. He was saying today that the best solution would be if Rogers would perceive this himself and make his own decision to move out on his own initiative. He may be hinting that I should try to push Rogers to that, but I'm not sure I could do it even if I tried. Henry says he called Rogers this morning and said that the two of them should get together and make sure they have a unified front in the face of this latest attack, and Rogers told him he just didn't have time to get together. Rogers told me basically the same thing later today and said he would get together with Henry, but didn't think there was much point in it. Then he tossed in a few cheap shots at Henry calling a, some Frenchman and asking that he be invited to a luncheon



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of French journalists so he could give them a backgrounder, last week. This, of course, just frosts Bill. The...[Tape cuts out]

Late this afternoon, Rogers called me and said he thought he'd better see the President to discuss the method of handling this whole situation on the press conference tomorrow night. When I told the President this, he was less than excited about having to meet with Bill but agreed to do so, and he did. I didn't see him afterwards, so I don't know the result of that. He, Rogers's whole point of wanting to talk to him, of course, was to make sure he handled things so that Bill came out looking alright. That was his whole concern yesterday, too, which is a pretty good insight into the guy's motivation, because he wasn't at all concerned about how the President came out of this whole thing; he was only concerned about protecting his own position.

End of March 3rd.