



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

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Tuesday, March 30th. Another day with nothing planned except the Allen Drury interview and, of course, the news announcement of the plan to make the troop announcement next week. The President was in the office late this morning, but stayed in through the rest of the day. Had a, a three-hour session this afternoon, with Ehrlichman in for the last two hours, and Kissinger for the last hour, mainly just general conversation. He did get into Congressional relation questions and had me call MacGregor to check on the reaction in Congress to his plan to make the troop announcement, which of course, was all very good. He discussed with John the problem of working out who Kissinger sees and spends his time with, especially in the press. Also the point that we've got a very delicate period coming up now on our relations with Rogers and Laird, as we get into the SALT Agreement and the follow-up to it. So it's terribly important that Kissinger lays low in his media contacts and lets them be out in front. He was intrigued with the report from the, on the *Washington Post* editorial that blasted CBS today for their slanting of the news and also was fascinated with...

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Audio Cassette 6, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 10 [AC-6(A) Sel 4]  
Duration: 7 seconds

a report we'd just gotten that Westmorland and two other officers in the Pentagon have been bugged.

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He thinks we ought to get that story out. Then when Henry came in, we got into a discussion of the whole SALT thing and our strategy in getting ready for it, plus the hopes for that and the follow-up events working out. That led also into a discussion of the problem with Laird, and the fact that he will not carry out orders except from the, directly from the President. It was



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concluded that Henry and John and I should meet with Laird and try to get a modus operandi worked out, which the President will then confirm. Also, he wants me to order Laird to get rid of Resor immediately, now that the Calley trial is over.

We then got into a discussion of the whole concept of the Chinese Communists in the United Nations, and Henry was concerned that Connally was being swayed by State to take the soft line on this, which he, of course, should not do. The President wanted some follow-up on that to be sure that it didn't get out of control.

Then the President went home at about 6:00 and called me right after he got there, and suggested that I come over for dinner...

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Audio Cassette 6, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 11  
Duration: 5 seconds

...his problem being that Helene Drown is there and he needed an excuse not to join her and Pat.

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So I went over and went up to the study where he had the fire going and the record player blaring. We talked for about 15 minutes before Manalo served a delicious steak dinner with fried onion rings and a beautiful cheese soufflé. The President had me read the Kissinger draft of the speech and was concerned that it's the typical Kissinger draft that does not have the things the



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President needs to pull a speech together. I persuaded him to let me have Safire go to work on it; so I'll send him a copy tomorrow.

He talked about his concern of Tricia and Julie using government planes for their personal trips and came up with the idea of having the Air Force charge him the commercial airline fare when they do use such planes, which is an ideal way to get around the sticky wicket there. He made several phone calls while I was there to Hugh Scott and Barry Goldwater, etcetera, following up on his phone call folder. He's doing a good job on keeping current on those. He came up with the idea of trying to organize the administrative assistants and secretaries on the Hill that are for us, as a counterbalance to the predominant, left-wing types up there, and thinks we can get some mileage out of that. That led him into a question of how we can better charge up the White House staff, and he feels that maybe we need a weekly meeting when he gives them a little pep talk. This, of course, will last about one week, but it does come to mind every once in a while.

I managed to get out after two hours, and I think he went on down and went to bed.

End of March 30th.

He was obviously in kind of a retrospective mood and walked out with me to the car, sort of generally chatting along the way, but with nothing apparently particular on his mind.

Some general thoughts as of the end of March. Our position, looked at objectively, would appear to be at an all-time low at the present reading. The polls show us the lowest we've been: Gallup



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at 50, Harris showing a drop just the other day from 43 to 41. The credibility figure is way down; the rating on handling of the Vietnam War is the lowest it's been. The magazines did one of their periodic "this week Nixon's in deep trouble" sort of orgies. The Laos withdrawal effect is at its peak, or bottom. And there is a considerable base for feeling that we've really gone down substantially. In spite of this, the general attitude of all of the staff people, and certainly of the President, as well as most of the Cabinet members, seems to be very much upbeat, positive, and optimistic. The reason probably is best expressed by the phone conversation I had with Bill Rogers yesterday, in which he reported on a talk he had had with Peter Lisagor earlier in the day. Lisagor had raised the question with him that he couldn't understand why he seemed so happy and optimistic, and why everybody in the White House seemed to be the same way when it appeared to Lisagor that we were in serious trouble and getting worse. Rogers answered that the reason in his mind was that we know what we're doing and where we're going and, therefore, are not concerned about the outlook. On the other hand, the press, and perhaps the people, at this point, don't know and won't for a little while, so they take a more pessimistic view. This is really pretty much the case. Rogers went on to say that when we came in here two years ago, we inherited a number of monumental problems and didn't know for sure how to solve them, although we had some ideas. We've put our ideas into practice, and modified some of them, and now have a clear idea of what we are doing, and see that we're on the road to solution and know how we're going to get there. With this in mind, we have no great concern about the temporary setback situation, because we realize that it is temporary. All of this may be overoptimistic, but on the other hand, there are all kinds of potential optimistic factors that aren't even taken into consideration in it. At the very least, it would appear that the economy has bottomed out and is gradually inching back into a sound position. And that in any event, we're going to get out of the war one way or another, and we have a pretty fair chance of getting out honorably.

Looking beyond that, there are a number of monumentally optimistic possibilities. Henry definitely feels he's got the SALT thing lined up, and that we can announce that in a couple of



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weeks; that that will lead to a Summit and a four power meeting after that in the fall. We know that at some point not too far off, we'll be able to announce that no more draftees will be serving in Vietnam. Henry feels, and now the President concurs, that there's a 50/50 chance at least of getting a Vietnam settlement this summer and ending the war completely. The Berlin negotiations appear to be reaching some sort of productive possibilities. The economic situation could turn out to be substantially better than we think it is at the moment. Then of course, there are all sorts of unforeseen possibilities on the bright side, as well as many on the dark side, that could come up. All in all, the outlook appears to be strongly balanced in our favor, and I think all of us feel it both rationally and intuitively, and that that provides the basis for the optimism that everybody seems to have. Overall, the conclusion would be that probably this week, or this period of two or three weeks, will mark the low of the second, of the first term, and also that probably the troop announcement next week will be the basic turning point from which things will start moving upward.

End of March 30th.