



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

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Saturday, May 29.

The President did his visit to West Point today, which went extremely well, and he seemed to be very pleased with it, both during and afterwards. He obviously gets a tremendous kick out of chatting with the cadets and seeing the outstanding caliber of young men that we have in groups such as this. It clearly gives him a charge, and trips of this kind may be worthwhile for that reason only.

Before we left the White House, he had Henry in for a final discussion before Henry's trip to Paris tomorrow and called me in at the latter part of it, as he sort of wandered around discussing the history of World War I, some of the problems made then. He was pointing up the significance of the date March 21, which this year relates to Laos, but in 1918 related to Ludendorf's big offensive, which was considered a great German victory, but which turned out to be the turning point in the war and the principal German loss. He sees Laos in the same possible perspective. It turned out that at the battle of May-- March 21, 1918, the Germans lost more of their high command and senior officers than the British did, and that result was a major setback for the German cause. He also got into a discussion on MacArthur at the Yalu and other specific military strategy items. He clearly has been reading some military history and enjoys discussing that kind of thing with Henry.

On the way back on Air Force One, we got into a discussion of our press relations approach. I had reported to him that Scali had called in Dan Rather to bring him to task on some factual errors he had made, and also had called in Sidey to blast him for *Time's* coverage of the Acheson group meeting, which *Time* had totally distorted. He questions whether Scali is doing the right thing. He makes the point that Ziegler's been trying to do this on factual corrections for two years and has gotten nowhere. We have to realize the press aren't interested in factual accuracy, and also that if we straighten them out on the points of factual matters, they'll hit us even worse on the judgment-type questions. His theory is different from Scali's and others, in that he believes the press and TV don't change their attitude and approach unless you hurt them. They are not



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honorable men, so you can't reason with them. He cites the example of Finch with Panetta, where Finch was nice to Panetta, backed down before him, catered to him and everything, and still got completely shafted by Panetta in his book. The moral is that if someone's against you, he'll screw you. He wants to be sure it's understood that he will not see Rather or Sidey as a part of Scali's effort.

Along somewhat the same line, he raised the question with me of Tricia giving a *Time* a cover story on the wedding, but Connie failed to get editorial control. The President's very distressed with this and wants it clear that he won't talk to *Time* or *Life* in any event. I checked this with Ziegler, who says we do have editorial control. And then the President called me tonight from Camp David saying he had checked with Tricia, and she had refused to go forward with the story, until at 11:30 last night, she finally did get control. And he again wants it understood he'll do no interview for either one of them, but he's approved Tricia giving Bonnie Angelo a 30 minute interview. His point here is that *Look* deserved a break, and we should give them the break; so he won't give any interview to *Time* or *Life*. He's very pleased with the *Look* story on Tricia. He makes the point that the Kennedy's always had total control of any article they cooperated on, and we should do this too if we're going to cooperate.

End of May 29.