



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

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Wednesday, June 2nd. A long day without very many things scheduled, which meant I spent an enormous amount of time in the President's office. Henry was in for a half hour at 10:00 to report on current developments, and we got into sort of a general discussion on how things are going in the various negotiations that he's got underway. The President made the point to him that we've got to make the big plays now, that we can't put everything off until it seems to be the best time from Henry's viewpoint. The President's view is that if we don't get SALT, if we don't get the summit, if we don't get a Vietnam settlement, all during this summer—and all of which are likely, but not certain—then he's got to go for a trip to China this fall. Henry is very strongly opposed to any trip to China this year, but understands the President's theory.

The President wanted me to do some polling on whether people agree with his support of the mass arrests of the peace demonstrators, and also whether they agree with his opposition to legalizing marijuana.

He had Henry back in again at 11:00, and we were all in until about noon. During that time the President got into questioning Henry about the general who supposedly shot a lot of people from the helicopter in Vietnam, and that led him into a discussion of the whole question of moral war. He made the point that, after World War II, he had visited Germany, stood on a hill and looked around where all the terrible damage was, with hundreds of thousands of people killed. And you could certainly say that that was immoral, to have killed all those people, to have bombed the areas and so forth, but the real question is, would Hitler conquering that area be more moral? Same point applies, that the North Vietnamese bombing is a tragedy, but it's even more immoral to send Americans abroad and not back them up with air power. He got quite cranked up on this whole subject and made the point that he will not go out of Vietnam whimpering; that if all of our other initiatives fail, he'll play his hole card in November...



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...and bomb North Vietnam totally. If we don't get our breakthroughs, he'll turn to the right all the way, and do everything he can to level North Vietnam.

He then got to sort of brooding over the fact that we're screwing up so many things, that we're not tough enough, and that we're not going at things the way we should. He feels we've got to be much tougher on domestic matters; that the President is not a liberal, he's a conservative; all our programs are wrong, we're gaining nothing from them and they're wrong for the country.

Ziegler then came in, and the President got back into a discussion of the questioning at the press conference last night on the demonstrations and made the point that most of the press disagree with his position in which he defends the police, but his responsibility is to keep the government running and he'll meet that responsibility. He wants Ron to say the President totally disagrees with you, the press, and those Senators, led by Ted Kennedy, who express this view. The President approved the police plan before they did it.

Henry walked into a buzz saw raising the question of whether he should meet with a *Time-Life* business group of Hedley Donovan's. And the President really jumped on him and said absolutely not, he should never give them that kind of backing. Then tonight at home, Henry



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called me to say he had received his letter from the Chinese and that it was even more accommodating than he had thought it would be. He was obviously quite ecstatic about the whole deal.

At midday the President had Finch in for an hour and a half on California politics. Bob reviewed his memo of recommendations. He has a main point of contention with Mitchell on the question of Ronald Reagan as Honorary Chairman of California. Finch thinks that this will give Reagan's people the feeling that they've got a franchise to organize the campaign. Both Finch and Mitchell think we should make Firestone the State Chairman or chairman of the organizing committee. Although Bob pointed out to the President that there's opposition from the Asa Calls and Jack Drowns and such, but it was agreed that we should go ahead anyway. Bob raised the Northern California problem and pushed the idea of Weinberger running for mayor of San Francisco because of the help he thinks that would give the President up there. And the President basically agreed with him. He agreed to set up a political strategy group of Mitchell, Finch, Haldeman, Harlow, Dole, and Ehrlichman, and Dent. The President wants to meet with this group from time to time. He made the point that Mitchell needs more input regarding the primaries. The President was surprised about the Ohio thing, and I don't think he's too pleased with Mitchell's letting it happen—that is, the Taft candidacy. The President will not campaign, but he will bring in the key state big shots that are the real Nixon people for a black-tie, mountain-top dinner. That got him back into talking about the Nixon loyalists and the problem there.

And then he got into the question of the subsidies we're giving to higher education; he wants to be sure we cut all the money out of the soft sciences and put it into applied sciences. He decided to shift to the idea again of an office-type, or a press room, press conference on Friday without any previous announcement, as a follow-up to the TV press conference; he kind of likes that pattern.



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He went through a lot of agonizing over the Somoza dinner tonight; he's very much wishing that he hadn't agreed to do it. Said he had a good talk with Connally this afternoon, that he has all the attributes it takes: he's mean, tough, and so on. He thought the scouts, that is, the Explorer Scouts, of whom we had 2,400 on the South Lawn, are a fine-looking group, but we should have had them in a room, where we would have gotten the feeling of enthusiasm and all. Then he got to questioning, as he has some earlier, whether the point that Buch--, that Ehrlichman and some others have raised to him, that he should show more emotion in the press conferences might not be a good idea. He's wondering whether he's right in playing it as cool as he is, and whether he shouldn't under some occasions show some anger and passion and strength of reaction, rather than just taking everything they dish out and coolly handing it back. It's a question that needs some real thought, I think, because he could sure make a mistake going too far the other way.

End of June 2nd.