



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Monday, December 21.

With the morning clear, the President had me in for a couple of hours to go over a whole range of odds and ends. He wants me to follow up on the Chotiner relocation. He still thinks moving him over to Agnew is a good idea but doesn't have a firm conviction on this. I'm supposed to try to set it up so that Chotiner will take it as a step ahead for himself.

He also wanted me to have a session with MacGregor to try to get him straightened out on the way to deal with the press. A number of articles have indicated that he thinks he's coming in to save the President from his overprotective staff. He made the point that in one story that the President is the only one who understands Congressional relations at the White House, and implies that he will come in and solve that problem. The President fully recognizes the need to get him off this kind of a wicket.

The President wanted me to follow up, too, on a conversation he had with Annenberg, who is very much upset by the editorial direction that the *Enquirer* has taken under Knight management. He had a very interesting comment on Otis Chandler, saying that the problem is that Otis can't abide anybody else's success. He hates the thought, especially if it's someone in his own generation, so he has a compulsion to tear down other people. He's a very small man, but very determined. The President feels this falls into place with what Otis has done at the *Times* and the way he's let some people, like Guthman, control him. Annenberg has an agreement with Knight to sell him a Philadelphia television station, but it is void if it is not picked up by March 1; so he wants to be sure we force an FCC hearing and delay the thing beyond March 1 since he doesn't want to let Knight get the control now. This we've got to work this out through Burch, before it gets past the point that they can't set a hearing. Annenberg also made the point that he intends to devote his fortune, or whatever of it is necessary, to Nixon's reelection in whatever way he can be of help.

We got back on the question of using educational television for the Dickerson year-end show, and also to carry on a continuing basis for direct communication that can't be done on the



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networks. We'd use NET, but let the networks cover if they want to, not ask them to do so. This could be used to meet Scranton's need for communicating with youth and with blacks, etcetera. The President is quite intrigued with the possibilities, and I think rightly so.

Henry was in for a while, and the President discussed a possible trip for next year. He's thinking about going to Vietnam in April, or whenever we decide to make the basic end of the war announcement. His idea would be to tour around the country, build up Thieu, and so forth, and then make the announcement right afterwards. Henry argues against a commitment that early to withdraw all combat troops because he feels that if we pull them out by the end of '71, trouble can start mounting in '72 that we won't be able to deal with, and which we'll have to answer for at the elections. He prefers, instead, a commitment to have them all out by the end of '72, so that we won't have to deliver finally until after the elections and, therefore, can keep our flanks protected. This would certainly seem to make more sense, and the President seemed to agree in general, but wants Henry to work up plans on it. He still feels he's got to make a major move in early '71, and he could make the commitment at that time that there would be no further use of draftees in Vietnam, and also make the long-range troop withdrawal commitment. Henry's argument is that this precludes then the necessity for periodic announcements or explanations and covers the whole thing in one swoop, as did our 150,000 announcement last year.

The President came up with an interesting idea for the Christmas program next year. Instead of having David Frost do the readings, he'll do them himself. He wants to include letters he's received and some Dickens-type Christmas readings. He's also thinking about using educational television from time to time to take an hour and answer his mail on TV, having some of the incoming letters read and then discussing them in the form of an answer to the writer. Interesting idea for a new use of TV.

He's chafing at the overabundance of Christmas activity and is already outlining his regulations for next year, wherein he wants much less involvement of himself in the Christmas season stuff. Overall, though, spirits are pretty good considering the fact that he's had no time off at all, really,



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for weeks. Somehow we've got to convince him that he ought to get out of here once in a while, but so far we haven't succeeded. I talked to both Bebe and Billy Graham, and they said they'd work on him, but there's been no visible result to date.

We had the Cabinet/Sub-Cabinet year-end briefing and reception today. Moynihan gave his valedictory address, and it was superb. He came through with exactly what we wanted in terms of a charge to the troops to get out and work for our policies. Also, he did a superb job of building up the President and his efforts. This is the first time anyone's really done that effectively in one of these kinds of sessions. We'll have to reprint him and get him distributed, because it really was worthwhile.

The President, of course, was delighted. He called later to talk about it. He apparently gave out during the reception and just quit after the first hour or so, even though there were a lot who apparently had not yet gone through the line. I didn't stay for the reception, so I don't know the specifics, but he mentioned on the phone that he had done a fair number and then quit.

End of December 21.