



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

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Tuesday, June 29.

Today started with the 8:00 Cabinet meeting at which the President delivered his blast to the Cabinet along the same lines that he had done with the economic group yesterday. He was in for a half an hour, which was the total length of the meeting, and the President did all the talking. Walked in, started it, delivered his pitch, got up and walked out. He opened with the point that this was probably the most important Cabinet meeting this year, and perhaps through next year. He had only the Cabinet members present, with a couple of Under Secretaries sitting in for those who were absent, and I was the only staff member present.

He started by talking about the controversy on the Pentagon Papers and said if we are going to have order in government, there must be a process for making decisions, so we can get the best possible advice, without being compromised by it being publicized. We are not talking about history, we're talking about now. Down in the government are a bunch of sons of bitches. Some of those that you've appointed may well-- be well-intentioned sons of bitches, but there's still a problem. There are some in the Civil Service who are dedicated, but many who sit in the meetings and debriefings, and so forth are out to get us. This is true of all Administrations, but it's worse now, and it's strange because I've been much more permissive than any other President. We have yet to fire one of these people.

From now on, Haldeman is the Lord High Executioner. Don't you come whining to me when he tells you to do something. He will do it because I asked him to, and you're to carry it out. The President must have the best possible advice with the bark off, but he must not see it in the newspapers, and that isn't going to happen anymore. We've checked and found that 96 percent of the bureaucracy are against us; they're bastards who are here to screw us. We don't need to be concerned about the so-called "open Administration." We're plenty open, like a sieve, everything gets out. Every day we see that one Department is fighting another. Justice versus Treasury, and so on. Of course they are, and they always will be, but they cannot be doing it in the press. The



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President will make the decisions, such as appointments to various posts. I'll make them. I'm not referring to you here, but to the people in your woodwork.

You've got to realize the press aren't interested in liking you; they're only interested in news or in screwing me. So don't fall for the line that they want something just for their guidance and background, and so on. They're going to screw you with it. Regarding Presidential decisions, appointments and otherwise, I want discipline. It's up to Haldeman to police it. We have ways to do it that will be extremely effective. When he calls, I want action. Unless we act effectively on the leaks now, it will be too late later next year. In the economic field, this is a very difficult subject. The economists don't know what to do. For example, Arthur Burns has changed his mind over and over. He has memos in on all different positions. Unfortunately, he said each of them publicly before he sent the memo to the President. There are many different views now regarding the economy, taxes, and so on. A lot of papers have been presented for the historical record and it's fine for everyone to do that, but the outcome depends on success or failure.

From the advisor's viewpoint, if he's wrong and we succeed, it'll be forgotten, and nobody'll-- the President will never reveal the fact that he had given the wrong advice. If the advice is right and we fail, it'll still come out that he advised the right thing, and he can be a hero while we fall. So the advisor has the luxury of winning both ways. The President doesn't have that choice. He's the only one in this room who has to run for office.

Regarding the economy, I've made the decision; it'll be announced by Connally today-- he's our economic spokesman. You're free to express your views only when you support the President, but the whole damn thing on the economy has already been in the papers, and thus it affects the decisions. So we've created the impression on this thing and on other things, not that we're wrong or that we're right, but that we're not sure. So what does the businessman do? He decides to wait and see what we're going to do. There's only one thing worse than being wrong, and that's in not being sure. So we're stopping that crap today. The first time there's a leak out of this Administration regarding an inside debate, we're going to crack down on the people at the top or



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at the second level, and they're going to go; so start looking for the scapegoat. You're all on the top, and each of you have a few loyal lieutenants, but beneath you, you have a whole department full of vipers, and they'll strike because they want to beat us, especially next year. For example: Goldstein at the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, a left-wing radical who hates us. So the Secretary of Labor now gives the policy and political interpretations. Don't worry about not being an open Administration. Civil servants weren't appointed to represent us.

Regarding the economy, we can't stop the situation with the Fed. Burns can say what he pleases. I hope he'll see the wisdom someday of being helpful and restrained in what he says, or he can be independent. Period. Our decisions are: there will be no wage-price controls, no wage-price board. We will call in the steel people and raise hell on both prices and wages, on specifics. We are going ahead with the depreciation allowance, but there will be no increase in exemptions, no investment tax credit. There's no point in these, because we can't get them through Congress anyway, and that would just show the impotence of the Presidency. Many of you have been on one side or the other of these, or both sides. I believe we're on the right track, but there must be confidence that we know what we're doing and that we have confidence in what we're doing.

Haldeman will be telling the White House staff all of this, right down to the pip-squeaks. We've got a lot of little people who love to be heroes. Ellsberg has gone out and said he's not guilty because, what he did, he did for the sake of the country. Hiss and the Rosenbergs and those people all said the same thing. Its irrelevant which side Ellsberg is on; we can't have the decision made regarding what is to be released, made by someone who doesn't have the responsibility. This ruins an orderly government. I get a lot of advice on PR and personality and how I've got to put on my nice-guy hat and dance at the White House, so I did it, but let me make it clear that's not my nature. We're going to go forward on Ellsberg and prosecute him.

The success or failure of the Administration depends on discipline: absolute frankness on advice around the table here, and I'll take the responsibility so don't hesitate; don't worry that you'll look bad, I won't tell. You'll make the record if you look good. We want a strong, hard line regarding



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the decisions before they're made, or we can't govern, especially regarding the budget which will be tough. Put the blame on the President, he said no, that you can't tell the press anything until it's decided. The President has the right to advice without pressure, especially pressure by leaks to bring press pressure. I want you to make this same talk to your subordinates. Haldeman has the worst job that anybody can have in the White House. I remember poor old Bedell Smith, who had to carry out a lot of tough decisions for Eisenhower. In his later years he started to drink a lot, probably to try and forget the things he had to do in his early years. He was at my house one night, and he started to cry and he said, "All my life I've just been Ike's prat boy, doing his dirty work." Well, Haldeman is my prat boy; he'll be down the throat of anyone here regarding leaks if they affect the national interest. When he talks, it's me talking, and don't think it'll do you any good to come and talk to me, because I'll be tougher than he is. That's the way it's going to be.

Then he just got up and walked out, that was the end of the meeting. It was pretty impressive, for all of them. I walked out right after he did, but picked up some talk later in the day, and they seemed to be very much impressed, so I think it had its effect.

We had some discussions later in the day on various odds and ends, particularly with Pete Peterson who wants to bring Dick Allen in as his Deputy, where the President wanted to use Dick Allen to handle the declassification project He decided to let Pete go ahead on Allen, however. During the discussion, the President made the comment to Peterson that you find after you've been in Washington for a while you start thinking about doing something else, that O'Neill's comment was certainly true: you can never go home again.

Tonight was the farewell dinner for Red Blount. He had all the Cabinet and Under Secretaries and top White House staff and a few of the key Agency heads. It was a nice party. President did a good job of praising Blount and the whole postal reform concept.

End of June 29.