



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

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Tuesday, May 2.

Kleindienst called me at 9:15 this morning to say that J. Edgar Hoover had died in his sleep during the night, raised the question of how we wanted to announce it, and what our plans were on succession. I immediately went over to the EOB, where the President was, and told him. He said definitely he wanted to announce it, talked about successors to a certain degree, but was more concerned with trying to get some Vietnam things worked out with Henry, following up on the Paris Summit report from last night. Since Henry had gotten no results, and they're now very concerned about how to handle the whole Vietnam situation.

In any event, I spent quite a little time during the morning on the FBI thing. We bounced around with Ehrlichman and Dick Moore the whole question of how to handle it. President kept calling over, felt that we ought to have Tolson function as Acting Director because he can be trusted and the President knows him. Everybody else turned that down because he's too old. Had some other suggestions.

Then Kleindienst called with the details. The maid had found Hoover lying on the floor by his bed at 8:30 this morning. Problem was that she then called his secretary, Miss Gandy, and she called Dr. Choicer, who is Hoover's doctor. He went over immediately, said it was a natural death between 2:00 and 3:00AM, probably a heart attack, but he hasn't called the coroner because we don't want anybody to know till we are ready to make the announcement. So we delayed the coroner till we got the announcement plan worked out, and ended up having Kleindienst announce it. And then the President went out to our press room and made a brief statement on the thing. President wanted to have him buried in Arlington Cemetery with a big ceremony and all, but it turns out that National Presbyterian is his church, Austin's his minister, and that's where he wants to be, so the President said he'd do the eulogy. He finally came down on, first of all, definitely not appointing a new Director but rather an Acting Director through the election, and everybody agreed that it should be Pat Gray, so that is the plan and it will be announced tomorrow.



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We then got into the problem of the Summit. The President feeling that because of the Paris problem Henry got into yesterday and Henry's recommendation now, which is that we cancel the Summit, that we've got to at least consider doing so. He asked me to run a poll to determine what the reaction will be if the President should cancel the Summit, on the basis of the continuing Communist invasion of South Vietnam supported by massive Soviet aid and military equipment. So we're running a one night poll tonight to get a reading before noon tomorrow.

End of May 2.