



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

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Friday, August 11.

Got into a flap today on the question of the détente with the press, because Bob Semple wrote a story in the New York Times that makes the whole point that we made a calculated decision and issued orders to stop jumping on the press, etcetera, which is obviously counterproductive, so the President got concerned about handling this subtly and making sure that we still continue our attack on the press and particularly eroding their credibility. Also got into a big thing on the question of Ramsey Clark. We launched an attack, but the President feels Dole missed the point completely as to our strategy, because he hit Ramsey Clark on the basis of his traitorism--treachery in Vietnam, but didn't make the point that McGovern said he would make him the Director of the FBI. So he feels now we've got to use Dole on this one hard-- Agnew on this one hard, in order to make the point, because Dole was the wrong one to do it. The Vice President agreed to hit an attack on it, but told me he felt it was a mistake to do so, because he would become the issue on it, and so we agreed that someone else should. We tried to have John Mitchell, and then Bill Rogers did it all on his own and really knocked it out of the ballpark. We're having Mitchell follow-up, as well as Clark MacGregor, because Rogers didn't hit the FBI point, but he did make the Ramsey Clark point better than Dole had. We'll also try to get some Congressional follow-up and keep the issue bubbling, since it's a good one for us.

The other big thing today was Romney. The President met with him this morning and George submitted his resignation, complained about Ken Cole and John Ehrlichman and the advance notice to the press and all, all of which came out in the paper later. He agreed that he'd work in the campaign, but wanted to get out. The President had John and me-- Ehrlichman and me come over to Birch at Camp David this afternoon to tell us about the whole thing. Said that-- he told him-- the President told him to go out and say that six months ago he had talked about moving out, that the President had asked him to stay on, that we have this problem and that he will leave, but not now. Then after the Convention he can come out to California and announce that he's leaving. He apparently complained about the Domestic Council, that his views are never listened to, that no one important ever goes to the meetings, and all that. The usual Cabinet versus staff



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complaints. We discussed a successor and agreed that Van Deusen would be the answer as acting Secretary. President ruled out the thought of Rumsfeld for the job, at least at this point.

President's view is to let Romney go, he's too negative now. Ehrlichman's view is to let it simmer till after the Convention and see what happens. He privately thinks that Romney won't actually go when the time comes for a showdown. The President then sat and discussed general political questions and the Vietnam problem for quite a while. He trying to analyze the political outlook and all. Doesn't seem to have any strong convictions as to what will or won't happen.

End of August 11.