

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS STAFF****Tape Subject Log***(rev. 9/08)*

Transcript #1: Part of a conversation between President Nixon and H. R. Haldeman in the Oval Office between 9:00 am and 9:18 am on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 488-6#1

Haldeman: There's, uh, uh, [clears throat] staff meeting one point that came up yesterday that, that, uh, totally independently came up again this morning with different people is that you somewhere, and probably ad-libbing in your speech this morning is the best place, should say something about the demonstration, and, uh, and maybe, and Buchanan and Safire were gonna work up some language. [Unintelligible] suggestion would be an ad-lib of the speech or something. There's a place where it fits; Safire found it. [Unintelligible] that you look at it and, and then this what we concluded yesterday - and today I think it probably comes through even more - that the overall impression of last week and Saturday, the weekend, was that there is a new element of respectability in the demonstrations, in that there was no, and almost literally no --

President: Um-hum.

Haldeman: -- untoward incidents. There was, they did tear up the benches at the Washington Monument to make campfires at the rock concert, uh, but not many people are going to know that. They did it after the TV was off.

President: Um-hum.

Haldeman: And, uh, there was one little incident where they threw some bottles at policemen Saturday afternoon, but nobody knows that. It wasn't on TV, as you would expect it wouldn't be. And, uh, therefore there's --.

President: [Unintelligible].

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Haldeman: No, you ought not to, you ought to, uh, uh, in a sense say that --.

President: Why don't we do it at the press conference.

Haldeman: Well, it may be better to wait until then.

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: I think it's a problem doing it today, but Buchanan's argument was you have to do it today because this is when the demonstrations are still in people's minds. If you ignore it today, either by that or by releasing a statement or something, they think you, uh --.

President: I'm not going to release a statement about the demonstrations.

Haldeman: Well not release a statement, but, uh, have Ziegler, and Ziegler will get a question, "What does the President think about the demonstration?"

President: Well, he can handle it. That's fine. That's fine. I think that's fine.

Haldeman: And he can say --

President: But that --

Haldeman: -- then he was-s, uh --.

President: -- yeah, that he was, uh --.

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Haldeman: The point that they raised, the point which is pretty good, it's the major point, that --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- the President is very pleased that, that, uh, it was, uh, it was in general --.

President: Well, please take this down then. Why don't you do that? That is obviously the way I should do it. I, I should, do not, I should not, uh, fawn over these people in a way Safire will prepare something, and I know what they'll come up with.

Haldeman: He can't [unintelligible]. Right.

President: Well, they'll still fawn too much. Ziegler should say this, he can say, this morning that they'll ask him whether the President was particularly displeased. The demonstrations were peaceful, were on, on the whole, were on the whole peaceful. People [unintelligible] those that get this. uh, continues to be the case in the future, and, uh, we, uh, we, this administration's trying to be as [unintelligible] as possible in the use of, uh, legal [unintelligible] so as to avoid confrontation, incidents, et cetera, and we think our policy has been, uh, fair. [Unintelligible] say that this shows that --

Haldeman: No.

President: -- that a lot of people are against the war.

Haldeman: No. The thought that they had was that, uh, put into that, that, uh, to deplore the

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aberration, in effect to say that it, it's un-, it, it's that, uh, it's unfortunate that you would see that they had to carry a Viet Cong flag and, uh, put it on the Washington, the peace statue and tear up the, the benches in the Washington Monument and tear down --.

President: Yes! They'd like for you to say, uh, and it's safe to say --

Haldeman: Yeah. I agree.

President: -- [unintelligible]. Uh, I, I, I know the, that the, uh, the suggestion's made with the best intentions, but I cannot get in at this point and when I get to a press conference about two or three days later, I'll say it. But are they all so, so stirred up, they, they --

Haldeman: No.

President: -- because of the papers and that sorta, I saw the papers where because the Washington Post had an article saying that the tourists liked the demonstrators now and that sort of thing.

Haldeman: Uh, it's, they're not stirred up about it, they're lookin' --

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: -- [unintelligible] cold-bloodedly afterwards as to what effect it had.

President: It had some effect. We all know that, but the point is, it's gonna have more if I build it up.

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Haldeman: That's right.

President: And they, don't they think so?

Haldeman: Oh yeah.

President: They agree it would?

Haldeman: Yeah, and, but part of it is they're giving away, that there's a chance to recite some of the stuff that, that went, in other words, people did see that Viet Cong flag on television --

President: Um-hum.

Haldeman: -- and my strong feeling is that you should never be in a position of praising a group of people who were seen by the American public --

President: Well, that's --

Haldeman: -- to be marching down the street behind the Viet Cong flag.

President: -- that's why I started out with the, uh, with the, uh, with the, uh, uh, Daughters of the American Revolution where they said demonstrators, ya know, we --

Haldeman: Yeah.

President: -- these youngsters that come in, we welcome, ya know, we welcome [unintelligible] our expression. I knew they were going to carry a Viet Cong flag,

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but we can't do it.

Haldeman: Like the VC flag, they tore down the American flag.

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: They tore all the American flags off the, off the --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- ring around the Monument. They tore all the wood benches up encircling --

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: -- the entire Washington Monument --

President: But --

Haldeman: -- and burned them for their campfires.

President: -- but nobody, uh --

Haldeman: It was reported, but it's --.

President: -- no, but nobody feels I should mention it anymore.

Haldeman: Yeah, but they do.

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President: Safire thinks we should.

Haldeman: No, this didn't come up yesterday 'cause we didn't know about it yesterday. Uh, it came up this morning.

President: Then I think it all, should all be [unintelligible] and they --

Haldeman: Yeah.

President: -- should attribute it to me. The --

Haldeman: Yeah.

President: -- the tearing down [unintelligible]. I think the, I, I then, I would recite the things [unintelligible]. Hell, I'd put it in there. The only thing if I do, then that audience will [unintelligible] me. You may turn them against the demonstrators, and they'll say I, I, I'm trying to fight the demonstrators. That's what I'm concerned about.

Haldeman: Yeah, I don't think you should do it. [Unintelligible].

President: A press conference, well, I know, but I think that there it's almost impossible to handle if I mention things like the Viet Cong flag, Bob, and the burning of the benches and that sort of thing. The stopping of traffic on the Jersey Turnpike: what'd people think, that was - just a cute little, playful trick, huh? I don't know, nobody knows about it [unintelligible].

Haldeman: Throwing bottles at the police, which is unfortunate, the police exercised remarkable restraint 'n' skill --

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President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- in, in dealing, in dealing with --.

President: Well, I could say that our Washington Police the, our, the Washington Police Department deserves great credit for its restraint, despite some instances, some instances of provocation and that, uh, bottles are thrown at police. I'm, that I, that, uh, the, uh, well, great [unintelligible] of the great majority [unintelligible] say the majority, Bob, only the demonstrators were, uh, they know that, that the demonstrations were peaceful [unintelligible] and that all Americans [unintelligible], and that's, that's not true. The great majority of American will join in deploring those, uh, some isolated actions: the carrying of the Viet Cong flag, tearing down all the flags, all forty-eight flags, forty-eight, uh, forty-eight flags around the Washington Monument and burning them. Correct? Did they? Breaking up benches and --

Haldeman: Burning them.

President: -- and burning them, the benches and, uh, the benches and, uh, what else?

Haldeman: Say, "I'm sorry the tourists who visit the Washington Monument this week will have to stand because, the, the. those kids burned the benches."

President: I feel, I feel I can put it in if they want to play it harder; I mena, might as well play a little harder.

Haldeman: Let's wait and see what they come up with, 'cause that's what I'm workin' on. If they [unintelligible].

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President: That is [unintelligible]. Yeah, not Safire.

Haldeman: Safire was gonna work on where it fit. Pat's gonna work on what to say.

President: Fits right in.

Haldeman: The place where it works in.

President: [Unintelligible] very well, is this little, uh, weekend news summary --.

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Transcript #2: Part of a conversation between President Nixon and H. R. Haldeman in the Oval Office between 9:00 am and 9:18 am on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 488-6#2

President: I realize that there is somewhat more tolerance of demonstrations. I don't think there's that much, though. I don't think, as the Post makes out, ya know, the people, the demonstrators [unintelligible] they're, they're all right and so forth and so on.

Haldeman:: Well --

President: There's a change toward the war. That's true. [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: -- the thing is there's also [unintelligible] demonstration was much --

President: Peaceful.

Haldeman: -- than it's been in the past [unintelligible] you did have that.

President: It was not as, not as haranguing, not as --

Haldeman: You had that tenseness that, that you had before. Th-there was sort of a sense of terror all the time before, because you never knew when they were going to cut loose and, and do something. And they did cut loose and remember last [unintelligible] Dupont Circle business --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- and the gassing and, and that's, the other side is, when we come back, the ring

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Conv. No. 488-6#2 (cont.)

of buses around the White House makes this place look like a barricaded --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- fort. Now, we didn't have 'em this time and we didn't, that they didn't have the men wearing gas masks and helmets, riot helmets. They were wearing their, the police were wearing their regular soft hats.

President: Very good [unintelligible]. So that changed. I think, though, that the, as I see it --

Haldeman: Now, the thing that we've got the other stuff on, it seems to me inevitably coming up. These other people have got to escalate in order to get 'ny attention. They're not getting the turnout, apparently, that they had hoped for and they, the way they usu- --.

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: Well, they need ten thousand people. They don't need any more than ten thousand but they need ten thousand. Actually their point is for fourteen thousand. They, th-their plan is for twenty units of seven hundred people each.

President: Battalions basically.

Haldeman: Well, they call 'em collectives.

President: Um-hum.

Haldeman: That's a military collective; they're Communists.

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President: I see. Yeah.

Haldeman: Ten regional collectives, and they're to move against ten targets. They have ten targets; they have, they have, I mean twenty --

President: You know, Bob --

Haldeman: -- targets.

President: -- the thing, the thing we have to realize is this, that the, the left is not dumb. I mean, uh, when you figure how they, how they, uh, how they quieted down during the campaign in nineteen seventy, and then, and how, how the candidates sucked around and wore American flags. You know, I, I remember some of them, I can remember, uh, a small one. Mansfield, he wore a flag just before the election. [Unintelligible] had it on since. They did, did - the candidates. Stevenson did. [Unintelligible] came to the White House. I've seen him with it on two occasions. He wore it right up to the last. But, and now they've jumped on the October seven speech and came along with the rest. You remember they were all for us. Now, they're going to play that way because basically the name of the game is power. They want power and they're trying to thrust out. Now, I don't know wh-, I, I, I don't know what the, the, uh, uh, judgment is this morning, but don't let your people get panicked, Bob. The --

Haldeman: They're not.

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President: -- [unintelligible] from there. Our people have got to stay tough and strong and listen, this is, this's a little more rifle fire. I mean it's tough, and it's going to be hard for a long time to come. But I don't want a bunch of people around here that are worrying about the fact that, oh, if the press knew this - shit, I read this press summary. You know if you read it, if you read it, I realize that they read all the stories and they must get horribly depressed. Just don't get depressed; nothing to get depressed about.

Haldeman: Well, the other point, that even Buchanan was saying, now it's been all charged up. I said, "Pat, it isn't even a lead story when you get outside of Washington. It was on TV, but I mean in the papers." And he got all upset and said, "Oh, yes, it is." I said, "Well, the New York Times yesterday, the Sunday Times, it was not the lead story. Now, if even the New York Times didn't lead with it, I would guess there are papers across the country that didn't lead with it." Maybe not, maybe it was the lead story [unintelligible]

President: Sure.

Haldeman: It's, uh --.

President: Well, apparently they, they had a big one in San Francisco. [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: Yeah, they did.

President: That's to be expected with 'em, almost.

Haldeman: Yeah, they had, they had big crowds at all of them, but, so, so, the crowd was bigger than, than they expected. So it's, what if you get a million people?

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- President: Look, the crowd wasn't as big as, uh, when you say bigger than expected, Bob, what the hell? Last year they had three hundred and fifty thousand. This year they have --.
- Haldeman: One hundred and seventy-five, that, the one hundred and seventy-five is on the basis of the pictures and the, and the people in the streets. It's reasonably --.
- President: Oh, yeah. The Star [unintelligible] was the one that went all out. They called it a half a million.
- Haldeman: Yeah, on the basis, 'cause that's what the demonstrators, demonstrators solidly claimed. They, they're smart, and they're, they're doing it --
- President: Won't our people do that? [Unintelligible].
- Haldeman: Exactly right, but it's never used. Said it was a half a million, well, we do agree pretty well to [unintelligible].
- President: Do we?
- Haldeman: Yeah.
- President: I didn't think it [unintelligible].
- Haldeman: Should have done it at the same time. Honor America we tried for three seventy-five which would have made it the biggest. We got two-fifty which makes it the biggest [unintelligible].

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President: Right. Well, anyway --.

Haldeman: I mean that's --.

President: It was a big crowd.

Haldeman: It would be if they were doin' it now.

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: I actually don't think Honor America was anywhere near two-fifty. That, that's what they're claiming, that --.

President: People actually know that the crowds were estimated. Look, you remember that crowd in the square at Columbus? [Unintelligible] think it was a hundred thousand. Now, God damn it, there ain't many crowds bigger than that. Where the hell you gonna put 'em? And you get 'em there, and that's, they were all out there, people jammed in, and beyond a certain point it isn't a crowd, it's a lot of onlookers, you know.

Haldeman: Yeah, and that's what happened here of course; they never got them all into the, to the crowd.

President: I say, you'll have, you, you, your people tend to, all of our people tend to, uh, and I just trust this, is that the Congressmen and the Senators - I hope that a lot of them are out of town [unintelligible] - won't get jittery and jumpy. MacGregor didn't think yesterday that they would. What's he think this morning?

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Haldeman: Same thing.

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: [Unintelligible]. They're gonna [unintelligible].

President: [Unintelligible] read the Washington papers, you'd get [unintelligible]. I must, you know, because of the ter-tremendous coverage where h-, Rogers said on the phone, he said, "Just think, the Washington Post had seven pages --"

Haldeman: Yeah.

President: "-- on the demonstration."

Haldeman: Yeah.

President: Seven pages!

Haldeman: I know, but, but --

President: Jesus Christ.

Haldeman: [Unintelligible] it from a local viewpoint, I suppose you, you [unintelligible].

President: Did they have seven pages on Honor America? That was a big story.

Haldeman: Yeah.

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President: Oh, [unintelligible].

Haldeman: Oh, no.

President: They hardly gave the goddamn thing a blip. They had a front page picture. Well --

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Transcript #3: Part of a conversation between President Nixon and H. R. Haldeman in the Oval Office between 9:00 am and 9:18 am on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 488-6#3

President: [Unintelligible] worse than that, i-if that isn't the worst rap you get, the repression rap, Bob. Now God damn it to hell. Repression! Did we repress this goddamn crowd? What did we do? We didn't even arrest those veterans. Oh, sure, they were violating the law. We didn't even arrest them. These guys tear down the flag; nobody was arrested, right?

Haldeman: That's right.

President: I think Ziegler --

Haldeman: I'll get him in the office.

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: He wasn't at the meeting this morning [unintelligible].

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: [Unintelligible].

President: Don't you think that's the best thing to do, rather than for me to go out?

Haldeman: Yeah, I do. And that was what they suggested yesterday, because, uh, Ziegler's answer. I think [unintelligible].

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Conv. No. 488-6#3 (cont.)

President: Ziegler [unintelligible] please.

Unknown: [Unintelligible].

President: Ziegler [unintelligible] please.

Haldeman: I think [unintelligible] good [unintelligible] in this that I hate to see. I-if you say anything in that speech about the demonstrations that'll be all you'll get out of the speech.

President: [Unintelligible].

Haldeman: I don't know.

President: Communists. Then you've got people who don't work.

Haldeman: That's the other question.

President: One thing I'd like for you to do - what's that?

Haldeman: Well, you wonder where the hell all these poeple who wander around and what they do.

President: [Unintelligible] what they do.

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Transcript #4: Part of a conversation among President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, and Ronald L. Ziegler in the Oval Office between 9:18 am and 10:04 am on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 488-6#4

President: The other thing, uh, Ron, I thought you want to cover is the, Bob and I were just talking a little about the demonstrations. Oh, he [unintelligible] Bob wasn't, Ron wasn't at your meeting, was he, Bob?

Ziegler: I was in North Carolina yesterday.

President: All right.

Ziegler: [Unintelligible].

President: Well, anyway, anyway there's a, there's a little, there's a difference of opinion, uh, is that some of the boys, uh, want me to make a major, well, it'll, it'll be the [laughs] anything I say about demonstrations [unintelligible]. For Christ's sake, nothing else I say to the chamber, but they want me to refer to the demonstrations at the chamber and, uh, Congress. Point out that we were [unintelligible] were not peaceful. Of course, we deplore it. These demonstrations are, are selfish [unintelligible], uh, that's a fair statement of what they want to say.

Haldeman: Expand a little [unintelligible] not to praise them --.

President: Not to praise them, just say --

Ziegler: [clears throat]

President: -- well, my view, Bob's view and mine, I think it's Bob's [unintelligible].

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Conv. No. 488-6#4 (cont.)

Haldeman: The key points they want to get across are, number one, that they know were we frightened.

President: Oh, hell.

Haldeman: Of course you aren't.

President: Or that our policy's gonna be changed.

Haldeman: And, and on the other side that we are not insensitive. In other words, that we are aware of the demonstrations; we know they happen; we think it's fine; we don't want to praise --.

President: It's really a cheap shot by NBC or, or, [unintelligible] somebody, you know, somebody said [unintelligible], oh, no, they, no [unintelligible] legitimate [unintelligible] that said the President wasn't in the White House. Jesus Christ Almighty.

Ziegler: CBS who said that --

President: Huh.

Ziegler: -- and I've already talked to 'em. CBS said that [unintelligible].

Haldeman: Well, in the White House, the Congress, wasn't in the Congress either --

President: Yeah.

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Haldeman: -- and the demonstration was directed at the Congress --

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: -- not the White House.

President: What in the name of --

Ziegler: The, the --.

President: -- God do they expect?

Ziegler: What I told them, that they th-, th-, th-, the line should have been, if they want to refer to the President, that the President, as he always does on weekends, most weekends --

Haldeman: Was working.

Ziegler: -- went to Camp David.

President: I worked all day long --

Ziegler: [Unintelligible].

President: -- too. Wrote a speech.

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Transcript #5: Part of a conversation among President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, and Ronald L. Ziegler in the Oval Office between 9:18 am and 10:04 am on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 488-6#5

Haldeman: We've got some interesting --

President: So --

Haldeman: -- dope on Kerry.

President: -- so, so I should be listening; you should say, of course --

Ziegler: That's what I've been saying --.

President: -- of course I've listened. I've listened.

Ziegler: [Unintelligible].

President: Look, I've read every god-, I've read it all. I [unintelligible] --

Ziegler: [Unintelligible].

President: -- you read that news summary. That's more - not only there, but I've read the papers, the coverage throughout the country.

Ziegler: That's what I've just --.

President: I always do.

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Haldeman: Kerry, it turns out, some time ago decided he wanted to get into politics. Well, he ran for, took a stab at the Congressional thing. And he consulted with some of the folks in the Georgetown set here. So what, what the issue, what, he'd like to get and issue. He wanted a horse to ride.

President: Yeah.

Haldeman: And they got it, that they suggested an issue. Forgot what it was; some stupid thing like, uh.