



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

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Friday, August 18.

Had me over to Birch at noon today. Said he had nothing for Anders. He had dictated a memo for Price on international stuff that he wants him to bring up tomorrow when he comes. Said he woke up during the night and had been up and down, working for an hour and then back to bed and so on. Best advice he'd gotten so far was to put some heart in it. And he got into the long complaint, as he has frequently during this week, that none of our writers have any heart, and that he hasn't really gotten anything news directed from any of the writers. He's concerned about Ehrlichman's reaction and gets back into the speech thing again. He reviewed what Buchanan thought he ought to hit and asked my view on that. Pat has seven or eight items he wants to be sure are covered.

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Audio Cassette 24, Side A.

Duration: 27 seconds

Rogers called about the problem in Paris. Ambassador Watson has been involved in a lot of heavy drinking recently, apparently and causing a lot of problems in the Embassy. As a result it's been determined he's got to be asked to resign. So Bill had McConger talk to him and apparently it's worked out fine. He's agrees he has to do it and his doctor wants him to anyway because he has emphysema so they're going ahead with that.



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In a monumental flap with the Vice President regarding his seconding speeches, because he apparently decided yesterday to have Dr. Joyce Brothers, the psychologist, be one of the seconders, and they went ahead and asked her. This obviously would be a disaster, on the basis that it would look like he got his own psychiatrist to prove he isn't nuts like Eagleton is. After going around on it, I called him back, told him he couldn't do it. He said he wanted me to appeal it-- to check it with President. I did, the President agreed, called him back again, said that is the decision. He agreed to go along with it, although it would be very difficult for him, since he has to now turn her off.

Ehrlichman called, concerned about the Labor plank, Towers apparently opposing what we want and pushing right-to-work and so on. John's maneuvering around to try and salvage what we need out of that.

Talked to Colson about strategy, he's a little concerned that we may be reacting too hard on the whole Shriver-Ramsey Clark-McGovern stuff, that there might be some overkill, and we might build a backlash. And we should shift now to positive stuff, which the President basically agreed with. We have hit the other thing awfully hard. Chuck is going to program some things on the other basis.

At 6:30 the President had Ziegler over to Aspen and reviewed the speech in general. Had me outline the various theories and approaches: Got into Buchanan's theory—that we should do a little cataloguing—in that things were a mess, that we should take on eight to ten issues, us vs. them; Price's theory of great things to do in the future, with a big deal of continuity, avoid the gut issues, stay on the high level. President feels the catalogue is unbelievably dull, routine, and expected, that we can't attack like '68 in order to get cheers, because we're on the defense-- we're on the defensive. Then he got down to what he feels are the three great issues. First, the



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economic disaster. Spell it out. Where we are, McGovern's economic disaster. Spell out where we are, take him on, in order to divert thinking from our failures and have them thinking more about McGovern's nutty proposals. Average guy always thinks of the economy in McGovern terms, instead of analyzing our performance. Scare them regarding his and keep the debate there. Secondly, law and order, permissiveness, lifestyles, court appointments. Third, foreign policy, including Vietnam. In order to avoid Vietnam being a loser, then build on the great initiatives and an all-out attack on national defense, United States number two, begging, and so forth. His argument is that we need a speech that says something on the three issues, or do we need a high level, bright new future, ignoring McGovern, and so on.

Ziegler opted for the first course, as I have consistently, in all these discussions during the week. President's gone through this at least six or eight different times in conversations. Ziegler said he ought to take the begging thing out. President called me and later in the evening, said he thought Ziegler had a point on begging, and asked me to have Ron work up what he thinks we ought to say instead, so I've got Ziegler and John Andrews working on that.

Mitchell called, very concerned because MacGregor was putting out some stuff on the Watergate thing in self-defense. John's very concerned because what he's putting out is not the line, and it undercuts our legal posture, and so on. He wanted me to call MacGregor, tell him he's got to use the line of "no comment", because individual rights are involved. We'll have a statement at the appropriate time, and then scare him into the fact that he may blow the lawsuit and some of the individuals concerned if he doesn't stay with the line. He's anticipating before we know the facts. Mitchell's concerned because at the Convention Clark [MacGregor] will be all over the television, and it's imperative to keep this down until after the Convention.

End of August 18.