

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN ON
JUNE 23, 1972 FROM 2:20 TO 2:45 P.M.

(Background noise)

HALDEMAN: Well, it's no problem. Had the...two of them in, uh, state of health (unintelligible) but it's kind of interesting. Walters said that, uh, make a point. I didn't mention Hunt at the opening. I just said that, that, uh, this thing which we give direction to we're gonna create some very major potential problems because they were exploring leads that led back into to, uh, areas it will be harmful to the CIA, harmful to the government'. (telephone rings) But, didn't have anything to with, with, with (unintelligible) kind of thing.

PRESIDENT: (Answers telephone) 'Hello? Chuck, I wondered if you would, ah, give John Connally a call. He's on his trip. I don't want him to read it in the papers before Monday about this quota thing and say, "Look, uh, he met, uh, we're gonna do this, but, but, I checked, uh, I asked you about the situation, and you personally checked your calendar and made, have an understanding." It's only temporary (unintelligible). It won't affect (unintelligible) people (unintelligible)." Okay. I didn't want him to read it in the papers. Good. Bye. (Hangs up telephone)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). He said

HALDEMAN: I think Helms did, too. Helms said well, uh, I've had no contact (unintelligible) and uh, Gray called and said, uh, yesterday, and said uh, that he thought

PRESIDENT: Who had, Gray?

HALDEMAN: Gray had called --Helm, s. which we knew, and said, uh, uh, I think we've run right into the middle of a CIA covert -operation.

PRESIDENT: Gray said that?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, and Helms said "nothing, nothing we've got at this point" and uh, uh, Gray said, - "sure looks to me like that's what we did." Some damn thing where he had -- (unintelligible).

We can do about it -- this would require at all and, uh, that was the end of that conversation. You can fix it so (unintelligible) we don't, so (unintelligible) we don't think (unintelligible). Said, well, the problem is that it tracks back to the Bay of Pigs. It tracks back to some other -- if their leads run out to people who had no involvement in this except by the contacts or connections, but it gets to areas that are at the (unintelligible) to be raised. The whole problem of this, this fellow Hunt, uh...

So at that point Helms's kind of got, the picture, kind of like the picture. (unintelligible)

...he, he said, he said, "We'll be very happy to be helpful to, ah, you know, and we'll handle everything you want. I would like to know the reason for being helpful." And it may have appeared when he wasn't gonna get it explicitly but was gonna get it through generality. So he said fine, and uh, Walters. I don't know whether we can do it. Walters said that. (Laughs) Walters is gonna make a call to Gray.

(Unintelligible) that's the way we put it, that's the way it was left, and, uh, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: How would that work though? How would -- for example, if they're desperate(unintelligible) got somebody from Miami bank to be here to count the inventory.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) they can do that(unintelligible). Somebody (unintelligible). But, the point John made was the Bureau doesn't, the Bureau is going on. That's because they don't know what they're uncovering. (Unintelligible) say should continue to pursue it, uh, they don't need to because they've already got their case as far as the, uh charges against these men, which may go up to the President or not and uh, as they pursue it because they're uncovering some which has been -- should not be hereafter.

Sure enough, that's exactly what--but we didn't in any way say we had any political-- ...interest or concern or anything like that, uh, (unintelligible) One thing Helms did raise is he said that, that Gray, he asked Gray why he felt they're going into a CIA thing and Gray said", because of the characters involved and the amount of money involved." Said there's a of dough in this someone and uh, (unintelligible) here is the possibility that one of our guys--that probably has some significance to the question(unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Well, we'll cross that bridge.

HALDEMAN: Well, I think they will 'cause our, see there isn't any question.

PPRESIDENT: If it runs back to the bank -- so, what the hell, they, who knows, we always (unintelligible) contributed to the CIA (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: CIA gets money as we know 'cause, I mean their money moves in a lot of different ways, too.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. However we thought that it did a lot of good. (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: Can you imagine what Kennedy would have done with that money?

PRESIDENT: Well, you remember what the son-of-a-bitch did on my vote? When I brought out the fact, you know, about uh . . .

HALDEMAN: Dulles.

PRESIDENT: ...that he knew all about Dulles? Shit, Dulles knew it. Dulles told me. I knew, I mean Fred Seaton had had the telephone call. Remember, I had a call put in. Dulles just blandly said something. Called me on the phone and for why?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Well now, what the hell. Who told him to do it? The President of course. I am going to talk to Harry separately before (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: At least Dulles was no more Kennedy's man than Helms is your man.

PRESIDENT But, he was told (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Better check on that (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) call down (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) that was all (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). The CIA briefed him on (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) the uh, that they're going to brief him on the covert operation -- do anything else, but they said that's involves culpability. (unintelligible/**REMOVED**)

HALDEMAN: The Democratic nominee, we're going to have to brief him.

PRESIDENT: Yes sir. (Unintelligible) I would, wouldn't brief him about a single thing we don't want him to have.

HALDEMAN: oh, no. Just tell him what we want to tell him. But, but, uh, I don't think you ought to brief him.

PRESIDENT: Me? Oh, hell no.

HALDEMAN: Now, after you were nominated, Johnson called you in, uh.

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PRESIDENT: Johnson was out of office.

HALDEMAN: I mean, that's the point --he was
(unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Eisenhower didn't brief, Eisenhower did not
brief Kennedy.

HALDEMAN: And it wouldn't, wouldn't be proper anyway..

PRESIDENT: No I'm his opponent.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) because you're, you're his
opponent.

PRESIDENT: We simply said that I will follow the same
thing that Eisenhower did. Course
Eisenhower was not (telephone rings)

HALDEMAN: That guy was (unintelligible)
(Picks up phone)

PRESTIDENT: Yeah...Ah, I'll call him tomorrow.
(Hangs up phone)

HALDEMAN But we didn't, it isn't, but I just, uh, I'm
sure you didn't have (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: No.

HALDEMAN: But, I think we should...

PRESIDENT: No. I just simply say yes, I would provide
for briefings from the appropriate
authorities and then they'll say well, are
you going to brief him? Of course not, and,
uh, I don't think we ought to let Kissinger
brief him. I'd just have Helms, just Helms.

HALDEMAN: Somebody will say "What do you think of it?"
(20 Seconds Unintelligible with. tape
noise/**REMOVED**)

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HALDEMAN: He can't, you see, he had no reason, no possible reason to put Senator Hubert in.

PRESIDENT: That's true.

HALDEMAN: Uh, but they're just finding out that (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) the President (unintelligible) President.

HALDEMAN: He (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: What did you say that poll, Gallup (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: It's out. It's been mailed for two weeks now down there.

PRESIDENT: Wonder why he, why he, got it out so quickly. Usually lead time is two weeks.

HALDEMAN: Well, actually, this is where lead time usually was until the last few months when he's spent a lot of money for some--. Uh, this time he's putting it out fast.

PRESIDENT: Well, what, uh, what's his intention?

HALDEMAN: Well, because he's got trial heats, and he wants to put this out probably before he sets, set the stage for the trial heats.

PRESIDENT: Back before the Convention, the obvious thing (unintelligible) campaign for election (unintelligible/**REMOVED**). God damn (unintelligible) nobody even (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: Remember, we sat here and talked about the kind, of emphasis because we were, that was a year and a half ago. But we had no idea -- we thought that they would do it through going on the Today Show (unintelligible) and all that bullshit. Remember at that time we didn't know we were going to have the other thing. Took events didn't we?

HALDEMAN: Yeah. They've always said we've know it's the case, but--

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PRESIDENT: The great event (unintelligible) China, May 8, and Russia. That's all.

HALDEMAN: If you don't have the events, you gotta, you gotta make everthing you can but obviously you're better off to put three months or three years effort against one event than you are to put the same amount in, in a tenth of that effort, against, uh, uh, non-event type things. Then, maybe --

PRESIDENT: I'm really impressed with Shultz and all those guys at the meeting.

HALDEMAN: I told them, uh, I, I...

PRESIDENT: Shultz (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I talked to Shultz about calling Connally and, and, uh

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: I said that you had mentioned how impressed you were with the paper he had done, and uh (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Eisenhower (unintelligible) show you how elections (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) and then in November, just before the election, he dropped to 57 (unintelligible) I remember (unintelligible) The reason for that was nothing he did, it was Congressionally (unintelligible,).

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's why we're staying to you, McGovern candidate (unintelligible) the problem we got to take on.

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (unintelligible) but in 1958 (unintelligible) recession (unintelligible) he started the year, he started the year, that, uh, but, he, uh, with 60-30, that was Eisenhower. Most people forget. 58 March, 52, which would give, uh 49-31.

HALDEMAN: Eisenhower?

PRESIDENT: Eisenhower.

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HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) was that the Fourth time.

PRESIDENT: That was the third time. Yes sir.

HALDEMAN: Have we got any (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Unemployment May 54-31, June 53-32, July 52-32, August (unintelligible)80 (unintelligible) September 60-28, October 70-26, November election 52-30 and 59 we never got up above under 60, 57, 58. 67 (unintelligible) and in January of 60 we got up to 71 (unintelligible) no election (unintelligible) of July, August, (unintelligible) For example, here's early July 61, late July 57 (unintelligible) Nothing happened (unintelligible) August 61. (Unintelligible) Sep-September 58, October 58, November 58. That's when we were running.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: So there was Eisenhower in '60. We were running lower (unintelligible) July (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: In other words, we are running lower.

PRESIDENT: A little lower, yeah, but that's (unintelligible) campaign of '59. Kennedy, you really can't tell about that. Uh, at the eve, of, of, his low in '62, in elections of '62, '62, was '62, yeah. But in '63, at the end, he was 57, 59, 57, (unintelligible) Johnson, then, of course, he was massively high in the upper 80's. We've never been very, high, but never as low as recently with Johnson.

HALDEMAN: I think that's inevitable. I don't think you ever will get up or (unintelligible) an 80.

PRESIDENT: But, uh, not -- let me say -- of course -- 66-46, 50-56 (unintelligible) September 48, October 46, October 44, November 44, December 48, December 46, that's all. (Unintelligible) Now of course we can 48, 49 by the nearest (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

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PRESIDENT: Except his negatives were higher, 46, 42, 44, 41, 44, 42. Our negatives have never been that high. We run around 49, 36 and uh (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: 37 (unintelligible) Then it (unintelligible) goes on 46, 48, 45, 44, 39, 39, 38, 41, 46, 48, 48, 48, 39 (unintelligible) 40, 41, 48 (unintelligible) then back up to 49, 406, 44, 42 (unintelligible). The point that I'm trying to make is that much does inevitably, ah...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Because you're under attack.

HALDEMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: You (unintelligible) you know that's what you hear (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: So then, what's before -the public eye there's the focus of attention is on the things that are negative to the Administration. Uh, uh, that's, it's an interesting point. Buchanan, in response to the response to his, you know, attack memo

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...argues quite, strongly that the point that the attacks should always be turned to the positive side -- that-, he argues that, that's wrong, and that the attacks should stay on the negative side. Do not try to weave in also the positive, maintain there are positive points. That we should, that there should be an attack program that is purely attack. That's one of" the interesting things have.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Except on foreign. I just don't. want to --uh, I just think we ought to continue But,

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible) he's talking about --

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: He's talking about primarily

PRESIDENT: Uh, huh.

HALDEMAN: Except foreign -- you, you hammer your strong, point.

PRESIDENT: I just think you've got to hit that over and over again 'cause God damn it, we gotta win our election.

HALDEMAN: You don't (unintelligible) against our hammering our strong point on everything, when his argument is when you are attacking why should we do(unintelligible) we, we should do some of our advertising - should be an attack on McGovern advertising.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and that attack not have anything on Nixon strong points.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: It should only make McGovern negative points.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: His argument being that it's impossible in this election for you to get less than 40%...

PRESIDENT: I know--

HALDEMAN: of the vote, and equally impossible for you to get more than 60.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Is that set up over there?

ZIEGLER: It's ready to go.

HALDEMAN: If you could go over early if we could get this for sure on the networks. Have to wait til 3:00 -- we got a Problem because of (unintelligible) film processing. Because they're shooting.

HALDEMAN: You know, they shoot with one camera then they serve all three networks out of the pool so that we keep rolling out. Therefore, we are better off (unintelligible)

UNIDENTIFIED: Get ready.

PRESIDENT: Clear over there at the other side of the (Unintelligible). You get the word to them.

ZIEGLER: Yes sir. But I don't want to take your to do it.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) my time. I'll go across, I just wanted to, uh (unintelligible)

ZIEGLER: Yes sir. Absolute (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: And uh, based from the thing this morning, do you feel it's, uh, worthwhile to (unintelligible) till Monday

ZIEGLER: Yes, sir.

HALDEMAN: Well, let's do it earlier in the day, because we are complete jeopardizing (unintelligible) Ehrlichman.

SEVERAL

VOICES: (unintelligible)

ZIEGLER: At 2:00(unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: I'll do it. I'll be (unintelligible). Have you, want set it up? You want me to come right this minute?

ZIEGLER: Well, I don't-- anytime you feel comfortable (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (unintelligible) Okay. Let (unintelligible) step on it.

ZIEGLER: As soon as possible.

HALDEMAN: His argument is if you, to start with, you got 40% of the people who will vote for you no matter what happens...

PRESIDENT: I agree.

HALDEMAN: ...and you got 40% of the people who will vote against you no matter what happens, so you got 20% of the people left in the middle who may vote for you or may not and that 20 is what you gotta work on. His argument is that you're so well known, your pluses ore clear, clear as well as your minuses; that getting one of those 20, who is an undecided type, to vote for you on the basis of your positive points is much less likely than getting them to vote against McGovern by scaring them to death about McGovern; and that, that's the area that we ought to be playing.

PPRESIDENT: Well.

HALDEMAN: I, I have to admit that these people are in the business, you know --

PRESIDENT: That's right, by God, I am not going to do it. I really want you to bring in Flanigan and all these others about that and lay it to 'em. I'm not going to do it.

HALDEMAN: Yeah .

PRESIDENT: Don't you think he'll agree?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Oh, you don't?

HALDEMAN: No, I think they will. They'll agree for awhile, you make -- you got to agree with them. The conclusion, and they'll say well why not do it anyway.

PRESIDENT: No, no, no, no, no, nothing, never.

HALDEMAN: I'd say that.

PRESIDENT: You can't take them for granted. Listen, he could think I'm setting him up.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Muskie.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) a reasonable man. God damn it (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Our best (unintelligible). The Buchanan theory is, the Buchanan theory is, have em be against Muske.

PRESIDENT: We don't give a shit for poor Nixon. Be against Muskie. Screw em otherwise. All right, fine, Bob (unintelligible with noise). I don't know whether our people have scared the people enough about Muskie or (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: We feel that they are,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: They are, but I think you got to build that up. His point is that so little is known about McGovern, you'll have a better chance of changing people's minds about him than you do about (unintelligible)

(Voices fade)

(End of Reel)