

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS STAFF**Tape Subject Log***(rev. 10/06)*

Part of a telephone conversation between President Nixon in his office in the Old Executive Office Building and Charles W. Colson between 2:08 pm and 2:54 pm on May 7, 1971.

Conversation No. 2-121

President: I guess the best one's been Edith Green so far. [Laughs]

Colson: She did a fine job. Oh, the House, the House fellows were really, uh --.

President: The House, the House came through. Did they, uh, a lot of Democrats as well as Republicans --.

Colson: Yes --

President: Huh?

Colson: -- sir. Great number of them --.

President: -- and, uh, how 'bout the Senate? Er, Ba-Barry Goldwater. Anybody else?

Colson: Ye-, well, there were three or four that spoke out yesterday but, uh, Goldwater's the only one who got picked up. He got, well, Dole got picked up. Sorry, sir, Bob Dole's statement --

President: Yeah.

Colson: -- did --

President: Yeah.

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- Colson: -- and, uh, actually, bringing in the Chief, as you're doing tomorrow, is, uh, that one-ups them all. I --.
- President: Well, some, uh, as you know, uh, Ziegler's worried about it, 'n', uh, bu-, from a st-, because I know that he's, he feels that he's gonna be badgered 'n', 'n' for weeks afterwards about our praising a man for violating constitutional rights. The hell with it! I don't care. I'm, I'm already stuck with that.
- Colson: He didn't violate any constitutional rights.
- President: Why of course not. But the point is, we already have endorsed the Chief, so why not let people know it?
- Colson: Well, I think, uh, I, I really think that the, the vast, vast majority of the people feel that --
- President: I've got to- --
- Colson: -- that we did it well.
- President: -- they've got to feel that. If they didn't, uh, then, the main point is that it's the right thing to do, and it's gonna be done again. In case these people come back, they're gonna get the same thing. And so why fool around with it?
- Colson: Well, you know, there's another, another characteristic, Mr. President, that people greatly admire, and that is when a subordinate is under fire, if the boss --
- President: Um-hum.

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Colson: -- calls him in and say he stands behind 'im [unintelligible].

President: Sure.

Colson: The, the Truman --.

President: Well, like we stood behind Hoover a few weeks ago.

Colson: Exactly, exactly.

President: I'm gonna do it with the Chief right now. He's gonna get it 'n' --.

Colson: Well, of course, i-if, if there had been an, an unfortunate incident, then standing behind him might, might --

President: Yeah.

Colson: -- be questionable. But, my God, he did a fantastic job.

President: Hell, nobody was hurt --

Colson: That's, that's the, that's the major --.

President: -- uh, killed --

Colson: -- accomplishment.

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President: -- or anything, and, uh, all these people e-, e-, uh, there's the right to demonstrate and there's the right to, not to demonstrate.

Colson: That's right.

President: Neither can interfere with the other, and that's, these people tried to interfere with the other and, therefore, they got, uh, clobbered, and they should've been clobbered.

Colson: Well, I think, I think as far as, uh, uh, I think Kennedy made a very stupid political move. I'm surprised.

President: Too bad we can't hang it on him more. I mean it.

Colson: Well, I'd like --.

President: You know, it's an interesting thing how the media didn't give it much play.

Colson: No, one network [unintelligible].

President: I think they felt, I think they felt it was gonna, gonna hurt him, don't you?

Colson: Yes, sir. I think it was damag-, I, I think --.

President: I think they were protecting him.

Colson: Well, the, the main --.

President: He may have called 'n' asked 'em to protect him, too.

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Colson: [Laughs] The main re-, I wouldn't be surprised, the main reason that, uh, I, I'm hoping we can escalate that remark is the more people that see it, I think, the more people lose respect for Ted Kennedy. And, uh --.

President: Well, we've gotta escalate it. In any event, he's gotta live with it now.

Colson: Oh, we will.

President: Yeah.

Colson: And we'll, we'll get, uh --.

President: And, uh, if I can get it, uh, I'd get that broadly circulated, uh, forty, fifty thou-, forty thousand, you know, your usual list.

Colson: We'll, we'll do that for sure. But, uh --

President: [Unintelligible] it circulated by a group that supports, uh, uh, amnesty for, uh, uh, Viet Cong! [Laughs]

Colson: [Laughs] Well, of course the other thing, i-it's, it's kinda of a remark that doesn't go away. You know, these things have a way to come back and --

President: Um-hum.

Colson: -- haunt people --

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President: Um-hum.

Colson: -- and, uh, that kind of a remark I --

President: Well, all in all --

Colson: -- they [unintelligible].

President: -- this city handled itself extremely well this past week, and, uh, we just gotta stick right with it.

Colson: Extraordinary, you know, the, in Boston yesterday, in Teddy's own home State, uh, pictures on the television last night of the police beating kids. And he, he --.

President: They beat 'em up up there?

Colson: Apparently they did. And, uh --

President: Yeah.

Colson: -- his, he should be more worried about the Boston Police Department. [Laughs]

President: On the other hand, the demonstrations across the country, Chuck, were far less than anybody --

Colson: Yes, they were --

President: -- estimated.

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Colson: -- yes, they were.

President: They bl-, they blew, they blew up this one we had a week ago Saturday, but it was less than the one they had a year ago. Last --

Colson: That's right.

President: -- November, I mean, everything is all a question of, uh, uh, it's going down.

Colson: Um-hum.

President: It's becoming less, uh, not effective. It's, uh --

Colson: No question about it.

President: People are, even though people are, are more sick of the war, uh, but, b-, they're just damn sick of the demonstrations.

Colson: Well, I think that people can be tired of the war, as they are --

President: Yeah.

Colson: -- and that's understandable.

President: Sure.

Colson: People're always tired of a war --

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President: Sure.

Colson: -- but they can be more turned off by the sight of the kind of thing that they've seen out of Washington this week. Uh --.

President: Well, they were such terrible people, you know.

Colson: Oh, God.

President: I thought, uh, and that guy standin' up there naked in front of everybody, that must've just turned off the heartland by the millions.

Colson: Well, and the, and the upraised finger when they, uh --.

President: The, the "God Bless America"?

Colson: Yeah. Terrible.

President: Ooh.

Colson: Just eh, in the-, there's no other way people can react to that, that he has to be completely soured.

President: Viet Cong flag. These, I just wish somebody 'd start burnin' that flag. But, that should be a project across the country: burn the Viet Cong flag.

Colson: We, uh, we have, the, the, the VFW has a very clever thing coming out this week, uh. We've written it with 'em about instructing every VFW member to, uh, destroy any Viet Cong flag he finds, and protect --

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President: Yeah.

Colson: -- any American flag that's --

President: Good.

Colson: -- in jeopardy. And I saw a resolution was introduced in the House yesterday to make it a, uh --

President: Yup.

Colson: -- an offense to [laughs] --

President: That's right.

Colson: -- fly the Viet Cong flag. I, I --

President: Um-hum.

Colson: -- we'll get some of this going. I --.

President: Yeah.

Colson: -- Brennan may do something for us in New York. He's --

President: Yeah.

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Colson: -- trying to organize it.

President: Good.

Colson: But, uh --.

President: Well, anyway, we'll, uh, just keep it goin'. Okay.

Colson: We will.

President: Fine.