

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN ON MARCH 20, 1973, FROM 10:47
A.M. TO 12:10 P.M.

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PRESIDENT: What I think, what it really gets down to, basically, that - I think what really should be done is that the leadership needs to be briefed on the Watergate thing. Just got, just at least our own friends have got to have a feeling that everything is okay. You understand?

HALDEMAN: Maybe their people will put out a statement.

PRESIDENT: I've worked out (unintelligible) after, ah, according to Dean and Moore and, ah, they've talked to, they've talked to Chapin and, ah, to Strachan. They thought that, uh, just, uh, just gonna let it go, try to reach, and without a statement, try to reach (unintelligible), you know. I have thought of the possibility --

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But you see, Bob, our own people have got to have some assurance they are not going to get out there on a God-damn limb, they've got to be told and that has not been done...

HALDEMAN: If they do...

PRESIDENT: ...and I am surprised it hasn't.

HALDEMAN: ...if they do the leadership they oughta, shouldn't they also include the Republican members of the Ervin Committee, so those guys know where we are too.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: And that means Weicker, which is a problem, but what the hell, he's gonna be investigating it

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: ...and seems to me we're better off to tell him.

PRESIDENT: True, true. Well I don't, I don't let

HALDEMAN: We haven't bought such things.

PRESIDENT: (unintelligible) and I guess that's popular with the FBI, you know. I'm not gonna try and stop any more - I don't know.

HALDEMAN: Ya, you have to.

PRESIDENT: What I meant, you see, what I'm getting at, at least our friends have got to know. I think the problem is, Bob, that there's probably too much time spent around the White House, ah, everybody around here you've talked about the God-damn thing, you know this and that, and I understand all that - but...

HALDEMAN: Well, it was those...

PRESIDENT: ...those, those guys have got, our friends at least have got to be reassured, that's the whole point, on this issue. They read about it, they read the charges and so forth so you've got to reassure 'em.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, well this is, that's the point I've raised.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well I

HALDEMAN: I asked them, they said they couldn't do it.

PRESIDENT: I know it.

HALDEMAN: That's what they tell me.

PRESIDENT: I said we'll put out any kind of a statement and let (unintelligible). The point is that we, ah, (pause) well, there's only one thing, at least some of them seem to be.
(Pause)

PRESIDENT Now what this lacks (unintelligible) basically

(CONTINUED): is - God-damn it, somebody is in charge. They will come in and say, "All right, now here's the PR plan for your appearance." Now, ah, I haven't been doing it, I've instructed Ziegler and the rest, they haven't been sayin' much. But, I mean, ah, the point is you can't depend on them to do it. I mean, Timmons is not a guy who can go out, you can't, just won't, can't do it. They aren't gonna listen to Timmons as to what points ought to be made.

HALDEMAN: Didn't McGregor?

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: Didn't McGregor when he was (unintelligible)?

PRESIDENT: You're damn right, it was McGregor. When I wasn't here, McGregor said he just (unintelligible). Somebody's gotta do it, though, see. Ziegler can't (unintelligible). Ziegler is good at telling them the questions they're likely to get. But Ziegler does not think enough in terms of here is the point we want to get across this day, huh? You see the point?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: This is the point. Here's where, here's where Klein would be better than Ziegler with his, all of his fuzzy-mindedness and everything, at least Klein would say, this is the point you've got to get across today. Ziegler of course is infinitely better in being ready for all the God-damn mine fields. That's what they'd be, a, you, you can (unintelligible) Scotch, it's virtually like, ah -