



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

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Tuesday, December 15.

The President cut off the GOP leadership breakfast with wives fairly promptly. He got in earlier than we expected him. Didn't have anything particular to cover. Had me in to go over a lot of odds and ends, many of them follow-up items from his Congressional reception last night and the meeting this morning. He had a few minor reaction items from the Connally announcement. Generally, it had gone quite well. One interesting point was that at the reception last night both he and Mrs. Nixon noticed that virtually all the Democrats who came through congratulated him on his press conference or had something positive of that sort to say, whereas none of the Republicans did. Sort of typical. We discussed the Carl Mundt problem again and I reported that we don't seem to have much hope of being able to work anything out because Mrs. Mundt is adamant. The President told me to call Carl Curtis and tell him that the President would tell Mrs. Mundt that if Carl resigned and later recovered, the President would give him the choice of any top commission that he wanted, that would be open or could be opened up at the time. That seems to be about the last hope.

We got into some more discussion of the Dole candidacy. And I gave him Dole's report from last night. He thinks now we should stir up the House and try to get over half the GOP members there lined up so we can get that pretty well set, too. We had a long discussion on the subject at the staff meeting this morning. And the general feeling is very strongly against Dole on the grounds that he is divisive rather than inclusive, and that his appointment would be a signal that we were taking the wrong direction politically. We all tried to put the heat on Rumsfeld, but he resists very strongly. I don't think there's any chance of getting him to shift.

Kissinger came in and the discussion covered some of the general thinking re: Vietnam and the President's big peace plan for next year, which Kissinger later told me he does not favor. He thinks that any pullout next year would be a serious mistake because the adverse reaction to it could set in well before the '72 elections. He favors, instead, a continued winding down and then



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a pullout right at the fall of '72, so that if any bad results follow they will be too late to affect the election. It seems to make sense.

The President was pretty well involved all afternoon, which gave me a chance to catch up on work and have quite a long talk with Cliff Miller on general PR setup. He's got some good idea--good ideas and is going to move on implementing them, particularly in the Klein area.

The President called at home to say he talked with Billy Graham, who's ecstatic regarding Connally. Also, that Kleppe had come through the line and said he'd like to do the SBA job. The President was wondering if we had anything lined up for Cauger. Overall, he seems to be in a good mood. Generally relaxed and moving with things as they come. But he hasn't really gotten to grips on the budget and the State of the Union yet. He's got the guys working, but he hasn't started to dig in. He did get underway tonight on his Christmas tree lighting speech and mentioned on the phone that he thought he probably would not read it, but would instead do an extemporaneous deal.

End of December 15.