



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

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Tuesday, December 29th. Another day with originally not much scheduled, although the afternoon was fully occupied by the meeting with Connally, et al., and we had a bill signing and a few other odds and ends in the morning.

We got back into the discussion on Director of Communications, and he's concluded that the best solution is to move Finch into this post, either temporarily or permanent, and then have Colson work with him. He's intrigued with my thought of putting Rumsfeld in there but feels there's a problem of a lack of complete, unswerving dedication to what we're trying to accomplish. He just doesn't have the confidence in Rumsfeld that he does, apparently, in Finch.

Paragraph. Later he called AI Haig in, and we had quite a long discussion of the Kissinger-Rogers problem as the President reviewed it with me yesterday. His real concern here is that he can't go on having Henry conduct operations independently of Rogers without Rogers' knowledge...

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...and it isn't working anyway, because Rogers has ways and means of finding out. For example, Dobrynin has told Rogers of his conversations with Henry, and about the summit meeting, etcetera.



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The President told Haig he was going to have to help handle this whole thing and that he was counting on him for that.

The Connally meeting started at 3:00 and went until 6:00. Then Connally had missed his plane, so he joined the President at the EOB and they went on until 9:00. The President called me right after Connally had finally left. Very cranked up and enthusiastic about his long talk with Connally. Apparently, Connally brought up the whole PR subject, and made the point that it's much more important to- than we seemed to have realized- to get across a more accurate picture of what the President is really like. He apparently emphasized the points of discipline, austerity, his Spartan-like approach to things, hard work, boldness, delegating duties. He said that regardless of what the characteristics are, the main thing is to emphasize them and get them out. He thinks it's very important that this kind of image get out soon as to what Nixon's really like, and that it's up to the Cabinet and his staff to do it. He said the Cabinet was a fine group, but there's not a strong man in it, and feels they should be out talking. He agreed that a PR guy can't do it, the President's associates have to. He feels there's a very good story to tell here, that people would like to hear it, about the way the President works, which would create enormous confidence. Also, we need to get across the boldness, courage, and strong man.

He feels that because the Congress is leaderless and has basically fallen apart, because there are no strong Governors except Reagan and Rockefeller, and no other focus of strength, that the Presidency is the only place the country can look for leadership and strength; so the President should get up and charge and lead. He thinks there's a fine story to be told here, a good image, not in changing anything but in making an asset out of the things that are true. He thinks the staff has to brag on the President, not on their programs. He feels the way it should be done is through articles, magazines, and so on, and some on television, all devoted to giving an insight into the man, what is he like, not wasting time on process and program. He thought that Finch could do a



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lot in this regard, and also felt that he could do a lot in providing the need for someone who the big shots can talk to. He's afraid that Flanigan has blunted his pick and is not as effective as he should be. He strongly approves Agnew and feels the President should not give up on him at all.

The President told Connally that I was more conscious than anyone else of the whole PR thing, and that he wanted Finch and me to sit down and talk with Connally on this. He thinks we'll find Connally extremely useful in politics and Congressional relations. Connally rates the staff very high, but repeated the charges the staff surrounds the President and keeps him isolated.

Apparently, Connally also very favorably reacted to our programs and is going along on the idea of making the big play. He thinks you have to, or you won't get any mileage. His opposition to value-added tax doesn't matter because that's going to be postponed a year, since they couldn't work it out anyway. Connally told the President he wants to really work on lobbying the Congress and will do a lot of entertaining and that sort of thing to try and do it.

The other item that came up today was the whole flap on the Jewish protest in this country regarding the planned Russian execution of two Jewish hijackers. The activity today consisted mainly of Rogers meeting with some of the complainants and making contact with Lindsay, Javits, etcetera, to lay out our line, which is that we're working behind the scenes to try to save the lives of the people, but we're not going to make a big political play out of it as those people are doing. Rogers is taking a hard line on this, as he has on several things recently, and this may greatly improve the overall Rogers situation. Rogers did feel maybe the President should meet with the protesters tomorrow, as a purely political gesture. And I mentioned this to the President tonight on the phone when he called after the Connally meeting. And he agreed that it might be a good idea and will at least consider it tomorrow if Rogers wants him to do it.



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End of December 29.