



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

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Thursday, February 4th. A big day on the Laotian buildup. The President called me in the staff meeting from the Residence, before he left for his speech to the cardiology group, to find out what the problem was as evidenced in the papers in the morning by, about the complaints on the embargo, particularly the Senators arguing about it. He wants to be sure we have the line properly established. This caused considerable concern in the staff meeting, as Ehrlichman particularly went into the whole question of credibility again. John feels strongly that we've got a serious problem and have to move now to deal with it. Particularly disturbing was Senator Bob Byrd's reaction, because normally he's been with us and he really blasted us. The President wanted a plan laid out for how to deal with him and had me call Bryce Harlow and Mel Laird to try to work out an approach. As it finally turned out, Laird had already been on top of it, had contacted Byrd last night and gotten it straightened out. In fact he, in effect, retracted his blast on the Today show this morning.

The whole credibility question is heavily debated, as a result of this, and the President's concern about the lack of a PR man in the NSC, and so on. We ended up deciding that I've got to take that assignment on and ride herd both on press planning but also the and also the Congressional planning and general advice on the effects of the actions they take. The problem here is, they won't let Ziegler in to the planning councils, and even if they did, they wouldn't listen to him on anything except the straight news stuff, whereas what's needed is someone who will come in, in at least as strong a position as Henry's, and deal directly on this.

As a result of this, I sat in the WSAG meeting today again and will plan on doing so regularly from now on. Unfortunately, I blew it on this one because Henry got into the question of whether Rogers should do the, do an appearance on Monday at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I argued that he should because it would give us our story on television Monday night, after the Sunday night move. Henry didn't want it done that way and was furious at my stepping in,



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slammed his book shut, sat and stewed at the head of the table for a few minutes and then abruptly adjourned the meeting for a five minute recess, and then started the 40 group. I talked to him afterwards about the tactic there, and he realizes that his maneuver in closing down the meeting really did more harm than my taking the position I did to begin with.

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We have another credibility problem in the question of reconnaissance patrols and so forth, but develop the line on the basis of that that was covered in February and there has been and will be no change. We're not doing anything new; we're not sending in any more recon people than we had been, so, there's no change there.

There was a lot of discussion during the day on the need for Congressional follow-up, especially regarding the embargo. The President making the point that we needed to get some people to move on making positive statements.

We got into a long discussion in WSAG as to who would brief which Congressman. The President ended up scheduling a breakfast with Mansfield tomorrow morning and then a briefing with Albert after that, so that he'll brief the two of them. And then we set up a schedule for the rest of the Congress.



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Mitchell and I had a two hour session with the President on a number of items. First, we discussed the whole question of J. Edgar Hoover and whether he should be continued. The decision was that Mitchell should go ahead with his implementation of his internal security planning operations, which Hoover opposes. This may bring about a confrontation, and if it does, we'll see how we handle it from there. The President made it clear that Hoover has got to be replaced before the end of Nixon's first term; because, we can't run the risk of the possibility of Nixon not being reelected and of someone else appointing Hoover's successor. The problem we need to make this point to Hoover in such a way as to get him to resign without any big problem.

We also got into some court questions. The President was quite excited about doing a speech covering his feeling that we need a new plan for very swift action in capital cases, like the British have, where a trial is assured within two weeks, and other such swift action. He wants to give a speech to some group urging this kind of thing, and congratulating the Chief Justice and Attorney General on the steps they've already taken. He also got into his desire to give a speech on prison reform, which he seems to be intrigued with. Apparently, he read an Al Otten article in the Wall Street Journal that he thinks was particularly impressive, and he wants Otten to help write the speech for him, working with Ray Price.

We then got into the principal area of the meeting, which was politics. Discussed the problem of getting Finch a specific assignment and a clear position, so that he won't get into muddying the waters in Mitchell's operations. The idea is to have him take the youth, the Mexicans and so forth, get him out of California, give him a state like Pennsylvania to handle.

There was some discussion of the Wallace question. It appears that Wallace is interested in making a deal of some kind that will make it unnecessary for him to run for President, which he apparently does not want to do. Mitchell seemed to feel that we might still want Wallace in the



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race, but the President felt very strongly that, under any circumstances, it would be better for us to have him out and that we should try to work this out. We also got into the question of a possible deal with Mayor Daley, who has indicated that he will not do anything to oppose the President if Clem Stone agrees to stay out of the Governorship race in Illinois.

The President and Mitchell agreed that Walter Thayer would be our best candidate for National Finance Chairman, and Mitchell is to explore that with him. Mitchell raised very briefly the question of whether he really should take on the campaign management role, but it was clear that the President had his mind made up on that, and John was not at all reluctant to go ahead. He did indicate he felt he would have to resign as Attorney General at some point before too long. He also laid out his plans for setting up immediately a Nixon for President apparatus and getting things going on that.

The President's schedule has been kept pretty light because of the Laotian operations, and that's resulted in his having a lot of time with nothing to do. He had me over to the EOB for a long session in the late afternoon, mainly regarding PR and internal staff relations and so on. We talked about the series of memos from Doug Hallett, analyzing the President's public performances. He's very intrigued with Hallett's thoughts and wants Price to try to get him on the staff when he gets out of school. We talked about such things as a need for an analysis of the value of rallies in campaigns, whether they have any real effect, particularly whether they're good on television or whether they're harmful. The problem for the President is, how else can you build enthusiasm.

He had a talk with Bill Rogers regarding follow-up plans after the Sunday night move, made a few agreements which will drive Henry up the wall, but I think we can work them out.



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End of February 4th.