



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

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Tuesday, March 9.

The first problem of the day arose when the President started to sign some material in his action file and discovered a memorandum from Pete Peterson, saying that he had run into a problem with both Connally and Hardin, regarding the recommendation he had put through the other day on how to deal with the wheat import problem with the United Kingdom. It turns out that both the Secretaries violently disagreed with Peterson's recommendation and felt that their input had not been adequately presented. Peterson's recommended solution was that the President call Hardin and get him swung over, and send a memo to Connally, in effect confirming the decision. The President, of course, refused to do so and instructed me to meet with Peterson and explain to him that that isn't the way to handle this. That it's up to Peterson to have a meeting with the Cabinet officers concerned and get the thing straightened out, and if he's unable to do so, then he has to set up a meeting with the Secretaries and the President. He made the point that I've got to convince Peterson that he can't have Cabinet officers saying that their views are not adequately presented, and that this will start him off on the wrong foot, which, of course, it would.

We got into quite a discussion during the day on polls, particularly the items on credibility, and the President was interested in reviewing the drop in credibility over a period of time and the question of whether that's related to the war, and so on. We pulled out a bunch of the back ones and really don't have enough to, to check it out. He feels that we haven't done an adequate job of knocking down the press credibility and that we've got to do that in our own defense, which we are moving to do.

Another flap continues today as a result of Wilbur Mills' unilateral negotiations with Japan on a textile agreement. This causes the President to be concerned that Flanigan has lost sight of the textile problem because he's dealing with too many other things, and that we've let it drop. I don't think that's the case. And we covered it thoroughly in staff meeting, and it would appear that this is something that there was no way we could have done anything about. It does pose a problem for us, but also a great opportunity in a chance to really whack Mills. In any event, the President



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wanted me to talk with Bryce Harlow about how to handle Wilbur Mills. And also, it raises the question whether Flanigan's up to handling the textile negotiations that this is a highly sophisticated deal and we really need to look at it carefully without any sentimentality and determine whether he can handle it.

The big thing of the day was Kissinger's decision to finally confront the President with his plan for resignation, which he actually did. The President told him, according to Henry, that he would not discuss the matter at all with him at this time, there were too many important things involved and we just couldn't even consider it, that we have to get to it later on. He told Henry that he would discuss it with me and possibly with George Shultz, and with no one else, and that we would work something out. In the late the afternoon, President had Ehrlichman stay in after a meeting with Shultz and then called me in. After some hemming and hawing about other things, told us about Henry's situation, and we had quite a long talk, making all of us late to dinner. The upshot of which is that we didn't really come to a conclusion on how to handle it, but all of us feel that Henry's taking this action may purge him of his internal problems and make it easier to deal with him and the whole thing. The general feeling is that Ehrlichman should try to handle Henry by getting tough with him because he's been soft, and that I should move in and handle Rogers, making it clear to him that he is going to have to start working within the system. Actually, the meeting Rogers scheduled for today, which Henry was going to refuse to attend, worked out rather well because Rogers called Henry and apologized for setting it up, said he would never do it again, that it was a one of a kind situation and asked Henry please to reconsider and come to the meeting, which Henry then agreed to do. The whole thing becomes kind of ludicrous.

End of March 9.