



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

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Thursday, June 17.

*New York Times* is still the major item of the day. President spent considerable time at a number of sessions with Colson, Ziegler, Ehrlichman, Kissinger and various combinations of them, going over points to be made. Particularly anxious to get across that this is no skin off of our hide, this involves the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations. There are no documents from this Administration. He feels Ziegler is saying this, but saying it too subtly and not making it clear. He keeps going back on the point of how many Korean documents there are, and how many World War II documents. He wants to get that established to show the problem of the relations with foreign governments, etcetera. He wants to be sure all our speakers hit the line that this does not involve us. He feels there's a lack of focus on our position, that we're making too many points, that all we should be saying is that one, it's not us; and two, it involves papers and documents of previous Democratic Presidents.

He wants to be sure that we do everything that we can to destroy *The Times*, but make the point that this doesn't involve this Administration. It does involve the country, the Presidency, our foreign relations and our ability to conduct the government. He wants to get a Rogers statement out today. He asked me to tell Ehrlichman that he wasn't sure Mitchell should delay the grand jury. He thinks that we have to play boldly and not be afraid of the risks. Mitchell delayed it anyway; in fact, he already had when the President was talking to me. He made the point that things were the same way in the Hiss case, that everybody will get a little jittery and want to start pulling back, but we want to fight it. This involves security. It relates to the leak of the Algerian material and '72 war plans that were in *The Times* yesterday. He doesn't want to fight it defensively; he wants to take the offense. He thinks that we should go ahead on the Rogers statement and keep pounding the public points. He wants to be sure Klein gets going on the editorial people. He feels we can beat them if we work it right, and that it's a real opportunity. He comes back several times to the need for the research on Korea and World War II, and that we should hang FDR and Truman on the same wicket.



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He points out that *The New York Times* has focused on their two key points, censorship and the Vietnam War; where we're not focused, this Administration is covering up nothing. This involves two previous Administrations, not ours. On the other hand, he doesn't want to jump on them on the line that they got us into the war; that's not our line. We stand for the integrity of the Presidency.

We had a good long staff session with the crew that Ehrlichman will be using to fight this, which is the two of us, plus Kissinger, Ziegler, Colson, Scali, and Moore, John Dean and Clark MacGregor. We've agreed to meet every day at 5:30 on the subject. One late in the day effort was to get LBJ to have a press conference tomorrow or Saturday and take it on. Our feeling was that, if he would do this, it would clearly put the thing in his lap, where it belongs. Obviously, he recognizes the same thing and is not very anxious to do it.

He worked on the ideas of what he ought to say at Rochester tomorrow. His point is to speak to the policy of this Administration regarding security. We've got to enforce a law that is passed by Congress. He then mentioned to Ehrlichman, Kissinger and me that he's thinking in very big terms on this and that he may argue the case before the Supreme Court himself to indicate the importance of it. He wants to use the line that *The Times* now says that stolen goods are fit to print. He wants to work on the Cabinet officers to cut out *The New York Times*, particularly Connally, Stans, Mitchell and Dole. Also, he ordered Henry to get the Lodge files on the murder of Diem, part of which is covered in the files *The Times* has, but part of it isn't, and he thinks we should get a set of those in our possession. Apparently, Lodge has the only files at this point. He gave Colson two or three lines to use, on the theory that we don't have any: one, is that they are knowingly publishing stolen goods; another, they're giving aid and comfort to the enemy; another, that no cause justifies breaking the law and giving comfort to the enemy. He repeated the rule that anybody on the White House staff talking to *The Times* is to be fired instantly.

The other item that came up today was the speech writing problem, and it arose in the context of the drug statement that was to be made today. They came up first with an eight minute speech



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that was not usable and then, because it wasn't, were told to cut it down to 150 words, which came out even worse. So the President wrote the thing himself. He makes the point that we have the problem because we always talk around things, like the drug business, rather than taking them on directly. We need someone to take these and get some sex appeal into them. We need focus and bite. He feels that what they prepare has no lead and nothing to grab onto. We miss the point of a lead for tomorrow's paper, a cheer line that's got to ring true. He thinks we probably need a different kind of writer, because ours may be too smart and write on the basis of their own intelligence, rather than doing it for the President.

On the drug thing, he really wants to put the emphasis on the importance of the program, making the idea that this is the battle that cannot be lost. That the financial, educational and leadership resources all will be committed to this battle, using whatever is necessary to win. Another facet of the drug thing was a point raised by Senator Ellender in the bipartisan leaders' meeting this morning, when he pointed out that we have nine departments involved in drugs now; we are now adding a new one in the White House, and he wonders how many people we're getting rid of in the process. The President got quite cranked up about this and wants Shultz and Weber to get going on the removal of people from HEW, OEO, and so on, who are spinning their wheels and who have done a lousy job up to now. He doesn't want to keep those who have failed, and he told me to have Shultz prepare a report by tomorrow morning on what we're doing, so that we aren't just going on with business as usual.

The President called me at home at 9:30, wondering how the TV news had gone. Obviously, he's uptight on this whole thing. I didn't have a news report. Then he got into the point of how he would handle Rochester tomorrow, and he says he won't read the statement, which is what we were going to recommend; he'll just issue a statement and talk there about domestic things and not say anything about *The Times* deal. He thinks that we're falling too often into reading things; that doesn't get it across, and he's afraid that what they're preparing is probably too legalistic anyway, and that's not the point for him to make. So he concludes that he'll either issue it as a



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statement or he'll ad-lib a brief thing; he will not stand and read to the editors. He does not want to get into the legalisms.

End of June 17.