



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

June 18.

Again today *The New York Times* Papers is the big story. We started out this morning with the President reviewing the statement they had finally gotten worked out last night for him to use in Rochester today. After a quick review, he rejected it on the basis that it has no language that really sings. It's too bland, and therefore, it's not worth reading. If he says anything, he'll just ad-lib it. Then, as he got to thinking about it, he decided that there was a real question of whether he should get into it at all. If he does, it makes the whole thing an attack on us. Also, there's the problem with the matter being in the courts. Also, the question of timing, maybe we should let it run, and next week go on national TV and really hit it. The thing that finally clinched it was the view that Herb Klein came up with, that this was the wrong forum for doing this, because it was a group of editors who basically are in disagreement with us on this issue, although generally in agreement with us on other things. The President's view was then to say it to the nation and then, perhaps, write a personal letter to every editor and TV man, making the point that it doesn't involve this Administration. In the end, it all boiled down to the point that the statement is not adequate, and that it would override the briefing and that it was the wrong place to do it. Then the thought was maybe to have Kissinger do it to begin with, since we do need someone to take it on in a tone of high moral indignation.

He got into some strategy points, feeling that we should make very clear, that from a political standpoint, this Administration is out of its mind to oppose the release of the papers, since they involve previous Democratic Presidents and how they got the US into Vietnam. Also, the question of World War II and Korea comes up, because those documents are also classified and those, too, are wars that Democratic Presidents got us into. Then, why do we object? Because of this problem--and then go into the case of the whole problem that they had suggested for his speech, making the point that we have to protect the Presidency, the President's advisors, the foreign policy sources that we have and so forth; citing SALT, the Middle East and Berlin as things that we're doing; the fact the President has seen 67 Chiefs of State, and that one of the main reasons for the progress in negotiations is the privacy of communications. A newspaper has



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

got to weigh a good story versus the question of aiding the enemy. His conclusion then was to say nothing today, that this is not the right forum.

He does feel that we should let Dole go on our line, using the facts of World War II and Korea, that this is not our Administration that's involved, and so on. He is thinking of marshaling it next week, marshaling the whole argument and his going on at that time. We then got into the question of our general plan on—approach to this and came up with a number of staff suggestions that we were back and forth on the phone, while we were in Rochester, trying to work out. The President agreed with some of them, disagreed with others. We all felt that Klein was an ideal spokesman for our press conference and also a letter to the editors. We pretty much agreed, although Henry Kissinger was in violent disagreement, that LBJ should go on to defend the Presidency. But then learned late this evening after a 45 minute phone call, Harlow had been unable to persuade Johnson to go on, that Johnson had completely collapsed, was in a state of being totally unstrung, feels that the country is lost, that the President can't rule and that they're out to destroy him, etcetera. So, that ended any participation by him. Another thought was for Rogers to go over the weekend while he's in New York

[End of tape reel AC-09(A)]

[Begin tape reel AC-09(B)]

Continuation of June 18 from the preceding side. The feeling was that if Rogers does go, Kissinger should not, and Scali is going to try to talk Rogers into doing it. The whole thing kept going back and forth in phone calls. Ehrlichman set up a meeting of the group in Washington to work on final recommendations, etcetera. As of late this evening, the matter was still pending



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

consideration by the courts. There was something of a flap on the point raised by *The New York Times* that the question was now moot, because *The Washington Post* had the materials. So we went into the DC court asking for an injunction against *The Post*, which was not granted, and we moved immediately to the Court of Appeals. The question of whether to go into the DC court was raised by John Mitchell, calling Ehrlichman while we were in Rochester. John and I agreed we should go, as did Mitchell; so that was the way that was set.

First thing this morning, the President met with President Senghor of Senegal. That was supposed to be a half hour meeting before we left for Rochester; unfortunately, Senghor wasn't told that and didn't get to the point of anything that he had planned to discuss until the meeting had been going about forty-five minutes. Also he speaks only French, so translation was required. This, needless to say, didn't get the President off to too good a start for the day. Rochester itself went pretty well. Crowds weren't as big as we had hoped for, but then the demonstrations weren't as bad as we were afraid that they might be either. Overall, I think we came out pretty well on it. The President apparently did an excellent job in the briefing. He had me call Connally tonight to get a reading from him; and Connally was very enthusiastic, particularly making the point that the President showed more feeling, dedication and real interest than he has before, that he was very eloquent in some parts, and this was a very effective kind of forum for him. He felt we should do more of them, and try to get them on television.

On the plane, the President got into a critique of the AMA speech draft and dictated a whole lot of stuff to me on things that he wanted to cover. He was concerned that they don't have enough of an attack on the Kennedy proposal, that they cover too many other things that the bureaucracy wants, rather than making the good political points that we want. So I called Price and had him get back to work on that.

End of June 18.