



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

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

Tuesday, July 20.

President had a Republican leaders' meeting this morning. Briefed them on the China thing and then had Shultz cover the economy. Apparently it didn't go too well, especially the economy part. The President was really fed up with the attitude of the leaders. He told me to tell MacGregor that he's got to avoid these leadership meetings becoming a crying towel. He's got to brief someone to step-up and cheer a little bit. He made the point that if that had been a Democratic meeting, they would have cheered the President's initiative and been babbling all over about it. And he sighed and said it's such hard work for the President to have to buck them up all the time, which I can certainly understand his concern about.

Then he had Dole and Timmons in, Dole going through the motions of informing him of-- or getting his views on the Convention site. The President immediately opened the meeting by saying, any of the three sites you have in mind is acceptable to me, and the line you should use in going out to the press is to say we discussed this, and the press-- the President left it up to the committee to decide. And he really does feel it's up to the committee. On that basis, Dole says the decision will be San Diego, although he thinks the committee really would prefer Miami. But he thinks they can handle San Diego all right, that they'll be able to avoid the California political factions, etcetera, and that they can probably cut the Convention to three days, but not to the two that the President had originally requested. Dole then pointed out that it's nec-- there's a real problem on the economy, as was evidenced in the leadership meeting, and that Shultz needs to meet with the nineteen Senators that are up for election and also the Congressmen. Dole also asked whether he should go to Taiwan or not on his trip to Vietnam; he obviously wants to do that.

This afternoon, after a session with Kissinger, the President had Ehrlichman and me over for a talk and made the point that he had decided to have Ehrlichman go with Kissinger and Bruce on the September trip to China to handle the advancing. I didn't say anything at the time, but when Henry came in and joined the meeting later, the President raised the same point again. Henry was



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

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

clearly shook by it. I too think it's a very bad idea, but Ehrlichman is dying to go to China, and this is the one way he can get in on the act, and he maneuvered it with the President this morning. Later this evening, Haig raised the question with Larry and said Kissinger was absolutely furious about the idea, that we can't have a substantive person going over to meet with them, and I think Henry will probably scuttle it, which is just as well.

The other problem on the China trip is that we're probably going to have to take some Democratic visits to China before the President gets there. The Chinese notified Henry today that it was very difficult for them to withhold permission to visit, to other political people, as they have been doing, now that our visit is arranged. I argued strongly that we should still try to talk them out of it, on the grounds that they could welcome those people after the President's visit, and so on. President, I think, is resigned to the fact that we're going to have to let them do it, but he's pushing hard to at least hold Mao in reserve and not have them meet with them. President makes the point that the Chinese have to have this trip—they initiated it—but we don't want to pant after them. We need to maintain our bargaining position, and we don't want to do anything that cuts that down.

He talked to Henry on the phone, while Henry was meeting with Hugh Sidey, and told him to make the point that the difference between this-- of the difference between this trip and other Summit meetings, that the President is not just going over there to tour or to socialize and charm these people; he's going over for real, gut-level discussions. He got talking with John and me about his concern that, although he's ordered no speculation regarding the effect this will have on other countries, etcetera, we should be doing some speculating on the fact that this is a discussion between the US and China, and we should speculate to the hilt about the President's leadership and how he brought this about. He wants Scali to run heavily with this story, making the point that the one thing you can talk about is that, thank God, we have a President who knows how to handle this kind of thing. Also bring up his forbearance during the Laos deal, that he had all the cards, but he never played them; he kept his eye on the main chance. We can say that we can't talk about the substance, but look back at this whole thing, the President didn't even tell his own



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

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

staff, etcetera. Made the point that we should change the name of Air Force One, immediately, to Spirit of '76, so that's done before the trip.

Then Kissinger came in, and the President raised with him the point of whether we ought to consider doing the Russian Summit first, and Henry definitely says no. Instead, we should plan on Russia in the spring, but announce it before we go to Peking. This is the way he's put it to the Russians, and he wants to hang tight on that. The President told Henry he should move the preliminary trip up to September 15. He needs to get over there earlier, especially if he's going to let other political people go in ahead of us; he needs to dull the impact, especially if Kennedy turns out to be one of them. Kissinger reported on his interview with Sidey and said Sidey was very much with us all the way, but made the point that his editors are absolutely beside themselves, that it's driving them wild to think that Nixon is the one to do this, and that they just think it's terrible, which is an interesting insight into *Time/Life*.

Before--then Kissinger left before he had come in, and again after he left, we had quite a discussion on the Vice Presidential thing, the President seeking John's and my views on what the situation is and how to deal with it. His feeling is that the Democrats need an issue, now that we've taken foreign policy away from them, and so they'll zero in on the economy as the substantive issue, and the VP as the way of cutting us. Also he got into quite a long talk about the question of succession, making the point that he may not live through even this term, let alone a second term, because of the possibility of accident or ill health. And that raises the question of whether Agnew is somebody that we're willing to see become President. He enumerated some of his problems: that he's dogmatic, his hidebound prejudices, he's totally inflexible and that he sees things in minuscule terms. We then talked about what to do to get him out, and concluded that it's impossible for him to announce—such as in January, as he apparently is willing to do according to Harlow—that he will not run, because that would open a horrible battle for the nomination. Also, Agnew himself would be immediately dead once he does that.



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

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

President then got around to raising the Connally question with Ehrlichman and made the point that the only one we could put on the ticket is Connally. We couldn't afford a battle, because out of that, Reagan would clearly come up with the nomination, which would be disastrous. The conclusion then is, if Agnew is not going to be on the ticket, he must get off by resignation. Given that, the sooner he resigns, the better. Then the President told Ehrlichman and me that we were to talk to Connally on the Vice President problem. That he-- the President wants to stay one step away from it, but I should call Connally, ask him for a couple hours of free time for John and me, and then we should just sit down and talk the problem through, see if he's got any ideas on how to approach it, so on.

End of July 20.