



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

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Tuesday, August 24.

The President came in just before 10:00 this morning. He had a 10:00 appointment with Ambassador Porter, which he didn't realize he had. He came in wearing a sport shirt with no tie. So he shifted the Porter appointment, chatted with me, changed his clothes, met with Porter, and then with John Mitchell. Then had Henry and me in for a while, finally got out around 3:00.

The Porter meeting, I guess, went very well. The President seemed to be quite impressed with him and feels he's going to do a good job in Paris, and that he seems to understand the situation very well. The meeting with Mitchell was basically on California politics. We first got into the question of our dealings with labor, and President felt that Shultz is still the guy to talk to Meany, that Hodgson shouldn't do it. I reported a phone call I had from John Ehrlichman, saying that Hodgson thought that labor was beginning to crack on the freeze now, and the sub-leaders of the unions were calling, asking if all this strife, and so on, was necessary. Hodgson thinks we have a chance to get through to labor, if we approach it right, and that Meany may acquiesce some. So we talked about that. Mitchell reported on his dinner with the Reagans, at which there was a great deal of carping about a lot of trivia, mainly from Nancy Reagan. They're concerned because there's a conservative meeting in Houston that's basically a conservative rebellion, especially regarding national defense. And the President got upset about that, said the conservatives are aiming at the wrong target—they should be hitting the Congress, not the President—that we need to posture in the public mind that we are for national defense. 'Cause we're getting a bad rap on that. Mitchell recommended Reagan as the Chairman in California, with Firestone and another liberal-type as Vice Chairmen. He said Finch is more or less in agreement with this, but waffles on it some. He thinks we need someone out here to keep the factors together, and who knows the players. He recommended Nofziger for that. The President shot that down, saying that Nofziger's too much of a loner, can't operate as a political man and is not a managerial type. We then talked about other possibilities as the guy to run the campaign here, came up with Bob Volk and John Flanigan as the only two worth pursuing. The President kept coming back to the conservative rebellion, and obviously that report concerned him. We



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talked about some general political things, the fact that Stein should be-- continue to be encouraged to keep McCarthy in the race if he can.

The President returned a call to Mayor Daley, who wanted to discuss the Northern Ireland Catholic problem with him, and at the same time, Daley told the President that he had made another statement urging labor not to play politics on the economic deal and to support the President.

Henry was in, discussing the problem of the Vietnam election again, which does pose a serious problem. President is strongly toying now with releasing the fact of our secret negotiations: blowing the channel and forcing them to deal with us publicly, and then attacking the Senate opponents, and saying they forced us to abandon our secret negotiations, and so on. Kissinger also got back on the line of what a real heartbreak the whole war situation is, because we really won the war, and if we just had one more dry season, the opponents would break their backs. And this, of course, is the same line he's used for the last two years, over and over, and I guess, all of Johnson's advisors used with him, to keep the thing escalating. I'm sure they really believe it at the time, but it's amazing how it sounds like a broken record.

The President took off for the afternoon, called me late in the afternoon to report that the oil slick from a leaking naval ship had fouled his beach, so he can't use it. And he had decided to invite the Mitchells to his dinner with the Reagans tomorrow night, told me to have-- for me and the rest of the staff to take the next two days off.

End of August 24.