



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

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

Sunday, September 19.

At Camp David: President called me over at noon. He was in his study with the fire going in the fireplace. There was a thick fog or low cloud outside. Had been very heavy rain this morning. He had a lot of schedule things he wanted to talk about. We went over, in considerable detail, the schedule plans and options for the rest of September and all of October. Mainly he was trying to figure out the balance of doing more press conferences, both in office and televised.

We then got into a discussion of Peterson and Connally, and I told the President about Peterson's concerns in the way things were set up and going. And he made the point that I should talk to Connally and make it clear to him that he can totally trust Peterson, and that Peterson's in his pocket, and therefore, he should work closely with him. The question really is, can he trust his own people? He got back onto the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] question again a little bit and feels that we shouldn't push too hard to save it, that we should let the Republicans vote their consciences, and we should be in a position to veto. He thinks we're now in a good position to squeeze on those things where the bureaucrats are against us, such as HEW, OEO, and Action, and of course, apply less squeeze in those areas where they're with us.

He thinks it was-- would be to our advantage to do a lot more in the way of contact programs, such as: getting Peterson out on the college circuit; expanding the idea of the Blair House dinner series with businessmen to a series of seminars with Congressmen and Senators, to get their ideas on what you think we ought to do. He sees this as something to do with White House staff and Cabinet people, making it clear that the President would not participate.

He talked a little about Vietnam and the point that he was sorry that we hadn't been able to actually end the war directly, but made the point that there really was no way to end it. It was doomed always just to trickle out the way it is, and that's now become clear.

He told me to talk to the AG about the Agnew issue again and said that we really need to decide now, that regardless of what we do, he thinks that instead of dodging it on Thursday night, it



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would be good to indicate his confidence in Agnew and say that if Agnew so desires, he intends to keep him on the ticket. He recalled the damage that was done to Eisenhower in '56 by his hesitation on keeping Nixon. It raised hell with the Nixon friends and the conservatives, made Eisenhower look bad, as these people pounded on him. The President's view is that Agnew is a liability. Although we can't prove it, and the only way we could check this is to run a tandem trial heat process, but he thinks still he should indicate his support, whether or not he intends to drop him later, and he thinks also, it's a good way to get the President out of the black VP question, which is sure to arise. The advantages of backing Agnew now would be that it totally mutes the press on the question and it pulls the rug out of the extreme right-- out from under the extreme right. He also wanted me to talk to Connally, Monday, on the Agnew point and see what he-- whether he thought it was a good idea to cover this Thursday night in his Q&A. He wants me to get Mitchell and Harlow together on the whole VP question. Also discussed Secretary of Agriculture, although the President basically has decided on Louie Nunn. He feels strongly we don't need a farmer, we need a politician, and that Nunn will meet the other qualifications.

End of September 19.