



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

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Saturday, November 20.

President was in to the office early this morning, and cranking away again on AF of L reaction. He was pretty distressed with *The New York Times* coverage, which was all he had seen. We gave him the report on the networks, and that didn't seem to help very much, and he still feels we've missed the point. I had set up a 9:00 meeting with Scali, Moore, and Colson, but the President had Colson and me in to his office, and so that got in the way of the meeting. He had a phone conversation with Shultz, discussing what our plans would be if labor walks out of the Pay Board, which Shultz thinks they're going to do, and he-- the President emphasized the need to have a contingency plan ready to go, just as we have in the foreign areas. He sort of summed it up, saying that on balance, as of now, this is first thing this morning, on balance as of now it comes out the wrong way: more emphasis on the rebuff by the labor people than on the President's courage. The point is that we have to override the cool reception story and change it to a "labor is rude to a courageous President."

The New York Times head and lede are absolutely the wrong thing from our viewpoint. He was also concerned, as am I, that no one used the old prosperity line, where he compared what was wrong with the old prosperity and that it was based on more, which is an ideal thing for speaker's materials. He felt Meany should be hit today on his rude conduct, that we should have a plan for keeping this going, especially the courage line. Suggested signs down at Miami, hitting the labor people for being rude, crude, vulgar and boorish. Also talked about a poll with Colson, and I went ahead and had our poll setup to include questions on the reaction to this thing and see if we can get some kind of reading over the weekend.

He pushed as we went on during the day trying to get some of these things cranked up, and I think we did a lot of talking without much result. One interesting thing that developed as the morning went on was that there was-- there were, by 10:00, over 400, nearly 500 telegrams, all of them favorable to the President and all of them quite emotional and strong in their approach. Obviously he wanted that "wires and phone call" story picked up.



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He was particularly worried by the AP story. Thought it had been badly handled by Cormier and couldn't understand it, because UPI's story was really pretty good. He was also concerned about the line that some of them are pushing, that he was rattled and nervous, and that kind of thing. One break that all of us felt was monumentally valuable to us is that the executive board raised Meany's pay from \$70,000 to \$90,000, and we had a lot of discussion on how, and/or whether, to take advantage of that. Ehrlichman called from Utah, not knowing about all the rest of this stuff, but feeling very strongly that the President should go on TV, call on Meany and the others to renounce their pay raise. He feels that the President should take a vigorous out-front tactic on this. That the editorial-- our idea of getting a lot of editorials against it that sort of thing was devious and indirect, that we need a clear attack by the President on the individuals. He also made the point that we should be sure that someone gets pictures of Meany at the racetrack, playing golf and getting in and out of his limousine down there. We should set them up as the "bloated barons of labor." The President should be vigorous, untypical, un-politic, forget-- and fight the labor leaders. He thinks we shouldn't put out the wires about the people responding, because we should play the line that the President's not responding to public opinion, but instead he's doing what's right. Just to slam the labor people. None of the rest of us shared that view, at least at the outset, and so we'll probably hold up on that approach.

Just before leaving for Camp David, the President had Julie, Dave Parker, Rose and me in to discuss Julie's schedule planning. Both he and she seem to be quite enthusiastic about what we've accomplished to date along that line and had a good session discussing it.

Also he called me as soon as he got to Camp David, because he had read on the way up there a memo from Clark MacGregor regarding the Campaign Spending Bill. Was trying to get Mitchell because he's concerned they wanted the President to signal that he would veto it and put out a Presidential statement, make some phone calls, etcetera. He felt that Mitchell and Connally should work on this and that the President should not get into it: that all the other action should be taken, but they shouldn't get him in. Mitchell called me later and had talked with the President. He agreed with the President, and that's the basis on which we'll now go ahead.



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Back to the labor thing. He wanted to be sure we got out the point that he went there not to win friends. In fact, he had said to his staff ahead of time to forget about that, that Meany will be sure that they give him a cool reception. That these are not union members, who would give us a good reception, they're union leaders, and they won't. So we'll be speaking to the country and not to this convention when we go down there.

He called later in the afternoon to comment on the UCLA-SC football game, saying the Bruins were really holding on and playing in a spirited way, that SC was really loaded with talent. Game ended up a tie.

He said he'd been looking at the telegrams and was really quite excited about them. Read me quite a few of them, and they really are strong and emotional, very much of the flavor of the November 3rd reaction. Also Sindlinger had reported to Colson that his polling reaction today on this is the biggest thing since Calley. So he thinks we've really got something going now, which is exactly the point I had been trying to make, from right after the speech yesterday on. He feels now that we've come to three conclusions: number one: that we can't make peace with the labor unions; number two: that the Pay Board must be tough and not back down to them; and number three: that it'll be very hard to do-- make the Hoffa move right now, under these circumstances.

End of November 20.