



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

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Thursday, May 18.

The President's still at Camp David preparing for the Russian trip. Connally called me this morning very disturbed about Evans and Novak column. He resented deeply the crack they made about his being distressed by the way I handle the President's schedule. I talked to him a little about Wallace, he doesn't think Wallace can run as VP on the Democratic ticket. Hubert can't take him, because Wallace is stronger than Hubert, and third party's out of the question because he's come so far in the Democratic Party now that he'd have no reason to go over and diminish his stature. Connally feels that if he's smart, and he thinks he is, that he'll go through the Democratic Convention and then say that he can't take the platform, or McGovern or whoever the nominee is, so the best thing to do is elect Nixon. He would want to claim that he helped make a President, and this puts him in a good position. He feels he's a smart fundamentalist, knows he can't play with his supporters' emotions, so he can't go on the Democratic ticket.

He thinks we should let the Vietnam story ride now, let the Joint Chiefs and so on handle it, and not worry about it. He also came up with the idea that when the President gets back he should set up a series of meetings looking to Defense reorganization, Vietnam continuation and so on, and that he should meet individually with each of the service chiefs to discuss their views on the restructuring of the Defense Department in terms of weaponry, manpower and so on. Give them a chance to unload, not on programs or budget, but just their general views. He feels we have to break the one-third division in Defense, and meld the forces or else go to a general staff, and that this is one step to do it.

Had a call from Mosbacher, who is upset with Chapin's handling of the Cadillac for Brezhnev, and ironed that out. He's resentful of Dwight running the trip, I think, mainly.

Throughout the day--

[End of tape reel AC-21(B)]



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[Begin tape reel AC-22(A)]

--the President called me 12 times on miscellaneous odds and ends during the day. He wants to figure on a visit to George Wallace at the hospital and ask for some data on logistics and so forth, to see whether he could do it. I recommended that he go ahead but that he do it tomorrow on the way down from Camp David. He said he had a good talk with Dobrynin who came up with Henry last night, spent the night, then met with the President this morning, that everything is on salvo for the trip. Discussed his plans for the press briefing and other wrap-up items before we started.

He was very distressed because he thinks Ehrlichman is dragging his feet on the fund cutoff for MIT, and says now that Shultz is out of the budget bureau that he wants something done on this. I found out that Ehrlichman had already done something this morning and met with Weinberger. The President also feels the staff is at fault on the fact that Kissinger was given the letter from the Ivy League Presidents and then he went and saw them. It should have been handled by someone else.

He's back on his need to clean out all Presidential appointees who aren't really good people, and he had a lot of little housekeeping odds and ends prior to the trip.

End of May 18.