



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

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Monday, June 12.

The President had me in this morning. He had written a lot of memos yesterday and had some ideas on political analysis based on thinking stirred up by the Buchanan memo. He feels that the weakness of Buchanan's approach is that we have to keep our strength up front and center. All of our attack lines should end on our strength. For example, people want new ideas and so on but we've had the boldest initiatives in history. We must not get trapped into McGovern's bog of people looking for the new face. For example, Buchanan deals all with domestic matters and totally misses our big issues. Who is bold, who is fresh on foreign policy? Obviously, it's Nixon. He feels we should attack McGovern in a way that surfaces our point, not just hit his point. We should not get trapped in putting out the enemy's line. He then expressed the feeling that Mitchell ought to have a strategy meeting this weekend for a couple of days to get down to decisions, both from the standpoint of therapy and ideas. That we should have another group as well as our regular group that's a bigger advisory thing. Then he referred back to the "Committee of 100" and the "Committee of 9", all of whom thought they were running the campaign when he was running for Congress. They actually were helpful for ideas and enlisting loyalty. He thinks we may be missing some smart people such as Senators, and Congressmen, and Governors. Also we're not fully utilizing the old political hands on our staff: Price, Garment, Safire, Finch, Dent, Buchanan, Chotiner, Rumsfeld, Weinberger, and so on. He says the great danger is for two or three people to think that they're the fount of all wisdom. The other side of the same thing is worse. To try and run the campaign with dozen or a 100 people in charge. We do need to get better organized regarding touching our bases. He's not sure MacGregor is as important as some Congressmen or Senators would be. And for example, Dent's mind is much sharper politically than Ehrlichman's. He thinks it would be a good idea to have a séance or retreat on all of this. In the Cabinet, the best political is Laird. Kleindienst is also good. That's it. We should avoid getting too ingrown in our campaign management.

We have to build the foreign policy point in terms of not changing horses. We can't afford McGovern in the White House on foreign policy because of his inexperience and naiveté. We



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can't have "white flag McGovern" in the White House. He thinks we need an addendum to the Buchanan memo on how to attack McGovern, in a way it builds the President's foreign policy image. Also we need to hit the media on the basis of they're all marching to the same drumbeat, *Time*, *Life*, and so on in their editorials. At the Democratic Convention we should make the point that this is the first time a former President didn't go to the Convention after he left office. He wants Dent to go out and see Wallace, also Strom Thurmond, to be sure we have a program of maintaining contact with him. He called Lukash to get a report on Wallace's current condition, and then raised the question that we need to find out what Wallace wants. See if we can make a deal with him.

He says Buchanan overlooks our real strong point, which is foreign policy. Mainly because he doesn't agree with our foreign policy. The problem is who will develop a battle plan. Where are the holes in the Buchanan piece? What are the four things we want to have come out? He thinks this retreat, or whatever you call it, should follow the pattern of the August 15 Camp David meeting with subgroups reporting to an executive committee. Emphasizes again we must avoid the trap of believing the opposition line. He does want Buchanan to go ahead with his 5,000 word piece blasting McGovern. He feels we must move to nail McGovern on the shift of views and that we've got to hit media on the basis they've got their candidate, now what will they do with him. Attack the media on their cynical attempt to clean up McGovern. First, he is the candidate of the Eastern media establishment. Second, the media can't be trusted. Third, he is a left-winger. Fourth, he's being advised to shift so don't believe him when he says he has shifted. We should really go with the establishment over the weekend. Predict a frantic effort to clean up George, which is signaled by his Eastern media establishment supporters.

This afternoon he and I met with Mitchell. Got back to the thing of having to get the anti-busing deal worked up against Zeidman and the Higher Education Act when he signs it. He raised the Presidential retreat idea of about a dozen people, with the President not there. He feels he should stay away from the political stuff, and Mitchell completely agreed. He makes the point that everyone's for peace and everyone has been for 25 years, but Nixon is the first one to do



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anything about it. He thinks we need someone to positivize, the Buchanan stuff. The one issue that McGovern can't get off of is the peace issue, because his partisans are super doves. So how do we play this? We need a strategy paper. The best way to make the peace issue is to attack McGovern on every aspect. Such as Israel, Vietnam, bugout, amnesty, and so forth. The President believes the peace issue will override all the others. He thinks our strategy on McGovern should be with no attack on him personally for now, but the Cabinet and the surrogates should hit him on the individual issues. He questions whether we're using all the best people. He wants to be sure we're not too narrowly based.

Mitchell told me after the meeting that he and the President had also discussed the Connally question. Mitchell reported on his luncheon with Connally before Connally left on his trip, at which time he asked him directly if he wanted to be Vice President. Connally said no, that he is interested in being President, but it's clear that he didn't see the VP as the route to that. Mitchell's view is that he wants to be Secretary of State and move from there. He did commit to changing parties, but feels-- asked Mitchell when he ought to do it, and Mitchell said after the election which Connally agreed to. Mitchell feels that we should go on our basis that we have to, therefore, assume that Agnew is the candidate. But we should work out a deal with him and make sure we've got things spelled out right without letting him develop a high price for taking the job.

The President also raised earlier today the Irving Crystal book which he had read over the weekend. He wants copies sent to all those of a philosophical bend in the Administration. Particularly Price and his crew because we need to get more bite and finality into what we're putting out. This led him to the point that he shouldn't be getting all his input from one source, especially on foreign policy, and he thinks Kissinger, for example, should get some other Soviet experts in for him to talk to. So that he isn't getting just Henry's views.

A little later today he came up with the idea that he had been thinking about the Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony on SALT and wants to reconsider the idea of the President going



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up to the Senate. He feels it would be easier than doing a press conference. It would be fully covered on television. It intrigues him as an historic thing. Painting on the big canvas with other things to come and so on. He told me to talk to Haig about it, and I did. He thinks it's a bad idea. The problem is Henry doesn't want to go up either now. And so we have the question, if he does go, what is the best way to sell our line to the public as well as, or much more importantly, than the problem of the Senate.

End of June 12.