



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

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Tuesday, September 19.

Mitchell called from New York because he couldn't come to the political strategy meeting today and had several ideas. In view of the polls at the present time, he thinks we ought to look at an alternate media plan, maybe build up the closer states, California, New York, Michigan, and so on, transferring from those states that are way ahead, like Texas. He thinks we should stay with the Democrats' negative commercial longer and hold up on the positive commercials for a while. If the leads hold, we should work out a plan for combined ads with Senatorial candidates. Flexibility is the key point. He thinks Buchanan's analysis piece is good, he especially likes the idea of Connally using Meany, Jackson, Humphrey quotes and thinks it would be good for Reagan to do an economic speech, especially at something like the Press Club. Feels we've got to get Dole, Finch and all to quit talking about the New Republican Majority. Feels there is some tendency of our troops to let up, so we shouldn't let the word out that we're cutting back on anything.

We had a problem today on the press situation with Pat Nixon. She talked to the President and apparently was disturbed because of a Q&A that got very rough in her first day out. The President has thus issued orders that we knock off all of that, that she shouldn't be put through that, nor should any of the rest of the family.

He's concerned about the grain deal and was asking about the staff analysis on that. Wants to be sure we keep the heat on on amnesty, and that we move out an amnesty commercial with the Democrats.

He got into some speech analysis points, based on his address to the Drug Conference this morning, made the point that the phrases that were picked up on television were all the ones that the President put in. Each is one that people can see, a visual type thing. He wants the speech writers to look at how the President cut out the connecting words and used short sentences, keeping the heat on them. He continues to bemoan the fact that he doesn't really have a good speechwriter.



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We had our political strategy meeting with Connally, MacGregor, Colson and George Christian this afternoon. Agreed that we shouldn't let the line build up that we're going to sweep in all the Congressional candidates. Connally made the point that we shouldn't let Pat Nixon get out in front of the President. She can't appear to be out ahead of him, so we should slow her down, not too long a tour, etcetera. Point was made on the necessity of getting the candidates to hang on the President, not the President going in for them. He decided to run the Russian five-minute-spot next week and then hold it up till after October 5, when we've finished the various Soviet announcements, but run the China five-minute the following week. Also going to run the Democrats national defense sixty-second spot next week, and go with Connally's foreign policy speech on Wednesday the 4th, keep everybody else clear on that day. Connally's point is that our strategy now must not be to do anything to become the issue. McGovern's the issue; we should keep it that way, and don't inject any issue. Also, keep Agnew at a low-key and don't let him become an issue.

Got into some follow-up on this on the helicopter to Camp David. Connally wanted to do a Q&A at his Democrat deal at the ranch. President doesn't feel he should, and I've had to turn that off. We got into an additional concern about depoliticizing the family schedule, keep them out of partisan activities, keep them in just basic events, get them out of any press Q&A type things. Keep Agnew out of the line of fire. McGovern is now the issue, keep it that way. Don't let the President, or Vice President or family become the issue, be sure Connally understands this. Stop releasing the surrogate schedules, which look like we've got too many other people out. Then he wants to consider dropping the regional press conference idea and figure out something to substitute for them, we shouldn't let the press dictate what we do. We could have one in-office press conference to get rid of the pressure. Probably it would be worthwhile to get it out of the way. Then find other events in Atlanta and Boston. Honor somebody, visit something, do a regional reception of our people, drop a major statement, nonpolitical or nonpartisan, or do a radio speech on, basic subject of the next four years. He had me into Aspen when we arrived to chat about this a little further before he went to dinner with his family.



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End of September 19.