



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

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Thursday, September 28th. The President did the cancer meeting this morning and then we returned to Washington, a lot of time to talk on the plane. He was, reacted rather adversely to the *New York Times* endorsement, not surprisingly, that is, their endorsement of McGovern. He wants the *Times* now totally cut off as an enemy, which we all agree we ought to do. He talked a little about the grain deal and how to handle that, since the TV zoomed in on it pretty hard last night. He thinks that we should admit guilt, if there is some somewhere, that we, Butz should investigate it and act, suspending the people who were involved and get something done so we can get it off our backs.

On the Al Smith dinner, he had a lot of instructions for the Vice President. He wants him to go to the Cardinal's reception ahead of time and shake hands with everyone, go early, sit through the whole dinner. His talk should be very light, non-substantive, non-political, friendly, and humorous. No blatant appeal to Jews or Catholics, don't praise the President, don't mention the election, lean over backward on the political side. If he does that, he'll be a great contrast to the McGovern method and should be very effective.

We discussed the Ft. Wayne deal a little bit. That's the personal information about McGovern's college caper. Mitchell told me yesterday in New York, that, or the day before, that Keith Beulan had the birth certificate photostat and, in fact, Mitchell had a copy of it, that was pulled out of the file. We're concerned now that Ken may have leaked this, which, of course, was contrary to all of his instructions, and the President was very concerned today that it not be used in any way. I've got to get back to Ken on it, see where that stands.

Kissinger got back from Paris last evening and I talked to him on the phone, told him the President would call him if he wanted him to. Henry said no need to, that he couldn't talk on the



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phone, but he did have to meet with him when he got back to Washington, so we set up dinner on the *Sequoia* tonight, Kissinger, Haig and I with the President. Henry went through his whole status as of now, and he is convinced that the North Vietnamese do want to settle.

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Duration: 7 seconds

The hang-up still is dumping Thieu.

And Henry has a proposal where we--, that he wants to go back with next week, when he's committed to go back for a three-day meeting. This time, to offer, what he wants to do is send Haig to Saigon tomorrow, have him meet with Thieu...

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Duration: 46 seconds

...and get an agreement from Thieu to secretly agree to step down, sometime around January. And to agree to North Vietnam's idea of a government of concord, which we would change to a committee of reconciliation, which the North Vietnamese have remarkably proposed consist of twelve people, with any action requiring a unanimous vote, which, of course, they'll never get. Henry feels this will, all this is a face-saving move for North Vietnam. That they recognize that it can have no effect, and that this gives us our opening we've been looking for in a settlement.



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He thinks we can move to an announcement of the settlement in sometime between the 20th and 30th of October, which would take effect in, with the cease-fire in place, and a start of the release of prisoners in November.

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Duration: 13 seconds

And then, the Thieu step-down in January. That's remaining secret for the time being, though.

Considerable discussion of this. The President had gone into the meeting prepared to tell Henry that he couldn't make a deal. He feels strongly that, as far as the election's concerned, we're much better off to maintain the present position. The part of Henry's argument that carried some weight, though, is the problem of how to deal with Vietnam after the election, and the clear point that we can't just sustain our present course forever; that we've got to go for a break, and that the break pre-election may be more likely than a break afterwards; and that this is the honorable settlement that we sought. It does not involve selling out South Vietnam to the Communists, and, therefore, is satisfactory to us, and we should follow it. It was left that that's what we'd do, after the President did considerable questioning of Haig and Kissinger as to how they would go about dealing with Thieu. Nobody feels that there's much better, much more than about an even chance of Thieu going along with it, but if he doesn't, they'll move to a plan two, which is basically the same thing, but...



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Duration: 9 seconds

...without the Thieu step-down deal.

They feels sure that North Vietnam will reject this, but at least it puts us in the position of coming back with a counteroffer which will require a further meeting, carry the thing up to the latter part of October before the talks break off, which is good. We're in the ironic position of wanting to continue the talks as long as possible if we're not going to settle, but wanting to complete them as soon as possible if we do, because the closer the settlement comes to the election, now, the more it'll look like a political ploy, which in no way, which it is in no way, but it will be hard to sell that if we have to announce the settlement just before the election. Even so, it's worth doing as long as it doesn't involve the fact or appearance of a sellout, and they feel that can be avoided. It was interesting to see Henry turn the President around on this, on the grounds of the problem of how to deal with, of dealing with this after the election, since the President's approach to it was based on his thought that Henry was trying to get a settlement before the election for the value to us politically, which the President feels is negative rather than positive.

End of September 28th.