



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

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Wednesday, October 4.

We were at Camp David all day. The President holed up working on the press conference preparation. He did have me over at noon for a while, reported that he'd returned Walter Cronkite's call. Cronkite had called yesterday, saying that he wanted to have a personal conversation with the President. Turned out that what he's after is to get the President to do an hour interview on CBS. The President's intrigued with at least exploring it, on the basis that it might be a good thing for us to do, and also do NBC and ABC, if we can do it without McGovern or after McGovern. He told me to have Ziegler follow-up with Cronkite, get all the details and all. I think it's a trap, but we'll see what Ron develops.

He had a lot of miscellaneous political ideas. He thinks we ought to have a television commercial on amnesty, and also using a Vietnam vet or a Labor guy. Also a Vietnam commercial, regarding don't turn Vietnam over to the Communists. He thinks we ought to consider Kissinger taking McGovern on after the October 10th McGovern speech on Vietnam. Wants to be sure to give the VP the poll data on the issues in Massachusetts. Thinks we need to start some columns now on what the selection means, that it's a test of the Eastern media, the intellectual elite such as the *New York Times* and the *Post* and so on. That we've got to make this a mandate on the issues, not just a mandate on the men. We need to pick up their wrong predictions and hang them on them. McGovern shouldn't be talking about landslides. He should make the pitch that we're seeking a decisive majority, we have no reliance on the polls, we're taking our case to every state, not predicting the winning or losing any, and taking it to every group, young and old, black and white, Catholic and Protestant, etcetera. Thinks we should also get some predictions of a close election. He's concerned about how they interpret the victory and that even if we win by 15 points they'll call it a disappointing win. Therefore, we ought to predict a 10 million vote margin or something like that and get it set in the public mind as the goal. On Congressional things, he wants to say that he won't comment on individual races, that we want a House and Senate that will support the Administration. Generally, of course, he supports Republican nominees.



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However, his major interest is the election of those who support the Administration, and there are certain Democrats who, because of their support in the past, will not have his opposition.

He came up with the idea on Atlanta of having a writing pool cover the meeting with the leaders so that we get some mileage out of it. Wants to drop the political dinner tomorrow night and do it in the afternoon instead. There were a few minor schedule questions. He had me over again at 5:00 for a couple of quick odds and ends and then left to go for a swim with Tricia.

We had a big flap with Henry last night and carrying on today. He's in a complete tantrum that the President should not have a press conference, because he's sure to give the wrong answers on Vietnam and blow the whole negotiation right as Henry is about to go into the crucial final stage. Henry actually believes still, even though Thieu has completely refused to go along with anything Haig proposed, Henry believes that we still have a 50-50 chance of pulling something off with the North Vietnamese this weekend and he's scared to death that the President will louse it up. Actually, I think he'll use anything that comes up as an excuse if the thing blows, so it works out pretty good for him. The President doesn't feel that there's any chance of settling, and that probably it's not desirable anyway, because any possible interpretation of a sellout would hurt us more than it helps us.

One interesting thing: I decided to drive down, as I always do. The President wasn't going to leave Camp David until 9:30. He called at 7:25, five minutes before I was to leave, to say that if I needed to get home early, he'd be glad to reschedule his departure so I could ride down on the helicopter. I said that I'd intended to drive anyway, but it was very thoughtful of him to show that concern.

End of October 4.