



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

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Monday, October 30th. One major item today was the continuing debate on how to counterattack on the whole espionage business. The President still thinks we should consider a libel suit, using the Colson route of suing the *Post* and Edward Bennett Williams on malicious lies involving the White House tied to the Watergate. Also, Ehrlichman feels we should exploit the *Post's* admission of guilt, but is concerned about the Colson libel suit, because it will inevitably lead to his having to leave the White House after the election. He feels that the President will be forced to clean up. The President thinks that we should go ahead on a white paper to the editors, give them the specific answers on all the Watergate items, and that maybe Ehrlichman should use *U.S. News* in next week's issue to get a, the whole story on record, get it established somewhere. He's afraid that it will leave a blotch on us, after the election, if we don't get the word out and all the questions answered now.

Later today, Ehrlichman called and said that he, Stans, Dean, and Moore had worked out a possible settlement of the Common Cause case, which is to go to trial tomorrow. So, that we would disclose \$5 million of our pre-April 7th gifts under court order, and this would avoid them going to trial until after the first of the year and would keep Sloan off the stand. They feel it's a good way to cut our losses, so they're going ahead to try to work that out.

The other big item today was the whole Vietnam question, and how we deal with the attack on McGovern, and the threat of the North Vietnamese blow-up. The original plan was for Rogers to hit McGovern today at a press conference re: his point that he would reserve the right to renegotiate any deal that we make. That he should, that that would crack McGovern and hypo what he said, and set the stage to blame McGovern if North Vietnam hits us on breaking off talks tomorrow.



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Ehrlichman feels that the key to Rogers doing this is that the President be precisely positioned tomorrow in Chicago, because he'd have to say some things at the regional meeting, and that Kissinger's doing a talking paper that he will discuss with the President on this. John feels that Kissinger talks as if it's a virtual certainty that this will blow-up tomorrow. I raised that with the President, at 10:00 over at Aspen, and he said to have Ziegler not announce on TV, because we may have to put Agnew on instead. He can't go on if Vietnam is blown up, as Kissinger apparently thinks will happen. Then he got back to considerable discussion of what a blow-up would do; makes the point that Rogers should go ahead today, but the problem is we had no choice once North Vietnam was on track. We couldn't turn it off, or slow it down. He called me a little later on the phone, said he had talked to Kissinger and that they expect a message at 2:00 or 3:00; that, the, Ehrlichman was overreacting. That Kissinger says, that first, they may agree to talk; second, they may just postpone the talks; third, they may possibly blow up, but Kissinger thinks that the third is not likely. But, if it does happen, that we should just take the offensive. He now feels Rogers should not go out today, until we get the message from North Vietnam that it's okay for Agnew to take on McGovern now, as hard as hell, but we have to wait until we get the message before Rogers can go out. He then cautions that we must not get jittery and hysterical. That we've got to handle this with poise; that we're going through the birth pains of an agreement.

Then, we told them to go ahead on the Vice President. The Vice President called me and was concerned about the statement, and is working that out with Haig, but feels that it would be a bad mistake for him to go forward with the plan that they've proposed to him of going to the White House press room, making a statement, and refusing to answer questions. I agreed with him. He suggested that he either do this as part of a speech he's giving tomorrow, or that he do it on a paid television five minutes tonight, and say that we purchased the time in order to get the full statement over to the people. So, we worked on that basis for a while. A little later, I talked to Kissinger, and he says that North Vietnam is preparing a blow for us this week: first, that they



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might not show up on Thursday, because the negotiations are completed; second, they might agree to meet; third, they'd say we cheated them, so they're breaking the whole thing off. If the latter happens, he thinks we should just brazen it through. He later told the President he was concerned that we'd take a murderous beating, because he did get the message from North Vietnam, and they simply said that they were taking the whole thing under serious consideration and, and would get back to us later. The President still wants the VP to go on, emphasizing that McGovern is sabotaging the peace efforts. He feels that we should ge--, develop our plan, that we should take a hawkish view. And then he had me talk to Kissinger a little later, and Henry, then, had calmed down.

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Audio Cassette 26, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 14 [AC-26(A) Sel 12]
Duration: 11 seconds

Said that he talked to Dobrynin who doesn't think that the North Vietnamese will blow; that they'll yell and scream, but then they'll talk.

Henry feels we must go on the offensive if they do blow; publish all that we've offered. Make the point that we didn't meet with them to sign, because: first, Saigon reports they're seizing territory and the threat of a bloodbath; second, Pham Van Dong claimed this was a coalition government, which we agreed it was not; third, we never agreed to leave all their troops in the South, and we've been watching for a unilateral withdrawal, which they were supposed to do as evidence of good faith. Then we should make the point that if in good faith we can settle, we will, but that we will not let us, ourselves be stampeded into doing this just for the election. He also says that the liberal press is very vulnerable in any effort to attack us, because now they've moved to the right



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of us, and they're complaining that we're letting good old Thieu down. Henry feels he should step out again and brief the press. That it should not be elevated to the Presidential level. We should just say that the first item was to end the war that we've made major progress—this is if the President goes on TV Thursday night. He should open by saying, the first thing in looking at the future is to end the war; that we've made major progress, and then describe the situation as it stands on Thursday night. Say we're committed to the generation of peace, and we pledge that we will get peace with honor in Vietnam. He feels that the first five minutes of the talk should be on Vietnam in any event, in a strong manly way. And the President later agreed, and said that we should go to the full half hour, if we need extra time. He had, he told me to have Kissinger get this offer to Price to write up a couple of pages for inclusion in the speech.

We then went over, I went over the poll that we'd done over the weekend, with the President, which shows a drop in the trial heat, and evidence that it's not because of Vietnam, but because the corruption thing is starting to get through some. He feels that Henry has got to get out through either Ziegler, or Rogers, the point that the President is causing a delay in these, because the deal isn't made properly, because that's the one thing that doesn't look so good in the poll.

The Vice President is going ahead with his blast at McGovern, so we'll get some action on that anyway.

The President also got into some schedule things today; there was a great train wreck in Chicago, as a result of which we decided to cancel our Chicago visit. The President called Mayor Daley to tell him, and it worked out pretty well, because Daley said he was canceling the McGovern parade for Wednesday night also. The President decided to go ahead with the radio speech today at the last minute on the old folks, so that was tossed in. He's approved the Urban Affairs speech



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and the TV speech. He's just going to read them as written, and wants to keep the week basically pretty free. He got back to the idea of the big press pool on the plane coming back on Monday, as well as going out on Saturday. He decided to go to church in San Clemente, instead of Whittier.

Deed of Gift - Privacy withdrawal reviewed and released by MS, NARA, October 21, 2013
Audio Cassette 26, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 15
Duration: 6 seconds

And, got back to the Drown problem on election night because they are coming back. He doesn't want them at the house; they're to stay at the Shoreham.

He wants a phone list for election night, people he should call. He wants to send wires to all our chairmen in each state, as the state goes over the top on election night. He refused to call Cahill to apologize for not mentioning him at the Northeast regional meeting. He decided to hold up on Oklahoma, New Mexico, and will not do those if we don't reschedule Chicago, and then later decided that we definitely should not reschedule Chicago, so we've dropped those on the schedule now.

And that's the end of October 30th.