



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

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Wednesday, November 15.

The President had me over first thing this morning, for mainly a discussion of Cabinet personnel. As of now, he feels we have to move Richardson out of HEW and Weinberger in. Also for the busing reason the question on that is what Weinberger's view on busing is, that we've got to give signals in the right direction. We've got to get the South into the Cabinet, that is a Southerner Secretary of Defense if we can get one. We should get John Collins from Boston as Secretary of Commerce, as a Catholic Democrat. The question of whether Clements could do the top job at Defense. Today the President talked to Rinfret and said that he wants to see him. Thinks Fred Dean is our best appointment from the South to Commerce, John Rawlings should be National Finance Chairman. Wants to consider Bush for National Chairman, Dent thinks he's the best. The President met with Dent this morning after his Vice President meeting. Wants to be sure Timmons has a Southern Democrat on his Congressional staff, to deal with the Southerners, such as Dick Russell's man. Wants to bring Dick Brannon of HEW over, who's a good Southerner, and would be good on the White House staff. We've got to have some Southerner in the White House.

Meeting with the Vice President this morning. We started out by reviewing the campaign, and discussing vote results, and some analysis of how things happen. And then got into the Vietnam situation summary. And he explained to the Vice President what our status was there on the negotiations that he thinks Henry is going to be able to wrap it up on this last trip, and he went into some discussion of the letter he wrote to Thieu, and the position he's taking on a very hard line basis, that Thieu has got to go along with us now. That if he doesn't, we won't have Congressional support to back him up later. They discussed the need to tie Teddy to McGovern, and not let him get off the hook. Then the Vice President started talking about the problems that he has in his role, particularly in intergovernmental relations on domestic policy. That they're not in the flow of policy formulation. The President interrupted and said, well, under our reorganization plans, this whole intergovernmental relations thing should be in OMB or HUD, and our reorganization gets into this, which I'm going to have Ehrlichman and Haldeman go over



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with you after our meeting. He said the Vice President should be dealing with important things instead, that he and the President should not have to take the heat on these intergovernmental matters. That they should stay out of solving their troubles, and he should stay on the highest level. We should set up effective machinery to handle these matters, keep the President and Vice President out of the crossfire and stay out of the nuts and bolts. He said what he should do, (the VP) is to continue his participation in the foreign field. Shuck off a lot of the clerical stuff, get into the new things, not just the President's errand boy to the mayors and Governors. The best big new thing would be the Bicentennial, a major public event of the Administration, involving all fifty states and all foreign countries. Jimmy Roosevelt's going to be our Ambassador abroad on this, and the Vice President could pick that up. This he should take on as a major responsibility, get it on the track. It's an opportunity to get high-powered people, rather than just a mediocre staff. And we talked about enlisting our New American Majority as the focal point for the Bicentennial. He said that first, the Vice President should spend more time cultivating the new Senators and Congressmen. The Vice President said he will be spending more time there, and that he's going to beef up his staff on this, that he had already started working on it. Also, he should work on not letting the Wednesday group take over.

Second, he should work the Southern Democratic Senators and Congressmen, and also some of the Northern Democrats like Delaney. Third, he should keep the Governors and so forth, maintain that contact -- but only at the highest level, social and speeches -- but stay out of it at the staff level. Fourth, the Bicentennial, he should not move fast, he should get a really high power group of PR people, writers, organization people-- not partisan, bring in the Democrats who have supported us. The Vice President on the political side should be in the battle, but above it. He should skip all the crappy jobs. Fifth, he should do a lot of the Party chores, but don't let them burden him down, he should stay above the Party, and do the New Majority. The Vice President raised the question of Indian Affairs, said he's very interested in that. The President said that he thinks it's a loser and the Vice President should not be tied to a loser. The President then reiterated his assignments to the Vice President. First, and foremost, Senate and House



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relations. Second, governors, etcetera, at a high level. Third, the New Majority, ethnics, Catholics in the South, and some political, but not too much. Fourth -- in the government -- preside at the Senate enough for credit, hit the NSC and that sort of meeting, shuck away all the trivia that are nothing. Fifth, take on a big project, the Bicentennial, this is the way to get an adequate staff. Sixth, foreign things at selected times.

The Vice President then said that he had reservations about the Bicentennial, and that he wants a chance to do selected tasks in the foreign field-- Kissinger type missions in the foreign area. The President agreed that he should not just do goodwill trips and funerals, but that he shouldn't worry about this, we'll handle it, setting him up for some single shot negotiations and foreign economic things. The President makes the point that what makes the Vice President important is what he does on the big plays, not the number of jobs he has. He pushed him hard on the Hill work and going at the social level.

The Vice President then got into some staff changes that he wanted to make, and the President told him to talk to John and me later. John and I then met with him over at Laurel, and went through the reorganization plan, which he was in basic agreement with, but, he got again into the staff and made the point that he was scared of the Bicentennial, because he thinks that it could be disastrous. You can't satisfy people, and it would lead only to trouble.

Later in the day the President got into the Colson problem again. Says that he really should leave now for our interests, and it doesn't really fit now under the reorganization to keep him in the White House, and, therefore, we should go another round with him. We really need him out now and not later. The question was whether to have him as RNC counsel-- instead we should have a member of his firm, and not him. We should consider Dent as counsel to the RNC, if he stays up here. Or, something else if he wants to stay. He said I should talk to Colson, say I'm talking without the President's knowledge regarding Dean, Ehrlichman and so forth-- the inevitable problems with the Hunt trial. The President can't let you go under fire; we can't be sure what will come out. On the positive side, you're needed outside now. Finch, Klein, etcetera, are leaving



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and pulling out completely, you're going for a specific purpose, and you will have a continuing relation-- the Clark Clifford role. The problem is that your position inside will erode; you have no great goal to pursue, like the election. The President needs you on the outside, where you are free to set up a campaign firm, as well as a law firm and do the poll brokering. Now is the time to pick up the clients -- law and PR -- and we just don't have the job inside. Think in terms of Lord Walton in rebuilding the Party. The President is determined to get politics out of the White House, so you become the man to see. You've got to go into the President and say that you've thought it through, this is what you should do, you reached the conclusion, be a big man. Both Klein and Finch want to stay, and the President said no, you shouldn't put him in a position of difficulty with you.

Met this afternoon with Pat Buchanan, basically to review his role. It was a long meeting; we got into quite a long discussion on philosophy and so forth with Pat. Told him that he wanted him first to supervise the news summary, and to do a weekly political evaluation on a free-wheeling basis. Second, to do the news conference preparation. Third, to handle the counterattack material, get it to the RNC and so on, more on programs than people. And fourth, to make substantive policy contributions. He covered the need to build up the mythology of the election-- the need to get all of this out of the White House now. And we had quite a little discussion on how to structure the counterattack. He then also got into thank you letters and called me on the phone tonight, I had gone home for the evening. He's concerned about letters to the labor leaders and so on, that someone has to supervise it. And that he's concerned whether we have any one in the political organization that's handling the first naming and all that. We need an extra paragraph to personalize the key letters, for instance the surrogates. The President has done all the basic forms, now they have to be worked in. Price has the responsibility to see that all the forms are put together; Colson should do the Democrats and laborers; Dent should work on it. We should get them out fast, they should work around-the-clock on this.

I had a talk with Kissinger this evening. He's concerned about some of the appointments and all, wanted to be sure that we wouldn't put Connally into Defense or State without letting him know



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ahead of time. Said he has some concerns about who Richardson might bring with him to State. And says the bureaucracy is really churning about what's happening, that it's good for now, but the problem is that if it goes too long -- that is beyond Thanksgiving -- it will turn on us. He also says Connally has put out the story that he's been offered State, and Henry is concerned about how to handle that if it's done.

End of November 15.