



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

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Monday, December 11.

The President had Dole in first thing this morning. I had talked to Bush ahead of time and worked out the arrangement with him as to how we would handle the announcement. He agreed that Dole should go out after the meeting and cover the whole thing, but say that Bush still has important work at the UN and that we'd have to do the shift after the General Assembly.

The Dole meeting went reasonably well. Bob came in and sort of wandered through a lot of chitchat for a while, and then the President finally eased into the deal by talking about Dole's trips, saying he ought to probably go to Japan, which would keep it open. Leave the option for a spring or fall trip, look for a really good event for maximum attention, but his best advice would be to go to Russia in the summertime. And that was left that way. Then Dole raised his handicap question. The President told him to sit down with our experts and develop a good bill, as the Dole Bill, on his information center for the handicapped idea. Providing them with a single source on benefits, and so on, like a veteran can do. Some discussion of Anne Armstrong, and John Rollins for National Finance and so on. Then the President called Bush --with Dole on the other phone-- and also had Ziegler in the office at the same time to develop the line. They agreed that Bush would stay on through the session, and Dole would stay at the RNC until the January 19 meeting. And Ziegler should shoot down the nonsense that Dole was pushed out. That basically covered the Dole meeting.

The President covered a lot of other odds and ends. Said he didn't want to meet with Colton alone on the Republican governor deal, or with the full group, but would meet with the Executive Committee. Wanted me to call Connally and tell him about Bush and get his reaction on Strauss. Wanted to be sure Colson gives Bush, Brock and Brown the book, chapter and verse on the President's activities for candidates. Wants Ehrlichman to get going on the Yorba Linda house, put someone in charge of it to keep the lawn mowed, and so on:

Had Ehrlichman in for a couple of hours. Went through his usual dreary review of the fact that we have a dull Cabinet in the public mind, and went on and on about that stuff. Made the point



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that we have to get some very young people at the second level and ethnics and thinks that we're wasting Krogh, who's too good, and Whitaker, who adds nothing.

Wanted me to get Mack Farrell locked-- keep him in the Visitor's Office, because the image does matter, plus doing a good job. And that Shultz is not impressive in selling the program as he's got to do today. That we've got no one to move around and articulate the Administration. That the Labor Under Secretary has to be a White House man. We can't handle that one solely on the Labor basis. Wants to get LaFontante and Anne Armstrong in to see him. Then gave us a long, long lecture on leadership and rambled on and on about the Georgetown set and all the problems there and then read a lot from Disraeli on the elite in London and so forth. Got into the election analysis and the fact that our margin in the suburbia was less than it was in '68 but we did better in the central cities, which is why we put together the landslide.

Got into the Watergate thing. Feels he doesn't want to leave an aura around the White House that there are a lot of bad guys there and the President doesn't care. Says the theory of, "Just be quiet and it'll all go away" won't work. That we need something to be said. Otherwise, how can the President handle it at his first press conference? We should try just a very brief statement, but we must get something to get it out of the way. At least something that Segretti had nothing to do with Watergate. And he feels a good offense is the best defense in this kind of thing. He went through it all with Ehrlichman and said that the view now is that the President is trying to hide something or protect someone, and that we've got to go for the smallest statement we can make, but we do have to make some statement.

I called Connally to get his reaction. He said he was mad as hell at Strauss regarding his TV thing yesterday. That he had called him and told him his remarks were ill-advised -- that he had gone out of his way to take a cut at Connally and said he had read him out of the Party and made the point, apparently, that it was a sin to have voted against McGovern, and that if that's so, they ought to set up new moral standards. He said he was pretty rough and that Strauss was quite disturbed. Connally said he may publicly ask that they censure all Democrats who voted against



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McGovern. He says Strauss' election won't change a thing, that he doesn't know what his deals are that he made to get the post, but that in any event, the Liberals will try to crucify him, that he brings no strength to the Party, he's just a manager. He can't bring the South in. Wallace is the leader of the Democratic South. The Southern Governors will try to keep the Party together, so will the Congressmen and Senators. For that reason, we should move in, somewhat, to let them have a place to go, but they'll need a compelling motivation. They can't go to a void or a nebulous third party. Theoretically, they'd do it in a minute, but they don't know how to do it practically. It'll take a move -- either a positive move by the Republicans or a negative move by the Democrats. We'll have to wait and see. He doesn't think Connally going Republican would do it. It wouldn't be enough, and anyway, the timing isn't now. He then mentioned that he's going to Saudi Arabia on the 15th and would like a letter to the King from the President.

When I was in the office late this afternoon, the President was going over general political stuff with Colson, then got a phone call apparently from Haig on the Vietnam problem. Talked about considering recess for a week and that Kissinger was backed into a corner again and that there was a question about the VP option of going to Saigon, that maybe that was a bad deal.

End of December 11.