



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Monday, January 8th. In the staff meeting this morning, we discussed the wage-price announcement plans, which was decided would be Thursday or Friday of this week. And because there are a lot of pluses, Shultz feels there should be a short Presidential statement on camera. That he should go out to the press room and make a statement and leave, and let Shultz do the detail briefings. And we'll be sending a one year extension request to the Hill for authority; announce the new director of the Cost of Living Council. George felt we needed a Presidential decision on how to go on this now. I raised it with the President later in the day, and he felt very strongly that this was the kind of thing where he has to go on instinct, and his instinct on this is very strongly that he should not go out front on it. That it's not a good thing for public exposure at this time, because it's not subject A, which is Vietnam, and it won't divert from Vietnam, and he'll get hit for not answering questions on the right thing. He did say he might do an audio tape instead, however.

I had a phone conversation with Connally, mainly just to check in with him. He says that he was very concerned about the newspaper campaign regarding the brawl about Congress, not just Vietnam but on the overall thing. And he said, for example, on the *Today* show this morning, Bob Byrd said he hadn't seen the President since last year. And he thinks that the whole attack, overall, is the most vicious thing he's ever seen and it will foreclose our options in a lot of areas. That the President should, therefore, call for Congress to reorganize themselves, put them on the defensive instead of the President. He went back to Byrd saying he thinks that reorganization thing is very bad, and that they might hold up appointments, if we don't agree not to withhold funds. He thinks that we should make the point that Congress shouldn't criticize the President, it should reorganize itself. This is fertile field for counterattack, regarding the fact that their structure is not sound. We should not be mean, but we should toss it back at them. Congress has to assert its power they keep saying. The President should say sure, but they also should exercise its responsibilities; its power without responsibility is destructive. He says he'll probably be up this week, and then he went through some specific people and appointment items.



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Audio Cassette 29, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 18 [AC 29(A) Sel 12]
Duration: 14 seconds

He said also he's having a problem on his Algerian contract that Kerns and the Algerians are about to draw swords, and he may have to talk to Shultz or Kissinger on this.

John Dean called to report on the Watergate trials, says that if we can prove in any way by hard evidence that our plane was bugged in '68, he thinks that we could use that as a basis to say we're going to force Congress to go back and investigate '68 as well as '72 and thus turn them off. He says Hunt's going to take a guilty plea on three counts. After Silbert's opening statement, he'll say that no higher-ups were involved. The rest of them will go to trial. That Rothblatt, the attorney for the Cubans, is a wild man, and he wants to go to trial. Liddy wants to go to trial, because he's hoping for an error in catching things up on a lot of procedures, and all, and thinks that, John thinks that this is better because Liddy won't take the stand, and it will be good to have him do it. McCord will testify, but he has no first-hand knowledge. All the Cubans will sit mute, and even if they're immunized afterwards, they'll take a contempt charge rather than talk. There's great concern on their part that the commitments to them won't be honored, and there's a problem with funds that LaRue is supposed to be working on. John is going to assemble a Congressional strategy group of himself, Wally Johnson, Moore, and Colson to, because he thinks that we may have some of our own cards to play. That we should start looking at the Hill guys' responsibilities, vulnerabilities and see if we can't turn off the Hill effort before it gets started, which he thinks is important to do.



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The President got into a lot of trivia. He has covered his press concerns with Ziegler, and he's talking about the things he wants to do there. Got into the discussion of the battle with Congress, and his feeling that the problem is the weakness of Timmons's personality and the failure of Kissinger and Ehrlichman to take the responsibility of handling this. He wants to avoid a whole series of Cabinet swearings-ins if he can. It's a real problem of doing them individually, and the question of whether he has to be present for the swearing in ceremonies, with the families, and all that. Maybe, we could swear the whole Cabinet in at once, if they're all confirmed, which he doesn't feel would be so bad. He said to tell Ash not to let the attacks bother him.

He went through the plans for the Inaugural church service. Julie and the Connie Stuart thing; he feels that it's a great mistake for Connie to stay, which Pat Nixon is apparently pushing now, so I have to get on that. Some other personnel things: he doesn't want Ambassador Meeker to get another ambassadorial appointment; he's worried about what to do about Clem Stone, how to avoid hurting his feelings. Concern about the FBI, and he had Ehrlichman in talking about that. He feels that Gray can't cut it, and that we do need to change that things are deteriorating there, and that Ruckelshaus may not have the stature and mystique to handle it. But in any event, Gray is not able enough, lacks the energy.

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Duration: 11 seconds

He thinks we have to find another post for him, and that he could do Bonn, so we should keep that open for him.



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He wants a thorough run on appointments, sub-Cabinet, and so on, later in the week as soon as we're ready.

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Audio Cassette 29, Side A, Withdrawn Item Number 20 [AC 29(A) Sel 15]
Duration: 12 seconds

He thinks we should offer Sweden to Gordon Allott Fast, and also make Miller an ambassador somewhere like Jamaica...

...to get him out of Washington.

Ehrlichman says on the reorganization and Congressional thing that Holifield is on the edge of supporting us, and Erwin can probably come along too. And...

Back to personnel, the President felt that we should go for the woman at the AEC, and get Schlesinger to sell it to Holifield if we can.

We got back on the press deal. He feels that Kissinger has let the press be an influence on him, so he's now become a captive of our critics, rather than controlling them. We've got to avoid



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getting emotional about press attacks; we must be detached but not isolated. We must not pay attention, whether they're for or against us, and in making great decisions, you can't be affected by press reaction. You do have to know what others are reading so that you know how to deal with it.

On the Congress thing, he says at some point he's going to say that this Congress, by its irresponsibility, prolonged the war, but he can't do that yet. At about the point he got into that, Bull brought in the cable report from Kissinger, in a red folder, and the President read it through and then summed it up, saying, there's basically no progress, four and a half hours of sparring, and that was about it. He then had Colonel Kennedy come in and said that he should call Rogers and make the point that when he meets with the South Vietnamese, we need South Vietnam to go along with us, if they're going, if we're going to continue the support. Also, that we don't want the North, the South Vietnamese to meet with the press.

He got into general operations, especially for Ehrlichman, and said that we shouldn't get so bogged down on the Inaugural and our new offices and all that we miss the essential thing, such as dealing with Congress, especially for Ehrlichman. Ehrlichman says he is going to do a regular domestic briefing of the press every two weeks or so to draw the poison off before the President's press conferences, etcetera. Also to do specific subjects that the President doesn't want to do, and that we're running a school for key Administration people on what our policy is, how to work with the White House, the OMB, the press, and so on. The President said we ought to consider a similar bipartisan school for Congress for our supporters. Ehrlichman argued the value of some overt evidence of Presidential activity on non-Vietnam. The President said that he's concerned on the economy, because it's moving too well now and we may have a dip in '74 because of that. He told me to talk to Connally to get him to tell us when he's going to move. That if he doesn't decide on a party thing, we're going to have a problem, because we have to have another horse



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than Agnew. We got into the general political discussion then and on the fact that we can't allow Agnew to get the nomination, but there is no other real possibility except Connally. After Ehrlichman left, he made the point that Ehrlichman getting into this whole PR thing would be very effective. Then raised the question of whether Klein could still be useful, and made the point that if we get him to divest himself of all operational responsibility and become solely a spokesman in handling contact, that he would be good and that we should keep him on. I think Pat Nixon or somebody, gave him a pitch on Klein, and he's reacting to that.

End of January 8th.