



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

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Wednesday, January 10.

In the staff meeting this morning we got into the Webster problem, and I said we weren't going to be appointing him, but told Ehrlichman that we were going to have to put him at the FTC. John pretty much blew his gasket, feels that he's got to see the President on that, and also on Pottenger, which we've got to get a decision on today. That carried on into the day, and the President didn't want to talk to John about it, even though John had requested the meeting. Wanted me to handle it. After going back and forth with John some, we decided on the Pottenger matter that we could get the executive order on quotas for colleges changed, and that the President would never have signed such a thing anyway. Turns out it was a Lyndon Johnson executive order. Now we'll get a signal out, which should handle Buchanan's objection to Pottenger, who was only enforcing the order according to Ehrlichman's pitch. John seems to feel that he can wheel it that way and agreed to try and do it.

On the Webster thing, I covered John's point with the President. The President said, we'll give Webster the OEP. I checked with that Colson. He says that won't go, so we came down on the basis, that the President said to tell Ehrlichman that he has an uneasy feeling on him, and that he's a little too smooth, reminds him of Kirkpatrick, the FTC guy, and he personally feels that it's better to have him in a less sensitive position. We need a solid man that we can control politically in that post. But that if John insists, the President will take him on faith, on John's recommendation only; if he tries to screw any friends of ours or anything like that, John is going to have wheel it though.

The President had Rose and me in for several hours this morning just on general chitchat. Said that Hobe Lewis had raised the question of keeping Stanton on the USIA Board, and we talked him out of that. Talked about Cliff Folger as a possibility for Red Cross Chairman. Discussed Stans' S-list and all the problems there. The question of Van Claiborne's program for the Inaugural concert. Some ideas for Chief of Protocol -- the President doesn't want to go with



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Borman, or somebody who is a star in his own right, but rather an advance man type. I suggested Dick Walling, and Rose suggested Mike Duvall.

We got Henry's cable regarding scheduling, and the President said I should send Henry a cable saying to leave open the possibility of a Haig trip to the friendly Asian capitals, as well as to Saigon rather than Henry going to Hanoi. But then the President realized that I was right in saying that we'd have a real problem in getting Henry stirred up on something like that, and shouldn't get into it. A little later, we got -- I had a phone call from Henry, and he said that he was sending a new scheduling approach that he thought the President would like because it solves some of the problems. And then when his cable came in, it turned out it was, because he's worked out a deal now where he would return to Paris to sign the agreement rather than going to Hanoi. And then would go to Hanoi in early February to work out peace settlement arrangements rather than to sign the agreement, which would solve the problem of Saigon's objection to signing the agreement in Hanoi -- and also the President's objection -- plus closing down the time frame and all that.

The President had Haig come over to go over the cable and the situation, and then he had quite a discussion on it. The real point is that the President feels he has to announce the settlement to the Americans before Kissinger initials it. Otherwise there is no point in his announcing it, because it's just covering something that is already done. He told Haig to get a message back to Henry, saying that the new scenario is infinitely preferable to the old routine of his going to Hanoi and that we should go ahead trying to work that out with the North Vietnamese -- that we would like the cease-fire as soon as possible, not to drag it on. But he feels that we will face an insurmountable problem on informing Congressional leaders and so on, in the period between the time Kissinger returns and the time that Haig returns from Saigon, therefore, Haig's trip should be compressed if possible. In other words, the less time Haig is in Saigon, the better. He should leave the technical work for others. Part of the problem, the President feels, is that Henry wants to be at the Inaugural and I think that's right. He's working the timing to suit his own convenience.



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The ideal here would be to get Kissinger to Paris quicker, like during the Inaugural. So then he said on the cable to say if we're fortunate enough to get Thieu aboard, that we don't believe the news will hold, and the announcement for the 19th which is in Henry's scenario, would have to be Presidential, rather than just White House saying that Henry is going to Paris for the signing. And then we would have to say at that time that we have an agreement. We should leave open the possibility of an announcement on Haig's return from Saigon, if we get a break with Thieu's acceptance; if Thieu doesn't agree, then the President is going to have to get the leaders in and tell them and go for a massive bluff to try and force Thieu -- saying on TV that Thieu won't accept, that he calls on him to do so. Both he and Haig feel we have to do that, rather than option two, which would be just to try and go it alone, because that just won't work. We should after some discussion come to the point that Friday's too late for either a Presidential or a White House announcement, because we're into the Inaugural cycle then. And Henry should make the point to the North Vietnamese that anything we do has got to be done by Thursday night at the latest, so Haig should leave a day earlier and get back in time for that. The President wants a 1,000 word maximum statement drafted for TV Thursday night, including something thanking the American people for their support. Now it depends on the intentions on both sides to keep the agreement, that we'll do our part. We call on all others to abide by it and so forth.

He feels the real problem on all this is Congressional, because they're going to demand the details. On the other hand, if Thieu doesn't go along, the clear thing is that Haig should stay in Asia, go to the other countries and filibuster and not come back until Saturday or Sunday. Then the President would bring the leaders in Monday and tell them that our problem is that we can't get Thieu's agreement and then he'd go on TV Monday night and try to play the bluff. He's obviously very much concerned about getting this on the right track for announcements, and timing, and so forth, and is afraid that Henry's ego and other kinds of problems are interfering in the sound decision in this regard, and I think he is probably right.

End of January 10.