



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

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Thursday, March 22.

The President had several schedule items today, but in between spent the whole time on Watergate again. Had me in at 9:00 this morning before the 10:00 meeting I scheduled to have with Mitchell, which was postponed to 11:00. So I spent two hours with the President. He was concerned about the Gray testimony, which keeps getting out of hand and asked who is programming Gray since the White House isn't. I pointed out that he had told us not to, that he had talked to Gray himself and then had said Kleindienst was to be programming him, which is what we were relying on. So beyond that I didn't know. He didn't regard that as a very satisfactory answer, but that's where the situation is at the moment.

He also said that Colson talked to him on the phone last night and reported that Baker's administrative assistant had come to Colson, and said that Baker said he didn't-- that he was feeling hurt because he wants to help but doesn't feel that he has anyone to talk to, and Colson suggested that maybe he should be the one. Baker said, for example, that he didn't know about the executive privilege statement before it came out and had caught him unawares and so on. Baker, of course, in talking to the President, had said he didn't want to talk to anyone else at the White House. That he wanted to have Kleindienst be his contact, which the President set up. But apparently, that's not working. So the President raises the question what's Kleindienst doing with Baker and all? What's Kleindienst doing on guidance to Gray? And he feels somebody's got to get to Kleindienst and tell him he's got to pick up the laboring oar here if the White House has to stay out of it. He then said to go ahead with the Mitchell meeting and then he'd meet with us all at 1:30, the full group. Thought I ought to talk to Colson, find out what he promised Hunt, and he wondered about Walsh as special prosecutor if we decide to go that route.

We had our long session, went through the whole facts and options. The question series again and didn't really come up with anything new except that Mitchell made the point strongly that the only real problem the President has is invoking executive privilege, which does put him in the position of appearing to cover up. John's argument, therefore, is that the solution to the



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problem, at the moment at least, lies in getting out of the executive privilege wicket somehow. And we spent some time discussing that, coming down on the side of at least considering going to the committee with the proposal that the White House people will waive executive privilege and come up, if we can testify in executive session without television and so on, and if it's limited to relevant questions. When we went back to meet with the President, we got into this and he believed that it was probably a pretty good approach and that's where we left it. We also felt that there should be a Dean report to the President, which Dean has pretty much completed on Segretti and can do over the weekend on Watergate and that that should be given by the President to the committee and probably publicly released. So we're working on that possibility now.

In the midst of all that, we come up with a new problem with Gray who was in questioning today. Got trapped into admitting or saying to Senator Byrd that he was probably right in his assumption that Dean had lied when he said he told the FBI he didn't know whether Hunt had an office in the White House. Of course the fact was they didn't ask him that, they asked him if they could see Hunt's office, and he said he didn't know that and would have to check. So Gray has sort of screwed us again.

The President seemed to be reasonably well satisfied by the decision we came up with and went on to his meeting with George Shultz upon his return from Europe and then took off for Key Biscayne. I'm staying here tonight for the Rogers diplomatic ball and going to Key Biscayne first thing in the morning.

End of March 22.