



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

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

Tuesday, December 8.

The President had a relatively light day. He added a breakfast with Bill Rogers sometime late last night, which resulted in his getting in a little late. The only schedule item this morning was an hour meeting with King Hussein. We added a few quick items after that. He then has a small working dinner with Hussein tonight, and that's it.

He started out with a strong complaint about the Hussein scheduling, on the basis that it should have been either a dinner or a meeting, but not both. Henry walked in at just about that point, so the President put that to him too. He also made the point that he will not see Dayan alone tomorrow-- or Friday, but will have Rogers and Sisco also sit in. Henry obviously was not pleased with this. He's anxious that we shut up on the Lithuanian defector, since there's nothing for us to gain by talking about it any further. He asked Henry for an answer for his press conference on a question regarding the Tet truce which is being pushed by Senator Jackson and backed by Rogers, much to Henry's chagrin. Henry has indicated that any such thing would be disastrous to us, in that it would permit the enemy to build-up during the truce, which they're already doing, to get ready for a major drive on either Laos or Cambodia. The only way we could possibly set up a truce would be to include the stipulation that they would have to stop infiltration, and they would, of course, be unwilling to do this.

I reached Connally this morning, having missed him last night, and passed on the President's message together with my own pleasure. I raised the timing question, and Connally said he had no concern about timing, and would be perfectly happy with an early announcement. In fact felt that the sooner the better. I then discussed this with Mitchell, who agreed, as did the President. The President then wanted Mitchell to take on the job right away of informing Kennedy that we now have a real problem with the massive new program we're about to launch, and the need to get Democratic votes to pass it. We'll really need a spokesman for this, to hit Arthur Burns when he lobs one at us from one side, and the Democrats when they lob at us from the other, and to keep pounding on the Hill. He wanted Mitchell to make these points to Kennedy, and set him up



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for a removal, and then we'd put the whole program into motion on Monday, when the President would see Kennedy and tell him who his successor was going to be. And then see John Tower, explain the whole thing to him, then meet with the leadership, to explain it to them, then go into the press room with Kennedy and Connally. And make the announcement on the basis that Kennedy would stay until the first of February, completing his two-year commitment, and that because of the massive transition Kennedy will spend the interim time teaching Connally the job.

The biggest problem of all here, of course, is to try to get all this done without getting any-- getting any leaks ahead of time, and obviously the thing to do is to move as fast as we can. The only problem is that we've got to get Bush settled before we can move on Connally, and that gets back to the whole parley on the National Chairmanship, because we have to see what MacGregor will do. I had—I talked with Clark, and the whole thought obviously shook him rather substantially. Right after we talked, Mitchell came in and we talked with him for a while too. I think he may do it, but he's obviously not terribly happy about the idea. If Clark does go to the RNC, we'll bring Bush into the White House. If Clark doesn't go, we'll probably have to send Bush to the UN.

I talked with Rogers, and he wants to meet the first of the week to go over the questions of removal of State Department people, so we've got that at least started. I talked to Bill Carruthers, the TV guy in California, and he's coming in on Thursday to see if we can work out a deal there. Mitchell reneged on the President's request that he notify Kennedy. The President concluded then that we have to put the thing off until Tuesday. He will do Kennedy on Monday, and get it set a day ahead of time, and then move on all the other things Tuesday, in sequence after the leadership meeting.

The President was interested in some ideas Rogers came up with, mainly regarding the format and approach to Cabinet meetings. These arose from Rogers' view of the British Cabinet, which meets every week for a brief general pep talk and chat type session. The President now wants to try having Cabinet meetings every two weeks not-- at 8:00AM, having them always end at 9:00.



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Without a planned agenda, where everyone has a chance to talk generally, it's probably a good idea. Another rather complex day, as we try to put all the bits and pieces together but the net result is going to be very constructive and that makes it fun.

End of the day.