



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

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Tuesday, May 20.

Announced the Thieu meeting at Midway this morning. President really furious because *Washington Post* had leaked the story - especially because our agreement with Vietnam was for simultaneous release. He said he hadn't reacted to other leaks, but this endangered national security and was serious.

He's now banned White House communication with the *Times* (for their editorial yesterday regarding the Nixon Foundation related to the Fortas case and for their coverage on the Cambodian bombings); the *St. Louis Press Democrat* (for Ottenad's inside story on Administration problems, pure phony); and the *Washington Post* (for today's leak). Says won't tell Ziegler or anyone his plan about Chief Justice announcement, to avoid leak.

As last few days, had me in for several long talks ranging over personnel and PR, more of the process of getting ready for what's to come. He's in a very introspective kind of mood. Mad for a little while this morning, then right back on course. Same line of discussion regarding need for really strong overall PR man - and the TV problem.

Did a film statement for Rebuild, and used tile TelePrompTer for the first time. Went pretty well, but I don't think he'll ever use it on TV.

Discussed need for a game plan regarding Chief Justice and he told me it would be Burger. Went over some ideas on how to get most mileage - hard to do and still keep secrecy until last minute. Ehrlichman and I discussed later and will develop further. Very important.

While home writing this at 10:00, he just called me back to office "to go over a few things." He was there when I left, but I didn't check out.

It's now midnight, just returned from an absolutely fascinating two hours with the President in the Oval Office. Walked in, he was pacing the floor in blue velvet smoking jacket puffing on a cigar. Said he'd decided to really dramatize the Chief Justice announcement. Move it up from



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Thursday to Wednesday, and do it in East Room with whole Cabinet - on live TV at 3:00. Have Ziegler announce to press at 11:00. I suggested 7:00 for prime time. President agreed. We talked on and on, about the new Chief Justice, the plan for announcing, etc. Called Mitchell at the Iranian Embassy to have him come in first thing in the morning to discuss plan. He'll have to speed up his tax and security checks - but says he can. Once again, President comes up with the right answer, after we all struggle with it.

He rambled on about the kind of Justice Burger will be, etc. Had me bring in *Who's Who*, and read his, as well as Burger's. Just wanted to sit and talk, like the good old days when he was picking a VP and a Cabinet. Also went over the Klein, Rogers, etc., stuff, the need for a TV man, etc. And the plans for building up the Thieu meeting, and hope for a major announcement at the end. Hope it all works out.