



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

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Thursday, July 1.

In discussing the Pentagon Paper question, in one of a long series of long meetings today, President raised the point of the Hiss question again and said that Elliot Richardson has got to fire Cooke, regardless of what he thinks about him. That one of the points he kept making about Alger Hiss is that his family was beyond reproach, etcetera. He wants Ehrlichman to realize that we have a great opportunity here: that this is a conspiracy; that they are not on good ground; that we now can leak out the other bad stories. He feels this isn't the time for a Presidential statement: that he should not elevate the suppression of the Papers, and it's not a good issue for us. So maybe further down the line, after our newsbreak on the July 15th, then he can really unload. The problem is that he doesn't want to get into the Ellsberg question. So he wanted Ehrlichman to do some checking on that, with the key staff people. He really got going again on trying to get Huston, or Dick Allen, or somebody, in fast to take this whole project on, like the President took on the Hiss case. 18 hours a day, with total dedication, tracking down every lead, leaking stuff to the press. Making-- he made the point that the Hiss case was won in the newspapers, because no one would prosecute, even the FBI. Also, on the declassification thing, leak the other stories to the good newspapers, because this takes the people's eyes off of Vietnam and gets them thinking about the past. What we need is not a workman like Whitaker, but an SOB like Huston, and the President will direct it himself. He doesn't believe the Cooke story. He's convinced Cooke was working against us, within the bureaucracy. He said, don't ever have Cooke in the White House, and he was very discouraged that Elliot won't move ahead and fire him. He feels that we're being too soft on Cooke. The real question is, why did he show anything to Ellsberg? What was Ellsberg's need to know? Later, he made the point that if we can't get Elliot to fire Ellsberg then we should at least cru-- I mean to fire Cooke, we should at least crucify him in the press.

He feels that, going back to the statement question: that we're still better off to let Ellsberg unfold a little more, before it's the right time for him to say something. We had a lot of discussions back and forth on whether to go ahead, and our final recommendation was that he should not say anything on television, but that it probably would be a good idea for him to make



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a basic statement at the Kansas City briefing. He's very anxious to get going on the busting out the other papers, and the declassification stuff. Still looking for names, so we suggested the idea of having Congressmen take the lead on this, like Rousselot or somebody like that, which he liked, but he still wants an inside staff man to ride herd on it.

He developed the line, regarding *The Times* that the court has now said that the newspaper can print the material if it doesn't do irreparable damage. Question now is whether a newspaper has the responsibility in any standard. That is, is irreparable damage the standard that the American people-- the American press is going to hold for itself? He feels that the press is on a bad wicket, regarding the right to profit from the publication of stolen documents. They have a constitutional right under the First Amendment, and that overrides the right of America and the right of an American who is fighting for his country to stay alive. They say they don't care about the effects. If declassification is going to follow unauthorized disclosure, then the de-- the whole classification system is destroyed. There's no grounds for release on the basis that other people have it. He's very strongly pushing to cut off the security clearances of most of the people in government and all the outside organizations, like Rand and Brookings, etcetera. Buchanan's arguing harder for a Presidential statement, and again we went back and forth throughout the day on that thing. The problem being that nobody really has made a clear statement of our line, and that's bothering him.

He had a meeting with the security declassification group that was set up under his order of January 1st; this is Rehnquist's group, and he really jumped on these poor guys who are second level bureaucrats. He told them to attack the thing frontally, to start classifying far less material, and have far greater penalties for violations of classified material, and to cut way down on the number of people with top secret clearances, setting up new classifications. He also wants to knock off the clearances for outside institutions. Don't classify to protect politically, only to protect the national security. Cut the number of documents and the number of people and then get a much stricter law, not under the Espionage Act, something with a straight criminal penalty, very stiff, for anyone who takes a classified document. He told them to expand their study to



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cover all previous wars. They should not be classified, and he wants them to give the President recommendations on how to declassify. This goes back to his idea on Korea, World War II, Cuba, etcetera. He says we now have the standard applied in an arrogant way to this war, because it's immoral. So it should-- shouldn't we also declassify the other wars? We can't have a double standard. He says that his purpose is not more secrecy, but less, because we classify too much, and then we can't protect it.

He wants a new classification at an extraordinary level, like "Presidential decision" or something, with highest security and only a hundred people cleared for it. He makes the point that you can't protect-- because you can't protect these documents and all, we've become inhibited, so we don't put things through the bureaucracy anymore. He wants to set up an ad hoc clearance for outsiders, so that they're cleared for one purpose when needed, but don't give them a permanent clearance so they can see anything. We can't worry about protecting individual reputations; we can only worry about the national security.

He made the point that the establishment has a new intellectual arrogance which leads them to think that they know best and that the determination regarding what the public should know should be made by them. There's a new morality where the individual determines what is moral and what is right. We can't let individuals through the government make determination: there wouldn't be any consultations, memos, or anything else. We serve a different morality. Elected officials establish the law, the courts enforce them. Those who disobey, even if they think the laws are wrong, are immoral. If the cause is right, they say it justifies breaking the law, but that's fascism: the means justify the ends. He told them to spend some time on their study and not to rush it, which is what Ehrlichman wanted him to do.

Mitchell called late in the day and suggested that we do a polygraph on Cooke. He doesn't think we should let him off. He's talked with the guys at Defense—Buzhardt, and so forth—and they are convinced that there's more to this than Elliot says. Also, that it would be a beautiful deterrent in the bureaucracy. The President said to have Mitchell have a tough talk with Elliot,



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telling him that we have to be able to fi-- answer our critics, and this is the only way we can do it.

End of July 1.