



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

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Thursday, September 16.

MacGregor reported at the staff meeting this morning that he had heard from Mel Laird, that Senator Hollings had told Tom Moorer that, at a meeting of Democratic Senators, Mansfield made the point that the Draft Bill was a straight line, 1972 political issue, that any Senators up for reelection who failed to support the Mansfield position would not receive funds in '72. Also that the question involved here was who brought the war to an end, and that it must-- they must fight to make sure it's the Democrats in Congress, rather than the Republican President. This, needless to say, stirred us up a bit, and we got some things cranking during the day to get that story out. As a result of it, the thing backfired. And late tonight, MacGregor called me to say that UPI was running a story attributing the whole report to Safire. We had used Satire to leak it, and one of his sources had pulled the pin on him; so the word was out. I told him not to worry about it. Actually I think it works out pretty well. We got the story on the wire instead of just leaked into one paper.

This was a day of lots of Congressional wheeling and dealing and maneuvers, as the situation shifted and ebbed on the Draft Bill vote, with Mansfield determined to kill it by tabling it. MacGregor came up with the proposal that we could split Allott off from Mansfield and get him back supporting us, if we would promise Presidential support for a separate bill that would provide a military pay raise, which Defense and Shultz thought we should do. We ran it by the President, and he agreed; so we gave that to MacGregor to go ahead and try to work on. It was the only way he could split Allott off. There were a lot of false starts, as they shifted the timing back and forth, etcetera, and Allott playing it right to the hilt and drawing out the last drop of blood before he finally agreed to shift his forces over to us. In the process of that, Mansfield put the vote off until tomorrow, when he knows Allott isn't going to be here. So we have to sweat it out another day. The President was concerned that we were using him too much in this kind of thing, and wanted to be sure that we recognize the danger of the use of the President when the President fails. And that we can't strike out too many times.



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As he was preparing for his press conference, the President called, asking for a question answer for him and commenting on it. He wanted Laird to talk to Hebert and see what we could do to hold on to the draft, and he wanted an answer by 2:00. He felt we should put the heat-- or that we had put the heat to the Senate by saying Hebert would not agree to a new conference, but now if we lose the Senate vote, what is our plan for following up? Obviously we've got to get a new conference. He then apparently called Hebert himself and later called me to say he had a special deal worked out with Hebert, that he wouldn't tell me about it, and not to ask him, but that to schedule him August 12 to go to the Armed Services Committee in the afternoon. As far as his answer in the press conference, he decided he would simply say we have a very serious problem, and this would be a disastrous blow to our ability to protect the United States.

He was very discouraged that his long meeting with Mansfield had apparently accomplished nothing in the way of getting any cooperation from him, which of course, is the usual situation when Mansfield's playing the partisan role. He made the point that he wanted Colson and me to get together this afternoon and develop a plan for an offensive against the partisan obstructionists, putting that label on the Senate Democrats. He feels we need an assault on the floor of the Senate and the House, and that we need the VP, Cabinet officers, etcetera, to really go on this, building on the quote from Mansfield from the leadership meeting, but we have to play the game this way, very hard. Kissinger apparently urged the President to take them on himself regarding the draft in Vietnam, but of course, he feels he has to stay above the battle, which he should. But we do need the partisan obstructionist label pinned on them, so he wanted me to get the group together and start figuring it out, try to get someone to stand up on the floor of the Senate, challenge Mansfield, and so on.

The press conference went very well. He had a chance to answer most of the questions he wanted to cover. He did a great job on the Draft Bill, which was the first question, saying that if they defeated it-- or tabled it, it would be one of the most irresponsible acts on the part of the Senate that he could think of, that it would jeopardize our peace initiatives, that a vote against the draft seriously jeopardizes US interests around the world and would make the US the second strongest



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nation in the world. He got several on the economy and a chance to predict things will be good. In Vietnam, he hit very hard on the question of cutting off aid to Thieu and pointed out that of the 91 na-- nations that we provide aid to, only 32 have elected leaders in the sense that we would call a democratic election; so we would have to cut off aid to two-thirds of the countries, if we followed that theory. He also made the point that in the Jefferson-Adams election in 19--1800, only 150,000 people voted, out of a total population of 4 million; whereas in the Vietnam Congressional elections, 80 percent voted versus only 60 percent in our last elections.

He had a good chance to lay out his plans for Phase II on the economic policy. Some good questions on China, and he zapped Reston pretty hard by saying nothing in the Reston piece in *The Times*. It appeared that Chou En-lai hadn't told Kissinger in much greater detail already. And then he just laid Muskie low on the black VP question, saying first, he wouldn't use the press conference to discuss politics, and then said regarding the proposition of prejudice involved in politics, he would reiterate his previous position, saying it was a libel on the American people to suggest they would vote against someone because of race, religion, or color, and cited the Ed Brooke example. As we talked about the press conference afterward, he was obviously very pleased and thought it had gone well, which it did. I had a staff dinner on the *Sequoia* for all our key staff and their wives, which came off very well. After I got back, we got into all the phone call flaps on the Safire problem.

End of September 16.