



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

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Tuesday, May 16th. The President had me in at 8:00, first thing this morning. Said he wanted to see Ehrlichman, Colson, and me right after the staff meeting. Wanted to be sure that his Secret Service is not increased at all doesn't want to allow a climate of fear to be created. He asked me to think of something he could do to go out today, maybe just go for a walk or something. I suggested he go over to the Treasury after the Connally announcement that would give him a chance to talk to the people in line waiting to get into the White House, which he agreed to do. He did it, and it worked out great.

He feels that from a political standpoint, this now assures Hubert's nomination, and he talked about that a little.

At 8:45, we came in after the staff meeting. As we walked in, the President was hitting Haig hard about massing tanks and going out. He gave his lecture that's covered in a memo he wrote over the weekend, that's in the file dated May 15th, on the need for taking chances in order to get results, rather than just going by the book.

Lukach says the Wallace prognosis is pretty grim. He probably can't be back on the campaign or anything in the way of normal work for at least three months, and there's a good chance that he'll be at least partially paralyzed permanently. The President feels this gives Hubert a tremendous boost with Wallace not nibbling him on the right anymore, he can now move all the way to the left.

He told Ehrlichman to do something fast today on the handgun thing, such as a ten year automatic jail sentence for concealed weapons. Then he gave us a lecture about the psychology



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of the Vietnam War, then got back to Wallace. Made the point that what matters is not winning the trial, what matters for the next 24-48 hours is the story regarding the guy, and so on. He said don't worry about doing it all by the book, the problem is who wins the public opinion on it. It's all PR at this point, not a matter of who wins the case.

Even though he wanted to keep his own security loose, he did suggest that the girls not do too much outside activity for a while.

He expressed some concerns about Flanigan, he doesn't, he got a lot of this from his meeting with Kendall yesterday, I think, he doesn't think Pete's up to the subtlety of what we have to do in his kind of job: that it requires scope, negotiating tact, and so on. He says Kissinger raised it, too, and that what we really need is Peterson's brains and Flanigan's character. And he's concerned about Flanigan in the Soviet Union, but there's nothing he can do about that now.

Cabinet meeting with the Connally announcement went pretty well. The President opened by giving a report on Wallace, on the outlook, and then describing the steps he had taken on Secret Service protection for Teddy and Chisholm. And on Connally, he said that he had come in on December 14, with the understanding that he'd be here a year, and then because we were in the middle of the international monetary situation in December, he agreed to stay until the present time. Now the economy is moving its succe--, we have the success of our inflation fight, and so we've agreed that mid-May is the time to announce his departure. He'll stay until his successor is confirmed. Kleindienst then broke the room up by saying, good luck.



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He, the President then said that history will record that, never has one Cabinet member in a year and a half done more for his country. John Connally has been the architect of the international economic policy; led the fight against inflation; has led in our effort to have the US stand up to the other countries. He gave a little vignette about the dinner in Bermuda on the ship...

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...when Tony Barber, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said in regard to the Smithsonian Agreements that without John Connally, we couldn't have had an agreement.

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The President said this kind of talent is hard to come by and it's hard to lose it. He's been a tower of strength in other areas, especially national security. He's a man of unusual quality to an extraordinary degree, which is that, when the going is toughest, he's at his best. He referred to his decision last week said Connally will take some part-time assignments that will be announced after the Soviet trip. Regarding his successor, he'd given it a lot of thought. There's really only one logical man with his, the philosophy close to the President's and Connally's, who knows the government inside and out, and that's George Shultz. He's not a politician, but any dean of a school has to have something: his tenacity, his soft voice, his great strength, and most important, his philosophy.



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Then Cap, his old friend from California, as director of OMB, the only problem is he's soft on budget matters, which had a laugh. The President then called on Connally, said we have common background, we fought so many battles and all, and we'd like to hear what Connally has to say.

Connally said it's no secret to the Cabinet how I feel about the President and the great privilege it has been to serve you. You and I know the circumstances under which I came for a limited period—that's been extended now. I leave with mixed emotions. It's easy to adopt an indispensable air. It's hard to leave when the problems still exist, but there will always be problems, and new ones will just keep coming. Under your great leadership, the country's in the best shape it's been in in recent years. Your move on Vietnam was right for the country. The courage you have shown makes it more difficult for me to leave; it's hard to explain how deeply I feel. I admire, my admiration and respect is boundless. You've done one of the great jobs that's been done in the history of the country. I leave with a sense of remorse, however, the little I can do, I feel I should do. You're entitled to ask of anyone, anything that you want. I did not seek the job, or any record of longevity in the job. The speculation will be rife, and I'll try to allay that. I will say for the Cabinet the plain unvarnished truth, that there's no disagreement on policy. I've the greatest admiration for the incredible job you're doing. I'm going because the time is up and I ought to go. I'm going back to Texas for a while, I won't do much until September except rest. I'll be available to the President for any additional services I can perform. Regarding the political speculation there's no ramifications at all. This has nothing to do with Texas or Wallace. The decision was made months ago, we talked in San Clemente in January. I have no future political ambitions. I don't know what the future holds.

It's to the interest of the country that the President be reelected. There's no choice in these times. I don't know what my role I will play, but I'm not changing party affiliations. I have mixed emotions I can't adequately express.



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It's been a great privilege to serve with all of you. I have great respect for each of you and even more for the President and Mrs. Nixon, who carry their burdens with such great poise and grace. I have a profound appreciation for the opportunity of serving.

The Treasury will be blessed with my successor, George Shultz, is the ideal man for the job.

The President then called on Romney and Volpe. Romney said Connally's capacity to put the country first was his great attribute as Governor, because of his ability and dedication. He's delighted he'll continue to be of help. Volpe said I could see the word outstanding written all over him when I first met him. It's been a great pleasure to know John and Nellie. I'm sorry to see him leave, but I'm sure he'll be here often.

The President then went over to the Treasury, did a bit there and came back through the crowd which worked out fine.

He then had a batch of meetings and appointments this afternoon, culminating with a boat ride with Cardinal Krol, and then he choppered on up to Camp David, where he'll spend the next couple of days getting ready for the Russian trip.

End of May 16th.