



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

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Friday, July 21st. We had a Joint Leaders—that's Republican leaders—breakfast with the Cabinet this morning. The President opened pointing out the Congressional strategy from here on out will all be political, but we won't take bad bills in order to get the good stuff; that our purpose is tactical. McGovern reviewed the campaign, made a point of the great understanding of the President and foreign policy, but the need to educate on his other accomplishments. His achievements and diplomacy are because we've been strong; that McGovern had destroyed his capability. The pitch that everybody here is a surrogate, this will be the most intensive Presidential campaign in history; more involvement with Cabinet, Senators, wives, and so forth to spread the story. The President made the point that we must never say Republicans and Democrats. We should never blame the Democrats or beat on the Democrats; always use the term McGovernites.

Timmons reported on the four weeks until the convention: an adjournment until October 1st, on October 1st or 15th, after the convention, four to six weeks meeting. That the Senate Foreign Aid will pass on Monday; our main task is defeating unwise legislation on the budget busting matters, and that we've got six to eight veto candidates in the process now.

Ehrlichman talked about the political implications on domestic issues; that we have a unique situation in that the opposition has its own proposals instead of taking us on on our proposals. So we are able to take the fight to the McGovern proposals, which are the best strategy, to tie McGovern's original proposals to him. Let him deny and argue, not us. McGovern is pitting the haves versus the have-nots. Our campaign is the antithesis of this polarizing. The opposition is trying to build divisiveness; we can turn this around. The battleground is not Congress, it's the Senate, because both candidates are there, we can force them to take positions, for example on busing. Our strategy next week will be to issue an ominous statement on the general question of overspending without reference to specific issues. There's a daily battle of communication to



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make the point that the vetoes are not against children, clean water, and so forth, but rather against taxes and high prices. We have to fight hard to break even at best on this. The President made the point that we have a President in the White House ahead in the polls, which is different than Truman, so there's a question of how we handle the opposition control of Congress. They'll try to say that the President has blocked Congress.

Hugh Scott made the point that their platform is that if you've got it, we'll spend it. The answer to the veto is not that we're doing less, but that we've already done more and done it effectively and done the maximum that the taxpayers can carry. We have more than met our legislative and executive responsibilities. We can't let McGovern off the hook we've got to keep talking about his original proposals. We can only assume that the revisions will be worse than the first attempts. The youth vote for McGovern is greatly overestimated. We should make the point of the unrepresentative convention: the quota systems are not democracy. There's no quota for senior citizens, veterans, farmers, the under-represented Italian Americans, Germans, and so forth. That basically it was a fraud regarding true reform. We should hold their feet to the fire, talk about why they don't adopt the platform.

In Congress they have nothing in it that they can enact into law. McGovern is the only Democrat nominee ever born without labor. Ford said we have a potential worth exploring regarding getting Democrats first, to endorse the President, and second, to vote for a Republican speaker. He's working on Operation Switch Over, but this complicates the problem, because we can't clobber Democrats who might switch. The President referred to the '64 Congressional results; Republican Congressmen avoided Goldwater in the campaign; the Democrats got their candidates to tie their Congressional candidates to Goldwater. We should do this in the areas where McGovern's behind. Force the Democrat to back or repudiate McGovern's candidacy. They won't work unless there's a concerted program to do this though. It's important to make this



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a campaign on the issues, not on personalities. We should tie to the McGovernite wing of the Democratic Party. McGovern represents a minority of his own Party, so don't say the Democrats. There's defection all over the country regarding the issues, but we make it impossible, if we put in on a Party basis. It was easy for LBJ to keep Goldwater in a corner in '64, because he had allies in the media. The press never let Goldwater off his extreme positions, but they'll do all they can to let McGovern off. We should always campaign against what the man said originally, not mean, not vicious. You do know where McGovern stands; that's what he said and that's what he meant. He sincerely believes in whatever it is. This is the clearest choice the American people have had in this century. There's no question where the President and McGovern stand on Defense, on permissiveness, on welfare.

Don't get into cute, tricky, name calling. Give the Rizzos, and so on, an easy way to move to us; no name calling, campaign on the issues, on McGovern's original position, and let him repudiate.

Dole made the point that we should isolate McGovern from the Party regulars. Enthusiastic and optimistic but not over confident; take McGovern on head on the issues; gear the campaign to the average American. The Democrats are the elite. Stay positive. Regarding the convention, we're doing serious business; we have work to do. It will be interesting, and it will be high level.

The President said that the Secretary of State and Defense are usually not in campaigns, but they can get in strong licks on foreign policy and defense; it's their duty to respond to the attacks that are made. The cardinal rule in politics is to make the other fellow play your game, not his, play your issues, not his. Their goal will be the poor versus the rich, class divisions, economic issues; we should not let that be paramount. For example, some of our staff says we don't need to emphasize foreign policy because everybody knows about it, but there are some domestic issues



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where we win, like busing, law, court and so forth, but others where they do, especially spending. We should not assume the people know about our foreign policy accomplishments; that's where he's weak and we're strong. Our strongest point is defense and foreign policy and we should hit it in every speech.

Rogers said people are interested in two points of foreign policy. One, they want a strong America; we should emphasize this. Two, they want to be respected in the world. We should say two things: first, our prestige in the world has never been higher, both with our friends and our adversaries; second, President Nixon is the world leader in the cause of peace, also, both with our friends and our enemies.

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Then he quoted Brezhnev, Ceausescu, and Tito as all hoping Nixon would be elected.

We have the strongest case in terms of tactics. McGovern applauds all that we've done, but opposes all that made it possible; he can't have it both ways. He can't say come home America and then applaud all we're doing in the world. The President said we don't want Laird and Rogers to do partisan audiences, but they will do good nonpartisan things, especially with television.

Laird said this is not the time to turn back to isolationism. He then listed his speeches and the things he's going to do on defense bases to show what McGovern's cutbacks will mean and so



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forth. The President said a weak United States isn't worth talking to regarding negotiations. McGovern's cuts would give the Soviet Union an insurmountable advantage. We've got to put the Defense cut issue clearly: jobs and US position in the world to maintain peace. In the campaign there is no complacency or overconfidence, because we know the numbers are against us. Our hope is to win decisively and to win the Congress. It depends on getting out the Republican vote, picking up the Independents, and getting a third of the Democrats. So we've got to hit those issues that appeal to the Democrat or the Independent; make the election more important than Party.

Following that, there was a Cabinet meeting. The President made the point that we have a serious budget problem. Shultz says all our economic strategy is now finally coming together; it shows the importance of holding our budget strategy; one of the best days in the history of economics. The President said speeches are not important; the main thing is to get on television; noon and morning speeches are better than evening, a night speech is a dead loser. In terms of events you can accept, don't take any state for granted and don't concede any, but concentrate on the big key states. The votes are at the nonpartisan meetings; take all possible ethnic, labor, and religious forums.

After the Cabinet meeting, we had a meeting with Dole and MacGregor. The President told Dole he wanted him to stay on as National Chairman, and they discussed some minor strategy ideas.

This afternoon the President, Mitchell, and I met with the Vice President and the President hit him hard on the way he wants him to handle his campaign emphasizing: no attacks on the press; to attack McGovern only on the issues, not personally; to ignore Eagleton; not let himself become the issue; stay noncontroversial; no discussion or comment on '76; concentrate on



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ethnics and labor; build closer ties personally to Senators and Congressmen; sell the positive story of the President, especially in foreign policy; avoid public appearance of aloofness, break away from the Secret Service; do some partisan events, because the President can't; don't concern yourself with platform issues; consult with Mitchell, Haldeman, MacGregor on strategy.

He decided to make the announcement tomorrow from the White House with the VP having a press conference afterwards, before he leaves for Oregon. The VP, incredibly, raised the point that he was going to hit the press again in Oregon. Mitchell and the President told him he must not do that, and so hopefully he's changing his speech.

We went to Camp David this afternoon; had dinner with Connally and Colson. I dictated a separate memo on Connally's views on campaign strategy as he covered it during the evening. Most of the evening was a general discussion of specifics on pulling together the Democrats for Nixon, running down Colson's reports, and so forth. The President called Colson and me back in after the dinner for some general chitchat for about an hour before we went to bed.

End of July 21st.