



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

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Sunday, April 29.

The papers today are full of columns and analysis calling for resignations and all, which caused me, after reading through them quickly, to say to Jo first thing this morning, that if the President really gets a hold of this thing, what's he's going to do is call us up there today and tell us that he's concluded that we have to resign, and that from his viewpoint that's where he has to come out but it'll be interesting to see whether he does. I still, at that point, had the feeling that there could very well be a better course for us also.

Kissinger called just to say I'm thinking of you. Says the Restons and all those people are out for blood. He rambled on a bit. Obviously, he is out of the play and sort of feeling sorry about it. President called at noon, right after I got home from church, from Camp David, said he was wondering if we could get up there at 1:30, and that John had said he wanted to meet with the President alone, and the President felt he should do that, and also he would, of course, meet with me alone. Felt it was appropriate for him to do so, in view of the decisions that I want to present to you, and then he said that all I can say is that I hope that Ehrlichman's as big a man as you are when I talk with him. He said everybody's trying to get at him to give him advice, but he's talked to no one, except that he spent virtually all day yesterday with Rogers. He's concluded that we've got to face up to what's right for the Presidency, and he was sure I would agree with that. Said he would talk to me first when we got up there.

Ziegler then called on the phone, said he wanted to tell me that the President's feeling, very strongly now, is that both Ehrlichman and I should volunteer a resignation, and that he's going to ask us to do that. He's thought it through. Ziegler argued with him last night and this morning. He's not concerned about my stepping up to it. And if Ehrlichman comes in and fights it, he's going to stick to it and force him to do it. He feels that if we take a leave we'll be eaten alive, and it won't work. A resignation will work. Wants a letter saying that we considered leave, but asked for resignation instead, so it won't be a period of uncertainty. He's confident we'll be cleared and will show our innocence, but at this time we feel we must resign. He's also made the firm



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decision that he will fire Dean tomorrow. So his plan is, one, to accept the voluntary resignations of Haldeman and Ehrlichman, and then tomorrow, fire Dean. He definitely will separate Dean totally out. Will say that he accepts the responsibility, he's going to try and bring this back.

Apparently said to Ron, "I made this decision in Florida last week" and what happened now. I called Wilson and reported this to him, and he said Ehrlichman should not put himself in a position where the President has to remove him, he hopes he will do what the President wants him to do, he should not fight it, it won't help him. I told Ehrlichman that, on the helicopter on the way up to Camp David, and he said he wanted to think about it, and we didn't talk any further on the helicopter.

When we got there, Ziegler said he wanted to see me and he came out, went for a walk while we were waiting over at Laurel. He was quite alarmed, because he said the President has made another firm decision that he's communicated to Ron this morning, which is that he, too, is going to resign. Ron said he's deadly serious and absolutely firm on it. I told him that I was sure that was not the case that it was part of his steeling himself for meeting with us that he's creating a big crisis that he knew he couldn't meet, in order to, be able to meet the lesser crisis that he has to meet.

I told Ron to go over to the President and tell him I was ready to meet with him. Ron said, "I'll tell him you're going to go along", and I said you can't tell him that, he's got to ask me, and I've got to say it to him, don't give him any indication, simply tell him I'm ready to meet with him.

When I got to Aspen, the President was in terrible shape. Shook hands with me, which is the first time he's ever done that. Told me to come look at the view out the window, then stepped to the door and said let's go outside and look at the flowers and all. So we were looking at the tulips from the Aspen porch, talking about the beauty and all, and as we started back in, he said, well, I have to enjoy it, because I may not be alive much longer. We got inside and he went through a discourse, saying that while nobody knows it, and he's not a publicly religious man, that it's a fact that he has prayed on his knees every night that he's been in the Presidential office. And that



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he's prayed hard over this decision, and it's the toughest decision he's ever made. He made the points on why he had to do it, but he's come to the conclusion that he has to have our resignations. He wants us to stay on to handle the transition. Then he went through his whole pitch about how he's really the guilty one. He said he's thought it all through, and that he was the one that started Colson out on his projects, he was the one who told Dean to cover-up, he was the one who made Mitchell Attorney General, and later his campaign manager, and so on. And that he now has to face that and live with it, and that for that reason, after he gets his other things completed, that he too will probably have to resign. He never said that directly, but implied it.

I made the pitch that he can't make that kind of a move, that Ehrlichman and I are expendable, and where there's a problem, we can step out and deal with it, but he can't do it. He doesn't have that luxury. He's got to stay in the office, he's got to pull things back together, and move them upward, and that he can. He said he thinks Ehrlichman feels he should resign, and he got that impression on the phone last night. Apparently, Ehrlichman told him that he had evidence that the President knew about the fake cable about Diem, and that the President really was the one who had ordered all these acts, and that he's got to face up to that fact. I guess that really jarred him, which well it might. He says he's going to make Elliot Richardson Attorney General, he's going to force Kleindienst to resign today, and he's going to announce both of those Monday night.

He told me about Tricia, that he had told the family not to come up to Camp David, but when he walked out last night into the living room, there was Tricia sitting there. She said she and David and Julie had stayed up most of the night before, talking about this, and that she had just come up to tell him that they all loved him. He's getting very sentimental, went through the whole thing about how Ehrlichman and I are the two best men he knows, and goes through all that kind of thing. On that note, I left, having assured him that I disagreed with this decision, as I had with a few other decisions he'd made, but that I had had my input, and that I would abide by the decision, I would do everything I could to implement it, and make sure it came out right.



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I went back over to Laurel and Ehrlichman went over to Aspen to meet with him. Ehrlichman was over there about a half hour, then the President called me back, and Ehrlichman left. President reviewed the Ehrlichman meeting with me. He said he's concerned because he thinks that Ehrlichman wants him to admit that he ordered illegal acts, but apparently Ehrlichman agreed to the resignation. So he was pretty relieved about that.

Then Ehrlichman and I had a phone call with Wilson from Laurel while we were working out our letters of resignation. He suggested, one, that we insist Dean be fired tonight in the same breath as us, because if he's as smart as he might be, he'll get his resignation in, in time for the papers tomorrow, if we resign out ahead of him. And second, that both of us should announce in our letters our meeting with the US Attorney and the committee counsel.

He told Ehrlichman to strike his words in his letter about his appreciation for his opportunity to serve the President, he feels it's his burden to appreciate us, not us him. Feels that we must now move on a very affirmative, open basis. Our meetings should be at the lawyer's office, they have a good room to do it. We should come and go openly and not sneak around or hide. And he hit hard on the point that the President must not say anything complimentary about Dean, that that's absolutely essential. I think we've got that point through.

President called John and me back over at 5:30, we reviewed our letters and the release plan and all of that. He had Bill Rogers come in at 6:00. President said that he had emphasized the national security area with Elliot, and the fact that they must not get into that in the investigation. Then he had us read our letters of resignation, Rogers had a few points of correction, and that was the end. The President got into somewhat of the emotional mood again as John and I were leaving, but we finally got out, and he remained to have dinner with Rogers, and then to get back to work on his speech. So today, April 28 [April 29] is the end of my White House career. Jo notified the families. I had called them all this morning to say I was going to take a leave, and Jo called them to say we had changed it to a resignation. Covered the bases with them on that.

End of April 2-- oops I said earlier April 28. It's April 29 so that's the end of April 29.