

A Week's Walk Through the

5/27/73

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The President's week, you might say, proceeded with business as usual.

On Monday morning at the daily briefing, Gerald Warren, the deputy press secretary, related that the President began work in the Oval Office, then moved to his other office next door in the Executive Office Building. He was meeting with staff members such as Ronald Ziegler, the press secretary, and Steve Bull, an appointments aide, and Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., his staff chief. Then came the first discordant note, which turned into the theme of the week.

Question: "Has Mr. Haig resigned?"

Mr. Warren: "No, he has not."

The President announced, through his deputy press secretary, the appointment of White House Fellows for 1973-74. "These White House Fellows were selected from more than 2,000 applicants," Warren explained.

"The President," he continued, "is accepting with regret the resignation of Daniel Bartlett Jr. as United States attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. Mr. Bartlett has held this position since May 6, 1969, and as he leaves the position of United States attorney, the President expressed to Mr. Bartlett his appreciation for his outstanding service to the nation during the past four years."

The deputy press secretary called attention to the meeting in Paris between Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam, the fourth day of negotiations.

Queried on Kissinger

Question: "Did Dr. Kissinger ever offer to resign or has he resigned in view of his involvement in wiretapping?"

Mr. Warren: "I have seen

THE WASHINGTON POST

Oval Office's Looking

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Glass

that story and I received queries off that this morning. As far as we know, Dr. Kissinger has not offered to resign and has no intention of offering to resign."

Warren noted continuing concern in the administration about the shortage of gasoline, but said that no major policy statement was planned at this time.

A reporter asked about a mysterious \$22,000 mentioned in a recent deposition in the Watergate case: "Can you tell us why a White House employee was used as a bagman?"

"No, I cannot," Adam, and I would not be able to comment on that deposition," Warren said.

Another reporter inquired about reports that the President was holding staff meetings to plan a "counter-offensive" on Watergate.

"I do know," Warren said pleasantly, "there are meetings going on the White House quite often and this is not new, to talk about the business of the White House, the continuing business of the White House, legislation, how it fares on the Hill, upcoming initiatives by the White House or by the Domestic Council, and so there are meetings

for those purposes. But I know of no meetings to plan counteroffensives or counterattacks."

Question: "Do you know of any meeting planning any copper plating?"

Mr. Warren: "No, I do not."

On Monday evening, the President went for a cruise on the Potomac aboard the presidential yacht Sequoia, accompanied by Haig. The next morning's headlines were about other matters.

CIA Deputy Says Haldeman Told Him Cover-up Was 'The President's Wish'

Nixon Aide Proposed Espionage, Burglaries

On Tuesday, the President announced through his deputy press secretary a major reorganization of the General Services Administration.

He also announced his intention to nominate Grady Perry Jr. to be a member of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board and Terence E. McClary of Nashua, N.H., to be assistant secretary of defense, comptroller, and Jack L. Bowers of San Diego to be assistant secretary of Navy for installations and logistics.

Question: "Jerry, could you tell us when we might expect a news conference or when the President plans to answer any questions in any form about some of these very serious charges about corruption?"

Mr. Warren: "I have nothing to offer you on either

one of these subjects, Jan, at this briefing."

Another Question: "Are you aware of any new instructions going out to government public relations officials on how to handle the press?"

Mr. Warren: "No, I would welcome some myself."

It was like that all week—like the sour strains of two

marching bands on the same field, but blaring different tunes. The press played the theme from "Dragnet." The White House played "Stars and Stripes Forever." And they clashed brassily.

The media attacked with small impertinences and the heavy thunder of big black headlines. The White House defended with the best pomp and ceremony at its command and programmed assurances of business as usual.

Late Tuesday afternoon, the President himself did answer some questions and his 4,000-word explanation unfurled the flag of "national security" to justify his own conduct in the Watergate affair. Leonard Garment, his acting White House counsel, and Ron Ziegler, his press secretary, and J. Fred Buzhardt, his special counsel, came out to amplify. The White House press corps, which used to be accused of playing patsy, seems to be shedding that reputation with a vengeance.

"Overall," Garment began, "I would say that there are three questions with respect to the statement that might be usefully addressed in very general fashion by me, preliminary to your questions. First, what is the nature and intent of the statement; secondly, why is it issued at this time; and third, what will happen after the statement is issued and comments are made upon it?"

Pleads for Order

"And fourth," piped a reporter, "why isn't the President making it?"

The session got worse after that. The official transcript does not record the four-letter expletives from the press or the general commotion and hostility. However, it does reflect the

frequent interruptions and Ziegler's repeated pleas for order.

"Gentlemen, let's settle down," Ziegler said.

"Just a moment, ladies and gentlemen," Ziegler said, "let Mr. Garment finish the point he was making. Those who are under tight deadline pressures, such as the wires, to match that, can file and we will continue."

"I suppose a lot of people," Ziegler said, "are more interested in the questions than they are in the answers. We can't get our answers out."

Lost in the fine print of official interpretations, one reporter asked: "Why are we all interpreting scripture for the President?"

Mr. Ziegler: "Excuse me?"

Question: "Why isn't the President here to interpret the scripture for himself?"

Nixon Concedes Wide White House Effort To Conceal Some Aspects of Watergate; Cites His Concern Over Na-

tional Security

And

Nixon Admits Probe Curb

And

Felt Nixon Knew, Caulfield Says

Early on Wednesday, the President met with 22 Republican congressional leaders to talk about legislative affairs. They discussed the farm bill reported by the Senate Agriculture Committee and the Alaska oil pipeline project.

And the importance of protecting national security secrets. Afterward, Sen. Hugh Scott, the GOP leader in the Senate, reported the President's remarks:

"Our negotiations with the PRC and the U.S.S.R. were highly secret and they are now. Leaking of information imperils negotiations and we have to continue measures to ensure that secrecy."

Scott added that the President "then said he would appreciate our support and he left to a standing ovation of all present."

The senator further complained that foreign ambassadors stationed here "have been shaken because they have been led to believe, by what they read in the paper, that the government is tottering and everything is going to the dogs." Sen. Scott said he reassured them to the contrary.

Stein Makes Point

Herbert Stein, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, made the same point at a briefing which the White House offered on economic affairs.

"Insofar as the people are drawing the conclusion that because of the Watergate . . . the economic officers of the administration are sitting here, as I said yesterday, paralyzed, waiting for the next edition of The Washington Post to come out, like a rabbit hypnotized by a snake, that is not the case," Stein protested.

At the daily briefing, the President announced, through Mr. Ziegler, that he intends to nominate Tilton H. Dobbins of Owings Mills, Md., to be assistant secretary of commerce for domes-



Photos by Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

Leonard Garment, J. Fred Buzhardt and Ron Ziegler: "Dragnet" versus "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

tic and international business and Kenneth A. Buenther of Rockville, Md., to be alternate executive director of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The President met with Mrs. Mary Brooks, director of the U.S. Mint, followed by a delegation from the American Legion which presented him with the Robert L. Hague Merchant Marine Achievement Award, followed by Republican National Chairman George Bush and his predecessor, Sen. Bob Dole. He also declared three areas eligible for disaster aid in Iowa, Maine and Colorado.

A number of questions persisted about his role in the Watergate. Garment and Ziegler explained that many of them could not be answered more precisely at this point without damaging the rights of individuals. The questions continued.

"You know," said Ziegler in frustration, "one of the problems we face in a situation like this is that an impression I think, and it has, in your mind about our not being in a position to answer all of your questions, I think it certainly would lead me to certain impressions—about do we have something else that we are not telling you or something we are attempting—"

Reporter: "You are being very perceptive, Ron."

Wednesday evening, the President drove to Camp David, too foggy to fly by helicopter. The headlines continued in the morning:

Nixon, Clemency Tied . . . Nixon '70 Domestic Security Plan Detailed . . . Democrats Consider Talk of Impeachment Premature

On Thursday, the President sent to the Senate for confirmation the nominations of James Schlesinger as Secretary of Defense and William Colby to replace him as director of the CIA. He also announced through his deputy press secretary his intention to nominate James E. Smith as comptroller of the currency. He also issued a package of material on the Domestic Council and its new line-up of five associate directors.

"The White House," Warren explained, "is having no trouble recruiting people, none whatsoever. As a matter of fact, we are still getting more offers of assistance than we can handle and from high-caliber people."

One reporter asked if the President would appear at a news conference. Another reporter asked if the President would appear before the grand jury. Another reporter asked if it was true that the President would

not hold a press conference until White House reporters stop shouting at Ron Ziegler.

"I think it would be nice if they did," said Warren, though he denied that explanation for the silence of the President.

Question: "Would it help if we stopped shouting at you?"

Mr. Warren: "You don't shout at me."

Question: "I wonder if we could have a show of hands of people willing not to shout at the President if he would hold a press conference." (Laughter)

Mr. Warren: "I would accept the show-of-hands idea." (Laughter)

The President, who returned to Washington around noon from Camp David, did appear in person, but before a quite different audience, the 600 returned prisoners of war. The President, once again, spoke of national security. Some of the men were moved to tears and all of them cheered him.

Toasted in Huge Tent

"I think it is time in the country to quit making national heroes of those who steal secrets and publish them in newspapers," the President told them.

In the evening, these guests gathered with their wives in a huge tent on the

South Lawn of the White House where the President toasted their courage and the steadfastness of their wives. He also made light banter, however.

"It is the custom at the White House to have a toast to the honored guest," the President said. "The difficulty tonight is that there are so many honored guests that we would be drinking all night and into the middle of the day. Somebody said, 'What is wrong with that?'"

Next morning, the headlines again.

Key Figure in Watergate Conspiracy To Testify Against Others in Cover-Up

And

Magruder Agrees to Admit Guilt

And Be Witness for Prosecution;

Nixon Assails Theft of Secrets

In mid-morning, the press was given a "photo opportunity" in the Oval Office in which they could witness and photograph the President receiving a hand-made American flag from Air Force Lt. Col. John Dramesi of Blackwood, N.J. Col. Dramesi secretly stitched the flag in a North Vietnam prison, using scraps from

underwear, a blanket and an old jacket.

The President thanked him and joked about the colonel's youthful good looks, a single man at 40. "Isn't he going to enjoy all these dinner parties?" the President said, grinning toward the assembled reporters.

"Take all the invitations you can get in Washington," the President told the colonel. "Watch out for those dogs they make you sit by."

Everyone laughed, but the President amended his remark. "No, there're some very nice girls here," he said. "You'll enjoy meeting them."

The White House press office issued a three-page chronological summary of the President's land transactions in California and Florida. The reporters were ushered into the glittering East Room to witness the swearing-in ceremony for Attorney General Elliot Richardson. The Marine band played ceremonial music in the lobby while the important men of the government gathered as witnesses.

The President joked again, this time about Richardson's political background. "He's been able to do something I've never been able to do," the President said. "He's carried Massachusetts twice."

Richardson spoke solemnly of his new duties and hopefully of "reaffirmation of standards" in government. "If there are flaws," he said, "they are in ourselves."

The President joked again, inviting the guests to a reception for the new Cabinet officer.

"The Attorney General and Mrs. Richardson," he said, "would like to meet all of you, those of you who do not have any matters pending before the courts of the United States."

Afterward, the President left by plane for a weekend at his Florida home. The White House press office made available a recording of his Memorial Day message to the nation, embargoed for release until Monday.

The afternoon headlines were big and black and bad for the President.

San Clemente Deal Is Bared

On the other hand, right beneath the headline was a friendly picture of President Nixon. He was holding the American flag.