

More Blunt Talk in the Oval Office

The transcripts of Nixon's June 23, 1972, talks with H.R. Haldeman contained the "smoking howitzer" of evidence that was the decisive factor in ending the Nixon presidency. But they also offered fresh insights into Nixon's attitudes toward people and issues. Among them:

ON MONETARY MATTERS

When Haldeman advised the President that Britain had decided to let the pound float, and that the Italian lira was also in serious trouble, Nixon displayed remarkable casualness:

H: Did you get the report that the British floated the pound?

P: No, I don't think so.

H: They did.

P: That's devaluation?

H: Yeah. [Presidential Assistant Peter] Flanigan's got a report on it here.

San Diego Union, and is now a vice president of the Metromedia broadcasting group in Los Angeles. He served as White House Director of Communications from 1969 to June 1973. Nixon bluntly declared himself unimpressed with Klein's abilities in that job:

P: And look, you've just not got to let Klein ever set up a meeting again. He just doesn't have his head screwed on. You know what I mean. He just opens it up and sits there with eggs on his face. He's just not our guy at all, is he?

H: No.

P: Absolutely, totally unorganized.

H: He's a very nice guy.

P: People love him, but damn, is he unorganized.

P: ... that's why you can't have Klein (unintelligible). He just doesn't really have his head screwed on, Bob...

H: That's right.

P: He just doesn't know. He just sort of blubbers around. I don't know how he does TV so well.

ON HIS BOOK "SIX CRISES"

The President made repeated reference to his book throughout the day, lauding it and urging its lessons on his campaign aides:

P: I want you to reread it, and I want Colson to read it, and anybody else.

H: O.K.

P: And anybody else in the campaign. Get copies of the book and give it to each of them. Say I want them to read it and have it in mind. Give it to whoever you can, O.K.?

H: Sure will.

P: Actually, the book reads awfully well.

P: ... that *Six Crises* is a damned good book, and the (unintelligible) story reads like a novel—the Hiss case—Caracas was fascinating. The [book's treatment of the 1960] campaign, of course, for anybody in politics should be a must because it had a lot in there of how politicians are like.

ON THE ARTS

In planning a campaign role for his daughters, Nixon grew wary:

P: For example—now the worse thing (unintelligible) is to go to anything that has to do with the arts.

H: Ya, see that—it was (unintelligible). Julie giving that time to the museum in Jacksonville.

P: The arts, you know—they're Jews, they're left wing—in other words, stay away.

P: Make a point.

H: Sure.

P: Middle America—put that word out—Middle America—type of people (unintelligible), auxiliary (unintelligible). Why the hell doesn't [Special Assistant David M.] Parker get that kind of thing going? Most of his things are elite groups except, I mean, do the cancer thing—maybe nice for Tricia to go up—ride

a bus for two hours—do some of the park in Oklahoma—but my view is, Bob, relate it to Middle America and not the elitist (unintelligible). Do you agree?

ON THE RIGORS OF CAMPAIGNING

P: Ah—Pat raised the point last night that probably she and the girls ought to stay [at the Republican National Convention] in a hotel on Miami Beach. First she says the moment they get the helicopter and get off and so forth, it destroys their hair and so forth. And of course, that is true...

ON MATTERS OF TIMING

H: You know, whether Pat—one thought that was raised was that the girls and their husbands go down on Sunday and Pat wait and come down with you on Tuesday. I think Pat should go down and should be there 'cause they'll have the salute—

P: (inaudible)

H: She should arrive separately. I think



NIXON & HERBERT KLEIN (1973)

P: I don't care about it. Nothing we can do about it.

H: You want a rundown?

P: No, I don't.

H: He argues it shows the wisdom of our refusal to consider convertibility until we get a new monetary system.

P: Good. I think he's right. It's too complicated for me to get into.

H: [Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur F.] Burns expects a 5% devaluation against the dollar.

P: Yeah, O.K. Fine.

H: Burns is concerned about speculation about the lira.

P: Well, I don't give a (expletive deleted) about the lira.

ON HERBERT KLEIN

A close personal friend of Nixon's and a longtime political adviser, Herbert Klein, 56, was for years editor of the



RUFFLING PAT'S HAIRDO

she should arrive with the girls. Another thought was to have the girls arrive Sunday, Pat arrive Monday and you arrive Tuesday. I think you're overdoing your arrivals.

P: No, no, no. She arrives with the girls and they—they should go. I agree.

H: But I don't think you have to be there until Tuesday.

P: I don't want to go near the damned place until Tuesday. I don't want to be near it. I've got the arrival planned (unintelligible) my arrival of—ah—

H: Now we're going to do, unless you have some objection, we should do your arrival at Miami International, not at Homestead.

P: Yes, I agree.

H: Ah—we can crank up a hell of an arrival thing.

P: All right.