



H. R. HALDEMAN JOHN D. EHRLICHMAN
... now—'wounded looks on their faces'

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Senate Won't Cry For 'Those Two'

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If H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman are ousted from the White House staff as a result of the Watergate affair, there will be very little weeping or wringing of hands by Republican members of the Senate.

Long before there was any hint of a Watergate scandal, and entirely independently of it, Haldeman and Ehrlichman had won the reputation as the most hated members of the White House staff on Capitol Hill.

Among a wide range of GOP senators—not just those of the party's liberal wing—Haldeman and Ehrlichman have long been blamed for the poor relations between the White House and Senate Republicans. The hatred and blame

may well be exaggerated and unfair—but it is a fact.

They are described as sealing off the President from meaningful contacts with senators.

They are criticized for treating senators with arrogance and condescension—as if senior members of the Senate, with 20 or 30 years of legislative experience, were merely cannon fodder whom Haldeman and Ehrlichman could command by right.

And, the worst sin, they are accused of demanding a high degree of loyalty to the President's program—even when politically risky for a particular senator—without offering GOP senators any

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substantial reciprocal right to be consulted on the formulation of that program.

"There's a lack of understanding of the legislative process and the people in it, even though I concede we're prima donnas too," said Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kansas), who was unceremoniously ousted as GOP national chairman after faithfully serving in the post during the 1972 campaign.

"It's the attitude—lack of understanding. It always appears we're being pushed around, directed and asked to respond, but there's very little sympathy when we have a problem, whether it's closing a base in Kansas or whatever. They say 'We can bring you two Nixon pens, but otherwise we can't help you.'

"The boys with power don't have much time for senators and congressmen," he continued. "And it's those two, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, who are the men of power in the White House. If they run the shop down there, they must be the ones responsible."

Dole's view is by no means universal. Sens. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Bill Brock (R-Tenn.), for example, said their relations with top White House staffers, particularly Ehrlichman, who deals directly with legislation, are very good. Stevens said there seems to be a greater White House effort this year to consult senators when tailoring legislation.

But many others share Dole's view.

"They've got a group over there—Haldeman, Ehrlichman, etc.—who interpret everything in a very personal way," said Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) in a recent wire service interview. "It's a very peculiar, unusual relationship."

Hatfield has frequently stated that the top men in the White House staff view any deviation from "total subservience" to the President's wishes as "disloyal." He calls this an amateurish way of looking at politics that could severely damage the GOP.

Extreme irritation with White House methods was recently expressed by two Republicans often described as models of loyalty to the President—Peter Dominick (R-Colo.) and J. Glenn Beall (R-Md.).

Dominick, in an angry floor speech in the Senate March 22, blasted the administration for neglecting to consult him in drafting an education bill that would fall under his jurisdiction as senior Republican on the Senate Education Subcommittee.

Introducing the bill, Dominick said, "I am doing this as a matter of courtesy; a courtesy, which, I might add, was not extended to any of the minority members of the subcommittee in

the form of a request for suggestions, advice and guidance with regard to any part of this legislation in its formulation stages by administration officials."

Beall, in a similar vein, told this reporter some weeks ago that when the older Americans bill first came up in the Senate this year, he expected to be contacted with the administration's counter-proposals, since he is the senior GOP member of the relevant subcommittee.

Instead, he said, he heard from no one until after the bill was reported and was two days away from a floor vote. Then one of the departments, he said, sent him a pack of 30 to 40 amendments designed to gut the bill, with a demand that he sponsor the amendments on the floor. Angry, he ignored the demand and sponsored only the amendment he had been pressing all along.

Glumly, an administration loyalist admitted, "They all hate Haldeman and Ehrlichman up here. They'd be delighted if they were fired."

"They act like children politically," said Lowell P. Weicker (R-Conn.) of staff decision-makers at the White House. Without singling any one person out, he said, "They're politically and legislatively immature—that's where I think the President is ill-served... there's a failure to try to get any sort of congressional input before decisions are made to do something or not to do something. When you totally cut yourself off, you never know what kind of response you're going to get."

An incident two weeks ago mirrors the anger felt by many GOP senators toward "the White House," though not at the President personally.

Just before a key Senate vote on whether to uphold Mr. Nixon's veto of the vocational rehabilitation bill, Republican leaders called a caucus to pep up their troops and plead for votes to sustain the veto.

Significantly, the emphasis was not on loyalty to the White House. Rather, GOP leaders Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) and Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.) couched their plea largely in terms of the need for the minority Republicans to make themselves an effective force and show the Democrats that they wouldn't go along with them on everything. Senators present said this was quite deliberate—a flat-out plea for White House loyalty would not have turned the trick. (Republicans voted 31 to 10 to uphold the veto, and the Democrats' attempt failed.)

In discussing relations with the White House, one GOP senator after another stressed that the problem, as they see it, isn't with lia-

son men Bill Timmons and Tom Korologos. Korologos, an energetic, bubbly, friendly man, is well liked and receives high marks for attentiveness and persuasiveness. Instead, it's "the boys with the power" right next to the President—Haldeman and Ehrlichman—who are blamed for the arrogant attitude.

One strong administration loyalist, who asked not to be identified, said he believed much of the anger against Haldeman stems from Haldeman's control over direct access to the President, whether in person or on phone.

"There's a fantasy on the Hill that two minutes with the President would solve everything, every problem.

"But two minutes for each of 535 members of the House and Senate would mean 1,070 minutes of the President's time each week. That's 18 hours. Of course they can't get it. And when they can't get it, they blame Dick Nixon or Haldeman or Ehrlichman—fantasy!

"They're also mad about the firing of hacks whom they've placed as patronage in the federal agencies, squirreled away in federal jobs.

"And there is consultation. Maybe not as much as there should be, but there was heavy consultation with (Sens.) Tower and Sparkman on the community development message, with Scoop (Jackson) and (Clifford) Hansen on energy. And (Peter) Flanigan spent weeks working on the trade message in advance with (Sens.) Scott, Bennett and Long and (Rep.) Mills.

"Of course, they're angry about impoundment too—it kills projects that may be rotten but make them look like heroes at home."

Indeed, senators traditionally have resented having to deal with presidential aides instead of the President himself. They are prima donnas. They get angry when they can't get their way on treasured projects, or when political dependents are ousted from patronage or denied good jobs.

And griping against "the White House" and "the men just below the President" has been going on since the start of the republic. It certainly was fairly strong under Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson.

But the griping against the Nixon aides appears a bit stronger. Something in the style of operations intensifies rather than soothes the ordinary dissatisfaction. Perhaps it is the tone of arrogance, to which so many GOP senators allude (William Saxbe of Ohio has likened Haldeman and Ehrlichman to "Nazis.")

With this tone as a starting point, minor incidents can multiply and develop into embitterment.

One senior GOP senator, an administration backer, hard-pressed for reelection, sent word to the White House staff that a congratulatory phone call from Mr. Nixon to a testimonial dinner in his state would greatly help him. He kept receiving word back that the President had not responded on whether he'd do it.

Shortly before the dinner, he met accidentally with the President in a setting where he could raise the issue with him personally, and Mr. Nixon said he had never even been informed of the request. Someone at the White House had simply shunted it aside—yet this is a senator who goes to bat for Mr. Nixon on the floor two and three times a week. Minority Leader Scott,

who has gone out of his way to display loyalty to Mr. Nixon on many issues that have hurt him back home in Pennsylvania, told this reporter in an uncharacteristic burst of anger recently, "What the White House needs in its advisory staff is some guy who has lost a close election recently—along that path lies wisdom."

What momentarily angered Scott was a statement by Ehrlichman urging the GOP House and Senate leadership to show greater effort on behalf of the President. Scott saw it as a veiled criticism of his efforts and those of other GOP leaders who at that very moment, despite misgivings as to the impact in their own states, were urging their colleagues to back the veto of the vocational rehabilitation bill.

Also irritating to many senators is the ton of materials the White House sends up to Capitol Hill, with requests that senators read them on the floor as if they were the senators' own speeches. (This is a common deception, practiced by every administration.)

Recently, Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) organized a round-robin of Senate speeches warning against cutbacks in the military budget as likely to weaken the nation. Thurmond says he dreamed up the idea himself (sometimes it is the White House that proposes such round-robins) but asked White House aide Powell Moore for technical aid—statistics from the Defense Department, written materials, and so forth.

Moore insists he merely supplied statistical materials, but he did walk into the office of one senator and offer him virtually a complete speech. The senator turned it down as unsuitable and wrote his own.

When Charles Colson, former White House aide, sent speech material to the Hill, "no one would use it—it was so extreme," said a GOP senator.

During last year's hearings on the nomination of Richard Kleindienst as Attorney General, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), among others, sought to use the hearings to support allegations of GOP wrongdoing in the settlement of a Justice Department antitrust suit against International Telephone and Telegraph Co.

According to a Senate aide, Colson retaliated by sending up a speech sharply attacking Kennedy and questioning his ethics, raising the Chappaquiddick drowning, allegations of cheating in college and similar issues. "It was a real headline attack," said a Senate aide, completely unsuitable for use and a breach of Senate courtesy if delivered on the floor. "No one took him up and he was unable to peddle it."

The problem with such White House materials is not that they are proffered around—everyone expects that and it's part of the game, even if it is somewhat deceptive—but that the materials may be totally unsuitable and the White House gets mad if they aren't used.

It is further evidence of the insensitivity of the top White House staff to the political realities of being a senator. The Republican senators react with hostility to the Haldeman-Ehrlichman operation. Justified or not, this hostility is a fact of political life in the Senate.