

By KML NARA, Date 5/13/04

TELCON  
The President  
7:40 p. m., June 17, 1971

- P: I think it is important that you give Rostow a call. I will tell you the problem. He is telling Johnson -- advising against doing the press thing. I am going to meet with 200 press tomorrow in Rochester and I am prepared and intend to defend Johnson on this whole thing but I can't and won't do that unless Johnson will defend himself. He wants us to take the heat on this. You call him.
- K: I think he is in Newport.
- P: Who, Johnson?
- K: No, Rostow.
- P: I don't care where he is, you call him and call me back. He is advising Johnson against this. He's got to have a press conference.
- K: I have talked to Bill Jordan and \_\_\_\_\_ and I don't think the information is correct.
- P: You don't think it's correct.
- K: I don't believe he is going to have one but I don't think Rostow is advising him against it, I just don't think Johnson wants to have one. I didn't discuss a press conference but I did say there should be some statement from Johnson on this.
- P: Tell Rostow that unless he has a press conference, I am not prepared to defend him. Why should I?
- K: I don't think you should defend Johnson anyway. You should defend the Presidency.
- P: It amounts to the same thing, a defense of Johnson. I don't think this is proper to put one side of the case out and not the other side.
- K: I will call Rostow about the press conference but you should concentrate on the theft of documents and on the unconceivability of \_\_\_\_\_ over attacking somebody and not letting them see the context. Why don't you supply the context?
- P: Well, chat with Rostow a little bit about it. The Harlow report is that he is advising against it. Johnson should go to the mat on this, don't you think so?

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7:40 p.m., June 17, 1971 -- page 2

- K: Frankly, I think they are all so eager -- it would get a brawl started between Johnson and the press.
- P: It would get it off us.
- K: But it also would drag it down to the level of whether Johnson was guilty or not.
- P: That;s a hell of a lot better than whether we are guilty or not!
- K: These people are deliberately undermining \_\_\_\_\_ in Government. What you are ..... the end justifies the means and this is called higher morality. Gerry Schechter from Times was just in here. Of course, they never print it like we tell it to them but --
- P: Yeah.
- K: I immediately go on the attack. I said I don't understand how you people ..... how do I know you are not stealing papers all over the place .....
- P: You be sure to call Rostow, and call me back.
- K: I will.