

**Date:** 1971-07-01

**Time:** 13:08-14:05

**Participants:** Richard M. Nixon, H. R. "Bob" Haldeman

**Location:** Oval Office

**Tape:** 534-012

SCROLLER TITLE: "You Need a Team"

SCENE SETTER: Fearing that a presumed conspiracy would leak his most damaging secrets, President Nixon prepared to launch a real conspiracy of his own. The "team" he proposed would become the Special Investigations Unit, later known as the Plumbers. They would engage in numerous illegal actions on behalf of the President. In this conversation, Nixon discussed options for the team's leadership with Chief of Staff H. R. "Bob" Haldeman.

**President Nixon:** I think you need a team. This is a big job. But you need a commander of the team, and—

**H. R. "Bob" Haldeman:** Well, this—

**President Nixon:** Maybe—

**Haldeman:** —[Richard V. "Dick"] Allen's point.

**President Nixon:** Maybe—Incidentally, Allen should not be the commander, should he? All right. But shouldn't [Charles W. "Chuck"] Colson be, when you come down to it, Bob? Is this—are we—

**Haldeman:** Probably.

**President Nixon:** Are we putting too much of a load? What is—

**Haldeman:** Well, it's structured so he can get—

**President Nixon:** He's got a lot of people working for him, hasn't he?

**Haldeman:** Yeah. And he's got good people that he's, you know, that—

**President Nixon:** His instincts are particularly good. [*Pause.*]

**Haldeman:** All right.

**President Nixon:** I think we ought to consider this fellow. I think we ought to pull him over here. [*Unclear*] on temporary duty for the purpose of working on this.

**Haldeman:** Well, the beauty of this type of CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] guy is that—

**President Nixon:** USIA [United States Information Agency].

**Haldeman:** Oh, you're talking about *this* guy now?

**President Nixon:** Well, either one.

**Haldeman:** OK.

**President Nixon:** Both sound good.

**Haldeman:** The CIA guy, the fact that he's working outside, we can just hire him as a consultant.

**President Nixon:** Yeah. Right.

**Haldeman:** There's some merit to getting a guy from outside.

**President Nixon:** Right. Good. Fine.

**Haldeman:** If he knows his way around here.

**President Nixon:** Good.

**Haldeman:** We can get this guy, too.

**President Nixon:** This guy, just get him. [Francis J. "Frank"] Shakespeare can bring him over.

**Haldeman:** Just have him assigned here.

**President Nixon:** I like the idea of a young bear cat who thinks there is a conspiracy. I'd put him on the conspiracy side, with the CIA guy, you know, [on the] declassification side.

*End of excerpt.*

CITATION: "Richard M. Nixon and H. R. 'Bob' Haldeman on 1 July 1971," Conversation 534-012, Draft Transcript, Presidential Recordings Program, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.