

July 2, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN  
FROM: CHARLES COLSON  
SUBJECT: Labor Releases

We have had good success with many of the agencies in reviewing in advance their press releases on particularly sensitive subjects. On a number of occasions we have headed off serious problems by doing this.

One area in which we have had complete resistance is with the Department of Labor. I understand the sensitivities; I understand that the Secretary is very cautious about interfering with Bureau of Labor statistics. The fact is, however, that we've had several instances where Labor Department releases have been written in the most negative possible way. I've called these to the attention of Hodgson and Larry Silberman, who on each occasion agree but then it keeps repeating.

The initial wire stories today on the decline in unemployment to 5.6 percent were exceptionally negative. I am attaching the first UPI story, the second line of which is that the Labor Department cautioned that the dip might have been caused by a "statistical quirk".

As soon as the story ran, Ziegler got to the wire services and, of course, we followed up shortly thereafter with Hodgson's briefing. So possibly, on balance the story will come out favorably. In digging into this I discovered that it was the Department of Labor's own press release that caused the problem. It would have been impossible to write a more negative release on what is a positive story. Even if there is a statistical aberration, it is the exact same statistical analysis that produced the 6.2 percent figure earlier.

I think this is unforgivable. The Labor Department either should look at these things with a political eye or let us review them or we need a new PIO.

Joe Loftus is the chief press man at Labor. He is a crusty, old newspaper man who certainly has not been cooperative or helpful and he ultimately must be responsible for this. I think if you want to put the new 'lord high executioner' theory to work that this would be an excellent place to begin and let us get a politically sensitized PIO into the Department.