



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Thursday, December 10.

Press conference day. President stayed locked up at the EOB all day, and I didn't see him for the entire day, something of a record. He didn't leave the EOB until just time to go over to the Residence and change clothes, and go down for the press conference at 7:00. He went back up right after the press conference, and spent the evening with the family. There were quite a few phone calls during the day asking for some specific information, primarily statistics that he would use tonight. As it turned out, he used practically all the figures that he asked for. The press conference itself was, in most people's minds, a great success. He covered 28 questions, which is the most he's ever done. With a wonderful range between long and short answers. Great command of the whole thing. He used a lot of good humor in handling, and in some cases turning aside, some exceptionally vicious questioning. Our phone checks afterwards indicated very high satisfaction on the part of all types of people, political, news, and press types, business leaders, etcetera. The only dissenting voice was Dick Moore, who was fairly disappointed. Mainly because he just didn't think the President came across as well as he can and has sometimes in the past. No one else seems to share that view. The President himself felt quite good about it, especially because he had the chance to zing the press several times, and he did it very effectively.

He's thrown things into a bit of a tizzy by making the personnel announcement that Rumsfeld's dropping his OEO post and Carlucci's taking over, and even worse, saying that he would have an announcement about a major Administration post for Bush at 11:00 tomorrow. John Tower was on the phone instantly, because he hadn't had any notification and was very upset about this. Bush wasn't prepared for it either, and worst of all, Charlie Yost hasn't been told. So once again we've come up with a replacement for him without his knowing it. This will all have to be taken care of tomorrow, and can be, but it does make things a little sticky.

President was particularly pleased with his answers in several areas, probably the most important one being his explanation of the need for foreign aid to Cambodia, where he explained how this



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was the most valuable investment we make because of its saving of American lives. He was extremely effective on this. The high point probably in most people's minds was the fact that he admitted he was wrong on the Manson comments and couple of his others where he's prejudged trials that are in progress. He gave a brief 13 second answer but, in effect, said that he was wrong in his comments on these things, and he was sorry about it. Overall, was well worth while. It's just too bad it wasn't on later so it could reach more people.

The whole personnel process goes on and on as we try to put the puzzle together. Dole still leads in contention for the National Committee, but there are many with very deep reservations, not the least of whom is Rog Morton. Harlow, Mitchell, and I had a long meeting with Morton today, and didn't succeed in selling him very well, I don't think. Harlow's doing everything he can to be helpful in this, and I think it's going to be great having him available on the outside. The rail strike was a big flurry for a part of the day, but it sort of petered out as three of the unions went back to work, the fourth one finally did so late in the day after the threat of a huge fine for contempt of court.

End of the day.