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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JACK HUSHEN

AT 12:25 P.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 19, 1974

THURSDAY

MR. HUSHEN: I don't like to start these briefings at 12:24 any more than you like having them start at 12:24, but I do like to follow one policy; that is, seeing the President before I come out here. I think that is important to being able to respond more fully to your questions, and that is what I have been doing.

Let me just go quickly through the announcements.

Following the President's return from the United Nations yesterday, he greeted this year's delegation of United States and European Parliamentarians' annual exchange visit. This year there are 14 Europeans visiting the United States. They were at the White House yesterday to pay a courtesy call on the President. I believe we posted a list of those who were at that meeting.

Then, as many of you know because you were there, last night the President and Mrs. Ford attended the Washington Press Club inauguration at which time Ron "Godfather" Sarro was sworn in as the new president and you have the President's remarks.

We have posted the President's schedule. The first item of the day was the breakfast meeting with the Congressional leaders and the Armed Services Committee chairman and ranking representatives. That meeting lasted 90 minutes. We posted a list of those attending.

The purpose of the meeting was, as the President announced at his press conference, to meet with the Congressional leaders to review the procedures for the Congressional oversight of CIA covert operations, and that is what was discussed at the meeting.

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The President described that meeting as a full and frank discussion concerning these procedures. Beyond that I cannot go.

Q What do you mean by "procedures"? We understand it was to review whether they were going to continue these operations or not.

MR. HUSHEN: Helen, I just can't go any farther than that.

Following that breakfast meeting, the President, as usual, met with Secretary Kissinger, General Scowcroft, Al Haig, Bob Hartmann, and myself. He also met for 30 minutes with Dr. Guyford Stever, who is the science adviser and also Director of the National Science Foundation.

The purpose of that meeting was to exchange ideas on the relationship between the Federal Government and the scientific community. It is also part of the President's program to meet with the heads of departments and agencies whenever he can.

As you are undoubtedly aware, there is a picnic going on on the South Grounds for the White House staff, being hosted by the President and the First Lady. I think the President should be just about out there and the pool coverage is going out for that.

At 12:50 the President is due to depart for Capitol Hill to attend a luncheon meeting with Republican Members of the House Appropriations Committee. At that meeting, the President will urge the Members to hold the line on Federal spending so that the Government can do its part to help control inflation.

That luncheon will be in the Joe Martin Dining Room, which is H. 139 of the Capitol.

Following his return to the White House, the President will meet with Houston Flournoy who is the Republican candidate for Governor of California, for a picture, basically.

At 2:30, the President will meet with Senator Barry Goldwater to discuss legislative matters.

At 3:00, the President will greet the crew of the SR-71 aircraft which set the transatlantic speed record of one hour and 56 minutes. You may recall that when they set that record on September 1, the President called them in London to congratulate them.

They also set a London-to-Los Angeles record, 3 hours 48 minutes, on September 11.

Again at 4:00 p.m., the President will meet with a number of Congressmen during another Congressional hour's session.

Q Do you know how many, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, I do. There are eight Congressmen scheduled in. They are Representative Bill Young, Republican from Florida -- I should have read Members of Congress and the Senate -- Senator Charles Mathias, Republican of Maryland; Representative Jerry Pettis, Republican of California; Senator J. Glenn Beall, Republican of Maryland; Representative Earl Landgrebe, Republican of Indiana; Representative David Satterfield, Democrat of Virginia; Representative Don Riegle, Democrat of Michigan, and Representative Orville Hansen, Republican of Idaho.

Q What is this?

MR. HUSHEN: These are meetings set up following a consultation between Bill Timmons and the President to give Members of Congress a chance to come in briefly, if they have something they want to take up with the President, or to bring somebody down to be introduced to the President, such as a distinguished personality from their State, something like that, but it is kind of an open-door policy with the Hill.

Q They don't come in together?

MR. HUSHEN: No; rarely.

Q And it lasts for how long?

MR. HUSHEN: There is no set time for each one. We just try to get all eight in in the hours, so it will vary. Some will be for longer than others.

Then at 5:30 today, the President will meet with the Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh. This meeting will give the President and the Foreign Minister an opportunity for a general review of the progress in our relations with India in recent months. It will be the first meeting on a Presidential level with an Indian leader since Prime Minister Gandhi visited Washington in November of 1971.

Q Who else will be in the meeting?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know whether Mr. Kissinger will be there or not. I will check.

Q Does Mr. Singh have a message for the President from Mrs. Gandhi?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't answer that, but the Secretary of State will be in that meeting.

Q Will they talk about food aid, do you know? Is that one of the topics?

MR. HUSHEN: That may well be. I don't know if it has a structured agenda or not. One of the reasons, of course, is Secretary Kissinger is planning to visit South Asia, including India, next month. And this is the first of a series of meetings with foreign leaders and the President which the President will be holding during the U.N. General Assembly session.

Q Will he meet with Gromyko?

MR. HUSHEN: He will be meeting with Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko at 11:00 tomorrow. As you know, he is in the United States to attend the same General Assembly session. That meeting will provide an opportunity for the President and the Foreign Minister to review the relations between the two countries.

Q Would you go back to the meeting with Mr. Singh. Does the President have any plans or intentions for reassuring Mr. Singh and through Mr. Singh, Mrs. Gandhi, about the role of the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in India?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't give you any guidance on that at this time.

Looking ahead on the President's schedule, I don't have anything for tomorrow yet, other than the Gromyko visit, but as you know, on Saturday, the President will meet with Prime Minister Tanaka of Japan, which was previously announced.

On Monday, he will go to Detroit to open the World Energy Conference at Cobo Hall.

After Detroit, I expect the next out-of-town travel, as things now stand, to be October 2, when the President addresses the student body of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and then goes on to San Francisco for a meeting that evening with UPI editors.

Q Both of them on the 2nd?

MR. HUSHEN: Correct.

Q Will that be a questions and answer session or will he speak, or what?

MR. HUSHEN: He will speak. The format has not been firmed up.

Q Is there a proper name for the editors' group?

MR. HUSHEN: It was just described to me, and I have always heard it as the UPI editors.

Q Is that overnight in San Francisco?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, I have communicated to the President that the overwhelming support is for an overnight in San Francisco, and I think that is where it will be.

Q Are there any other stops in California, like San Clemente?

MR. HUSHEN: He will be returning on the 3rd, the best I know now, with no other events scheduled right now.

Q On Detroit, Jack, is he planning to stop at Grand Rapids while he is out there?

MR. HUSHEN: He has no plans to.

Q Just up and back?

MR. HUSHEN: Right. The speech, I think, is scheduled for about 11 a.m., so it will be out in the morning and back in the early afternoon.

Q How about Brigham Young?

MR. HUSHEN: That is a morning speech. I don't have the exact time on that yet. Let me check that, since there is a time change, and it may not be that late of a departure.

Q Did you say if there were questions or answers at the UPI?

MR. HUSHEN: That format has not been set. The only other thing we have on the announced schedule are President Leone's visit next Wednesday, September 25, and a series of four Republican campaign fund raisers, which you already have the dates of.

I have a couple of other announcements to make this morning.

The President is accepting the resignation of Dr. James P. Roach as a member of the Board of Foreign Scholarships, and we will post information on that.

I think you have the paper on the fact the President is transmitting to Congress today the annual report of United States participation in the United Nations.

The President is also transmitting to Congress the first annual report of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee. This committee was created by law to advise the Civil Service Commission concerning what is known as the Federal blue collar wage system.

Finally, the President is transmitting to the Senate for its advice and consent a protocol to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union. This protocol limits the 1972 ABM treaty, which provided for two ABM sites to a single site. You have the President's letter of transmittal.

I think that is just about all I have to announce this morning.

Q Jack, back to the meeting this morning with the Armed Services Committee, will you tell us whether any proposal or concern was expressed about leakage of public testimony and whether there was any intention to do anything about it?

Q What was the question?

MR. HUSHEN: Was there any discussion about the leaking of Mr. Colby's testimony, and was anything going to be done about it.

Q That is right.

MR. HUSHEN: The discussions did include Congressional procedures as well as Executive Branch procedures.

Q Is that your answer?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q On the same subject, Jack, yesterday Secretary Kissinger told the pool that Congressional leaders were going to be briefed in detail on CIA operations and then they were going to be asked what do you want to do, or what do you want us to do -- I forget the exact quote, but it has been quoted -- and this led the pool report and at least one wire service to say that this would be a review of the entire CIA covert political operations, including the question of whether or not they should be abolished.

Now, today you say that the discussion was regarding Congressional oversight of CIA covert operations, which is much narrower than the other seemed to be. I wonder if you could get some clarification for us on that.

MR. HUSHEN: I think I ought to just stick where I am because I don't want to try to direct you one way or the other beyond what I have said in terms of the nature of the discussions.

Q Can you see the problem, that you can look at it two ways and some people are?

MR. HUSHEN: I think between what the President said on Monday and what Mr. Kissinger said on the plane yesterday, you ought to be able to draw the kind of conclusions that you are drawing.

Q Were there decisions taken? Can you say whether there were any decisions?

MR. HUSHEN: I cannot.

Q Jack, did the President and the Secretary brief the Members of Congress on the full scope of the CIA's covert operations?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q Did you find out yet who recommended to the President that Dr. Kissinger be considered for this title of National Security Council Chairman? You looked the other day and found a number of people who didn't know. I was wondering if you proceeded to find out who did?

MR. HUSHEN: I am only going on what the President told me, and that was he didn't have that recommendation.

Q Can you tell us why the President felt it necessary yesterday to give Dr. Kissinger such a vote of confidence?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, I think the President was concerned about stories which he felt were either misleading or not true and wanted to assure the public in a forum such as he had up at the United Nations of his full confidence and support for the Secretary of State, and that there was no contemplated change in his position in the Executive Branch.

Q Jack, do you, or does the President, have any idea of the origin of those stories? They seem to be coming from someplace in this building.

MR. HUSHEN: I would leave it to the people who are writing the stories to know where the origin of the stories are.

Q Jack, is Benton Becker on the White House staff?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

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Let me just go back before I take the Becker question and say one more thing to all of you on that matter of the President's statement of Henry Kissinger. The President wrote that statement on the plane flying to New York yesterday. He wrote it out in longhand and then had it typed up when he arrived up there.

Q Did he do it at the request of Secretary Kissinger?

MR. HUSHEN: No, he did not. I specifically asked him that.

Q Did he present the copy of his longhand remarks to Dr. Kissinger before he delivered them or afterwards?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, Dr. Kissinger knew what the President was going to say before he actually said it. He was given the longhand statement afterwards.

Q After it had been delivered or before?

MR. HUSHEN: After it had been typed. But I don't know which side of the delivery it was given to him on.

Q Was this a gesture, a keepsake, memorabilia, or what?

MR. HUSHEN: Whatever.

Q Would you complete that, Jack? Did the President intend to say that he intends to retain Dr. Kissinger as both Secretary of State and Assistant for National Security Affairs?

MR. HUSHEN: I couldn't read it any other way.

Q Jack, would you answer my question on Benton Becker?

MR. HUSHEN: Carroll has a question on Benton Becker. I talked to Mr. Buchen on this to get this straightened out. He is a voluntary assistant. He was not on the payroll and was not even being paid as a consultant.

Q What did he do it for?

MR. HUSHEN: Because he was asked to.

Becker has previously worked with Mr. Buchen and with the President when the President was Vice President and also I believe when he was still in the Congress.

Q Is he working full-time for the time being?

MR. HUSHEN: No, he just engaged in that last activity and now is back practicing law.

Q He is not now helping then?

Q Who asked him to come aboard on a voluntary basis, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: Mr. Buchen.

Q Back to the CIA, if I could. You said in answer to Gaylord Shaw's question that the Congressional leaders were briefed on the full scope of CIA covert political operations.

Were they then asked what should be done about those? Were they asked for their opinions on that broad subject?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, having not sat in on it, and having rather limited guidance, I just have to say that you will have to interpret what a full and frank discussion is.

Q Jack, when you say that they were briefed on the full scope of CIA covert operations, you mean the full international scope, not just confined to Chile in this instance that you have discussed?

MR. HUSHEN: I think I answered that question in the affirmative.

Q I just want to be sure that that is what you meant. You meant the full scope of the CIA operations around the world, not the full scope of the CIA covert operations in Chile?

MR. HUSHEN: Correct.

Q Jack, will there be a similar meeting with people who are directly charged with CIA oversight responsibilities up there? You may already know about everything, but that is what we were told.

MR. HUSHEN: I know of no plans for such a meeting. I just don't have anything I can tell you for sure on that.

Q Do you rule out that this discussion or review could lead in the near future to a cessation of all such covert political activities by the CIA?

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MR. HUSHEN: I can't respond to that.

Q A question related to the protocol for the ABM treaty. When is the President going to send to the Senate the other treaty resulting from the summit meeting; that is, the treaty on underground nuclear testing?

The second part to that question; that is, when is the party of experts, or whatever you want to call them, the U.S. and Soviet groups, going to meet to work out the peaceful explosion facet of that treaty?

MR. HUSHEN: I just think I am going to have to take both of those questions and try to get you an answer. I don't have it.

Q Jack, I am wondering why it is he would send up one and not the other?

MR. HUSHEN: I presume we are not ready to send up the other.

Q Will you find out what they are?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q I mean, have there been any meetings of the group that are to work out that particular facet or are these still to be held?

MR. HUSHEN: I think we can get you your answers when this briefing is over, but I don't want to guess at something.

Q Jack, could I ask you a two-part Haig question. Number one, when will he leave the White House, on what date?

MR. HUSHEN: Shortly.

Q Before or after John McLaughlin?

MR. HUSHEN: Let me just put it this way: I expect that Mr. Haig will leave within a week.

Q The next part of the question is, there are some in Congress who feel there should be some sort of hearing on this appointment. Will the President support this?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think there is any precedent for doing that. The President is returning him to military duty because of his long experience there and his outstanding record.

Q You said the President is returning, or do you mean Haig?

MR. HUSHEN: No, the President is returning him, I said.

Q He will walk out a General, will he not?

MR. HUSHEN: No, he will not. He will leave here as a civilian and be returned to active duty following his departure from the White House.

Q Jack, would the President object if hearings were held?

MR. HUSHEN: The President does not see the need for such hearings.

Q Does that mean that he would oppose such hearings, he would tell the General not to do it, advise him not to do it?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't answer that.

Q Jack, there is some confusion about the President's speech yesterday on another subject, about whether he was promising to provide food or just to increase the dollar amount that the United States would commit for food, and it in fact would be a lesser amount of food provided.

MR. HUSHEN: I wouldn't read that into it. I think it is a genuine decision to supply more food. How much more has to be worked out.

Q Jack, a couple of us talked to Secretary Butz out here in the driveway this morning, and he said it would mean less food but more money involved in it because of inflation.

MR. HUSHEN: I am not going to stand up here and contradict Mr. Butz without having a better feel for just exactly what the program is going to entail.

Q Could you add that to your long list of things you will check for us? He was coming out of here, I gather, when he said that. Could you check on that, whether it was more money or more food as well?

MR. HUSHEN: All right, I will try to get you some guidance on that.

Q Jack, we were told General Haig would probably leave Friday. Is he delaying his departure until the appointment of a successor, and is there a successor about to be named?

MR. HUSHEN: There will be a successor, but that successor has not been selected yet.

Q Under the title of Chief of Staff?

MR. HUSHEN: If not the title, the function, and I don't think there is any delay on the part of General Haig for that reason.

Q Does the President expect to have a successor in place when General Haig leaves?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't answer that. I just don't know.

Q Do you have any guidance on when a Press Secretary will be named?

MR. HUSHEN: I thought you would never ask. Shortly.

Q Within a week?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't want to get tied down to a fixed period of time, because if that slips, then --

Q Does he have a selection? Does he have someone in mind?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, certainly it is not for lack of candidates.

Q How many people have been considered, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't say that. I don't know.

Q How many volunteered for it?

Q He complained the other night there weren't enough candidates, and you are saying the opposite.

MR. HUSHEN: I think he was just trying to find out who was willing to stand up out there.

Q Well, then someone has been selected, I gather?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't say that, and I certainly wouldn't want to encourage any speculation along that line.

Q Is there at least a list of several finalists that the President is selecting from among or are they still hunting for candidates?

Q Is it considered over, or in the quarter finals, or what?

MR. HUSHEN: No, but it is a matter that is of concern to the President.

Q What was the "no" to that that you put at the start of it? There is not a group of finalists?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't go into all of the details of the selection process.

Q By "shortly", do you mean by the end of this week? Can you give us some guidance on what you mean by "shortly"?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, soon. I don't want to give a fixed date because there isn't a fixed date.

Q Jack, on Monday night, the President again explained his reasons for granting the pardon to Mr. Nixon. Since that time, have you had a chance to tabulate the telegrams and letters and so forth? The remarks coming in since then? We are trying to find out if there is a change in that.

MR. HUSHEN: No, but I will check that.

Q Jack, on another matter, could you tell me if the President has reached any decision yet on his support, or non support, for public financing of Presidential and Congressional elections? He had some people in the office, I believe a couple of weeks ago, to discuss that matter.

MR. HUSHEN: No, I can't give you any guidance on that yet.

Q Jack, there was a story in the Newseek, "Periscope Correct", where he had talked to Congressman Frenzel and told him he wanted the bill killed.

MR. HUSHEN: I can confirm half of that. He made the phone call. What he said, I don't know.

Q Jack, has the President taken any stand on the consumer protection bill that Mr. Nixon had said that he probably would veto? They are trying again to get cloture this afternoon on it and they may get it, and they may not.

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure what the answer is on that.

Q Was the President aware of that loophole in the amnesty program whereby military deserters could get undesirable discharges?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, that was taken into consideration in the discussions that took place leading up to the announcement of the program.

Q Jack, do you have any answer to Jerry terHorst's published complaint about the President frittering away his time?

MR. HUSHEN: The President is not frittering away his time.

Q Jack, how will the White House respond to Mr. Jaworski's request for additional Watergate tapes and documents? Do you have any answer yet to that request?

MR. HUSHEN: No, we have the request and we are studying it.

Q Jack, to follow that up, the President said there were some discussions going on to deal with Jaworski's concerns. Have those discussions reached any conclusions?

MR. HUSHEN: Not that I am aware of and I have tried to stay in touch with them so that I can be responsive to your questions.

Q Is there any kind of an agreement between the White House legal counsel and Mr. Miller over a possible change in the ground rules under which the former President's tapes and documents will be handled?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know if they have reached any agreement or not on that. The agreement could be amended but, as yet, I know of no amendments to it yet.

Q Has the President talked --

Q Jack, when the President goes to Japan --

MR. HUSHEN: Wait a minute. Phil's got it.

Q Has the President talked with former President Nixon since his last news conference, or has he had any communication with anyone at San Clemente?

MR. HUSHEN: I am pretty sure the answer to that is no, he has not talked to anybody in San Clemente.

Q Back to the loophole, you said that was considered. Do you know what the President's feelings were on that subject? Did he express any opinion such as, "Oh, the hell with it"?

MR. HUSHEN: No. Was the figure 500,000? I don't have the figure of the large number of deserters who were given dishonorable discharges, but it is a very large figure which we had here. The main thing was to get some equity in the program so that any of these people who want to get the stigma of a dishonorable or undesirable discharge off their record, can apply for alternate service and then get a clemency discharge.

Q So his thinking then was to leave the choice up to them? If they were willing to settle for an undesirable discharge, that was their concern?

MR. HUSHEN: Right. You understand that when the military gets rid of them through the discharge, then they have no control over them and it is a civilian control.

Q Before, when I asked the question, "Can you make sure that the President did not speak with either Mr. Nixon or anyone else at San Clemente," you seemed to hedge just a little bit, or perhaps I misread what you said.

MR. HUSHEN: I was just trying to review whether I had heard anything like that and President Ford has not talked to the former President since the day that he nominated Nelson Rockefeller.

Q Or anybody at San Clemente. The question included that also.

MR. HUSHEN: I will check that out, but I am virtually positive the answer is no.

Q When the President goes to Japan, on the way to Japan, will he be stopping in any other foreign country, or on the way back from Japan, will he stop in any other foreign country?

MR. HUSHEN: The only plans right now are Japan. I won't say that that won't change, but the only plans now are Japan.

Q When does the President plan to send up his laundry list of deferrals to the Hill that he promised to send up to them to let them know what they want?

MR. HUSHEN: I think today or tomorrow.

Q What time today or tomorrow? I mean, is that what the 1:00 meeting is about, or is that about something else?

MR. HUSHEN: I think that is about something else. That will undoubtedly be discussed, but whether or not it goes today or tomorrow, I am not sure.

Q Is Ash going to be over here to brief us about those deferrals?

MR. HUSHEN: I hope so.

Q Could you request that he be here?

MR. HUSHEN: I have no qualms about making the request and I would like to have him here because he can talk more candidly about it.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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(1:03 P.M. EDT)