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NEWS CONFERENCE

#331

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:36 A.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 29, 1975

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let me read you a little announcement here.

At the invitation of the President, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan will pay a State visit to the United States from September 30 to October 13 as guests of the United States Government. This will be the first State visit to the United States by a reigning Emperor during the entire 120 year history of America's relationship with Japan.

The visit will symbolize the close and cooperative relations which have developed between the United States and Japan over the past quarter century.

Q How were they before that? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: The President believes that Their Majesties' visit will contribute a new dignity to U.S.-Japan relations and strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Japanese and American people.

The President and Mrs. Ford will greet the Emperor and Empress when they arrive in Washington on October 2, and will host a State dinner in their honor at the White House that evening, the evening of October 2.

On October 3, the Emperor will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, tour Washington and give a banquet at the Commons Hall of the Smithsonian Institution in honor of President and Mrs. Ford.

Deputy Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda will accompany Their Majesties during the visit.

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Also, let me tell you today that the American delegation, which is negotiating with the Soviet Union on long-term grain sales, will be returning today. This afternoon they will be leaving. That delegation, as you know, is headed by Charles Robinson, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

Q Returning where?

MR. NESSEN: To there.

By way of background, Secretary Robinson began his discussions on the 11th of September in Moscow. He returned here on the 16th of September for additional consultations, which are now complete, and he is going back now to continue the negotiations with the Soviet Union.

For tomorrow, the President will be going to dedicate the new FBI building here in Washington at 11 o'clock.

Q Will it be possible for us to cover that?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q And go on the trip?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

The check-in time at Andrews is 3:30 p.m. tomorrow, for those of you going on the trip.

Q With bags?

MR. NESSEN: You can bring whatever young lady you would like to, Jim. (Laughter)

The take-off time is 4:15. The arrival at O'Hare is 4:50 Central Daylight Time.

The President will go directly from the airport to the Conrad Hilton in Chicago, where he will speak at the Illinois State GOP fund-raising dinner. There will be a reception ahead of that.

Q Do you have a dollar and cents figure?

MR. NESSEN: The attendance is expected to be 1,000. The tickets are \$125 a head.

Q How much for the reception?

MR. NESSEN: There is a general reception for all the dinner guests, then into the dinner, and then a brief post-dinner reception for about 75 people.

Q How much is that charge?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there is any extra charge for that. I think that is the head table people.

Q He is going at 5 o'clock or so?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q What time is the reception?

Q Where is he going to?

MR. NESSEN: The Conrad Hilton.

Q Is there going to be a motorcade?

Q Does he helicopter from O'Hare to the hotel?

MR. NESSEN: No, he is going in the motorcade.

Q Against the traffic, during the rush hour?

MR. NESSEN: He is going against the traffic. They are going out; he will be going in.

The President will board the helicopter at 4:40 and Air Force One at 5 o'clock. The President arrives at O'Hare at 5:35. These are tentative times.

Q Is that the National Guard?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

He gets in his motorcade, arrives at 5:35, and gets in the car and goes downtown.

Q After that?

MR. NESSEN: After that, he will spend the night in North Shore Hilton in Skokie, Illinois, where the next morning he will meet with approximately 30 or so mayors from the Chicago suburbs and from the smaller towns of Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin, towns which have a population of 150,000 or less.

Q How about Illinois?

MR. NESSEN: The Illinois cities will be the suburbs of Chicago.

Q Do you have a list of these names of cities?

MR. NESSEN: We have sent out invitations, but we have not gotten all the acceptances and regrets back yet.

Q Can you give us a list of those?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have it right now, but I will get it for you.

Q One meeting with mayors of all those cities?

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

It is a meeting with the mayors in the towns in the suburbs of Chicago. For the out-of-State cities, those of Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin, it is mayors from towns with 150,000 population or less.

Q One meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Were these invitations sent out a long time ago?

MR. NESSEN: I think about the middle or end of last week.

Q What is the format?

MR. NESSEN: It will give him an opportunity to hear from all the small city mayors and suburban mayors about what their problems are. He just had this meeting with the big city mayors, and he wants to hear from the smaller cities and their mayors.

Q Mayor Beame was the smallest city mayor we had. (Laughter)

Q Is the mayor of Dearborn, Michigan going to be there?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the list.

Everybody will be sitting around a square-type table, and it will be a discussion. I would think they could ask the President questions or tell him what they think their problems are. The purpose of the meeting is to hear their problems.

Q Open coverage?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we have decided on the coverage, but I would doubt the entire meeting would be open. There will be pool coverage, but I haven't quite worked that out yet.

Q What time does the motorcade get downtown?

MR. NESSEN: About 6:15.

Q Ron, the earlier times you gave us were wrong, then?

MR. NESSEN: No, that was the press plane time. He arrives at 5:35 and gets to the Hilton at 6:15. He is staying at the North Shore Hilton overnight. He has a meeting with the mayors the next day, and then he goes back to O'Hare. He will have some staff time in the hotel, which will give us time to have a little briefing about the mayors after the meeting, 45 minutes or so.

Q Which hotel?

MR. NESSEN: At the North Shore Hilton.

Q Will we be staying at the North Shore Hilton?

MR. NESSEN: The press will be staying at the Hyatt House, a couple of blocks away.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: Entirely because there was no room at the North Shore Hilton. There wasn't originally enough for the staff people. I am leaving about three people behind from my office, and there will be ten rooms at the North Shore Hilton for the pool.

Q Where will we be staying?

MR. NESSEN: At the Hyatt House on Lincolnwood.

Also, there is not enough room for WHCA at the North Shore Hilton, so they will be staying at your hotel. We are not playing any games with this thing. There simply is not enough room.

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Q Why didn't he stay there?

MR. NESSEN: There is not enough room in either of the hotels to get the President, his party, WHCA and the press all in one hotel. There was a thought of putting the President in the Hyatt. It turned out the Hyatt didn't have enough rooms for the President, the whole staff and WHCA.

Q Why not stay at some other hotel?

MR. NESSEN: The answer to that is these are the only two hotels which are not serviced by the General Telephone Company, and the General Telephone Company is on strike. These are the only two hotels served by Illinois Bell, where we were guaranteed having telephones and telephone service.

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Q Does that apply to the downtown Chicago hotels?

MR. NESSEN: We will ask Eric whether they have Illinois Bell at the Conrad Hilton.

Moving along to the next day after the Mayors meeting --

Q What time is the Mayors meeting?

MR. NESSEN: The Mayors meeting is at about 9:30 on Wednesday morning. Then he is going to have some time in his room to work on paperwork and business and it will be during that time that we will try to bring some Mayors down to give you a briefing. Then, after that, he leaves from O'Hare to go to Omaha.

Q What time?

MR. NESSEN: Take-off time is noon, and then he goes to the Omaha Hilton.

Q What time does he arrive in Omaha?

MR. NESSEN: He arrives in Omaha at 1:15, Central Daylight Time. Then he goes to the Omaha Hilton where he will be interviewed by some local television and newspapers. I don't know what the release time on that is because I don't know when they plan to broadcast it. I expect to get word back from Bob Mead shortly.

Then he goes to the White House Conference which begins at 4:30, and the format will be the same, which is very brief remarks --

Q Is that also at the Hilton?

MR. NESSEN: Yes -- followed by questions from the people who are participating in the Conference.

This Conference is drawing its participants from both Nebraska and Iowa. Then the question and answer session, as I say. Then he goes straight to the motorcade and to the airport.

Q What airport?

MR. NESSEN: Eppley Field.

Q Is it a military field?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so. Offutt, I think, is the military field. This is the civilian field.

He takes off at 5:50, arrives at Andrews at 8:55 -- this is all Wednesday we are talking about -- gets on the helicopter and arrives on the South Lawn at 9:15. That is the end of that.

Q What was the Andrews time?

MR. NESSEN: Andrews time -- 8:55.

Q Is what you have given us in lieu of a bible?

MR. NESSEN: No, we will have the bible this afternoon.

Q He won't have long at the White House Conference, will he?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the same length as usual. He starts talking about 4:35 and finishes the questions at 5:25. You know how those things are; they always run late anyhow.

Q Who will be there? Zarb and who else?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't gotten the list of staff participants yet.

Q Judging by the FBI briefing, you are not going to brief tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: That was my thought, because between the FBI dedication and the trip, I don't think there is much you will need. We will be here all morning, obviously, to answer your questions.

Q Is he going to make a long speech or short one?

MR. NESSEN: At the FBI dedication?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I haven't seen the text of it, Bob.

Q Do you think it will be like the Justice Department speech Friday?

MR. NESSEN: I think it will probably be a little more there.

Q Will we get it tonight?

MR. NESSEN: We will try but I doubt it.

Q Will you have an a.m. speech for Chicago?

MR. NESSEN: I think the speech he is giving tomorrow night at Chicago, we will be able to put out at least excerpts ahead of time.

Q Here?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure we will get it that far ahead of time, but at some point we will get it and put out excerpts from it.

Q Is this being paid for by the Republican National Committee, this trip?

MR. NESSEN: Right, according to the formula.

Q Is the speech political?

MR. NESSEN: You mean is the content of the speech political?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Some. It is not personally political for his own candidacy, but in his role as leader of the Republican Party.

Q You mean the round trip to Chicago is paid for by RNC but the Omaha leg is the taxpayer, right?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Is he going to ride in the car from the Hilton back out to the North Shore Hilton Tuesday night?

MR. NESSEN: From the Conrad Hilton to the North Shore Hilton?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: That will be a motorcade.

The President is probably going to sign the extension of the oil control bill this afternoon. He is aiming at 3:00.

Q Will he have remarks?

MR. NESSEN: There will be a little signing in the Oval Office and he will have a short statement to make.

Q You said probably sign. Do you mean there is a chance he won't sign it today?

MR. NESSEN: I think the "probably" has to do with the 3:00 more than anything else. I think if you want to bring cameras in there and film that you can.

Q He will make a statement?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he will make a little statement.

Q Will we have that in advance?

MR. NESSEN: It is not completed yet.

Q How can that be covered? Will it be broadcast out here?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, we will put it through the mults.

I don't see anything else.

Q Ron, on this grain deal, does that mean it is all but sewed up with this delegation returning?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't say it is all but sewn up. They are going back and continue their negotiations.

Q The President indicated great progress had been made at one or two stops on his recent tours. Is that still the situation? The President said at various times on his travels earlier this month that very encouraging progress was being made, great progress has been made, things like that.

MR. NESSEN: With the Russians?

Q Yes, about the grain deal. Is that still the situation, that there has been encouraging progress?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Do you know the official title of Robinson?

MR. NESSEN: Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

Q What issues remain to be solved?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I ought to get into the negotiations while they are in progress, Phil.

Q On another issue, last Thursday on the Floor of the House, when they were debating the attempt to repeal the Byrd Amendment, which the Ford Administration supported and lost, Congressman Dellums quoted Mr. Ford as having told him when he was Vice President Minority Leader the following quote --

MR. NESSEN: Les, we go through this every time the Byrd Amendment comes up for repeal.

Q I don't want to ask about the Byrd Amendment. I want to ask about what Dellums said that Mr. Ford said, because I think it is a very important statement.

He said, Ron, "There are times when people are leaders and there are times when people are politicians, and I have six factories in my district, and this is the moment I choose to be a politician."

Did Mr. Ford say this or did he not?

MR. NESSEN: I have no way in the world of knowing, Les.

Q Didn't you have somebody watching this debate up there? Would it be possible to find out tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think so. The President's position is he favors repeal of the Byrd Amendment.

Q Did he say this, or did he not? It is in the record. In other words, the White House doesn't care to refute this?

MR. NESSEN: I have no comment one way or the other.

Q Has the President expressed any opinion or had any reaction at all over the execution of the five terrorists in Spain which, as you know, has had widespread repercussions in Europe?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is obvious that the issue of capital punishment stirs very deeply held and very sincere and at times differing feelings, both in the United States and around the world. The President is fully aware of the reactions in Europe to the executions in Spain.

Frankly, I think that the White House would really prefer not to go into any greater detail on what is basically an internal Spanish matter other than to say the President in this and in other cases has expressed regret at the cycle of violence which leads to such a tragic outcome.

Q This statement seems just a little reminiscent of the sort of statements we got after the Kent State incident where we heard that violence begets violence and things of that sort.

There seems to be no feeling of sympathy or compassion or concern or outrage or anything expressed one way or the other. It is just a dispassionate statement to the effect that violence begets violence and we are sorry this happened. There are no deeply felt emotions.

Is this the final definitive White House statement on this matter of the executions in Spain?

MR. NESSEN: I was asked for the reaction and I gave you the reaction.

Q Is there no other concern the President feels or cares to express?

MR. NESSEN: I think this is the White House reaction, Marty.

Q You are saying that the executions were a part of the cycle of violence; the President regards the executions as a part of this violence?

MR. NESSEN: A cycle takes more than one part.

Q And the executions are part of the cycle?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And he, therefore, is expressing regret at the executions?

MR. NESSEN: Of the entire cycle of violence.

Q Is that the President's expression or the White House expression?

MR. NESSEN: As we have always said out here, I try to reflect the President's views as closely as I can.

Q Ron, that is an important point. We are interested in what the President's response is. If I read you right, you said this is the President's response and not a White House response.

MR. NESSEN: I think everything I say out here reflects the President's views.

Q But you used the word specifically the President.

Q Ron, are the executions in Spain going to have any effect whatsoever on American negotiations with Spain for bases?

MR. NESSEN: The view here is that the question of negotiations with Spain is entirely separate from the reaction I was requested to give on the question of the executions.

Q Ron, has this Government expressed formally a concern to the Spanish Government?

MR. NESSEN: I will need to check that, I don't know.

Q Is there going to be extra security for Hirohito?

Q Let's put it this way: 12 European nations -- I believe it is 12 -- or at least a substantial number, have ordered their Ambassadors home from Madrid. Is there any thought being given to ordering our Ambassador home?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate he will be.

Q Is there going to be any extra security for the Emperor of Japan?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we have talked of specific security procedures but, as is the case with all foreign visitors, the necessary steps will be taken to assure his security.

Q Before going too far afield, would you refresh my memory on the President's views on capital punishment? Has he ever expressed any?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has expressed the view that this is a matter which is before the Supreme Court in terms of domestic -- as far as it applies in the United States -- and he has chosen not to say anything publicly while this matter is being discussed by the Supreme Court.

Q So far as you know, he has taken no stand on capital punishment since becoming President?

MR. NESSEN: Not as far as I know. Not publicly, no.

Q Ron, you said a minute ago the view here was that the question of the Spanish bases negotiations was entirely separate from the question of these executions?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Isn't it actually the case that the reason for the soft and non-committal answer by the United States is directly related to these base negotiations?

MR. NESSEN: Not in our view.

Q Ron, is the FBI building going to be officially designated the J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building, and will the President dedicate it in those terms?

MR. NESSEN: Jack has been tracking on that. Let me get an answer from him.

Q Has the President ever expressed himself on capital punishment before he became President?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to dig through the record and look. I just don't know.

Q President Sadat is quoted as having said yesterday that President Ford had given a commitment that after the interim agreement between Israel and Egypt, there would be an interim possible disengagement of Israel in the Golan Heights. Has the President given any consideration to this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't really view that as a startling revelation. I think both the President and Kissinger have said publicly that the Sinai agreement was a step and the American goal has always been to help in whatever way it can to produce an overall Middle East settlement.

The United States does think that the Sinai agreement is an important step but the President has said before that we would do what we could to make progress in the Golan Heights and so I don't think President Sadat was making a revelation that the President hasn't already said publicly.

Q Ron, what he means by progress, does he expect the Israelis to evacuate the entire Golan Heights? Is that part of his understanding?

MR. NESSEN: What the United States is committed to publicly is to help and make every effort it can to bring about progress toward --

Q What is progress? That is undefined.

MR. NESSEN: No, but that is the subject of negotiation, Les.

Q Ron, has the White House worked out its problem with Congressman Pike over the papers that they need up there on the Hill?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't say that it is completely worked out but I think it would be fair to say that considerable progress has been made and that the President is hopeful that the matter can be resolved and that he will go more than half way to resolve it.

Q Ron, while we are on these subjects, has the President worked out the problems with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee?

MR. NESSEN: This has to do with the documents on the Sinai agreement?

Q That is correct.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that the State Department is negotiating with the Foreign Relations Committee on that.

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Q Ron, does the President agree with Congressman Pike that U.S. intelligence gathering is so bad that we might be attacked at any time?

MR. NESSEN: No, he doesn't.

Q Can you tell us his position?

MR. NESSEN: He agrees with what Director Colby said last night.

Q Ron, to go back to the Golan Heights question, he didn't really phrase it the way you phrased it. Sadat didn't say that the Sinai was just one step and we would hope other negotiations would lead to a disengagement of the Golan, or anything like that.

He said the Israelis agreed to a partial withdrawal in the Golan Heights, and if there were any secret agreements in this interim settlement, that was it. He didn't say it on this basis. The question we are asking is whether or not Sadat is correct or not.

MR. NESSEN: What has Sadat said that I did not address?

Q You said the interim agreement included a request by Israel for a partial withdrawal from the Golan Heights. This is what we are trying to find out. Is Sadat correct?

MR. NESSEN: I have to read the Sadat story more clearly.

Q Sadat was quoted as saying that the United States promised an Israeli-Syria agreement.

MR. NESSEN: The President has publicly pledged to do what he can to bring about an Israeli --

Q Has the progress toward a Golan agreement already started? Is there a negotiation already underway?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q It has not started, as far as you are aware?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I am aware.

Q You said considerable progress had been made with Congressman Pike?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Has that progress been made since about 12:30 yesterday when Congressman Pike said on TV that no progress had been made?

MR. NESSEN: I think from the White House view considerable progress had been made.

Q In what area?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is still being discussed and negotiated, Marty.

Q Congressman Pike said yesterday the situation that would be satisfactory now would be to have the President signing personally a written statement that would say he objects to one matter or another being released by the committee. Is the President prepared to do that?

MR. NESSEN: Marty, I think I would just prefer to wait until they have concluded the negotiations instead of speaking out in the middle of negotiations. The President is hopeful a resolution will be forthcoming.

Q Ron, is the President nominating Rod Hills to the SEC?

MR. NESSEN: We have no announcement to make today, Jim.

Q Is the President delaying a decision on the tax cut because he thinks some of the signs are upturning now and some of his advisers are urging him not to ask for an extension?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is a question of delaying. The President has been asked about this, as I recall it, for the last couple of months, and he has always said that this is a decision that needs to be based on the economic outlook as close to the end of the year as you can wait.

This is not even October yet, and you are talking about an extension of a tax cut which would take effect January 1. The President believes that that decision is purely an economic decision that needs to be based on the outlook close to the end of the year.

Q He didn't say that his decision would come soon several times? The L.A. Times interview --

MR. NESSEN: I think he talked in terms of four to six weeks.

Let me clear up two things. The name of the FBI building is the J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building.

The photo pool for the meeting in the Cabinet Room should meet Bill Roberts right here.

Q Ron, what is the meeting with Arthur Burns about?

MR. NESSEN: They meet normally about once a month, and there had been an expression here a while back to put more of these routine meetings on the public schedule. So, today we decided to put it on the public schedule, but he comes in once a month.

Q What about the Zarb meeting going on now?

MR. NESSEN: The Frank Zarb meeting doesn't have anything to do with -- this is to introduce nine co-chairmen for the Bicentennial Combined Federal Campaign and to urge them to work for a successful campaign. Zarb has been appointed as the chairman of this group. This is like the United Givers Fund and that kind of thing, and Frank is chairman.

Q Does the President plan to tell Dr. Burns that he just couldn't believe what he read the other day in the paper about the Government providing jobs? Is this one of the things to be discussed?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't seen the agenda for the meeting, Phil, but I assume, if the subject came up, the President would tell Dr. Burns his views on the subject.

Q Is there any particular reason for putting this meeting on the schedule and that of Arthur Burns?

MR. NESSEN: I just said it is part of my trying to meet some interest that was expressed here a while back in putting more meetings on the public calendar.

Q Zarb is not going to talk to him about energy today?

MR. NESSEN: Not at this particular meeting, no.

Q The President expressed himself very strongly about Congress on the OPEC price hike on Saturday. What is he going to do about it now?

MR. NESSEN: The President is going to share with you some of his views this afternoon when he signs that extension. I don't want to take away from the President's remarks, but basically the President is going to point out what is undeniable, which is that Congress now has two choices.

One is to pass the phased decontrol that the President wants or, if Congress will not do that, to give the President the authority he has requested to ease the impact of immediate decontrol on the users of propane, on the independent gas station owners, on the independent refiners, and to pass the windfall profits tax on oil companies which the President has repeatedly asked for.

The third alternative that Congress has is to do nothing, or to try to extend the controls, which amounts to the same thing, in which case next June we will all do what we did on Saturday, which is to hang over the teletype machines and find out what OPEC has done to us at the invitation of Congress.

The President feels very, very strongly about -- and hopes -- as he said on Saturday, that what did happen on Saturday will demonstrate not only to Members of Congress but to the American people, who will hopefully get in touch with their Members of Congress and let them know how they feel, that the course that Congress has followed is just an open invitation for OPEC to do what it did.

Then, as the President said, some Members of Congress who don't want to come to grips with this issue have tried to make the American people believe that it is Congress, or those Members of Congress fighting to hold the oil prices.

The policy that those Members of Congress have followed has not held oil prices down. It has resulted in a 700 percent increase in the price that we sent out of this country to the Arabs, including \$2 billion that will now be added to the bill.

The price of your annual oil bill has gone up 200 percent since the so-called controls went on in 1971. The President is going to make sure that the American people understand that it is those Members of Congress who want them to believe they are holding down oil prices who are really pursuing a policy which allows the OPEC countries to dictate to us the oil prices we pay.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:15 P.M. EDT)
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