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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:00 NOON EDT

OCTOBER 2, 1975

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let me make just a couple of short announcements.

The pools for tonight's events involving the visit of the Emperor and Empress will be posted at about 2:00. Bill indicates that some of you who may not have signed up, or expressed an interest in being on any of tonight's pools, there is still time to let him know, although there is no guarantee you will make the pool but, if you want to put your name in you can do that and we will post it about 2:00.

Thym or somebody is here to hand you a release announcing that the President intends to nominate Rod Hills to be a member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the remainder of the term, which expires on June 5, 1977. He will succeed Ray Garrett, Jr., who has resigned. Upon confirmation by the Senate the President will designate Rod Hills to serve as chairman.

Carol is giving you an announcement that the President is announcing his intention to nominate Stanley S. Scott of the District of Columbia to be Assistant Administrator of the Agency for International Developments. His area of responsibility will concern the Bureau For Africa. He succeeds Samuel C. Adams, Jr., who resigned effective September 27, 1975.

There is also an exchange of letters between Stan and the President relating to Stan's desire to move to the AID agency.

I will wait for those to get passed out before going on.

We do expect to have a brief statement or report on the meeting between the President and the Emperor. It is possible that that will be here before we conclude this briefing; if not, shortly afterward.

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As you know, the House of Representatives is scheduled to vote this afternoon on the bill numbered S. 2230. This legislation would allow the resumption of arms sales to Turkey within some limits and would allow the Turks to take delivery the arms they have already bought and paid for which are being held in this country in warehouses while the Turks are required to pay storage fees.

The President strongly believes that favorable House action on this measure is critical if vital American and NATO security interests in the Eastern Mediterranean --

Q How about going a little slower.

MR. NESSEN: The President strongly believes that favorable House action on this measure is critical if vital U.S. and NATO security interests in the Eastern Mediterranean are to be restored. These interests have been severely damaged by the embargo.

Favorable action on this measure will enable the United States to begin rebuilding its security relationship with Turkey, which for a long time has been a good friend and an important NATO ally.

Favorable action will also enable the United States to renew effective efforts with all the parties involved--mainly, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus--to realize an early and equitable settlement to the complex Cyprus dispute.

Favorable action also will enable the United States to intensify assistance in cooperation with international agencies to alleviate the suffering of the refugees on Cyprus, and also favorable action will enable the United States to pursue assistance to Greece to help that country overcome its current economic problems.

The President feels that these goals in the Eastern Mediterranean are ones on which all can agree, but they cannot be achieved without favorable resolution of the Turkish military assistance issue.

For these reasons the President believes that House approval of the bill is essential to the safeguarding of important American and NATO interests, and to the efforts of the United States to help realize greater peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Q The Senate has approved that already, haven't they, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: The Senate has approved their resumption of the sales, that is correct.

Q Are you going to have anything to say after the vote?

MR. NESSEN: I would expect so.

Q Does he expect it will pass?

MR. NESSEN: Well, it will be close.

Q What does your headcount say?

MR. NESSEN: That it will be close.

The Wholesale Price Index came out today and it went up six-tenths of one percent in the month of September. Frankly, the statistics are still being analyzed and there is some complicated seasonal adjustment factors in this particular month and, in all honesty, I don't have any very elaborate reaction or any reaction to it yet until the economists have had a chance to study it.

Q You are not happy about an increase of that size, are you, in the Wholesale Price Index?

MR. NESSEN: We are not happy by any increase, Jim, but for this specific one --

Q It is rather large.

MR. NESSEN: It is smaller than the past two months have been, but --

Q By the historical performance of the Wholesale Price Index that is a very large increase indeed.

MR. NESSEN: Six-tenths of one percent, while the economists are looking at it with just some of that in mind, as I say, the seasonal adjustment factors are complicated this month.

I guess to anticipate some of your questions, some of you who watched the ceremonies for the Emperor and Empress noticed an airplane flying over, I guess, trailing a sign --

Q Wasn't that in restricted air space?

MR. NESSEN: It appeared to be, certainly. There is a procedure by which the Secret Service notifies the FAA of apparent violations of the restricted areas over downtown Washington. This was done this morning and I understand that the FAA has a procedure of its own once it receives such a complaint, and I understand the FAA is investigating.

Their phone number over there -- and they are prepared to give you whatever they know -- is 426-8521.

Q Do you know what that sign said?

MR. NESSEN: It was backwards. I think it had to do with whales.

Q It said "Save Our Whales" backwards.

Q What if that plane had had something other than a sign? It appeared to be over the White House almost literally and that is a no no, and given the fact that the President was out there and the Emperor was out there and a lot of other folks, why wasn't something done to prevent it from being there in the first place?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you suggest, Steve.

Q Anti-aircraft? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I don't have really anything else.

Q Ron, does the President plan to replace Stan Scott?

MR. NESSEN: The answer is yes, and we don't have a replacement to announce, though.

Q How about Rod Hills? Does he plan to replace him?

MR. NESSEN: You mean as the Deputy Counsel or whatever his title is?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether that specific job is going to be filled. I don't know.

Q Ron, why did the President, unlike the Emperor, fail to mention World War II in his statement?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't any idea. I don't know, Phil.

Q Ron, Mr. Helmut Schmidt is coming here tomorrow. Can you say anything on what they have in mind here about this meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think we announced some of the reasons for the trip. Let me dig them out.

Q Does the President have any plans for any kind of fast or last minute trip to the AFL-CIO Convention which I think opens today? If not today, it opens tomorrow.

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q He is not going to the AFL-CIO Convention?

MR. NESSIN: We haven't announced any plans.

Q Can you rule out any appearance before the AFL-CIO Convention? They are sort of expecting him, I gather.

MR. NESSEN: Where is it?

Q San Francisco. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any plans for him to go to that convention.

Q Ron, on September 16, Dr. Kissinger told a conference of southern Governors, "The U.S. must maintain the right unilaterally to defend the Panama Canal for the indefinite future." Does the President agree with this?

MR. NESSEN: Les, I think we have probably spelled out the position on those negotiations.

Q That isn't my question. Does the President agree with this statement by Dr. Kissinger or not?

MR. NESSEN: I would like to see Dr. Kissinger's statement in the full context, Les, rather than a single sentence about an extremely complicated subject.

Fran?

Q Is the White House satisfied now that things are ironed out with the Pike Committee? Are you going to turn over the materials?

QUESTION: Question.

MR. NESSEN: Fran is wondering whether the President is satisfied with the vote of the Pike Committee yesterday, and he certainly is. I think it is a demonstration of the fact that reasonable men can reach a reasonable and responsible agreement and the fact of the matter is that material is already going to the Pike Committee under this agreement.

Q With respect to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has the President decided whether he is going to give an assurance that there are no other commitments made by the United States other than those spelled out in a detailed --

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kissinger is up there testifying today, you know, and I don't know what precisely his testimony is but, Mort, just to review the record, you know that Dr. Kissinger has already told the committee that every scrap of paper involved in the Middle East Sinai negotiations has been turned over and that really the only matter being negotiated now by Dr. Kissinger is to what extent -- really, what is being weighed is the desire to make public everything that can be made public while at the same time protecting the historic and traditional confidentiality of communications between heads of State. But he is up there for that very reason today.

Q Do you expect more material to be made public as a result of Kissinger's testimony today?

MR. NESSEN: I think he is up there today and I just don't see how I can say anything further.

Q Did the President and Kissinger confer about what the plan was that Kissinger was going to offer?

MR. NESSEN: They have conferred about that, of course.

Q Are you informed about what it is that he is going to present? It is a closed session, isn't it?

MR. NESSEN: It is a closed session. I understand the State Department is the proper place to get more details of his testimony.

Q The President announced to make a certification on understandings and so forth, not Secretary Kissinger but the President?

MR. NESSEN: We are not getting Pike mixed up with the Sinai agreements.

Q The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has asked the President to certify that there are no secret understandings.

MR. NESSEN: The whole matter is being discussed up there, Helen. The Pike Committee, I think where it is not directly related is, as I said, an example of how reasonable men can work out a reasonable and responsible agreement. And the Administration certainly hopes and expects the same thing will be done at the Foreign Relations Committee.

Q Can I follow up Steve's question? I think it is very important. Since I have been here in the last two years we had a helicopter land on the lawn; there was a near Kamikaze attack by a Delta plane that was hijacked; there was gate crashing, and so forth.

What is to deter -- I mean, the President is always getting threats -- other than your phoning the FAA, what would keep planes from coming out of that air space, Ron? It is kind of a serious thing.

MR. NESSEN: What else do we have today?

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Q I have a question relative to the trip yesterday. The pool report on Air Force One was rather sparse. Did you hear the President give any evaluation of the trip yesterday and the day before, either politically in terms of what he had accomplished, new ideas he had got from his contacts with the people, or did he give any comment or evaluation on the changes in security, which were pretty apparent?

MR. NESSEN: He didn't comment on any changes in security. He did comment specifically on the meeting with the mayors yesterday morning and felt it was one of the best meetings he had had in a long time. It was a perfect example of what we have been trying to say is the purpose of these trips out of town -- an hour and a half meeting with the small town mayors of Illinois and three other States.

There was a range of issues, and they expressed their views on the issues that faced them and the people who live in their towns. It was an opportunity for the President to sit for an hour and a half and listen to the concerns of people who run and live in those towns.

He thought it was very valuable. He thought the mayors had a very good grasp of grass roots concerns in small towns and suburbs. Jim Cannon told the senior staff meeting this morning that there were a dozen specific matters that came out of that meeting that were going to be followed up on by the White House.

Q Could I follow that? Specifically, what was the President's reaction to the consensus among the suburban and small city mayors that the Federal Government should not give direct aid, direct financial aid to New York City?

MR. NESSEN: He agrees. You know he agrees. He has said it all along.

Q I understand, but his reaction to their position, to their support, does he feel that that strengthens his hand, his position, his resolve?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that it needs strengthening, Ted. The President has that position for what he believes are both practical and Constitutional reasons, and he is obviously pleased to have them share his view, but I don't know that his resolve is weakening and needs to be strengthened.

Q Did you ask any questions today about whether the President is still optimistic about getting a SALT agreement this year in view of what he said yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: I just think what he said yesterday was essentially a rewording of what he said in the American Legion speech, and nothing has really changed since he spoke there. I guess Dr. Kissinger talked about it to some extent at his news conference early in September. There is nothing different now.

Q Ron, could you be any more specific today regarding the President's remarks yesterday on this trade-off he is considering on a tax cut; that is, a spending curb pledge by Congress in return for his support of a tax cut?

MR. NESSEN: No, because I think the President's answer was worded quite precisely and it ended up saying that was one possibility. He said he was going to make his decision in a week or so. I forget what the exact timetable was. I really don't have anything to add to what he said because I think the answer pretty well covered it.

Q Let's go at it this way, Ron. The limit that the President tied the tax reduction bill to last year hasn't held. In other words, the \$60 billion has been substantially exceeded. What makes him think he could hold the limit this year in a trade-off for a tax reduction? Is he going to ask that they do it statutorily so there would actually be a legal limit on spending, or is he just going to try to have it as an informal understanding when last year it wasn't held to?

MR. NESSEN: I think we are premature here because the President is talking about one possibility from a range of decisions that haven't been made yet.

Q Ron, has the President consulted with the leadership on the Hill as to their attitude on this kind of an agreement?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware that he has, Jim.

Q Does he plan to?

MR. NESSEN: In none of the meetings I have sat in on has he done that, and the decision has not been made, as he said himself.

Q Secretary of Labor Dunlop has suggested that perhaps this tax cut should be extended but the employment benefits should not be extended. Does the President agree?

MR. NESSEN: The President has not made up his mind on this, Dick, and it is too early to talk about this.

Q Let me be more precise. Has the President expressed himself on the extension of unemployment benefits?

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean in terms of the period of the number of weeks for each worker? It is up to 65 now, I think.

Q That is an extension in itself, and there is talk of extending that period.

MR. NESSEN: Extending 65 weeks?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that that matter has come up for discussion or decision. I haven't heard it.

Q When does the EIA legislation go up?

MR. NESSEN: I would expect perhaps next week.

Q Ron, has the President had anything to say about the damaging of the Post presses and the setting of the fire and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: It is a labor dispute which is in the process of being discussed through the collective bargaining process.

Q Sure, but what was his reaction to the damage?

MR. NESSEN: The President always deplores violence of any sort.

Q What are the Constitutional grounds for denying New York City financial aid?

MR. NESSEN: The President believes it would violate -- as he said before himself publicly, and often, I think -- the traditional Federal system in which certain responsibilities belong to the States and within the States certain responsibilities belong to the municipalities and that Constitutionally this would alter our system a great deal for the Federal Government to begin to get into State and municipal affairs to this extent.

Q You said you were going to check to see whether the President was aware that threats on his life had tripled.

MR. NESSEN: I forgot to check.

Q Was he aware of the stepped up security and the arrests and so forth that took place during the trip?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he was aware of the arrests. He certainly was aware of security procedures.

Q Ron, are you now informed about what the arrangements are going to be in West Virginia and how the President is going to ride or not ride in a parade?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Are there any other details on the Saturday trip?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q When will you have them.

MR. NESSEN: When they are all made.

Q Tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: Is tomorrow Friday?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I guess we will get a bible out tomorrow.

Q Do you have any idea what time that parade is?

MR. NESSEN: The President will be leaving here early in the afternoon.

Q For Elkins?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, for Elkins.

Q Is he definitely coming back to the White House for a couple of hours to work between that and --

MR. NESSEN: That is not all worked out yet.

Q What is the approximate time of this parade?

MR. NESSEN: About two o'clock.

Q Are there likely to be any telephones in Elkins?

MR. NESSEN: I think the telephone has reached there. (Laughter)

Q May I rephrase my question, please. Are there likely to be any special arrangements made by the White House to assure a sufficient number of telephones in Elkins so we may file?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And time in which to do so?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, there will be.

Q What is the story with the blue and white helicopter that was flying around? Is that a Japanese helicopter or another we don't know about?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't see a blue and white helicopter flying around.

Rather than read you a report on the meeting with the Japanese Emperor, would you prefer to have this quickly typed and read for you?

Q Yes.

Q Ron, there is a school lunch bill and the deadline is soon for either veto or signature, maybe tonight or tomorrow night.

MR. NESSEN: That is not due yet, is it?

MR. CARLSON: It is midnight tomorrow.

Q I wonder if you can tell us what the President will do?

MR. NESSEN: I can't tell you what the President will do.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 12:33 P.M. EDT)