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NEWS CONFERENCE

#476

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:30 A.M. EST

APRIL 8, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: 'Yesterday, the President invited a number of the top officials of the Nashville Banner and of the parent company, the Gannett Newspapers, to lunch. The purpose of this was to honor the Nashville Banner on its 100th anniversary. The President had been invited to come to Nashville to take part in the 100th year anniversary and was not able to do so. Instead, he invited a number of top officials to come to lunch, which they did yesterday.

The discussion at lunch amounted to what you might say was an interview, and we will have transcripts available. The Banner plans to publish this in their afternoon edition, and I think we will hand out transcripts at 5:00 p.m.

Q Were you there?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I was.

Q Can you tell us if he broke any new ground?

MR. NESSEN: I would rather you read the transcript and make your own judgments.

Q Why do you have to wait until 5 o'clock?

MR. NESSEN: It is whatever time afternoon papers come out.

Q They are out now.

MR. NESSEN: By the time we get it all together, it is going to be 5 o'clock anyhow.

As for today's schedule, I think you know that the President is having another one of these Congressional hours, during which Members of Congress come in for very brief periods to discuss matters and bring constituents in, and so forth, to introduce to the President.

The regulatory commission meeting with the President is at 2 o'clock. There will be pool coverage at the beginning of the meeting, and at the end of the meeting there will be a briefing on what was discussed, by Ed Schmults and Paul McAvoy, who are the co-chairmen of the White House committee which is working on the problem of regulatory reform. At least one of the commissioners will also come out and help with the briefing.

MORE

#476

Q What time?

MR. NESSEN: The meeting is scheduled to last for an hour, from 2:00 to 3:00. It will probably run longer than that, so probably between 3:00 and 3:30 we will have the briefing.

Q He said the other day when I asked him this that all of the involved agencies were submitting written reports on the progress. Will we be able to get copies on that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Why don't you ask Ed at the briefing this afternoon what is the status.

Q It will be too late then.

MR. NESSEN: No, it won't, because we won't pass them out before then.

Q Maybe you won't have them prepared?

MR. NESSEN: Let me check with Ed.

Because of the President signing the summer youth program in the Rose Garden at 3:30, we will delay this regulatory briefing until after the signing ceremony in the Rose Garden. Probably the briefing will take place somewhere around 3:45 to 4:00. The details of that are that the President is signing a message to Congress asking for a supplemental appropriation of \$528 million to support 888,100 summer jobs for young people.

At the same time, the President will sign a memo to all the departments and agencies reminding them that the Civil Service Commission also has a program which they should abide by to provide summer jobs for needy young people.

We will have more details on that later, but that is to be signed at 3:30 and then the briefing on the regulatory agency meeting will be after that.

Q How much was the amount of money for the supplemental?

MR. NESSEN: \$528 million.

Q Is that in the budget?

MR. NESSEN: This is an urgent supplemental --

Q What happened?

MR. NESSEN: -- for FY 1976. I think you are thinking of money in the budget for 1977.

Then you know about the meeting with the Governor General of Canada, who is on a private tour of the White House today, who will stop in for a courtesy call with the President.

Q Why is the President meeting with Governor Ray of Iowa?

MR. NESSEN: To discuss the Republican platform.

Q Is he a member of the platform committee?

MR. NESSEN: He is, and Governor Ray will be meeting other representatives of the party to get a wide range of views. I think he is meeting with Rhodes, Scott, Mary Louise Smith and other Republicans in Washington.

Q Is he meeting with Reagan people?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

The President is announcing he and Mrs. Ford will give a luncheon at the White House in honor of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and His Highness Prince Henrik on Tuesday, May 11. It was previously announced last November that Her Majesty is coming to the United States in May to take part in the Bicentennial celebrations and, after this stay in Washington during which there will be this lunch, the Queen and the Prince will travel extensively through the United States.

Speaking of traveling extensively through the United States, the trip for tomorrow --

Q What was the date again?

MR. NESSEN: May 11 for the luncheon at the White House.

The trip for tomorrow, there are lots of complicated little details of the trip that are still being worked out so I don't think we are going to have the bible until very, very late in the afternoon and, I think more likely, on the plane tomorrow. But you do have the outline schedule that we gave out yesterday so you know enough to write overnights from it.

Q You will have a text?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I hope we will be able to put out an advance text this afternoon for the first speech, which is at the Alamo. This is really quite a brief speech by the President and we would put it out embargoed for 6:00 a.m., if that is of any help.

Q You said you will put it out this morning?

MR. NESSEN: We will put it out this afternoon, yes.

Then, there is a speech at the Law Day Dinner tomorrow night. The President is going to hopefully go over the speeches and give his final approval some time this afternoon and we will get that one, too, hopefully. That is a longer speech with, I think, more substance perhaps than the Alamo speech. So I would not look for that one until during the trip tomorrow but I would like to get it out to you ahead of time with an embargo of 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on it for tomorrow.

Q Do you mean the Alamo speech will be lacking in substance? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I don't mean that at all.

Q Is the Alamo speech going to have any substance in it? (Laughter)

Q You already characterized it as brief.

MR. NESSEN: I think I would describe it as brief remarks.

Q Brief, but substantial remarks?

Remember the Alamo, is he going to mention that?

MR. NESSEN: I remember that.

Q Is he going to mention defense in any way?

MR. NESSEN: In the Alamo speech? (Laughter)

Q Have you heard anything about John Connally campaigning with the President down there?

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans for him to join up in the campaign on this trip.

Q Is Senator Tower going to be with him?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I think he will be. Senator Tower is his State campaign chairman.

Since we are not going to Houston on this trip, I don't expect we will see John Connally on this trip.

Q Could you expect to see him in Houston on the second trip?

MR. NESSEN: That is a little far ahead.

Q John Connally has a ranch right outside of San Antonio.

MR. NESSEN: He might not be coming into town that day. (Laughter)

Q Has the President asked John Connally to travel with him?

MR. NESSEN: On this trip?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q On either trip?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Why not?

MR. NESSEN: I think Governor Connally made his position in the primary clear.

MORE

Q What is it?

MR. NESSEN: I will let him speak for himself.

Q He said he was neutral.

Q Before leaving the subject of campaigning, you know Governor Reagan has had to give up his charter jet because of a lack of funds, and I understand there is a report Jimmy Carter is about to cut back on his transportation. Can you tell us again, has the Counsel's Office got a figure and how is the figure computed on the use of Air Force One for campaign purposes? Is it a charter cost per hour, or what is charged against the campaign for use of the Presidential aircraft?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the precise formula, but whatever formula the FEC approved that was submitted to them, but is what we follow. We have given out figures for the cost of the plane. It is roughly \$2,200 an hour. The formula is -- I will have to dig out the letter for you. It was submitted to the FEC last fall sometime.

Les?

Q Frequently during the campaign the President has cited his 25 years of service in the Congress during which time he strongly supported the Byrd amendment, as you recall.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ambassador Scranton, whom I believe you said the other day also speaks for the President, told the Security Council it is the continuing policy of the President Ford Administration to seek repeal of this same Byrd amendment that Congressman Ford supported. Congressman Derwinski said this morning that the Ford shift is due to the effort of Kissinger and company.

My question is, is there any reason to doubt Mr. Derwinski's conclusion in this regard, the amazing shift between his position as Congressman and now?

MR. NESSEN: The President, ever since I recall him being President, has favored the repeal of the Byrd amendment.

Q Would you deny Mr. Derwinski's conclusion that this is the effect of Kissinger and company?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the answer to that, Les.

MORE

#476

Q Ron, according to some figures I saw the other day, the President has spent more than half the amount of money he is legally entitled to for the primaries, yet he is only about a quarter of the way through the primaries. Does he have any idea of cutting back?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. That is all done over at the PFC, Howard. I don't know what the money situation is over there.

Q Ron, when are we going to get the President's tax returns?

MR. NESSEN: As soon as they have been switched over from the actual returns to the press release form that we put the other ones out in and the figures are checked with the accountant and so forth. I would expect it relatively soon.

Q Have the returns been submitted?

MR. NESSEN: The returns were mailed about the 1st of April.

Q What has been the reaction to the President's letter to Speaker Albert about the military system appropriation?

MR. NESSEN: The reaction? What do you mean, the reaction?

Q Has he gotten a letter back? Has Javits called, or anybody else?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check, Tom. I didn't check on that.

Q On that subject, Ron, there seems to be some confusion about whether the President would accept any transition additional funds if it were prorated among all of them, or is he just opposed to any additional funds for the transition?

MR. NESSEN: I think his position is as stated in the letter.

Q Ron, were you in that meeting yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Which one?

Q With the Congressional leaders.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q It is my understanding that Senator Case told the President that he had been told by Dr. Kissinger that the Administration would approve those funds.

MR. NESSEN: I will tell you how I think the confusion came up, and I think maybe it led to Fran's question and maybe it led to -- I didn't hear Senator Case say that. At an earlier stage in the consideration of the bill, some Administration witnesses I think testified that -- well, testified to this, one, that the President was not requesting any funds specifically for the transition quarter because what he asked for was adequate for that full 15-month fiscal year.

But, if Congress insisted on adding extra money, the only way he would accept it would be on three conditions: One, that it was given out proportionately to all the recipients of the aid rather than being focused on one country, and that that proportional division be based on a percentage increase above the Administration request and not above what Congress has given.

The third condition was that it be 25 percent more than what the President asked for them in the case of each country involved. It then became obvious that Congress was not going to go along -- the Senate, I guess, is the one involved here -- was not going along under the only formula under which he would accept the transition funds, and he put out the letter yesterday.

The emphasis on the fact when he had a lot of domestic needs here at home for Americans that he is opposed to adding this extra money in foreign aid, which he believes is not needed because the original request was considered adequate for that full 15-month fiscal year.

Q I am not sure I understand his formula, Ron. He would agree if they provided --

MR. NESSEN: This is not his formula. This was at an earlier stage in testimony before the Hill when this question first came up. I mean, the bottom line is he is opposed to any money for the transition quarter. If Congress is going to take money that should be spent for needs here at home and spend it on foreign aid, if they insist on that, it was testified to previously he would only accept under these three conditions.

Q Can we go over the conditions again?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Margy, I want to give them. Check me on them.

Number one, that the money be given to all recipients, extra money be given to all recipients of foreign aid and not just one or two recipients of foreign aid.

Number two, that it be given to them on a percentage basis, and that the percentage be the same for each country, 20 or 25 percent above what the President requested for each and every country and that that formula be based on what the President requested for each country and not on what Congress had voted for each country.

Q Ron, regardless of the prospects of the Senate ever going along with it, is the President still willing to accept extra quarter funding under those conditions, or is that out the window now?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is academic because I don't think the Senate is going to do it under those conditions or that Congress will do it under those conditions.

Q But do those conditions still apply if the change their mind?

MR. NESSEN: Since the outlook for them doing that is so vague, I did not specifically ask, but I will.

Q Ron, you sounded as though you were backing off the Administration position.

MR. NESSEN: Not at all. Because of Fran's question and Aldo's, I was trying to trace some of the history of how an idea may be in some peoples' minds on the Hill that in an earlier stage of this witnesses had indicated there was this one circumstance under which the President would accept transition quarters.

Q Does the circumstance still apply?

MR. NESSEN: That is what I told Ed, since there was no likelihood of Congress doing it that way. I didn't bother to check, but I will.

Q That was his formula? That was a proposal that came from here?

MR. NESSEN: No, his formula is no extra money for the transition quarter. If they try to ram it down his throat, he would have accepted it only under those conditions. Whether he would, I will have to check.

Do you know, Margy?

MRS. VANDERHUYE: It is his formula.

MR. NESSEN: Ed's question is under the hypothetical circumstances, if Congress went along with that formula, would he sign it then?

MRS. VANDERHUYE: The fact is at this point the thing has gotten so large and programs from other areas have been cut.

MR. NESSEN: Let me check on that. The circumstances are not the same as they were when that testimony was given. Money has been added to certain programs and taken away from certain others.

Q The fact is those conditions came from here, didn't they?

MR. NESSEN: When faced with the question, yes.

Q So, that was the formula the President presented to Congress?

MR. NESSEN: What I am concerned about, Tom, is that it wasn't something that was volunteered, it was something that was given in response to a threat from Congress to insist on money for the transition quarter.

Q I guess the question is, are we in the same situation here as we were with testimony on the antitrust bill where witnesses were saying something that did not necessarily reflect the President's views?

MR. NESSEN: At that time, it did reflect the President's views, but the bill has been changed substantially since that testimony was given. His latest position is in the letter. As for Ed's specific question, I will check.

Q I believe there is also an amendment in that bill now. Have you checked with the President on what he thinks of the amendment, which would restore the trade with North and South Vietnam for six months? I am pretty sure it has been attached to that same bill.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't know that. I will look into it.

Q What about the bill up there on the flu shots? It now has the summer youth program attached to it.

MR. NESSEN: The President really preferred to have that as a clean bill, mostly because of the need for speed to get this money appropriated so that the drug companies could begin making such quantities to have it ready for the end of next summer.

Actually, if you look at what they have tacked on there, it is somewhat less than the President asked for in those areas. I think in the summer youth program they have tacked on \$525 million. He has asked for \$528, I believe, and on-the-job training they have \$1.2 million, and I think he requested \$1.5 million or \$1.7 million. They have put in a very minor amount for older Americans, so he would prefer to have a clean bill because that is the fastest way to get it through without involving it in controversy and so forth, but until the bill gets through Congress and gets here, it is hard to say what he would do with it.

Q But he is going to accept it?

MR. NESSEN: What they tacked on, except for the older Americans question, is what he asked for in other areas, but lesser amounts.

Q On the summer employment requests, is that the first time the President has asked for that \$528 million today?

MR. NESSEN: You mean this supplemental he is sending up today?

MISS EARL: It was in the budget, but this is the official transmittal of the submittal.

Q It is in the budget?

MISS EARL: Yes.

Q The \$528 million?

MISS EARL: Not that particular amount. We said we would adjust it depending on how they determined the need to be.

Q Which budget was it in?

MISS EARL: Fiscal year 1977.

Q Is this going up in the form of a supplemental request?

MISS EARL: Yes. He said we would send it up in the budget for this summer. We mentioned it in the budget.

MR. NESSEN: I will check this out and have the details for you by the time the signing ceremony comes around.

Q Another subject, I was wondering if you had a chance to ask the President, as you said you would, whether or not he expects Secretary Kissinger to stay on in the new Administration.

MR. NESSEN: This is a matter that has not been discussed between the President and the Secretary.

Q I was under the impression from what I thought you had said earlier that in fact the President had told the Secretary that he would like him to stay on and that the question here had always been that you didn't know how Kissinger had responded.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so, Dick. I have always called attention to the President's public statements on Dr. Kissinger, and then I was asked by several people yesterday, would I find out whether Henry has indicated his intentions to the President. I said I would, and I did. The answer is it is a matter that has not been discussed between them.

MORE

Q In other words, the President has never told Secretary Kissinger directly, personally that he would like --

MR. NESSEN: I thought the question had to do with, has Dr. Kissinger indicated to the President what his plans are in the new term, or whatever it is.

Q Maybe we could backtrack a little and maybe I am under the wrong impression, but it seemed to me a while back there was a published report -- this is where it all started, in my mind, at any rate -- that the President had said he wanted Secretary Kissinger to stay on.

MR. NESSEN: He says it all the time. He said it last Saturday and again yesterday.

Q At that time, you said he had told Secretary Kissinger that himself, I thought. That is my recollection, anyway. But you were unable to tell us anything more on the subject. It seems to me the question has been, ever since then, has Secretary Kissinger expressed his feelings on it?

MR. NESSEN: It is a matter that has not been discussed.

Q We are trying to find out whether the first half of it has been discussed.

MR. NESSEN: What? Does Dr. Kissinger know the President wants him to stay on as Secretary of State? The answer is yes.

Q How does he know that if they have not discussed it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know if it is a matter of discussion. Henry knows the President wants him to stay on as Secretary of State.

Q Just to be crystal clear, are you saying the President does want him to stay on in a new term?

MR. NESSEN: I am not saying anything new today, Jim. I refer you to the Green Bay statement, yesterday's statement and any other statement. The President's views have not changed.

Q The President has said he wanted Secretary Kissinger to remain as long as he would like, if my memory is correct.

MR. NESSEN: Get out the exact words of Green Bay. I don't recall just what they were.

Q Green Bay was the winning play or losing plan analogy.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so.

Q That is what you passed out the other day.

MR. NESSEN: Well, maybe it was.

Q Can you tell us exactly what it is the President has told Secretary Kissinger?

MR. NESSEN: Secretary Kissinger knows of the President's feelings about him staying on.

Q What are those?

MR. NESSEN: As he expressed them in Green Bay last Friday and on numerous other occasions.

Q Does that mean that the President would like him to stay on in the new Administration?

MR. NESSEN: I think you can read what he said in Green Bay, Dick.

Q Obviously, it is not very clear.

MR. NESSEN: I think it is perfectly clear.

Q It should be easy to answer then.

MR. NESSEN: It is easy to answer. What does the President think about Secretary Kissinger staying on? See what he said in Green Bay.

But, what has Dr. Kissinger indicated to the President are his intentions about staying on? They have not discussed the matter.

Q In other words, the President is going all over the United States telling the Nation that he wants Secretary Kissinger to stay on as long as he would like to stay in the Cabinet but he has never discussed this with Dr. Kissinger and Dr. Kissinger has not indicated to him at all, at least personally, what his plans are?

MR. NESSEN: They have not discussed the matter.

Q Since this whole discussion came up after Rogers Morton's comment, they have not exchanged any words on the subject?

MR. NESSEN: I think the question was, have they discussed the -- the question yesterday was -- it started this way, something like the President said what he said in Green Bay, but what has Dr. Kissinger told him about his future plans? That was the question raised yesterday, and the answer is they have not discussed the matter.

Q The question is, does the President expect Secretary Kissinger to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: They have not discussed the matter.

Q Ron, isn't that a little strange to you?

MR. NESSEN: Maybe so, but this is the fact of the matter.

Q Hasn't the President even assured Dr. Kissinger that Melvin Laird is wrong when he said the other night that Kissinger is the guy that wants to leave? Are they just being polite in not discussing this dread subject? It doesn't seem to be very convincing.

MR. NESSEN: Doesn't it really? I try to be as convincing as possible.

Q You mean the President didn't say anything to answer Mr. Laird's statement that Kissinger is the guy that wants to leave?

MR. NESSEN: We have a Cabinet full of people and, believe it or not, they don't all sit around the Oval Office week-in and week-out discussing with the President how long they will stay, whether they can stay, when they will leave, and that applies to Kissinger just as it does to everybody else, and the mere fact the question is raised here every day does not drive the President or the Secretary, or any other Cabinet member, to sit down and talk about this matter. They have not discussed it.

Q There has been no indication from Secretary Kissinger at all that he would like to leave?

Q Any discussion with other members of the staff or that kind of thing?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to ask Dr. Kissinger who he has talked to about his future other than with the President. In terms of the President and what Dr. Kissinger intends to do in the future in a new term, they have not discussed the matter.

Q Have you in recent days expressed our desire to the President for a Washington news conference?

MR. NESSEN: I have.

Q What is his reaction?

MR. NESSEN: We don't have one scheduled at the moment.

Q What is his reaction to our request?

MR. NESSEN: We don't have a news conference scheduled at the moment.

Q Have you drawn his attention to the fact he is sneaking up on the Nixon record? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I think maybe I can straighten out the summer jobs program question for you. In the budget, the President indicated that he did intend to submit a supplemental for summer youth jobs in the FY 1977 budget. He indicated in that budget he intended to submit a supplemental for summer youth jobs but that he could not in the budget say how much it would be until determinations were made as to how many jobs were needed.

In March, the Secretary of Labor made an analysis of what the situation would be in the summertime, turned in his recommendation, and, as a result, the President settled on the figure of \$528 million, which he is now going to send to Congress in the form of a supplemental which he will sign this afternoon.

Q Was that the figure the Secretary of Labor came up with.

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, it was.

Q Is that the current Secretary of Labor?

MR. NESSEN: In March, we had this Secretary of Labor, yes.

Q Is that going to increase the deficit by that amount?

MR. NESSEN: Since the figure didn't appear in the budget -- I will get an answer for you from OMB. They are the experts on the budget.

Q I don't like to niggle at this --

MR. NESSEN: Sure you do, Jim.

Q Why is this being submitted as a supplemental -- we are talking of summer jobs this summer?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Why is it a supplemental in 1977? Why not do it for 1976? Fiscal year 1977 doesn't start until October 1 when the summer will be over. I know it doesn't make any difference really, but I was just curious.

MISS EARL: It has been done that way in the past.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the answer.

Q Have you had any reaction individually or collectively, as the union organization from Federal employees, to the President's indication he was going to veto the Hatch Act reform?

MR. NESSEN: In the way of mail?

Q Yes, or any sort of messages from Federal union leaders?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of any.

Q Ron, one final question on the Kissinger matter, if you don't mind. Would it be fair to say the President has no idea at that time whether or not Secretary Kissinger plans to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it would be correct because it focuses attention on a question that is of burning interest in your mind, Dick --

Q I am sorry, but the President made quite a strong statement yesterday about the Wisconsin race in connection with Secretary Kissinger. He has made other statements in campaign appearances around the country. You say they have not discussed it, but --

MR. NESSEN: They have not discussed Secretary Kissinger's future in a new term, that is correct.

Q But you seem to be unable to respond or unwilling to respond when asked whether there has been any exchange of information at lower levels in the sense that the President knows what the Secretary's plans might be.

MR. NESSEN: They have not discussed it and, whether Secretary Kissinger has discussed it with anybody else, you will have to ask him.

Q So, in effect, as far as you know, the President has no idea what the Secretary --

MR. NESSEN: They have not discussed the matter, Dick.

Q Can you answer my question?

MR. NESSEN: They haven't discussed it.

Q That doesn't matter, obviously.

MR. NESSEN: They haven't discussed it.

John, you asked about Hatch Act mail. I see in the summary of mail for the week of March 29 to April 2 there was actually quite a large amount of mail received on this subject, with 237 letters being in favor of the Hatch Act revision and 5,617 letters opposed to the Hatch Act revisions, and 5,500 of those were form letters. Of the 5,617, 5,500 were form letters.

Q Who circulated the forms?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q This was before he indicated he might veto it?

MR. NESSEN: What was the date of that?

Q That was Saturday, wasn't it, in Green Bay, that he said he would veto it?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. These came in before that.

Q Ron, Ambassador Scranton spoke of Rhodesia's illegal Smith regime. What I was wondering is, does the Ford Administration consider Uganda's regime which Ambassador Melady has reported has killed an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 blacks and deported 62,000-plus, does the Ford Administration consider Uganda's regime to be legal?

MR. NESSEN: We have diplomatic relations, I think, with Uganda.

Q Therefore, we recognize them as a legal regime?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know precisely what you mean by "legal regime".

Q Your Ambassador who speaks for Mr. Ford says the Smith regime is illegal. I would like to know, do they think that Uganda is legal in that sense?

MR. NESSEN: By what criteria?

Q By this criteria Mr. Scranton enunciated in the United Nations. I want to know, do you feel Uganda is a legal regime?

MR. NESSEN: We recognize them as the authorities --

Q That isn't my question. Do you regard this as a legal regime in the sense that Mr. Scranton said Smith is illegal?

MR. NESSEN: We don't have diplomatic relations with Rhodesia.

Q I am aware of that, Ron. Can you answer the question?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see how I can, Les.

Q In other words, you don't know?

MR. NESSEN: I said we have --

Q You said that three times. I want to know, do you believe it is legal or not?

MR. NESSEN: I don't believe I can answer beyond what I have said, Les.

Q In the newest Woodward-Bernstein book there are several dozen references to the then Vice President Ford as he prepared to become the President of the United States. Has he had any reaction to those references and do you know, or could you find out whether he submitted to an interview by the author of the book?

MR. NESSEN: He did not and has had no reaction to it.

Q Has he read the book?

MR. NESSEN: He has not read the book, no.

Q A change of subject, did Elizabeth Taylor, or her agent, or Kissinger request an appointment to see the President?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Before you go, there is a question that didn't come up that we would like to speak to. It is a story given considerable play in the New York Times this morning and I thought I would -- it is the Dave Burnham story concerning the cable TV. I don't know if you are familiar with it, it was in the lower right section --

Q Next to the Loch Nessen monster? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Yes, next to the Loch Nessen monster. (Laughter) Well, the general thrust of the headline in the story, some of you may be familiar with this, it is a complicated subject that has been around for a long time and, to some extent, is a controversial subject. The headline and the story, I think, tend to give the impression that the President has taken some action on this matter.

The fact is that no recommendations on the cable TV matter have been made to the President and that there are people in the White House working on the subject, but they have not even reached the point where they have sent a summary of their work so far to the President.

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There is a Domestic Council review group on regulatory reform and it has been conducting an analysis of cable TV regulations for about six months. Based on that analysis, the review group decided that it could not make any recommendations for any changes in the FCC regulations until they had done additional research and analysis. The review group was not able to satisfy itself and to marshal enough facts to satisfy itself on the effects of some of the supposed reforms involving cable TV, the effects on consumers of broadcasting and cable services.

Also, this review group found that recent changes in FCC regulations have not been in effect long enough to allow for an analysis of them to be conducted.

There are 14 different areas in which this review group feels it needs to obtain additional information before making any recommendation, so they are going to take extra time to dig out extra information in these areas and make further analysis before making any recommendation to the Economic Policy Board.

Q What are those areas, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you all the areas.

Q Can you give us some of them?

MR. NESSEN: They have to do -- just to give you an idea -- there are copyright matters, one of those involved; as I say, there are economic effects to be looked into. What the others are, I am not myself sure. This is an extremely complex subject. I could get you the name of a person you might contact if you want to dig into it further.

Q Do you know how long the actual study will take, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no time put on it.

Q Will this take us past the election?

MR. NESSEN: If it does, it is unrelated.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:13 P.M. EST)