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NEWS CONFERENCE

#570

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:14 A.M. MDT

AUGUST 26, 1976

THURSDAY
(Vail, Colorado)

MR. NESSEN: I have a lot of little announcements to make today.

First of all, let me give you the arrival arrangements for the various guests coming in.

The first to arrive will be the Vice President. His helicopter gets to Avon at 4:30. He will be going by helicopter from Grand Junction to Avon, arriving at Avon at 4:30, and arrival at the President's home at 4:50. He will be met at Avon by Stu Spencer and by Rog Morton.

The next arrival will be Senator Dole. He is driving here from Grand Junction, and he will arrive at the President's house at 5:30.

John Connally will be the last to arrive. He flies to Eagle, where he will be met by Jim Baker and then will drive over, arriving at Eagle at 5:30 and 6:15 at the President's house.

The schedule of meetings is, first of all, the President will meet with Vice President Rockefeller at 5:30. At 6:30 there will be a meeting with the Vice President, Senator Dole and John Connally, together.

At 7:30, there will be a dinner with the three visitors, plus some staff people, which I will get for you later.

The coverage plans for all these arrivals and meetings and dinners and so forth is still being worked out. We hope to have that worked out and posted by 3:00.

Q Will he meet them out here, outside the house at Avon, or where?

MR. NESSEN: No, the President will not go away from the house.

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Q Will we meet them? Will we be able to talk to them as they come in?

MR. NESSEN: That is up to you. We haven't laid anything on to take you to Avon or Eagle or anywhere.

We will try to post the news coverage of these meetings, dinner and so forth at 3:00. I think we will put out our regular posting today at 5:00. I think most people want to get to the barbecue that Vail Associates is giving.

Q Are you contemplating one picture?

MR. NESSEN: We are still working on that.

Q Will the meeting with Rockefeller be a standard meeting, the meeting with the Vice President? Can you characterize that a little better?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the agenda is, Walt. I will try and check for you.

Q Are his expenses being paid by the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I will check, Phil, and find out.

Q Is anybody meeting Dole?

MR. NESSEN: Since Dole is driving, nobody will meet Dole.

Let me give you two other things in the way of a schedule here. One is that there has been -- let me give you one thing.

There has been some interest in talking to some of the participants in the staff meetings about what has been discussed and decided about the fall campaign. I thought that we would make Jim Baker available tomorrow afternoon at about 3:00 to talk to you about that and to answer your many questions about that.

I think we will embargo it for 6:00 p.m. Saturday because I take it a lot of people would like this information to write Sunday stories and for the news magazines.

Q 6:00 p.m. EDT?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Does the Tribune have a problem?

Q The Chicago Daily News has a real problem. We encounter this all the time.

MR. NESSEN: With your early Sunday edition?

Q We don't have a Sunday paper and never have had one for 100 years. A number of other papers around the country don't have Sunday papers. The Long Island paper doesn't.

MR. NESSEN: Let me talk to you about it afterwards, Bob, and see what we can work out.

I think for the majority of the people --

Q We don't want to get callbacks on his story.

MR. NESSEN: We will have a 6:00 p.m. embargo for Saturday. The briefing will be at 3:00 tomorrow afternoon here. I think the feeling is that we would let Jim talk to you and answer your questions and so forth without TV or recording and then Jim will stay and redo for radio and TV sections, or whatever you would like him to do. Is that acceptable to the TV people?

The President asked me to announce to you this morning that he has completed the top organization of the PFC now by appointing this morning Mrs. Ely Peterson of Michigan as Deputy Chairman of the PFC for Voter Groups.

Q What does that mean?

MR. NESSEN: Voter groups means she will be dealing with women's groups, youth groups, ethnic organizations, various religious organizations, veterans' groups, farm groups and any special interest groups.

Q Ron, she already had that job?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q She had that job and had submitted her resignation. How did he persuade her to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: He is a very persuasive person and he persuaded her to stay on and she wanted to devote the next two months to helping the President.

The President is very pleased that Mrs. Peterson has agreed to continue in the effort she will be performing.

Q Is that true? Had she resigned?

MR. NESSEN: No, she hadn't resigned. I probably should let Bill give you the exact details of this. She is from Michigan. We have a biography that is in the type-writer now and will be ready for you, a biography of Ely Peterson that will be ready for you right after the briefing.

This now completes the organizational chart, the top of it at least, for the PFC.

Q Is she a co-Deputy Chairman?

MR. NESSEN: She is a Deputy Chairman, that is correct.

Q I don't understand. The woman had the job before and he is announcing today he is appointing her to the same job she currently holds?

MR. GREENER: He is announcing she will continue in the job.

Q He is not announcing a new appointment?

MR. GREENER: He is announcing she will stay on in that position and complete the chart, that is right.

Q You said he was appointing her.

MR. GREENER: Announcing her continuation, if you prefer.

Q Ron, isn't it a fact that Mrs. Peterson represents a segment of the Republican Party that wasn't taken into full account and, as a result, she resigned in Kansas City? She represents a group that feels that it wasn't fully represented in Kansas City and this is part of an amend -- maybe amend is too strong -- this is a part of party unifying, isn't that a fact?

MR. NESSEN: It doesn't sound like anything I have heard.

Q Did she submit her resignation? It is a simple question.

MR. NESSEN: Bill, come on up.

Q Did she submit her resignation and was she persuaded to stay?

MR. GREENER: She was persuaded to stay. I don't know whether there was a written resignation.

Q Did she ever go off the payroll of the PFC?

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge.

Q So, she was still working there yesterday?

MR. GREENER: That is right. She was back in Michigan.

Q But she was saying she wanted to stay on?

MR. GREENER: That is correct.

Q What about Bob's observation?

MR. GREENER: What was it?

Q My observation was that Mrs. Peterson represents a segment of the Republican Party or a wing that feels, wrongly or rightly, that they weren't fully represented at the Convention -- sometimes called the moderate or liberal wing, whatever you want to use -- and as a result was cool toward continuing and resigned her position; that this action by the President is a move to unify or bring that group -- the Mathias' and the Brooks' -- back into the picture. It is all one ball of wax?

MR. GREENER: It couldn't possibly have been because Ely, when she left Washington, before she ever got to Kansas City, she was talking about having to go home and being with her family. She wanted to go home and talk to them about it first.

Q Who was it that talked to her first? Was that the President or Jim Baker?

MR. GREENER: Jim talked to her yesterday and the President talked to her this morning.

Q There are no blacks in the organization?

MR. NESSEN: Not at the Deputy Chairman level.

Q I assume, then, by what you said, Bill, it took a call from the President to get her to finally say yes?

MR. GREENER: That is not so.

Q Why did he call her?

MR. GREENER: He called to thank her.

MR. NESSEN: I think we ought to really leave here clear that what Bob suggests simply was not part of Ely's thoughts about wanting to go back to Michigan. That was purely a personal matter. She was talking about it for several weeks before we left Washington, and it is totally unrelated to the suggestion Bob makes.

Q Is she going to come out to Vail?

MR. GREENER: No, she has a commitment on Tuesday that she has to meet. I don't know what it is, but I will try to find out for you.

MR. NESSEN: Let's talk about Yellowstone.

First, some of you have expressed some interest in finding out what the President's background was as a park ranger and so forth. We found a very good article that appeared in a magazine that contains a good kind of background, and I have it up in the office and we can make copies for those of you who would like it.

Q Park ranger or forest ranger?

MR. NESSEN: Park ranger.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: Yellowstone.

Q He was in Yellowstone?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

The easiest way to do this is to outline the President's schedule on Sunday first. I expect the President will be leaving Vail at 9:30. These are rough and tentative times. At 9:30 the President will leave Vail, drive to Avon, catch a helicopter down to Grand Junction, arriving in Grand Junction about 11:00.

The President will fly from Grand Junction by Air Force One to West Yellowstone. That is in Montana. The President will then go by helicopter from West Yellowstone Airport, by helicopter, to Old Faithful, which is in Yellowstone, and it is in Wyoming.

Q What time, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: He arrives at 1:00 at Old Faithful. The President will speak at Old Faithful.

Q A prepared text?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, there will be a prepared text. I hope to have it for you on Saturday.

Q Can you characterize the speech? Is this to boost the national park program or is this an environmental speech?

MR. NESSEN: He will talk about the environment program and the park system.

Q It is a nonpolitical speech?

MR. NESSEN: In what sense, Annie?

Q Whi is paying for the helicopters?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check for you. I don't know. I don't know of anything political about it, though. The PFC is paying. We will check. I am not sure that it is the PFC.

The President speaks at Old Faithful on the subject of the environment and the parks. He then goes by helicopter to another part of the park called Canyon. It is at that point where he will meet some of his former colleagues in the Park Service. It will be kind of a sentimental reunion, about 30 of them. There will be no remarks at Canyon.

The President will go by helicopter from there back to West Yellowstone, arriving at 3:30, takes off in Air Force One and flies to Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, near Rapid City, to refuel.

The need for the refueling is you can't take a full load of fuel into West Yellowstone or out of West Yellowstone, so in order to get all the way back to Washington he needs to stop at Ellsworth and take on more fuel.

The President will arrive at Andrews Air Force Base at 10:30.

Q What will he do on the ground at Ellsworth?

MR. NESSEN: What will the President do on the ground at Ellsworth?

Q Yes.

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MR. NESSEN: I am told people in the community are being invited to come out and see him.

Q It is a little rally?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is a little rally. The people are being invited to come out to see him.

Q Handshaking?

MR. NESSEN: Probably he will shake hands.

Q That is not political, either?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Jim. I guess we are going to have this problem with everything the President does this year and the same question about everything the President does this year.

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Q Who is inviting the people to the base?

MR. NESSEN: The base commander, I suppose. The base commander has declared an open house.

Q Will he speak at Ellsworth?

MR. NESSEN: There are scheduled remarks planned. He probably will make some remarks to the crowd.

Q How long will he be there?

MR. NESSEN: About an hour, to refuel.

Q Ron, Old Faithful shoots water only at certain times. Is that a time for the big explosion of water?

MR. NESSEN: Will you be able to cue Old Faithful so it will spout off when the President is there?

MR. BLASER: We will do our darnedest.

MR. NESSEN: The theory of the press coverage, before I get into the details of it, first, it will be difficult, logistically, but I think we have it worked out to everybody's satisfaction. One of the basic causes was we wouldn't expect you to drag your wives and kids along on this very tiring day. Your wives and kids will be able to go to Denver at a reasonable hour and fly straight home from there.

Q I think it would have been nice if you had discussed that with us.

MR. NESSEN: Phil, when we get into this, you will see it is just logistically impossible to arrange.

Q It would have been nice if we could have been consulted rather than you planning our lifestyle.

MR. NESSEN: My view was the main interest in the press was for us to work out as good a coverage as we could for the events in Yellowstone and I did not ask my folks to place as high a priority on making arrangements for families to go along as I did on the very real problems of the press coverage up there.

Q I am not asking that the families in any way interfere with the coverage of the President of the United States. I don't think they would have. I am only suggesting it would have been nice if we had been consulted on what we would have liked for them to do instead of you deciding our lifestyle.

MR. NESSEN: I wasn't intending to decide your life style, Phil.

Q That is what you did.

MR. NESSEN: I did consider my first priority to be to arrange press coverage under very difficult conditions.

Q Will you outline to me how the families would have interfered with the coverage of the President?

MR. NESSEN: I did have some expressions by some people who were concerned about their families being on and off buses and sitting around airports for long periods of time. I did have that expression and took it, frankly, to be an expression of what most people felt.

Q Was there a safety factor in taking the whole crew into West Yellowstone and taking off again?

MR. NESSEN: One of the problems was, what kind of airplanes are you going to use, and had we opted for taking all the families to Yellowstone, we would have had to get a stretch DC-8.

As I say, Phil, I had people say to me, "God, what are we going to do with our families on a day like that?" And that was partly, frankly, why we decided not to subject the families to that.

Q If you have evidence that it would jeopardize the coverage of the President of the United States, you were perfectly legitimate. If you did not, I resent it.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, my first priority, I felt, had to be full press coverage under extremely difficult logistic circumstances, and I did give that top priority, and so did Doug and Ray.

Q Is there a charter into Denver?

MR. NESSEN: The press will depart Vail at 6:00 a.m. on Sunday. I don't have a baggage call time for you, yet. 6:00 a.m. departure by bus, arriving in Grand Junction at 9:00 a.m., going by press plane to West Yellowstone, arriving at 11:00.

Ray tells me baggage call is 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. the night before.

Depart Vail 6:00 a.m., bus to Grand Junction arriving at 9:00 a.m., fly to West Yellowstone, arriving at 11:00 a.m.

Q Is that the same time here? Does that mean he will arrive ahead of us?

MR. NESSEN: The President arrives at 12:30, the press plane at 11:00.

There will be two primary locations: The Old Faithful location, which is where the President will speak; and the Canyon--so-called Artist's Point location--which is the reunion with the old park ranger colleagues.

We have two press buses which go from West Yellowstone Airport to Old Faithful, arriving at Old Faithful at 12:15, which is 45 minutes ahead of the President for set-up time.

Q What time was that?

MR. NESSEN: The arrival at Old Faithful is 12:15 and the President arrives at 1:00.

From West Yellowstone, a third bus will go to Canyon Artist's Point for those who wish to cover the reunion and we have made that a pool operation on the theory that most people want to cover the speech and yet, you don't want to lose out on whatever color or activities there might be at Canyon, so, we are going to ask that those people who go to Canyon do so as poolers and fill in their colleagues who opt to go to Old Faithful to cover the speech.

Q Where will we get that, at West Yellowstone Airport?

MR. NESSEN: West Yellowstone -- where do they get their pool report from Canyon?

MR. BLASER: Back at the airport.

MR. NESSEN: West Yellowstone Airport. I am going to get to that in a minute.

Those of you who go to Old Faithful will be back at West Yellowstone Airport at 4:30. Those of you who go to Canyon will arrive back at 4:45.

Q Give us the times again, 4:30 and what?

MR. NESSEN: 4:30, the buses come back for those who went to Old Faithful, 4:45, for buses that went to Canyon.

We have the press plane scheduled to take off at 5:15. Obviously, it is your call, you need to stay until you finish filing. If we depart at 5:15, the plane would come back to Denver, refuel, and then fly on to Washington, arriving at 12:30 a.m. at Andrews. That is the press plane.

Let me mention a couple of things I think will sort of smooth this out and make it complete.

We will have three pool seats on the helicopters that the President will be involved in. That is West Yellowstone Airport to Old Faithful, Old Faithful to Canyon, Canyon back to West Yellowstone. We have three pool seats on those choppers. Doug will talk to you on how they are broken out. I think he has worked out something that makes everybody happy.

Q How many from here to Grand Junction?

MR. NESSEN: We are still working on how many seats, if any, we get on those choppers.

Let me point out one thing to you as you make your own decisions as to where you want to go. If you go on Air Force One pool from Grand Junction to West Yellowstone, you are going to be stuck at West Yellowstone except for the two wire writers and one writer. There are only three pool seats on the choppers that accompany the President from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful, so everyone going there on the Air Force One pool, they will be stuck there for the day and won't see anything.

Our advice would be, let that Air Force One pool be just the two wires and one writer who will go by helicopter with the President, and don't anyone else go on that Air Force One pool, otherwise, you will be stuck for the day and won't be able to get into Yellowstone.

Q On the way back from Denver to Andrews, the press plane is taking off at 5:15. Does the press plane stop at Rapid City?

MR. NESSEN: No, the press plane will refuel at Denver.

Q There is only one plane?

MR. NESSEN: There are two planes, a family plane leaving earlier in the day and the press plane.

Q How about coverage in Rapid City?

MR. NESSEN: That will be covered by a full Air Force One pool. We will be back to ten people on Air Force One pool.

Q What about the phones?

MR. NESSEN: Let me get back to the phones.

Q Is there a pool that can fly with the President from Old Faithful to Canyon Village?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, there are three people on the chopper.

At Old Faithful, for the TV folks, there will be a mult and there will be a 60-foot camera throw. Here are the filing facilities: West Yellowstone Airport, no Telexes, five to ten telephones; Old Faithful, on the platform five telephones; in the filing center, which is in the Old Faithful Lodge, another five or ten telephones, but no Telexes; at Canyon, there is just frankly nothing.

Q Nothing?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing.

Q Is there a Telex anywhere?

MR. BLASER: No Telex within 500 miles. Denver, when we stop for refueling, there will be a possibility there.

Q That would be very helpful, and we could do some writing and drop it off there.

MR. BLASER: We will talk to John Buckley about that. We discussed it yesterday with John Buckley.

MR. NESSEN: If you go on a 5:15 take-off from Yellowstone, you have to count on a 7:00 departure from Denver.

Q Seven o'clock whose time? Why does it take an hour and 45 minutes to get from Yellowstone to Denver?

MR. BLASER: It takes an hour and a half.

MR. NESSEN: The arrival time of Air Force One at Rapid City is 4:45. I think we are back to Central Time, aren't we?

MR. BLASER: No, Mountain Time.

Q When will the families get to Andrews?

MR. NESSEN: What time does the family bus leave here?

MR. CARLSON: Ten o'clock.

MR. NESSEN: Ray, do you have details of the family bus and plane?

MR. ZOOK: No.

Q How will they get home from Andrews if we don't get back?

Q Do the two planes from Denver arrive at Andrews approximately the same time?

MR. NESSEN: No, the press plane is due around 12:30 and the family plane would arrive around 7:00.

Q That schedule you gave us has him getting back to West Yellowstone about 3:30 and the press buses don't get back until 4:30. How will you make an Air Force One pool that way?

MR. NESSEN: We have thought ahead. What we will do, we will have a police escort for the Air Force One pool to get them out of Old Faithful and around through the crowds and back to West Yellowstone with flashing red lights in time to make Air Force One. That is where the Air Force One pool is put together, at Old Faithful.

On this organization chart of the PFC, which has all the names announced yesterday, plus Ely Peterson being added today, Roy Hughes, who is the Deputy Chairman for Administration, ought to also have the title Deputy Chairman for Administration, and Treasurer of the PFC.

Q What happened to Mr. Moot?

Q How come he wasn't mentioned yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean, being appointed or having the Treasurer's job?

Q Being part of the team.

MR. NESSEN: He wasn't here.

Q Did Moot resign?

MR. GREENER: He was Finance Chairman. He wasn't Treasurer.

MR. NESSEN: What did you say, Naomi?

Q If they have a Superintendent's house at Canyon, they would have phones in the Superintendent's house.

MR. NESSEN: Doug has been up there and says there are no phones.

Q Will there be a separate baggage call for families?

MR. NESSEN: Baggage call for families, I am guessing, will be Sunday morning.

Q Can we move our baggage with theirs?

MR. NESSEN: Ray will give you all the family baggage stuff.

Q Is it tentatively planned that -- I am asking this because I have a special problem on family -- is it tentatively planned kids will leave here at 10:00 on Sunday, plus baggage, back to Andrews?

MR. NESSEN: That is the plan.

Q Why can't they leave here a little later in the day so they don't have to spend two or three hours at Andrews?

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you get together with Ray. It is your airplane and you can have it go anytime you want. I think there was a feeling by some people they didn't want their kids or their families sitting around Andrews at 12:30 or 1:00. Get together with Ray and work out what makes everybody happy.

Q Couldn't the press plane meet the families in Denver when they refuel?

MR. NESSEN: In order to pick up the large number of wives and children in Denver you would then have to go with a stretch DC-8.

Q Won't the 8 get into Yellowstone?

Q Could we go on with the briefing?

MR. NESSEN: I am standing here ready and willing to take your questions, Muriel.

Q Could we have a briefing now? (Laughter)

Q How about some questions on what else happened today?

MR. NESSEN: Be my guest. That is why I am here.

Q Is the President going to make a campaign speech on Labor Day?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to announce today on his schedule.

Q Are we going to have a meeting with Dole and Rockefeller and those people tomorrow morning?

MR. NESSEN: We are still working on that. It is a possibility.

Q What is the President doing today?

Q Will you brief tonight after the working dinner?

MR. NESSEN: I don't expect to.

Q What is he doing today until the visitors show up?

MR. NESSEN: The President this morning met as usual with Brent Scowcroft, met with Dick Cheney, and had this meeting to discuss the fall campaign. I know that Alan Greenspan, for instance, talked to him about a couple of economic questions and Jim Cavanaugh talked to him about some domestic questions.

After that, he went to play golf, as I think you know, in the Charity Pro Am Tournament. He will be back and have his meetings late this afternoon and evening. The pattern has been that Cheney works with him again in the afternoon, and I assume that will be the case again.

Q What really was decided today except for the Ely Peterson thing?

Q Question?

MR. NESSEN: Helen wanted to know what was decided at this morning's meeting.

I would rather not say what decisions were made today, but you do have Jim Baker coming tomorrow, who will be able to give you a wrap-up of what was done during the whole week.

Q Is Dick Cheney going to California later in the week to see Ronald Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I will have to check.

Q What airfield will it be from Denver?

MR. NESSEN: Stapleton.

Q Is Dick Cheney going to be replaced by Jim Lynn, as the Ear reported?

MR. NESSEN: Are you kidding? Did they really?
(Laughter)

Q Is that yes or no?

MR. NESSEN: Jim Lynn will be replacing Dick Cheney as White House Chief of Staff? The answer is no.

Q Ron, in what position is Rog Morton staying on?

MR. NESSEN: As Chairman of the Steering Committee.

Q The President said there would be an announcement on Friday following the morning working session with the Vice President, Dole and Connally. Is there anything you can say about that now? Will there be a morning announcement?

MR. NESSEN: We have not completely put together the plans for making some or all of those people available, but we are working on it.

Q What do you hear from Dean Burch and Ruckelshaus about the debates?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing so far. I don't think they go to the meeting until later today.

Q Ron, is the President agreeable to keeping the Presidential seal off the podium when he speaks in the debates?

MR. NESSEN: Was that a proposal?

Q Yes, part of it.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. They are working out all the details.

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Q Is there likely to be anything involving Rockefeller and the others while we are at the barbecue?

MR. NESSEN: No, somebody asked and I said no. I don't want to get the idea built up that there is going to be some kind of announcement tomorrow.

Q That is what the President said. He said, we will have an announcement for you following the meeting.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he means an "announcement" announcement.

Q That is what he said, wasn't it?

MR. NESSEN: We are still working on how to make those people available.

Q Could you take my request that Vice President Rockefeller and Senator Dole be available to us for questions tomorrow, please?

MR. NESSEN: I will make that known, and Connally.

Q How long will those gentlemen be in Vail? Do you know?

MR. NESSEN: The plan is, the Vice President will leave tomorrow morning, Mr. Connally will leave tomorrow morning, and Senator Dole will leave on Saturday morning.

Q Are they all staying at the house?

MR. NESSEN: They are staying around at different houses. I think the Vice President is staying upstairs in the Scott house, and I don't know where the other two are staying.

Q Ron, if all those strategy meetings are so brief, why wasn't Mrs. Peterson included in them? She doesn't have anything until Tuesday. Why wasn't she invited?

MR. GREENER: She was. She wanted to go home and be with her family.

Q She was invited to participate?

MR. GREENER: Yes, Jim talked to her yesterday.

Q About coming out?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Was there a telephone call or communication with Governor Reagan this week?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge. I will check.

Q Has he heard from Nixon in any way?

MR. NESSEN: He has not.

Q Ron, you said earlier that Dick Cheney has been presiding in most of the meetings, of the Strategy Committee of the PFC. I understand he is going to journey to California.

MR. NESSEN: Wait a minute. I don't know what you mean by the Strategy Committee of the PFC.

Q He has been presiding at meetings all week with Stu Spencer --

MR. NESSEN: With White House and PFC staff people. You mean with the President?

Q On meetings devoted to strategy.

MR. NESSEN: The President presided at the meetings he attended.

Q What about the other meetings?

MR. NESSEN: Dick got together with White House people and PFC staff.

Q He was presiding?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is fair.

Q He is planning to go out to the coast this week to talk to Reagan about the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: I said I will check on that.

Q My question is, really, it is simply a question in my mind whether White House-PFC people have discussed the propriety of the White House Chief of Staff taking such an active leadership role in the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: If you take the propriety question in its narrow sense, Dick is not covered by the Hatch Act and it is my understanding, Bill, that the FEC has ruled that once a Government employee has given 40 hours a week to Governmental duties, he can use his extra time for political duties. I think all of you know Dick and his work schedule and know he spends certainly more than 40 hours a week on Government business.

If I could go ON BACKGROUND, perhaps, to give you another thought on this, it was felt that it was very much better to have the White House liaison man with the committee standing there in public, you know his name -- "he says, "This is what I am doing," he attends the meetings and so forth -- than perhaps the way that link has been in the past, where it wasn't as open as it is.

Q Are you saying you don't want a Haldeman and a Nixon-type operation; is that what you really mean?

MR. NESSEN: Bob, I think you understand what my BACKGROUND guidance is.

Q Why is that?

MR. NESSEN: I would just rather have it ON BACKGROUND, Jim. I want to try to give you our thinking, but I would like to have it ON BACKGROUND, if I may.

Q Does that mean that Mr. Cheney will take a more public role? He is not usually one who comes and briefs us but will he take a more public role as liaison between the two camps?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean, a more public role?

Q Will he be available to us for questioning at briefings on campaign things such as Stu Spencer and Rogers Morton always were?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that is his role. I think his role is liaison between the White House and the committee.

Q Maybe I don't understand your using the phrase, "more public."

MR. NESSEN: You know this year who the White House liaison man is between the White House and the committee.

Q Ron, I came back from this golf thing, if anybody wants a fill on the golf.

MR. NESSEN: You want to come up and give a verbal pool report?

Q Only if anybody needs it now, otherwise, I will write it.

Q What time do the Vice President, Senator Dole and Mr. Connally leave tomorrow morning?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a precise departure time, but it will not be at the crack of dawn.

Q This Baker thing tomorrow morning, can you tell us what he is prepared to discuss? Most of the briefings this week have been, "I don't know," or, "We are not at the point where we are ready to announce that yet." Just for planning purposes, can we expect him to discuss in detail what they have been talking about or will it be just a publicity thing?

MR. GREENER: He will discuss in some detail --

Q We can't hear.

MR. GREENER: He will be able to discuss in some detail what has been going on, however, as we said before, he doesn't plan to come in here and lay out the strategy, step-by-step, for the whole campaign.

Q Just what is it? We have a manpower problem and we obviously want to cover it if there is going to be some news. What actually is he prepared to talk about?

MR. GREENER: What has been going on during the week.

Q Can you tell us how much he will be spending on media and what the media campaign is?

MR. GREENER: I think he can give things such as you are asking for.

Q Can he tell us what Connally's role is?

MR. GREENER: That will depend on the meetings tonight and tomorrow morning. We will see what we have. I won't second-guess the meetings.

Q We will have that from Connally, himself, tomorrow morning, I hope.

MR. GREENER: That is entirely possible.

Q He should be able to tell what his role is.

Q Ron, Jody Powell says he doesn't like the way you folks are handling the debates question. They say it should be handled by press release. I wonder, what is the President's reaction to that? The President asked us the other day to get the word to Carter instead of his calling up. I wonder, what is the President's reaction?

MR. NESSEN: I think the representatives are meeting today. I guess about a half hour from now in Washington.

Q Are they going to tell them in Washington what they have worked out or will you tell us later today?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I ought to be the spokesman for that. I think they are accepting the invitation from the League of Women Voters to come in without committing in any way to sponsorship by the League or to going that route or format.

Q What is the next step?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Do you know where the meeting is?

MR. NESSEN: I really don't. It is in Washington.

Q Are they going to listen to the League of Women Voters' proposal?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't know what they are going to do because I am not there. I don't know what the format of the meeting is.

Q When are we going to find out how the debates are going to be announced? Is it going to be a joint announcement from here?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, we have laid out our position on how the debates ought to be conducted and now representatives of the two groups are getting together to begin their discussions. I think it is much too early to talk about some --

MORE

Q Are Dean Burch and Ruckelshaus going to talk or will they say we have to get it from you?

MR. NESSEN: I really don't know, Phil.

Q Yesterday all the queries were kicked back to the White House from the League.

MR. GREENER: If any decisions are made and it is decided and they send it out here, I assume they will try to do it simultaneously. We don't know whether any decision will be made today, though, Phil.

Q Do you have a deputy back there?

MR. GREENER: A fellow named Ron Webber.

Q Has Buchen told the President whether or not he thinks the debates, since the FCC regulations are so involved, can be held on television? Has the President talked to Dean Burch about this?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is Dean Burch's expertise in the communications law, which is one of the reasons that led to his choice for this job. I am sure that will be one of the issues.

Q Don't they routinely have to have an exception to the equal time provisions and things like that?

MR. NESSEN: I am way over my head talking about the communications law.

Q Ron, will the Vice President, will Connally, will Dole talk to us so we can ask them questions?

MR. NESSEN: I said we are still working out how and who and when to make available those people. It will depend partly on their getting here and my being able to get together with them and see what their wishes are. It will partly depend on them.

Q The request, Ron, is that these people be made available and that it not be done the same as the Jim Baker thing.

MR. NESSEN: No, the Jim Baker thing was done in response to a lot of questions from people who want to write weekend pieces, Sunday pieces, if they have a Sunday paper, and to make available any of the people -- Dole, Rockefeller, or Connally -- will be a completely different project.

Q Will we get a chance to see the President today, as we have for the past two days in a row, a little talk or little briefing?

MR. NESSEN: No, that wasn't planned for today. You are stuck with me today, Carol.

Q Do you have anything to tell us about North Korea?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything today. We are studying that proposal, but I don't have anything to tell you about it.

Q Going to Korea?

MR. NESSEN: They made a proposal at the Joint Truce Commission. We are studying it and don't have a response yet.

Q Has the President talked with Kissinger since he has been here?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check, Phil. I don't know.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:00 NOON MDT)