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9/26/74

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

Thursday, September 26, 1974

Breakfast was held in the Dining Room on the Second Floor of the Residence. It lasted 2 hrs. and 15 minutes.

Participants were:

The President	Senator Aiken
Secretary Kissinger	Senator Fulbright
General Scowcroft	
Bill Timmons	Congressman Rhodes
Senator Mansfield	Congressman O'Neill
Senator Scott	Congressman Frelinghuysen
Senator Humphrey	Congressman Morgan

Secretary Kissinger gave a report on the diplomatic status and the outlook for negotiations on Cyprus. There followed a discussion of the pending Foreign Assistance Legislation including its relevance to the Cyprus situation as well as the legal questions regarding assistance to Turkey.

It is the Administration's view that passage of restrictive amendments will work against the interests of all parties, especially Greece, since it will inhibit negotiations to settle the Cyprus situation.

There was also a brief discussion of the Trade Bill and the ^{Jackson}~~Jacobson~~ Vanik Amendment.

The President feels this was a very useful and constructive meeting.

Suggested Statement for Ron Nessen on Meeting With
Congressional Bipartisan Leadership

February 20, 1975

The President has on several occasions expressed publicly both his concern over the gravity of the situation in the Middle East and his determination to continue doing all we can to help bring about progress toward peace in the Middle East rather than risking a slide backwards into renewed conflict. It is in this context that Secretary Kissinger undertook his latest trip to the Middle East. And it is in this context that the President and the Secretary of State wished to share with the Congressional leadership the results of the trip.

I am not going to talk about the substance of the discussion with the Congressional leadership, nor about the substance of Secretary Kissinger's trip, except to say that the trip was an exploratory one; not one designed to conduct or conclude a negotiation or agreement; and not one during which the Secretary made any specific suggestions or proposals. It was essential after all that has happened in recent months that we obtain a clearer perception of what the different parties have in mind concerning negotiations: What are the prospects, what are the problems, and what we can do to help. Secretary Kissinger was able to do this, and he shared his findings with the leadership. They also discussed his next trip to the area scheduled for next month which, it is expected, will include concrete negotiations.

Q Turkey: come up?

A. Yes. Pres urged again that Congress restore aid for the reasons he has stated before.

and to Jory

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3-March 1975

The meeting lasted for about an hour. The President began the meeting by saying that he has until tomorrow night to veto the legislation which restricts his authority to impose oil tariffs. He said he would veto the legislation and said that he was faced with several options. One would be a straight veto with no delay in the tariff, but that might be overridden by both Houses and that would have a bad psychological reaction. Option two would be to veto the bill and amend the proclamation to postpone the imposition of the second and third dollars for 30 to 60 days. Option three would be to make additional commitments to Senators and Congressmen in an attempt to get more votes, but he indicated that he did not like that idea. Halfway through the meeting the President said: "I think I have to veto the tariff restriction bill and modify the proclamation. We will also have to postpone decontrol on April 1st, so, in effect, we are delaying the whole program."

There was a general discussion about the Pastore-Wright blueprint and about the Ullman plan by the various Senators and Congressmen present. Congressman Schneebeli said that Ullman expects to have his bill out of Committee by ~~April 17th.~~

There then was a general discussion by Scott, Griffin and Tower about the number of votes to sustain the veto which the Republicans had lined up in the Senate. Griffin told the President -- "I think we will be able to sustain

your veto. We picked up a couple of Republican votes and a couple of Southern Democrats and there are some New England votes that we should get, but we don't have them yet."

The President said -- "We don't concede that we can't win in the House," and told Rhodes that he would like to see a good vote there."

70 of the 75 Freshmen Democrats in the House attended a ^(2-HOUR) breakfast in the State Dining Room with the President. ^(ALSO ATTENDING WERE) The Vice President, the Secretaries of State, Treasury and Interior and several officials of the Ford Administration (Hartmann, Rumsfeld, Zarb, Greenspan, Seidman, Scowcroft, Marsh, Hushen, Friedersdorf and the White House Congressional Liaison Staff).

The President began the discussion by saying that he looked forward to getting to know the Freshmen better and working with them, and spoke of his affection for the House of Representatives in which he served for 25 years. He said, "many people have categorized this group at the far end of the spectrum, but I think you are ~~more~~ ^(MORE) aimed toward problem solving."

The President then introduced Jack Marsh who spoke briefly about the Congressional Liaison function in the Departments and Agencies; Max Friedersdorf, who introduced the Congressional Liaison staff, and then each Congressman stood up and introduced himself. The President said there are two major problems facing our country and each one has international ramifications. On the top rung of the ladder on our priorities for action ^(1st) the economic problem, ^(and) second, what to do about the energy problem.

He said "we will continue to become increasingly vulnerable in the energy ~~area~~ if we don't do something to offset our dependence on foreign oil."

The President then went through his slide presentation on what his energy plan called for -- why we are in the crisis we are in, the tremendous increase

the cost of foreign oil, production and consumption trends and the return to the economy of the \$30 billion taken in as the result of tariffs, excise taxes and windfall profit taxes. He described that part of the program as the least understood aspect of ~~the~~^{the} program.

The President then introduced ^{Henry} Kissinger, who is scheduled to leave tomorrow on another trip to the Middle East, and Dr. Kissinger spoke about the international aspects of the energy problem and how important it is for the United States to lead the way in energy conservation. He also touched briefly on the Middle East peace negotiations, saying that they fall into three general areas: negotiations between Egypt and Israel; resolving differences among the Arab states, and the role that Russia is playing.

The President then opened the meeting to questions and answers. The questions generally were concerned with: offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, the inflationary impact of the President's energy program, the need for the President to continue to communicate with Americans, the effectiveness of ~~the~~ jawboning in ~~the~~ energy conservation, ^{and} government assistance in the housing industry.

The President closed the breakfast by saying that he would be taking some action today to reduce some of the pressure that he has applied on Congress to give them a chance to find its answers to the economic and energy problems facing the country. He did not, however, spell out what action he would be taking.

Several of the Congressmen came up to the President after the meeting and asked him for autographs.

- Q. Several of the Congressmen said during interviews out on the lawn that the President spoke quite a bit about compromise on his energy program. Did he indicate any particular areas of compromise or which Congressional plan he favored?
- A. Jack Hushen was at the meeting and he reports that none of the Democratic proposals were mentioned and there really wasn't any particular talk of compromise except at the end when the President said that he would be taking some action today to reduce the pressure on Congress so they could work on their own proposals. It was a friendly meeting, several of the questions were more in the nature of ~~speakers~~ ^{speakers} but there wasn't really much talk of compromise.
- Q. We understand that one or two of the Congressmen were critical of the President for accusing the Congress of doing nothing and they said that they had organized much earlier than previous Congresses and, in fact were doing a lot. Did the President respond to that criticism?
- A. Yes, the President did respond to that -- he said that he was in the forefront of those in Congress who were trying to reform its practices and had worked to get Congress organized in December instead of waiting until it began its session in January. (FYI: He didn't respond to their objection to the "do nothing" label).

REPORT ON BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL MEETING

March 24, 1975

When the President entered the room with Dr. Kissinger, the attendees stood and applauded.

The President began the meeting by saying that he did not intend to assess blame for the suspension of the Middle East peace talks. The President then gave a short history of recent efforts to help Israel and Egypt to make another step toward peace. The President said that he was greatly disappointed that the talks were suspended without agreement.

The President said the parties involved now will assess how to proceed toward peace, ~~including the possibility of a conference in Geneva.~~ The President praised Dr. Kissinger for his skill and patience, and said that everyone was grateful for his efforts.

Dr. Kissinger reviewed in some detail the negotiations. ~~He concluded that in the end it was not possible to bring the parties together because neither Israel nor Egypt was willing at this time to make a further compromise.~~ Dr. Kissinger ~~also said~~ ^{concluded} that the ~~two sides~~ ^{US} will now consider ~~what to do next,~~ ^{how to further the course of peace,} including the possibility of negotiations at Geneva.

~~In response to questions,~~ ^{At this point announced} the President said that the United States will now re-examine the Middle East situation and will keep Congress fully informed on the results of the examination.

→ go to Brant's guidance.

The Congressional leaders who spoke were unanimous in their praise for the President and Dr. Kissinger for the latest effort to take another step toward peace in the Middle East and the Congressional leaders promised their continued bipartisan support for Middle East efforts.

At one point Speaker Albert said that on behalf of the Democratic leadership he wanted to tell Dr. Kissinger "you have outdone yourself to bring this thing to a conclusion." Everyone present applauded.

June 23, 1975

PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The President met this morning at 9:30 a. m. with Congressmen Lee Hamilton, Charles Whalen, John Brademas, and Paul Sarbanes. Those who also attended the meeting were Secretary Henry Kissinger, John Marsh, Max Friedersdorf and Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft. The meeting lasted an hour and ten minutes.

This was the President's second meeting with members of the House to reiterate the need for restoring aid to Turkey. During this meeting the President emphasized the urgency of this need, if we are to avoid steps by the government of Turkey that are damaging to important U. S. interests. He explored with the Congressmen the possible alternatives for early legislative action.

Q. What were some of the possibilities discussed?

Discussion continued. No conclusions were reached.

A. I am not going to go into the details or the substance of the discussions, partly because of the preferences of the participants, and primarily because of the sensitivity and importance of the issue.

but the dialogue will continue

FYI ONLY: Not only does foreign policy play an important part in these discussions, which could affect our bilateral relations with Turkey permanently, but considerations of a reticent Congress and a wary, easily inflamed Greek-American community come into play as well.

NOTE: The above two paragraphs may be used as a read-out -- at your discretion.