

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 3, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF

CLIFFORD P. CASE  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
JACOB K. JAVITS  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
AND  
CHARLES H. PERCY  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

THE BRIEFING ROOM

12:12 P.M. EDT

SENATOR CASE: Before you get your tape recorders out, this represents purely a recognition of the time honored custom of Senate seniority. It does away with the question of who is the boss, who is the best or anything else.

I am the oldest, Jack is next and Chuck is next. That is the whole basis on which we happen to be the ones who happened to be the ones who came out here to talk to you.

The Wednesday group had a very good session with the President. We had scheduled it sometime before the recent discussion in the Middle East, so the purpose was not that in particular.

Naturally, the President brought it up and explained in brief terms, as he will explain further, and the Secretary in still further detail just what has been agreed to and its implications.

Our chief purpose in asking the President to see us was to give him a chance to hear our views and give us a chance to hear his general views about the conduct of the coming campaign.

This was done with great frankness and a fine spirit on both sides, on all sides, and that is all I think I have to say at the moment. This is going to be an ongoing, a continuing working relationship that all of us are having as a group, as well as individually, with the President.

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(OVER)

Q Did you ask him to do anything in particular? What do you mean, "the coming campaign"?

SENATOR CASE: The President's campaign for re-election, and we expressed not only a great interest in it, a feeling that we as a group, as well as individually, had something to contribute, a concern that our general viewpoint be adequately considered in the development of policy and in the conduct of the campaign.

There was every evidence on the President's part that he was thoroughly aware of the desirability of this, and he wanted to do it.

Q Senator, did he tell you why he wasn't going to New Hampshire?

SENATOR CASE: No, I don't think that came up. As a matter of fact, nobody from our group represents New Hampshire right now. Norris Cotton is coming down to do it, and I am sure is going to do a good job.

Q What was your viewpoint?

SENATOR CASE: My viewpoint is that I support the President. I think that there is no dissent from this generally. The matter hardly had to come up. The implication of our presence was this.

Q Did you ask him to keep the Vice President on his ticket, Senator?

SENATOR CASE: We said ---at least I said, and there was no disagreement with this that I know of--I said I was content to leave this in his hands, that we thought he had been handling it well and would continue to.

Q Did you get off on other subjects, including the Middle East agreement?

SENATOR CASE: There was discussion of it largely in terms of explanation by the President.

Q Did you get a money figure for aid?

SENATOR CASE: The only thing mentioned in that regard was that the amount was going to be substantial, but this already we knew.

Q Senator, I am a little confused as to why you are here, why the Club came. You say you want an input into his campaign on policy. Would you call that a more liberal trend, you hope the President will take a more liberal stand on things? Can you be more specific?

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SENATOR CASE: We represent a substantial group of Members of the Senate. If we have to say it ourselves, we all represent a group that has been successful politically, as well as representing in general -- not complete agreement on all matters, but in general -- a point of view which we think ought to be fully represented.

We think it was appropriate that we state this to the President, as well as indicating not only that we wanted this, but we thought it was desirable, but also we wanted to let him know we were behind him.

Q Did any of you express concern about the things Mr. Callaway has been saying about Vice President Rockefeller?

SENATOR CASE: There were several expressions about the start-off of this operation by Mr. Callaway, a general feeling that this was perhaps the exuberance of a new man that has since been corrected, and certainly a feeling on the part of everyone I know who spoke that it was quite desirable that it should be corrected.

Q Senator Javits, I am wondering if you recall in 1968 there was a report that Mr. Callaway, who was then in charge of the Southern area for Mr. Nixon, said we hope that Governor Wallace will be on our side and Governor Rockefeller, according to this report, asked Mr. Nixon to repudiate this, saying, "We do not want racists." Do you recall that?

SENATOR JAVITS: I don't recall it specifically, but the fact is Bo Callaway's remark was not particularly friendly to Mr. Rockefeller.

Q This was 1968.

SENATOR JAVITS: I know, but we are talking about 1975-1976. There were expressions of opinion, including my own, that this team, in my opinion and that of some others, had the best chance of winning and was a sound and effective team being presented to the American people together.

It was not the principal point of this visit. The principal point of this visit -- and there were 12 Senators present out of 14 who generally assemble for lunch on Wednesday at one Member's office or another who represent 162 electoral votes out of the 270 it takes to win -- was essentially to advise with the President on that question: What is the most effective and efficient use of his time and the best policy for the Republican Party in terms of his own future and the future of the party.

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Is it to tailor one's campaign to States with small electoral votes which have pronounced conservatives or is it to take a moderate and middle-of-the-road position, which we believe is the most attractive, and the most congenial to the States with the great positions in the electoral college?

To be very specific, we believe the President will be congenial to receiving the point of view of this group of Senators and putting it into the hopper with the point of view of more conservative elements of the party, whose point of view is entitled to full and equal recognition.

We felt our point of view, with this heavy electoral vote and huge population, was not being adequately reflected in the total summation of views before the President.

So, we have worked out with the President a means by which our point of view can be presented and evaluated. That is all it is about.

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Q Do you meet with them regularly?

SENATOR JAVITS: It is not necessary to meet with them regularly. We can always meet with them in many, many ways but the important thing is to have a way in which our position and point of view, or at least the consensus of it, can be reflected and that is a very easy thing to accomplish and I think we have worked it out satisfactorily.

Q How did you accomplish it?

SENATOR JAVITS: We accomplished it by establishing a channel of communication which would reflect to many in the most effective way our view. One or more of us on a given number of subjects will communicate that view to the President or the President's trusted aides.

Q Senator Percy, aren't you here really because you fear that the President was becoming a captive of the conservatives of the Republican Party?

SENATOR PERCY: I think we had some concern that our input -- I don't think he is a captive of any group -- but our input was not articulated and we wanted to make it perfectly clear that we wanted him to have our input, we wanted to hear directly from him that he wanted it and he gave us that assurance. I think each of us spoke not only of our own State, certainly in Illinois with Dick Ogilvie the Chairman, and I am Honorary Chairman, as is Les Arends and Marguerita Stit Church.

I am calling a meeting September 21 of all of the leadership across the State to organize that campaign in his behalf and I think every one of us want to help in every way we can.

Our main point was that we are able -- every one in that room -- to hold about 99 percent of our Republican votes, small as it might be in some of our States. But we also win by attracting discerning Democrats and Independents and the positions we take we think are important. He promised and pledged that we could have input on issues, that we could have input on organization and how the campaigns are conducted in our respective States.

I have already met for hours with Bo Callaway, I have no complaints whatsoever.

I would like to say that I did review with the President, however, when we think of this Wednesday Group, we are not a homogenous group, we disagree on a lot of things, but out of that group came the genius of budgetary control, out of that group came support for a strong defense budget and NATO, out of that group we were able to hold to the budget line and not let the defense procurement bill get beyond our budget line.

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And I think many of us, even on the Child Nutrition Conference this week, if we vote on it this week, we will vote to send it back to conference rather than bust the budget.

We believe in fiscal responsibility. We like social programs but I believe we have been in the forefront of a tough and mandatory energy program and regulatory reform. I think he knows this. We put a crime package in in 1972 that was a tough package.

Even though we are progressives and moderates and we like to win big in our States, we hope we are a responsible group. I think the President knows intimately every one of us. We just want to say to him we are for him and we intend to work closely with him.

Q Can you tell us, one, who was in the meeting from the staff, and, two, can you clarify something Senator Case said, did the President describe Bo Callaway as a man of exuberance that has been brought under control, so to speak?

SENATOR CASE: Those were my words but I think they are a fair paraphrase of the consensus that the President will always speak for himself, as he always has, with respect to Vice President Rockefeller.

Q You were paraphrasing the President?

SENATOR CASE: No, I was not paraphrasing anybody, I was just describing the mood.

SENATOR PERCY: Dick Cheney, Pat O'Donnell was in there, and, obviously, Congressional Relations, Bill was in there.

Q Was Callaway there?

SENATOR CASE: No.

SENATOR PERCY: Ron Nessen was in for a while.

Q Senator Javits, what was the President's response when you said this team -- meaning Ford-Rockefeller -- had the best chance of winning?

SENATOR JAVITS: I can't quote the President. He will have to quote himself. He has been quite outspoken on that subject, I am sure he will be again. I do not wish to quote the President.

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Q Would you like to paraphrase him?

SENATOR JAVITS: No, I can't. I think we better leave it at this.

Q Senator, you have been criticizing some of the President's speeches around the country in a conservative tone.

SENATOR JAVITS: I haven't particularly agreed with the President in some matters but that has not in any way interfered with my feeling that he is the best man for the Presidency of the United States, considering what the Democrats may offer as well. That was the general feeling that we expressed to the President and that was an essential aspect of this meeting.

Q Senator Javits, Vice President Rockefeller went South last week and he made some rather startling speeches of his own. Did you share those views he expressed down there?

SENATOR JAVITS: I can't be generic about it. There may have been inflections and emphasis which I definitely would not share but that is just as true of my relations with President Ford and his relations with me, he doesn't approve of everything I do, far from it, and I don't approve of everything he does. But in total I believe this is the very best team that can be offered to our country.

Q Following up Carroll's question, it seems to a lot of us that you are concerned about the tone of the President's speeches recently. You keep shying away from this, but the President goes out on the road and he really does emphasize the conservative side of himself.

SENATOR CASE: I would like to say a word on that point. The point is, yes, we think he has not been doing his own compassionate nature justice. He is very sound in many matters, very sound about the importance of controlling and keeping inflation under control, that this is a matter involving the best interest of everybody, rich, poor and all groups in the American society. And the essential thing to do -- and we think he is right to emphasize it, but we think he has not always given himself a fair chance to let his general compassionate nature through and in part this is a matter of emphasis. To a great degree this is what campaigning is all about.

SENATOR PERCY: I think it is fair to say the issue of inflation came up from our group. A member of our group said -- and I think we all confirmed it -- in their judgment inflation is still a problem. And every working person today and those not working are concerned about inflation and we have got to do something about it.

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In fairness to the meeting, we started on the Mideast and I think I speak for myself, and the others can speak for themselves, but I think a brilliant job has been done by the President and the Secretary. I think we should be fully supportive, we are going to work very hard, some of us in the Congress, to get an overwhelming vote of support. I don't like to see Americans there any more than any one else but I am willing to take this risk. We have asked Israel and we have asked Egypt to take risks, and they are both taking huge risks in this matter. I think we can take a measured risk because the alternative is war, embargoes and the costs of that would be almost incalculable. I think we can take this measured risk and I intend to fully support it and commend the President on what he has accomplished.

Q Senator Case, I wondered if you could tell me, you said you thought he had not been doing his compassionate nature justice. Do you feel Mrs. Ford has been doing his compassionate nature justice? And what do you think the effect of that will be?

SENATOR CASE: You will forgive me if I let some other department handle the matters of the domestic relationships here. I do want to follow up, if I may -- I will answer any questions, of course, you want -- on the Middle East matter, Senator Percy properly brought it in, it was the subject of our discussion. The President opened the meeting, as I said, by explaining it.

In my own view, I think it can be said at this point, I am not happy about the necessity of putting Americans in these warning areas, nor about the great cost that is going to be involved, but we do think that a very substantial job has been done at considerable cost and with considerable risk and that we have a hope of going ahead. I share that view and I think that was the general consensus of those at the meeting, though each one will speak for himself.

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Q Can we hear Senator Javits on this?

SENATOR JAVITS: On the Middle East situation, I believe this is the better alternative which has been chosen, and I shall support the President and Secretary Kissinger in respect of it. I believe of the two risks which are being run, obviously the greater one -- because it is survival which is involved -- is that of Israel.

Be that as it may, the fact is that this was the alternative to an uncertain situation which could easily have led to war, perhaps not this year, but pretty clearly a grave danger next year.

Therefore, the choosing between these alternatives, notwithstanding the cost and the risk of stationing American civilians there in a small number, but nonetheless Americans, and again though they will be in the area of the United Nations forces, a further guarantee against particular jeopardy.

This was the right way to go. With this situation somewhat ameliorated and peace for the time being on this Western front, respecting Israel, there is a real opportunity now to turn to Syria, Jordan, the PLO and to try to find a way out of those dilemmas. Without it, the path to war would have been very clearly indicated.

When you consider the cost of an embargo of oil again, which could have plunged the whole world into a deadly depression and the risks of a conflagration in that area of the world, the price we have to pay is reasonably adjusted to the avoidance of the risks we would otherwise run.

I shall support the President and the Secretary of State, who I think in this case has done a brilliant job in respect of this agreement.

Q Have you heard of any unpublished side agreements we don't know about yet?

SENATOR JAVITS: I think I can assure the people of our country that every side agreement and every secret agreement and every understanding will be thoroughly dug into by the Foreign Relations Committee, of which Senator Case is the senior ranking Member, and I stand immediately next to him in rank.

We will do our utmost to see that the public knows all because it is my conviction that the more the public knows, the greater will be the in-depth support for what the United States is here trying to effectuate in the most dangerous area in the world.

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Q For openers, would you recommend that Secretary Kissinger testify in open hearing tomorrow?

SENATOR JAVITS: No, it is not necessary for him to do that. I know you gentlemen need to have news every day, but there is lots of it around. I think the testimony here has to be handled with the great sense of responsibility, and we should first ask the Secretary what there is he has to testify to that he feels should not be public and then we should evaluate it with the definite bias of making it public.

But the great virtue of our committee is a heavy sense of responsibility for the best interests of our country and peace in the world.

Q Aren't you being contradictory? You just talked about being very open on everything domestic, the American people should know everything. You come along now and say we will decide.

SENATOR JAVITS: The American people have as much prudence as they expect us to have, and they know this is a very reasonable approach to a situation which could involve very great jeopardy to our country and the peace in the Middle East, and that we should first see the dimensions of the situation with, as I say, a strong bias in favor of making everything public before we made that decision.

Q As to secret agreements themselves, would you accept secret agreements which only you knew about in Executive Session?

SENATOR CASE: I don't think -- this is my own personal view -- that the American people are committed by anything that is not known to them. Therefore, there is no such thing as a secret agreement by the American people or by this country and for my money, I will press to have all commitments by the United States made a matter of public record.

SENATOR JAVITS: I would like to join in that completely. I thoroughly agree with Senator Case's definition and will act accordingly.

Q Did you discuss this possible energy compromise that is looming?

SENATOR CASE: This was explained by Frank Zarb and other people on the part of the Administration, and the efforts made by Senator Mansfield shared in by the Speaker recently were all gone into and the hope expressed that a compromise could be worked out.

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Q And what do the three of you think?

SENATOR CASE: If this can be done, I certainly will support it.

Q Was any new formula proposed or discussed or offered either by the President or by any of you other than the 39-month plan which already has been rejected by the House?

SENATOR CASE: This had been rejected by the House. I don't think that the President's basic view or that anything very basically new was suggested. I think the new aspect of it was the visit by the majority leader and by the Speaker and their assurance that they would do their best.

I think they are having a meeting tomorrow on it, as a matter of fact, in the Senate Democratic caucus to make it possible to bring about substantial agreement on this formula.

Q Senator Javits, did you have any discussion about the New York City situation with the President?

SENATOR JAVITS: The President saw Governor Carey yesterday. I did have a word with the President about it, and I believe later this week we will have a rather clear definition of the Administration's position respecting New York City. It is my belief that the consequences of a New York City default would be horrendous for the financial markets of the country, for other cities and for other States; indeed, any Governmental subdivision that seeks to raise money by borrowing in the public markets.

I do not believe the United States is insensitive to that position, but I believe the general feeling has been that if there is a guarantee of a general take-out of New York's troubles that that may interfere with New York's major efforts and New York State's major efforts to help in respect to their own situation.

I do not consider it a permanent position by our Government. I consider it as one which is open to the fact that New York City and New York State will have done everything they can to help themselves. That is my interpretation of the situation here.

Q To follow up briefly, do you expect a clear definition to represent the change in the previously stated position of the White House?

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SENATOR JAVITS: I cannot say that, but I can say I do not feel here a lack of sympathy with New York or that New York has to be punished. This involves much too much for any such narrow point of view, and I do not believe the President entertains it.

Q May I ask, Senator Case, when you told the President his compassionate nature was not coming through, did he agree with that premise? (Laughter)

SENATOR CASE: The great thing about Mr. Ford is that he accepts with complete frankness and complete lack of any kind of unhappy feeling the most sincere and earnest expressions of criticism, especially when they are of a constructive nature and particularly from people he regards as friends.

He accepted this not only in good spirit, but I think he agreed it was a good idea.

Q Are you saying the President should not give quite so much emphasis to vetoing spending bills, he should put at least equal emphasis on his concern for the poor, that sort of thing.

SENATOR CASE: I will try to put it exactly as he feels about it. I don't think anybody should expect the President to change his views or to change his basic approach. I think it is necessary for him to do what hasn't always been necessary perhaps for him to do in his role as candidate for the House of Representatives, to make it clear this approach is in his judgment designed to bring about the best result for all the people, including those out of work, including those worried about losing jobs, even though they may still have them and including those on fixed incomes, attempting to meet constantly rising costs of living.

This is just in the domestic field, and it was a matter, therefore, of his making it clear that he had those goals as the highest goals and the whole matter of, you don't balance a budget for the sake of doing an exercise in sound economics, you do it for the purpose of creating a situation in which this country's economy can best prosper in everybody's interest. It is a matter largely of emphasis and explanation.

Q Did you discuss with the President the travel he has been undertaking in recent months and his plans for such a heavy schedule and the campaign expenditure difficulties?

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SENATOR CASE: This came up only obliquely, I think; that is, the last point. Ted Stevens expressed a little unhappiness about a meeting in Seattle which he thought wasn't broadly based enough to include elected representatives and Republican office holders in his State, as well as in other States.

It was pointed out this was largely a trip by the President for extrapolitical purposes, White House conference meetings, and the reason it was being paid for by the Republican Committee was there were one or two aspects of it or items on the agenda which did have a political purpose.

This was the only reference I heard to a discussion of the President's travels.

Q Senator, are you convinced that Mr. Callaway will no longer suggest the dropping of Vice President Rockefeller and, if he again suggests that this might benefit the ticket, are you prepared to ask for Callaway's resignation?

SENATOR CASE: I don't think I need to get into any such hypothetical decision as that because I am convinced that the matter has been put at rest by the President.

SENATOR PERCY: I have talked to him about it, and I am convinced he won't.

Q Senator, one of the biggest general criticisms of the President by moderates and liberals in Congress has been his failure, in their judgment, to deal adequately with the high rate of unemployment. Do you have any views on this, and what, if anything, did you tell the President about it?

SENATOR CASE: Senator Javits would like to start off a discussion on that, and I think he should. He has been in the middle of it in his work in the Senate.

SENATOR JAVITS: I am the ranking Member of the Labor Committee, and have handled the bills on the floor that related to the extension of unemployment compensation. The President's record on that is good. The President has lent himself strongly to the continuance of unemployment compensation for those unemployed through no fault of their own up to 65 weeks.

He has been responsible for recommending a good summer job program, for the youthful unemployed, and considering his views on the budget, et cetera, he has been reasonably good within his own principles on the issue of public service jobs.

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Those have been the criteria for the unemployed.

We undoubtedly would feel -- at least I would feel -- that a good deal of initiative is desirable in terms of the production in American business, the productivity of American business, worker morale and more enterprising measures directed along that line.

Those are matters which we would suggest to the President. On this issue of dealing with the unemployed in a forthright way, notwithstanding a high price tag of over \$18 billion a year, I consider the President's record to be very good.

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Q Can we get back to the Middle East thing for just a moment? Do you gentlemen feel the Congress will approve the portions of this agreement that have to be approved by Congress?

SENATOR JAVITS: It is my view that after considering all the facts and the alternatives presented to us that a majority of the Congress in both Houses will approve of this as being the only road to take under these circumstances.

SENATOR CASE: I think it is terribly important to put it in just those terms. This isn't a matter to get euphoric about. This is a matter to accept very soberly because it is perhaps the most important decision we will have to make in quite a long while. I am convinced that, when it is presented in that fashion, not as a great triumph for an individual or even for our Nation, but as a sober acceptance of responsibility which this great land of ours has, that it will be approved.

Q Senator Javits, you mentioned among the other parties with whom negotiations must be carried on, Syria, Jordan and the PLO. Do you now advocate sitting down with the PLO?

SENATOR JAVITS: I do not. I am simply accepting the realities that one of the tenets carried by Syria, certainly by Syria and by other Arab countries, is what they call satisfying "the legitimate aspirations of the PLO." I agree with the policy of the United States not to be negotiating with them and Israel's policy not to be negotiating with them under existing conditions but I simply have to recognize that, as a fact of life, it exists as a claim and a demand which will somehow or other have to be dealt with.

MR. NESSEN: I wanted to finish up the thought I was expressing when the Senators arrived and that concerns the travel. I only wanted to add one thing to what I said before.

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As you know, Congress appropriates \$100,000 a year to pay for the President's travel. You know it is subject to annual review and, if Congress shared Dick's views, or other people's views, that the President is traveling too much, obviously the way to reflect that would be to reduce the travel budget.

Q Nobody has said that the --

MR. NESSEN: No, I just wanted to tidy up that. I know nobody suggested it, Helen, but somebody said don't you think he ought to save the taxpayer's money and isn't he traveling too much. My only point is, if that is the judgment, there is a way to reduce the travel, and that is by Congress cutting off the money.

Senator Javits mentioned the possibility of the President defining his attitude toward New York City in the next three or four days. Just so you understand what he was talking about, he asked the President this morning if the President would send a telegram to a citizens group in New York that is interested in this problem and spell out precisely what his views are without committing himself to anything. The President reserved judgment on that. If he did send the telegram, it would reflect the views that I told you last night are the President's with regard to any Federal role in the New York City problems.

All I am saying is that Senator Javits didn't mean to suggest there was any new position coming but only requesting a telegram spelling out the existing position.

Q Before you go away, Ron, did the President in some fashion tell Callaway to cool it?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of, Jim.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:44 P.M. EDT)