

Discussion of the December 10, 1975 Cabinet Meeting
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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 11:37 A.M. EST

DECEMBER 11, 1975

THURSDAY

MR. GREENER: Let me go over the President's schedule this morning on some of the staff meetings.

He had breakfast this morning at 7:15 with Secretary Simon to discuss the tax cut legislation.

He had a meeting at 8:30 this morning with Secretary Dunlop in which he discussed the common situs picketing legislation.

He had a meeting at 9:30 with Secretary Rumsfeld and General Scowcroft. Rumsfeld reported on his NATO meetings.

I think you have all the others.

We have one announcement which has not been posted yet, and that is that the President announces his intention to nominate Robert Ellsworth to be Deputy Secretary of Defense. This is a new position created by Public Law 92-596 on October 27, 1972. In other words, there will be two deputies.

Q What is this one for?

MR. GREENER: Primarily the intelligence area.

Q Has this position ever been filled before,
Bill?

MR. GREENER: No, it has not.

Q Is there a formal title to it?

MR. GREENER: Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Q For something?

MR. GREENER: No, just Deputy Secretary of Defense.

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Q Isn't Ellsworth presently Assistant Secretary for International Affairs?

MR. GREENER: He is presently Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

Q How does he rank in relation to Clements? Are they coequal?

MR. GREENER: No. After he is confirmed, the President plans to designate William Clements as principal deputy.

Q Is this, in effect, an upgrading of international security to the Deputy Secretary level?

MR. GREENER: It is merely a matter of filling that position that has been vacant.

Q Was that Congress' intention when they did that, to upgrade international security from the assistant to deputy level, do you know?

MR. GREENER: I don't know. I will have to check it for you, Jim, what the intent of the law was.

Q Bill, didn't Mel Laird want this, because he needed another deputy when he was at the Pentagon, to handle operational affairs and another guy to handle hardware?

MR. GREENER: John, as I say, I don't know what the background of it is. I just know the law designates the two of them.

Q What was Ellsworth getting? What will he be getting under this change?

MR. GREENER: He was Assistant Secretary, getting \$39,900, I think, but let's check it. I will get it for you exactly. His new salary will be \$44,600. We will check the other one.

Q Bill, is there something in Ellsworth's background that qualifies him for this job?

MR. GREENER: Since June 5, 1974, he has been Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. From 1969 to 1971 he served as U.S. Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. There is a handout on it. It will be coming to you shortly.

Those are all the announcements for today.

Q On DOD, can you tell us when you are going over there?

MR. GREENER: When I am going over there?

Q Yes, assuming the confirmation is all complete.

MR. GREENER: Shortly after confirmation. I just don't know.

Q Before the Vail trip, should that materialize?

MR. GREENER: I just don't know yet. I did talk to the President --

Q When are your confirmation hearings?

MR. GREENER: Next week, as far as I know, Fran, but I have not been given a date.

Q Bill, in the meeting with Mr. Dunlop this morning, did the President make a final decision on signing or vetoing the common situs picketing bill?

MR. GREENER: No, he did not.

Q You started to say something else. You did talk to the President or something.

MR. GREENER: I was going to give some information on Vail. I asked the President this morning, and the problem of setting the date on Vail is what is the calendar for Congress. If Congress is in session over Christmas, then the President will be in town. If the Congress completes their work on say the 20th, then the President does contemplate departing the 23rd or 24th for Vail, returning on the 29th.

Q Why would he return so early on the 29th? Why doesn't he just stay through New Year's?

MR. GREENER: Because he feels he should get back and do the work that is in front of him -- the State of the Union, legislative --

Q But that has never been an inhibition because he could always take work to China and work anywhere we wanted.

Q He took work to Vail last year.

MR. GREENER: This is the President's desire, to come back.

Q Does he feel that the days he spends in Vail he cannot work effectively?

MR. GREENER: He will be working while he is there, also.

Q But not as effectively as he could back here, and that is why he is coming back?

MR. GREENER: No, I would not say that. He just feels that he would like to come back.

Q Does he feel the Congress will be in session beginning the 29th?

MR. GREENER: He does not know.

Q Is he seeking to or attempting to avoid criticism for excessive traveling by cutting down his stay in Vail?

MR. GREENER: No, he is seeking to return to his office, where he would like to be on the 29th.

Q Bill, he is aware that perhaps as many as 100 members of his staff and the White House press corps will be taken away from their families at Christmastime if he does in fact do this?

MR. GREENER: Why would they be taken away from their families, Bob? Couldn't their families accompany him?

Q Those of us who have to go.

MR. GREENER: Well, couldn't your families accompany you?

Q Probably not.

MR. GREENER: As I understand it, reservations have been made, and I also should have added that in the event that it is that period of time and that is where they are to go, the people are trying to work out with the owners in Vail that you can sublet the condominiums for whatever period you are not there so as not to lose that amount of money.

Q They are trying to?

MR. GREENER: And they are very hopeful. They have talked to them twice in the last two days, and they told me this morning that it looked very good, but I just don't have a final word on it, Bob.

Q But is he aware of these difficulties? That is what I am asking.

MR. GREENER: Yes, he is.

The answer on Ellsworth's prior salary level was \$39,900, Lou.

Q Bill, in addition to one lawsuit for \$100,000 charging sex discrimination in the White House Press Office, there is the fact that Margita White is still not being paid as much salary as Ron Ziegler's former male assistant in the same job.

My question is, has the President or Mrs. Ford expressed any concern about this treatment of women by the White House Press Office?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q Do you have any comment, Bill? Do you have any comment?

MR. GREENER: Do I have any comment?

Q Yes, do you, on this question.

MR. GREENER: Les, I think it would be rather inappropriate for me to comment on the \$100,000 suit, which is in litigation, and secondly Margita White is standing right here and if she has any comment is welcome to make it.

Q Yes, do you have a comment, Margita?

MRS. WHITE: I am perfectly happy with my salary.

Q Bill, did you meet with the President this morning?

MR. GREENER: Yes, I did.

Q Did anything come up about the forthcoming Gallup results showing Reagan leading the President?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q Is the White House aware of this poll, and do you have a reaction to it? It apparently shows Governor Reagan now leading President Ford.

MR. GREENER: I have not seen the poll, so I would have to check on it.

Q Do you know if the President is aware of the forthcoming poll, Bill?

MR. GREENER: I do not, Saul. It was not mentioned at all.

Q Bill, was there any discussion at all that you are aware of, with the President, with Callaway or Stu Spencer or anybody who is going down to this Houston meeting about any moves to counter Reagan or advance the President's chances? There are a number of people going down there, and I wondered whether that subject matter has come up at all in the White House?

MR. GREENER: The subject matter has not come up at all, Lou.

Q On that same thing, Bo Callaway attended a Cabinet meeting yesterday, which was somewhat unusual, and supposedly reported to the President on the campaign so far. What did he tell the President?

MR. GREENER: I did not attend the Cabinet meeting, so I will have to ask.

Q Can we get a rundown on that?

MR. GREENER: I will do my best for you.

MR. SPEAKES: We posted it yesterday.

Q You didn't really say anything.

MR. SPEAKES: There was not much detail, just a basic rundown on staffing and who is in New Hampshire that works for the Ford Campaign Committee and who is in Florida. It was a very quick rundown.

Q They did not say how you are doing in New Hampshire?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q No evaluation of the progress of the campaign in either State, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Bo stated he is expected to win in Florida and New Hampshire.

Q He told the President that?

MR. GREENER: The answer that he gave was that what he gave him was a rundown of the staffing at the President Ford Committee and also the people that were involved in New Hampshire and Florida and then the question was asked whether or not he gave him any report on how he felt the President was doing in New Hampshire and Florida, and Larry answered that he did state that he expected to win in both States.

Q Any amplification?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

MR. GREENER: No amplification.

Q Do you mean he said, "Mr. President, we think you are going to win in New Hampshire and Florida," that's all?

Q The President said, "That's good."

Q Bill, is there anything further you can say about the President's campaign plans, so far as you know?

MR. GREENER: No, I have nothing on that.

Q Can you tell us what this meeting with the Spanish-American Republicans is about?

MR. GREENER: Sure, if I can just find it.

Q Bill, can I go back to the other thing for just a second before you get into that?

MR. GREENER: Sure.

Q Is it going to be common practice now for the next year for the President's Cabinet to be kept up on the politics of the President's campaign? Will they be, in effect, political advisers as well as administrative advisers?

MR. GREENER: There are no plans for that, Ann. It was just a matter of bringing them up to date on the staffing and let the Cabinet know where everything was standing.

Q Why does the Cabinet need to know where the President's political organization stands?

MR. SPEAKES: It is the other way around. Bo was keeping up on issues. The Chairman of the RNC attends Cabinet meetings regularly.

Q Was there any discussion, do you know, Bill, of the use of Cabinet members in the campaign in these primaries?

MR. SPEAKES: I think they do plan for some of the Cabinet members, except that those that are traditionally nonpolitical.

Q No detailed discussion of who would be going where?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Let's turn that around for one minute.

MR. GREENER: Wait a minute.

Q Bill, did Larry say that the Chairman of the RNC attends Cabinet meetings regularly?

MR. GREENER: Yes, he did, and she does.

Q Let's take that a little bit further. If Larry says it has been standard practice for the Chairman of the National Committee to attend Cabinet meetings, is Mr. Callaway going to attend all or most Cabinet meetings from now on?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know.

MR. GREENER: I don't know. We will have to check it. I have heard of no such plans.

Q On the Rumsfeld meeting this morning, did they discuss the withdrawal of some nuclear warheads from the European theater?

MR. GREENER: As you know, we never confirm or deny the positions of nuclear warheads, so there would be no way to answer your questions.

Let me just answer the question that Bob had. The meeting was requested by Benjamin Fernandez, who was Chairman of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, to discuss and request Administration actions in the areas of Presidential appointments and also to reaffirm the need for the position of the Special Assistant to the President for Spanish-speaking Affairs, a post held now by Fernando C. DeBaca, and that basically was the whole thing.

Q They did not discuss the role of the Spanish-American Republicans in the campaign or are not discussing it?

MR. GREENER: It is not part of the paper. Of course, they are having the meeting now, so I don't know what they are discussing.

Q Has the President been in touch by telephone with Secretary Kissinger since Secretary Kissinger arrived in Brussels over the use of the new proposal --

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge, but you can check on that.

Q Question?

MR. GREENER: The question was whether or not the President has been in contact with Secretary Kissinger by telephone today.

Q On the subject of Kissinger's view, before it passes into history, do you have any comment on the dropping of the contempt citations by the House?

MR. GREENER: Nothing except that we are pleased that the committee was able to get the information that they required.

Q Bill, just one more on that, if I may. There are reports this morning that the President personally ordered this information to be turned over to the committee when he got back from China and was briefed on the dispute-- he personally ordered that the material be turned over. Are those reports correct?

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge, Jim, but I will doublecheck it for you by asking the President. I didn't ask him if he specifically ordered it, nor had I heard of it.

Q How did it happen?

MR. GREENER: What do you mean, how did it happen?

Q Who set the wheels in motion for this conference?

MR. GREENER: As I mentioned the other day, members of the staff of the White House and the State Department were working with members of the committee to effectively give them the information that they required.

Q Yesterday it was the position of the White House that the President was not going to compromise with Congress on the tax bill; that is to say, he was going to insist on a spending ceiling and that that be matched with the permanent extension of the tax cuts.

Now, Senator Scott, on the Hill this morning, urged the Congress to compromise with the President. Was Scott just talking off the top of his head or does the President have a compromise in mind?

MR. GREENER: I would not care to characterize what Senator Scott was doing, but the President's position is firm; that is, that he would like to have the tax cut that he has proposed and he will accept no tax cut that does not couple with it a spending limit.

Q As Senator Scott, the Republican Minority Leader, said, how can he expect the Congress to compromise with the President because it appears from what you have said again that the White House position is unyielding and there is no room for compromise.

MR. GREENER: The President's position is just as I stated, Walt, and that is clearly that he would like an \$11 billion larger tax cut than that being proposed by the Congress and that he would also like it coupled with a spending ceiling limiting the growth by some \$28 billion.

Q Then we can conclude Senator Scott misspoke about compromise?

MR. GREENER: You can draw your own conclusions. I would not care to characterize it.

Q Bill, last March 13 Paul Miltich, who was Mr. Ford's Press Secretary for eight years in the House and as Vice President, was appointed to the Postal Rate Commission. I was wondering, do you know of any expertise or experience in postal rates that would qualify him for this, and did Mr. Nessen have anything to do with this transfer of jobs?

MR. GREENER: I don't know enough about Mr. Miltich's background to say what is required for that. I will have to check on it for you, Les.

Q Was Ron Nessen consulted in any way? Did he participate in this in any way? Did he have anything to do with the transfer of jobs?

MR. GREENER: I would have to check on it. As you know, I was not here.

Q Bill, can we go back to taxes?

MR. GREENER: Certainly.

Q I think that Senator Scott is being quoted this morning as having told reporters that he agrees with the feeling by Democratic Senate leaders that a Presidential veto would be overridden in the Senate. Congressman Rhodes yesterday said he could not forecast what would happen in the House.

We were told last week, I think, that the President was confident that the veto could be sustained at least in the House. Is he getting any new information on this, and is he making any efforts to get in touch with the leadership to try to work out some kind of a compromise or is he determined to proceed with this battle without changing it?

MR. GREENER: The President is not determined to proceed with any battle. He would like the Congress, as I said, to place a spending ceiling that couples with any tax cut that is presented and that remains firm and he expects that to be sustained.

Q Does the President still think that a veto could be sustained?

MR. GREENER: Yes, that is what I said. He expects it to be sustained.

Q In the House or the Senate or both Houses or what?

MR. GREENER: I don't have the specifics on that, John.

Q Are we talking about the same thing, the entire package, or just the compromise, which would extend the tax cut for three months or six months?

MR. GREENER: No tax cut of any kind unless it is coupled with a spending ceiling.

Q Of \$395 billion for fiscal 1977 because yesterday Mr. Scott said if somebody was 1 percent or 2 off, who's commenting?

MR. GREENER: I don't think they have come down to that. You are being very "iffy" on it. Obviously, the President would like \$28 billion and \$395 billion. That is exactly what he proposed.

Q Bill, I am puzzled by your statement that the President expects the veto to be sustained if his own lieutenants on the Hill have told him it won't be. There seems to be some lack of communication between Senator Scott and Mr. Rhodes and the White House.

MR. GREENER: I can only tell you what his aides are telling him, Bob, and that is that it can be sustained and will be sustained.

Q And by his aides, you mean Mr. Friedersdorf and the others in the Congressional Liaison?

MR. GREENER: And the others that are dealing with the Congress, correct.

Q But not the Congressmen who are going to do the voting? They are not telling him, right?

MR. GREENER: I don't know that, Bob. You are reporting to me on what they are saying. I have not--

Q I am asking you. Have Mr. Scott and Mr. Rhodes, who are the leaders, told the President that it is going to be sustained or that it is not going to be sustained? I am asking.

MR. GREENER: I don't believe they have said either, Bob, to him.

Q On the contempt citation, one more detail. The Buchen letter will send to the House the actions taken by the Forty Committee, but while the President was in China the Senate Select Committee produced a report which said that the most apparent covert action which was in Chile when President Nixon was in the White House deliberately bypassed the Forty Committee, it went from the Oval Office to the CIA to the Embassy in Chile.

The question is, will the White House supply those covert actions which bypassed the 40 Committee as part of that compromise package?

MR. GREENER: I don't believe we have had any problems at all that I know of with the Senate Select Committee, and we provided them with the information they requested.

Q I am talking about the House.

MR. GREENER: You said Senate.

Q I know, but the Senate Committee produced that report; the Buchen compromise deals with the House. Will the White House supply the House Select Committee with those actions which deliberately bypassed the Forty Committee?

MR. GREENER: Has such a request been made?

Q I know the ball is in Buchen's court and he mentioned only those actions approved by the Forty Committee to get away from the Executive privilege on the State Department.

MR. GREENER: I think, as I understand the situation, that they have received the information they feel is necessary.

Q I wonder if you would take that question. Will the White House apply those actions which bypassed the Forty Committee?

MR. GREENER: I will just have to check on it for you. It is a specific that I don't know.

Q On the same subject, still trying to find out who initiated this compromise, the President had invoked Executive privilege with respect to the State Department subpoena and then Mr. Buchen sends a letter saying that we will give you more of the Forty Committee and the 303 Committee, four more years of their records that you asked for, and then the committee people come down and say they are getting everything they need, including State Department recommendations, which was the area in which the President invoked Executive privilege.

Who directed Mr. Buchen or Mr. Highland to show them material which satisfied their State Department subpoena? They say it did. Who directed them to do that? If it was the President, when did he do it -- before he left for China or after he returned, or what?

MR. GREENER: Jim, I just said I did not discuss that with the President. I will find out for you.

Q Bill, on the common situs picketing situation, the President in the past has said that he supports the idea but we are a little vague on where he stands on the bill now. Has that become clarified after his talks with Secretary Dunlop this morning, and could you tell us where he stands now?

MR. GREENER: He still has to wait to see the bill. There are some 15 additional amendments, as I understand it, that are on the bill, and he needs to see that and see what effect above and beyond what the President asked for, and so he did not make any decision on it until he can see it.

Q But he still supports the principle?

MR. GREENER: As far as I know, yes.

Q Bill, when did Mrs. Smith begin attending Cabinet meetings? Right after her ascension?

MR. GREENER: Yes, as soon as she became Chairman.

Q I realize to an extent I am asking you about prior Administrations, but do you know, by any chance, whether that had been standard practice in the previous Administrations?

MR. GREENER: I don't know.

Q Bill, as Phil Buchen makes clear in his letter to Mrs. Schmalzried's complaint to her lawyers, the Civil Rights Act that was cited by her lawyers does not apply to the White House, it does not apply to the Hill.

I wonder if the President feels, however, that the civil rights bans on sex or racial discrimination should apply, whether there should be a new law which does include all Federal agencies?

MR. GREENER: To begin with, you would have to ask the Civil Service Commission, who is the one that made that ruling, whether or not it applies to the White House and Congress.

Q No, no, Bill.

MR. GREENER: Let me just finish.

Secondly, the President is against discrimination of all sorts, as you know, and will not tolerate any practice of it in the White House or any other place that he controls, and the question of whether or not he would propose any additional legislation, I would have to check with him, John.

Q If that is the case, why does he not raise Margita's salary to what Jerry Warren was getting for doing exactly the same job, whether she is happy or not with that salary. If you say that he won't tolerate it, Bill, how can you say this?

MR. GREENER: Very simply. I just did. (Laughter)

Q Well, that's great.

Q While you are at it, Mr. Greener, could you ask him --

MR. GREENER: Les, let me just finish, that she is happy, as she said, and second of all --

Q So were the slaves, Bill. They had rhythm and so forth. I mean, seriously, this is a principle above and beyond whether she is happy or not. She is doing the same job that Jerry Warren did and she is not getting the same pay. How can you stand up there, seriously, Bill, and say that the President won't tolerate it when it is going on right in this press room?

MR. GREENER: It really isn't, Les. I believe you checked this morning. She actually is making more than Jerry made.

Q No, no, no. She said this morning \$39,000 is what he made and she is making \$37,000. Isn't that right, Margita.

MRS. WHITE: I did not recall specifically.

Q I did. I wrote it down. Do I have to tape the phone calls?

MRS. WHITE: I seem to recall it was around \$39,000.

Q Right. You are making less than that, aren't you?

MRS. WHITE: I am making almost \$38,000.

Q That is right. That is less, isn't it?

MR. GREENER: I am sorry. I thought it was.

Q Mr. Greener, on the same subject, could you ask the President, then, why he golfs at Burning Tree if he discriminates against women?

MR. GREENER: Yes, I will, Fran.

Q Bill, in the past few days two chairmen of regulatory commissions have quit their posts, and at the same time they have issued letters that were extremely critical of the way the White House staff handled their redesignations or nonredesignations. I refer to Mr. Sampson and Mr. Timm.

Is the President aware of this, and has he made any effort to directly communicate to these people and tell them that their services were no longer required? Why did he allow them to just dangle in the wind this way?

MR. GREENER: You are expressing that, but let me just say that on Mr. Timm he has submitted his resignation and it was requested by then the President's counsel Roderick Hills on behalf of the President. As to the details --

Q Did the President communicate directly with either Mr. Timm or Mr. Sampson?

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge. It was done by the Counsel's Office.

Q Could I go back to Miss Schmalzried for one minute?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q You said a moment ago the President will not tolerate discrimination in any form.

MR. GREENER: That is correct.

Q Is it his position, then, that there was no discrimination in the case of Miss Schmalzried?

MR. GREENER: My answer would have to be that since it is in litigation, I am not going to comment on the case, Jim.

Q Bill, I would like to follow through. Didn't Phil Warden bring her down from the Capitol Hill press corps?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Bill, if I can ask one more question on that picketing bill, are we right in assuming that Mr. Dunlop reiterated his position that the President should sign the bill at this meeting this morning?

MR. GREENER: He did not this morning. He simply went over some of the new amendments with him, and they didn't make any decision.

Q Bill, may I ask a question. It seems as though we have not seen the President doing anything by way of fund-raising or speaking to Republican functions since before the economic summit conference at Rambouillet, and that is a good many weeks ago, and we have heard very little by way of how he thinks his campaign is doing since then.

Is the President's campaign on the back burner now as opposed to his Presidential functions? We have not seen any political activity by the President. You are not answering any questions about a Gallup Poll this morning. Is the President's political campaign in a state of eclipse?

Q Limbo is what you call it.

MR. GREENER: The President has stated all along that he plans to campaign on his record, and that is what he is doing, working in the office as the President. As you know, with the exception of the one time in Boston, the remainder of those trips were on behalf of the RNC and the State committees.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END (AT 12:18 P.M. EST)