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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JERRY TER HORST

AT 12:54 P.M. EDT

AUGUST 15, 1974

THURSDAY

MR. TER HORST: I want to apologize again for keeping you here until almost 1 o'clock. It seems like not much has changed in the 11 o'clock briefing cycle (Laughter) but I am assuring you it is not being done because I could get out here earlier and I was just sitting back there wondering what I was going to be doing.

A lot of things have happened this morning, as you will shortly discover, and as we get a little better organized here, I think we will find it coming closer to 11 rather than further away each day.

I have some schedule items here I should start with. I think it would be a good idea if I could run through everything I have and hold off all questions until afterward.

The President was at work in the Oval Office shortly after 7:30. You have had a report from the participants in the breakfast meeting, and those of you who may have missed that will be able to get the transcript of the briefing by Senators Jackson, Ribicoff and Javits.

The President also has met with a number of staff members this morning, including General Haig, General Scowcroft, Secretary Kissinger, Ambassador Rumsfeld, Bob Hartmann, myself and Counsellor Marsh. He will be meeting with Counsellor Kenneth Rush before the economic meeting this afternoon.

The President, as you know, has just met with the county officials. You have had a briefing on that, and the list has been posted of the participants.

As you also know, Counsellor Marsh has been sworn into office formally. The President participated in that swearing-in. I understand you have had a pool report on that. You had Mr. Marsh out here.

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At 2 o'clock this afternoon the President will meet with his economic advisers, and we have posted that list, which is essentially an expanded Quadriad session.

Later this afternoon, at 4:30, the President will meet with Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Caspar Weinberger to discuss the various rational health insurance proposals before the Congress.

At 5 this afternoon, the President will meet with his transition group. The time of that meeting will determine just who is there, and we will post that list for you. But you already know the four members who are the nucleus of the team -- Ambassador Rumsfeld, serving as coordinator; Counsellor Marsh, Governor Scranton, and Secretary Morton.

Tomorrow, as you know, the President will meet with King Hussein, and that day climaxes with the State Dinner, which the President and Mrs. Ford will host in honor of His Majesty and Queen Alia.

Q What time is that meeting?

MR. TER HORST: At the moment I don't have a precise time on it, but we will post the schedule as soon as we can, Ralph.

We will have details on the coverage of that dinner sometime tomorrow, also.

I have no further schedule to give you, but I think you can safely expect the President to remain in the Washington area until he goes to Chicago Monday.

I have several other announcements.

The President has signed one bill, H.R. 15074, the District of Columbia finance reform bill. We will post details on that.

The President late last evening also vetoed one bill by returning H.R. 11873 to the House of Representatives without his signature. In the veto message, which you have been provided, the President pointed out that this bill overlaps and duplicates many existing programs and in his mind is an unnecessary addition to Federal expenditures.

Q What is the name of the bill?

MR. TER HORST: I think it has to do with veterinarian animal research. We will post complete details on this bill.

The President is transmitting to Congress today an amendment to the United States-United Kingdom agreement on defense uses of atomic energy. This amendment extends the agreement, which is due to expire on December 1, 1974, and I think you have the President's letter of transmittal.

We will also have available in the Press Office following the briefing three documents bearing on this: the report of the Secretary of State, a joint report of the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Secretary of Defense, and the text of the amendment.

The First Lady has asked me to announce on her behalf her selection of Nancy Howe as her personal secretary. This is the first appointment to be announced by Mrs. Ford for her staff in the East Wing. We will post all the details, but I might just mention that Mrs. Howe is a native of Lynchburg, Virginia, and her husband is a Regular Army officer.

She has lived in many posts abroad, and she previously worked for the White House Historical Association. As you probably know, she has been working with Mrs. Ford, serving as both secretary and appointments secretary, since President Ford became Vice President.

Q Will she have a press secretary?

MR. TER HORST: I presume that she will, yes, and those announcements will come from Mrs. Ford when she chooses.

I also want to announce today that the President has named Philip W. Buchen as Counsel to the President in charge of all White House legal matters. That is effective from today on.

Q Does he replace Fred Buzhardt?

MR. TER HORST: Mr. Buzhardt has not yet resigned but he will resign. However, he is staying aboard during this transition period.

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Q What about Leonard Garment?

MR. TER HORST: It is my understanding that Mr. Garment is not directly connected with the Legal Counsel's Office and hasn't been for some time.

President Ford also wanted me to call attention to the statement yesterday that was released by the State Department that the United States disapproves of the Turkish military action on Cypress and strongly urges immediate compliance with the relevant United Nations cease fire resolution.

Q The President is urging this?

MR. TER HORST: The President is calling the attention of the Turkish Government and the world community to the statement released yesterday by the State Department which is as I just described it.

Q But the subject of "strongly urges", is that the President or the statement?

MR. TER HORST: That is the President saying he strongly urges.

Q Where does the end of the quote come then in the statement from the State Department?

MR. TER HORST: This is not a quotation from the President. The statement is a statement by the President.

Q Is it the United States or the President personally who is strongly urging compliance?

MR. TER HORST: Both.

Q Can we say today that, "The President today strongly urges --"?

MR. TER HORST: Precisely, Ralph.

Q That is the point of it?

MR. TER HORST: That is the point of it.

Many of you weren't here for the briefing that Senators Jackson, Javits and Ribicoff held on their meeting with the President on the trade bill, but you will have the transcript, and in addition to that, I wish to point out that the President is personally involved in the negotiating process that is ongoing with the Members of the Senate on the trade bill and that he feels progress is being made on this very important piece of legislation.

I think I am ready for your questions.

Q How is he personally involved in the negotiations? Could you explain that a little further?

MR. TER HORST: As the Senators themselves explained in rather great detail this morning, because of President Ford's direct involvement with them in the negotiating process, the expectation is, or the hope is, that the substance of the Jackson amendment can be preserved in some form of compromise that will meet Congressional approval and a Presidential signature.

Q Jerry, can that be a quote that is being made on this very important piece of legislation? Is that what the President said?

MR. TER HORST: No, that is my statement describing the President's role.

Q Can you discuss with us the two or three reports this morning which purport to give the President's thinking on long-range planning of decentralization of Government, post-Cabinet and staff changes? We have many conflicting reports on this subject.

MR. TER HORST: I think, Ralph, the best procedure, and it is the one I strongly recommend, is that we allow the President a little bit more time to gather all the input from these people with whom he is dealing on the subject of transitional matters and then we will be able to talk, I hope, clearly and succinctly, but I just cannot stand here and comment on this person's opinion and that person's opinion because in the end it is going to be the President's opinion that counts.

Q Does the President feel any resentment about his various advisers pleading their cases publicly?

MR. TER HORST: No, I would not say there is any resentment on his part. He feels that the people he has working for him are responsible people or he wouldn't have asked them to come aboard, but on the other hand, that doesn't necessarily mean the President by any means approves statements that appear in the paper that haven't come out of the Oval Office.

So I really caution you against unnecessary speculation by various so-called -- well, you have used them in your stories, I won't characterize them from here -- because this whole thing is still in process. Decisions have not yet been made. They will be made but they have not been made.

Q Jerry, it is getting a little tough for us to tell the difference between the necessary speculation and the unnecessary speculation.

MR. TER HORST: Well, when I was out in the room it never seemed to be too much of a problem. We just continued to do it anyway. (Laughter.)

Q Jerry, are you saying not to anticipate any early changes in the Cabinet?

MR. TER HORST: I am not referring, Russ, specifically to the Cabinet or the staff of the White House or any place else in any specific matter. I am just saying the President, as he said, has asked everybody to remain aboard. Thus far everybody is remaining aboard with the exception of changes that we said we would announce as they occur.

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Q There is a report this morning that General Haig will remain, but will be given a job other than White House Chief of Staff. Can you comment on that?

MR. TER HORST: As of last night, the President said he wanted General Haig to remain as Chief of Staff for the duration.

Q One report this morning is that Governor Scranton has indicated to the President that contrary to his previous statements on the subject, he is now willing to stay in the Federal Government. I am wondering if the Governor has made that expression to the President.

MR. TER HORST: I am not certain that he has personally given the President such a statement, but I am sure that at this stage of the transition the President would welcome good talent from anyone, particularly if it comes from a person who wants to volunteer it.

Q Jerry, would you please reconcile the President's pledge of an open and candid Administration on Friday with his attempt to gut the Freedom of Information Act on Tuesday?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware that any gutting is going on.

Q I quote from an open session. "Three House Republican Members of the House Senate Conference on the amendment to the Freedom of Information Act said they had received phone calls earlier in the day from Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Silberman requesting a delay in the conference because the Department of Justice could not support the amendment."

In the open session, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, said he had received a phone call from Attorney General Saxbe during which Saxbe said he had spoken with the President. Saxbe said the Department of Justice could not support the Senate version of the amendment, asked for a conference delay and strongly implied that Ford would be prepared to veto the legislation if Congress now passes it.

That is what I am going on.

MR. TER HORST: I appreciate your version. Thank you very much.

Q That is on the open record.

MR. TER HORST: The President's position is that as the new President of the United States, not only on this particular bill, but on others, if he has an opportunity to make input, as you know, as he says, he believes in being a conciliator and a compromiser, and he prefers not to veto bills that Congress proposes if there is a possible way of bridging differences and making them acceptable both to the Executive branch and the Congress.

As the new President, he intends to generally, without my trying to be too specific, follow the pattern of working with the respective committees on bills that look like they might be a problem to the Administration and see if it is possible at all to reconcile those differences before they become locked in concrete.

Q What is the problem here? What problem does President Ford see with the bill that he is threatening to veto?

MR. TER HORST: I think I will have to, at this point, let the Cabinet officers who worry about the legality of legislation like that speak for the Administration. I have given you the President's outlook and the policy he intends to follow, and I think you will find the Cabinet officers will be governed by that.

Q Will the President support former President Nixon's veto of the \$23 billion agriculture appropriations bill; in other words, will he ask this Congress to sustain that veto?

MR. TER HORST: It is my understanding that the President does support President Nixon's veto of that. However, he is hoping that it will be possible in the course of time for Congress to rewrite the bill, in effect, and preserve key elements which obviously must move forward.

Q Could you tell us, Jerry, on your statement that General Haig would remain for the duration, is that the duration of the Administration or the duration of the transition? Which duration is that?

MR. TER HORST: The President has not defined the term to me, so I can't define it for you. However, I have used the word for an "indefinite" duration, if that helps you any. I don't know, but it is the President's intention to convey strongly that he wants Al Haig to remain aboard as his Chief of Staff.

Q Jerry, do you think it is conceivable that the President meant the duration of the transition?

MR. TER HORST: I am certain he wants him to remain on as long as General Haig figures he can be of service to the President and the President feels the same. I really can't push that word around because the President hasn't defined it to me.

Q Back in the old days to say that the President was going to be remaining in the Washington area for the weekend meant he was going to Camp David. Does it mean that in these days?

MR. TER HORST: No, it does not. I can't give you guidance on that. I can say for BACKGROUND purposes, not for attribution, I couldn't rule out Camp David, but I know of no such plans to go there. I think it will be commuting between here and the residence in Alexandria.

Q Can you tell us more about this new head of the Legal Counsel Office, how big his team will be and who he is?

MR. TER HORST: Mr. Buchen was just named today, and I am sure that he will have his own thoughts and his own plans on how he ought to develop that office.

Q Is he a former law partner?

MR. TER HORST: This has happened rather swiftly this morning and late this morning, so I don't have the usual biographical material to distribute to you, but I can give you a ready reference to him.

Mr. Buchen is a native of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and he attended the University of Michigan Law School during the same time President Ford was attending the Yale Law School. It so happened they met this way: President Ford took several summer sessions at the University of Michigan Law School one year, and he was a member of the DKE fraternity. That is Delta Kappa Epsilon, I am pretty sure. Philip Buchen was also a member of the same fraternity, and they roomed together that summer.

That was their first association, both as law students. Before the war, after President Ford's graduation from law school and Mr. Buchen's graduation from law school, they formed a law partnership in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

It only lasted six months because Mr. Ford was then called into service. Then after the war, they did not go back to that original law firm, but both joined one of the larger law firms in Grand Rapids, the same law firm.

Q Do you have a date when they roomed together?

MR. TER HORST: I am not sure I have a precise date in mind, but some time in the late 30's.

Q How does the President feel about the pending G.I. bill which would increase benefits by 23 percent?

MR. TER HORST: The President has that bill under serious study by members of the White House staff and no decision has been made on it by the White House to my knowledge at this point.

Q Jerry, do you happen to know when you say "serious study by the White House staff", exactly who that is? Specifically, would it be in the Domestic Council and OMB?

MR. TER HORST: It would be in the Domestic Council area and probably OMB, also.

Q Are you any closer to knowing when the President will name a Vice President?

MR. TER HORST: I have a feeling that it is probably not going to occur as rapidly as the President had hoped it would.

Q Do you think it will be this week?

MR. TER HORST: If it is not late this week, it will probably go over until early next week. (Laughter.)

Q Don't commit yourself. (Laughter.)

Q Who is he conferring with on the staff?

MR. TER HORST: I hope someone who speaks more clearly than I just did. (Laughter.)

Q Who is he conferring with?

MR. TER HORST: He is conferring with himself, to be frank with you. He is not ready to make the announcement. I don't even know if he has narrowed the list. It is something he is discussing with himself in his own way and he has told us when he has made the decision he will call us in and then he will decide which will be the proper format to accomplish the forwarding of the nomination to Congress.

Q Has he been through the recommendations that he requested?

MR. TER HORST: I am sure he has been through many of them already, yes.

Q Did he discuss this with former President Nixon on the telephone?

MR. TER HORST: No, that was purely a social call.

Q Yesterday you told us that the White House Counsel apparently in consultation with the Special Prosecutor and the Justice Department had made a decision on the tapes being the personal property of Mr. Nixon. Apparently the Special Prosecutor says they were called but not consulted.

You also said that we might get a guy from the White House Counsel's Office to brief us on that. I was just wondering about all three of those areas?

MR. TER HORST: It was impossible for me to obtain an attorney to come here and brief you on this yesterday, or even today for that matter. However, as you are probably aware, Mr. Buzhardt and Mr. St. Clair before he left, together reached an informal opinion, not written, but one based on precedent in law, that all of the tapes are the property of the former President.

I think I inadvertently clouded the role of the Watergate prosecutor. I think I used the words that this decision has been reached as a collective judgment. That implied affirmative participation by the Watergate prosecutor and that is in error.

What actually occurred is that the Buzhardt-St. Clair opinion was presented to the Prosecutor's Office to see whether they concurred or objected and they had no objections. I think that takes care of all three, Charley.

Q Will it be possible to get somebody to brief at some future date, if not now?

MR. TER HORST: I doubt it, particularly since Mr. Buchen is aboard as a new man, President Ford's man. He is just trying to get the office together.

Mr. Buzhardt will be leaving shortly, after a transition period has occurred, and maybe at some time in the future Mr. Buchen would address himself to all of this but I wouldn't try to speak for him and I don't know.

Q Will Mr. Buchen review the decision now in light of Mr. Buzhardt's and St. Clair's intimate involvement in the tapes?

MR. TER HORST: I can't tell you. I will have to leave it up to Mr. Buchen to run the legal office.

Q Does the President approve this decision by the two lawyers and is this a final decision?

MR. TER HORST: The President did not participate in the decision-making process.

Q Is there a chance he would reverse this?

MR. TER HORST: I can't give you any firm yes or no on that but I would strongly doubt it.

Q Jerry, didn't you say yesterday that he concurred?

MR. TER HORST: I think I said yesterday he concurred in the decision. He did not participate, but he concurred.

Q He approves, in other words?

MR. TER HORST: If you want to define it that way, I will stand by that.

Q Can you give us the circumstances of Buzhardt's resignation? It sounds like it was rather hasty today.

MR. TER HORST: It wasn't hasty. Mr. Buzhardt, as you know, has not been in the best of health for some time. He has indicated previously that he hoped to leave the assignment he had here but he had agreed to stay on during the Nixon Administration and serve as continuity for the legal office during the transition from the Nixon Administration to the Ford Administration, but the President felt this morning that it was important that his own appointee and his own counsel -- a man in whom he has great faith and trust -- immediately take over the affairs of the legal office.

Q Was there any event that caused him to think that this morning?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware of that.

Q There seems to be quite a stir created by this decision to turn the tapes back to Mr. Nixon, and I wondered if you know whether the White House got telephone calls or telegrams on this as a great many people in the press did? Do you know?

MR. TER HORST: I just have no knowledge of that, Pete. I really do not.

Q Jerry, will the 145 tapes subpoenaed by the House Judiciary Committee be turned over?

MR. TER HORST: Well, the ruling by Mr. St. Clair and Mr. Buzhardt is that all of the tapes are the property of the President, including those now in the custody of the court and the Special Prosecutor's Office, and when they have finished with them those, too, would revert to the possession of the former President.

Q In this informal opinion, the precedent seems clear, but what laws provide for the United States Government to turn over the property it has paid for and produced, to a private citizen?

MR. TER HORST: Apparently, I am told -- and you can check it out with the legal profession -- but I am told that there is no law touching on this subject, but the precedent goes all the way back, I believe, almost to George Washington's time.

Q Jerry, I have a question that relates to this, and it also bears on press policy as it develops, which a lot of us are very interested in, of course. Yesterday, when we asked about the possibility of a briefing with the lawyers, you said you would try, and someone asked if you would urge them to appear, and you said, "I certainly will. I will tell them there are a lot of questions I cannot answer."

I am curious to know what happened in the meantime. Did someone tell you this whole thing should just be dropped, or what happened?

MR. TER HORST: I kept my pledge to you. I told the legal office that we would very much like to have somebody out here and brief you fully on that if they cared to do that because there was a great interest in this room in that happening. And they made their own decision that they preferred not to do it.

Q Who made the decision?

MR. TER HORST: I can't tell you that.

Q Did the President get involved in that?

MR. TER HORST: The President was not involved in this in any shape, manner or form.

Q Did that matter of the tape have anything to do with the immediate acceptance of Buzhardt's resignation today?

MR. TER HORST: I can't address myself to that, I really can't, because the President this morning said that he wanted to name Mr. Buchen as his legal counsel, and that has been done.

Q Jerry, is there a letter from the President to Fred Buzhardt that we can have accepting his resignation?

MR. TER HORST: He has not resigned today. He will resign. He is going to stay aboard for the necessary transition period, as I have explained here, at Mr. Buchen's request, but Fred has indicated that he wishes to leave, and when he actually does leave, we will announce it and provide you all the information we can.

Q What are you thinking about, two or three weeks?

MR. TER HORST: I really don't know. They will probably work that out between them.

Q Will he go back to the Defense Department?

MR. TER HORST: I don't know that, either. This will be something Mr. Buzhardt will have to decide himself.

Q Where is Mr. Buchen now, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: Mr. Buchen is here, and he is in the Legal Office.

Q Is there cause and effect between your urging and Buzhardt leaving -- your urging them to brief us, and Fred Buzhardt's resignation?

MR. TER HORST: I can't give you any guidance on that. I am having a difficult enough time trying to gain control of my own assignments in the Press Office without trying to worry about what is happening in other departments.

Q Do you know of a connection?

MR. TER HORST: I know of no connection.

Q Speaking of your assignment, is Jack Hushen coming over?

MR. TER HORST: I think tomorrow we will have some announcements regarding the Press Office and its staffing that may be of interest to you, and I would like to wait until then.

Q You told us, I believe, in connection with the briefing on the tapes question yesterday that the Justice Department also had a role in these deliberations. You didn't mention them today. Did they in fact have a role or did they not?

MR. TER HORST: They did not have an active role.

Q Were they advised of the decision and asked if they wanted to dissent or how did it work or don't you know?

MR. TER HORST: Neither Mr. Buzhardt nor Mr. St. Clair, Marty, gave me any guidance as to whom they talked to in the process of reaching their decision.

Q Have any of the tapes now been moved into the custody of Mr. Nixon?

MR. TER HORST: No, the tapes, as I have said before, and as they have been, are in the protective custody of the Secret Service.

Q Could you raise this matter with the President about getting Buzhardt out here for the briefing inasmuch as he is still on the staff?

MR. TER HORST: No, I did not.

Q No, I mean, would you, please?

MR. TER HORST: I don't think that is necessary. The President has just named himself a new counsel. I think that now all those matters I am going to leave to Mr. Buchen and he can speak with the full authority of the President when he feels it is time to speak.

Q On this matter, do the White House lawyers not want to talk about the tapes because they really don't have the time or because they just wish it would go away and they don't want to discuss it publicly?

MR. TER HORST: They didn't give me reasons for their decision.

Q Jerry, you are leaving very open the tying in of Buzhardt's departure with the tapes, following in the aftermath of the ruling.

MR. TER HORST: I can't draw conclusions for you.

Q But it is an open question.

MR. TER HORST: I can't help you on that, Helen.

Q I am just asking you to tell me what happened. Is there a tie-in?

MR. TER HORST: I can't help you on making that kind of a judgment. It is not my role. All I know is that the President said he wanted today for me to announce to you that he has asked Philip Buchen to be his legal counsel, and that I have done, and from now on that matter is going to be in Mr. Buchen's hands.

Q In a situation where you go to someone on the White House staff and say, as Press Secretary, that you think a certain briefing should be held and the person that you are telling that to says he doesn't think it should be, does he then have the final say, or is there someone who would arbitrate this? To what extent do you set press policy?

MR. TER HORST: I set press policy, but I don't set legal policy. And I can only make recommendations to the people who are in the various offices on things I think they should do. And if they disagree then in their area in which they are supposedly expert, that has to be their decision.

Q Was it explained to you by them that the act of having such a briefing would constitute a setting of legal policy?

MR. TER HORST: I didn't get into the question of legal policy, no, and they didn't give me their answers, but their answer was not responding to my request, and that was the situation.

Q Could you speak to Mr. Buchen about this situation?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, I have talked to Mr. Buchen, and he has assured me that he is going to devote full-time to the President's White House legal problems from here on in, and he is in the office now.

Q I am talking about the tape situation. Will Mr. Buchen ask Mr. Buzhardt, since it is a legal problem, to come out and explain the decision?

MR. TER HORST: Mr. Buchen is now in charge of all those matters, as well as the ongoing legal work of the White House, and I will have to leave it up to him. He is just aboard.

Q Will you go to Mr. Buchen and ask him to ask Mr. Buzhardt to come out and explain?

MR. TER HORST: Why don't I do this: Why don't I relay to Mr. Buchen your interest in having some kind of briefing on this subject and see what response I can bring back to you.

Q Jerry, are you saying that Watergate is no longer a part of the White House legal problem at all?

MR. TER HORST: Watergate has never been a problem with the Ford Administration. We ended that when the Ford Administration came into office, and the President, as I have said before, strongly feels that it is time to move forward from where we have been and see if we can accomplish the things that the country needs doing, and that he wants to do for the country.

Q During this period you make it sound as though Mr. Buzhardt is almost a free agent.

MR. TER HORST: Mr. Buzhardt is staying aboard to help Mr. Buchen during this transition period from one legal counsel to another, and I am sure Mr. Buzhardt's future will be something that they will talk about between them. I can't really say much more than that, in any event.

Q Jerry, perhaps I am confused. Maybe you have answered this question, but with the coming of Mr. Buchen, is there now going to be a review of the policy on these tapes?

MR. TER HORST: I would think that is something Mr. Buchen is going to have to decide in his own way. I just can't tell you that. The appointment has just been made.

He probably hasn't spent more than 15 minutes to an hour in the Legal Office, so it would be very unfair for me to try to commit him to something that he has just taken on.

Q Could we have Mr. Buchen come out here and answer for himself?

MR. TER HORST: I said I would convey my request that there was urgent desire that there be a briefing on this matter and I will so do that.

Q This unwritten opinion by Mr. St. Clair and Mr. Buzhardt which you call a ruling, as if it were engraved in bronze --

MR. TER HORST: That is my word, not theirs. I may have used that inadvertently. Let's call it an opinion. I would prefer to call it an informal opinion.

Q The fact is that the tapes are now in the custody of agents of the President, the Secret Service, and if there are additional tapes subpoenaed by the prosecutor -- you may want Watergate to go away, but won't it be President Ford's decision as to what to do with those, based, I presume, on Mr. Buchen's advice?

MR. TER HORST: I presume in that event that Mr. Buchen and the Special Prosecutor's Office would work that out.

Q Jerry, there must be a way, I would expect any time the White House, the President turns over any information or any material to a private citizen or any other agent to catalogue that information so that he will know what he is turning over. In this case will there be any effort to ascertain the completeness of the tapes before they are turned over to President Nixon? Otherwise there will be no way of knowing just what happened while they were in Mr. Ford's custody.

MR. TER HORST: Marty, I think we should save these questions in the hope that I can produce someone here who can brief you responsively on it because obviously I can not. I am a press secretary, not a lawyer, and I have not been involved in the current or previous discussions on this whole subject and it would be not to your advantage for me to try to do it.

Q Is there a timetable for removing the Nixon documents from Government property?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware that there is, but I hate to be bound by it because I am not familiar with all the details of the Transition Act which covers the transition from one Administration to another.

Q Jerry, the county officials said today that the President would veto the mass transit bill if it comes in at \$20 billion and he proposed a compromise between the \$10 billion

that the Administration proposes and that \$20 billion.

Does he have a figure in mind where he wouldn't veto the bill?

MR. TER HORST: The President, on that particular bill, on the urban mass transit bill, yesterday instructed Bill Timmons to lend Administration support to the Harsha amendments. Congressman Harsha is the ranking Republican on the committee, and it is my understanding that the Harsha amendments would have the effect of reducing the price tag on the bill from, I think, \$20 billion to \$11 billion.

Q Jerry, will the economic advisors have a briefing after their meeting with the President at 2:00?

MR. TER HORST: I will have to check and see.

Q Can you say whether the President will announce a new V. A. Director in his Monday speech?

MR. TER HORST: That is quite possible. I would anticipate he certainly would talk to the veterans on matters of their concern and I wouldn't rule that out.

Q A follow-up question: Is the fact that the G.I. benefits bill is under serious study related to the same reason he has vetoed or indicated vetoes on the others, that it would be high spending and therefore --

MR. TER HORST: As all matters like this come before the President, the President obviously is trying seriously to obtain a balanced budget and he has said himself many times he is in favor of reductions wherever possible in Federal spending.

On the other hand, he is also very much aware of the concerns and needs of veterans which he feels are critical, and must be solved, and therefore he is hoping to find some way in which he and the Congress can work together to see if they can accomplish both objectives.

Q Excuse me, you said "trying to obtain a balanced budget." These are all fiscal '75 appropriations. You mean he is trying to obtain a balanced budget in fiscal '75?

MR. TER HORST: Often, as you know, Ted, once things start in one year they tend to continue on in the following year and there is always an accumulative effect of any bill with money tied to it, so the serious review is going on in the hope that both the objectives of the bill and the President's desire to keep some firm rein on the budget process can be met.

Q What is the President doing on Cyprus besides this warning?

MR. TER HORST: He has conferred with Dr. Kissinger. Dr. Kissinger has been very active both personally and as Secretary of State in attempting to bring the two parties back together again under a cease fire arrangement that will stick and of course under the operative United Nations resolution.

Q On the Vice President thing, to get back to that for a minute, has the President ordered any background checks yet on any of the possibilities?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware that has been done.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Press Secretary.

END (AT 1:40 P.M. EDT)