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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JERRY TER HORST

AT 12:12 P.M. EDT

AUGUST 23, 1974

FRIDAY

MR. TER HORST: We have posted today's schedule. This morning at about eight o'clock the President went out in the Rose Garden to greet a group of Michigan and Colorado 4-H'rs who are in Washington for a leadership conference and tour of the White House. I think those who were here at that hour were probably outside at that time.

The President met with Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield for a general discussion of legislative matters. The President plans to meet regularly with the Congressional leaders, both in groups and individually, to discuss prospects for the remainder of the Ninety-Third Congress.

The President met this morning with Al Haig, Secretary Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, myself, and will be meeting shortly with Bill Baroody.

You have a pool report on the beginning of the President's meeting with the Syrian Foreign Minister and we have posted the left to right, I believe, on the seating of the participants. That meeting lasted for about 60 minutes. The President wanted to meet with Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam to review the status of the Middle East negotiations, and the further improvement of relations between our two countries.

Secretary Kissinger attended the meeting plus the others who are noted on the photo session list. The President views the visit by Foreign Minister Khaddam as underlining the importance we attach to the Syrian role in the peacemaking process of the Middle East.

The President expressed his personal admiration for Syrian President Assad's statesmanship in accomplishing a disengagement of Syrian and Israeli forces earlier this summer as a step toward a durable and just peace, and in the meeting, President Ford stressed again that the United States remains irreversibly committed to maintaining the momentum essential for achieving a lasting Middle East peace settlement.

The President also took the opportunity to assure Minister Khaddam of his determination to continue the deepening and strengthening of Syrian-American bilateral relations and he expressed pleasure at the progress that has been made since the restoration of diplomatic ties on June 16.

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The President and the Foreign Minister discussed also ways to maintain this progress including steps in the economic field. You had a pool report on that, obviously.

At 12:30, in about 15 minutes from now, the President will greet the farm family of the year. That is on the schedule. The Fourth Annual Farmers' Home Administration National Farm Family of the Year is the Julian V. Fowler family of Fairbanks, Alaska. The Fowlers have one of the most successful dairy farms in Alaska. The President will greet them out in the Rose Garden. There will be open coverage in the Rose Garden at 12:30 so we won't have to pool that, and if we can get through the briefing -- I don't have a lot to give you today, so we will probably be able to make it.

We will post the list of people who are in attendance afterwards.

This afternoon at two o'clock the President will meet with representatives of senior citizen organizations. There will be 19 representatives of those organizations and we will post a list along with Under Secretary of HEW Frank Carlucci, Commissioner on Aging Arthur Flemming, and Jim Cavanaugh of the Domestic Council.

The President will use this opportunity to listen to the representatives describe the problems of older Americans and hear their proposals for a solution.

Following that meeting at about 2:55 P.M., the President will go to the Naval Dispensary at 23rd and C for an eye examination. This is routine and his first eye examination since becoming President. This is part of the physical examination process that Dr. Lukash commenced yesterday. We will take a travel pool along but there will be no coverage of course inside the dispensary.

At 4:00 this afternoon the President will meet with Counsellor Anne Armstrong. There is no set agenda for that meeting. As you know, the President likes to get together with his Counsellors on a one-to-one basis and receive their views on a variety of subjects, and we probably will not have a report on that meeting.

This evening at six o'clock, the President and Mrs. Ford will host a reception in honor of the staff which served him as Vice President. You may recall a similar reception was held for members of the Secret Service Vice Presidential detail. We don't plan any coverage of the reception. It will be on the first floor of the Residence.

Tomorrow the President will spend at least the morning in his office. I don't have a schedule yet but we will post it as soon as we get it, and hopefully that will be this afternoon or at the latest, first thing in the morning. We don't plan to brief tomorrow but if there is any information, we will probably post that around noon.

I can give you this word also on Sunday's schedule. The President plans to go to church at the Immanuel Church in Alexandria again and we will have a travel pool as we have had on the two previous Sundays for that.

I have a couple of announcements. The President is bringing aboard on the White House staff Paul A. Theis who has been with the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee for the past 17 years. Mr. Theis will become Executive Editor and administrator of the office which prepares the speeches and the public statements for the President. He will be reporting to the President through Bob Hartmann, the Counsellor who, as you know, has been for many years one of President Ford's chief speech writers.

We will post some biographical information on Paul Theis after the briefing.

I have an announcement that Mrs. Ford asked me to make for the East Wing of the White House. She has asked Lucy Winchester and Helen Smith to stay on in their capacities as Social Secretary and Press Secretary. I think we have had some inquiries on that. At least I know they have on their side and she asked me to clear this up for you.

I think that takes care of the announcements. So let me try your questions.

Q Jerry, I see on the wire service the economic summit is now planned for late September. Does that mean the President will not have any major decisions on changing any economic policy until that summit meeting is over?

MR. TER HORST: Tom, as I said in the past, the goal of the President is to use this process of economic summity to arrive at a package solution tackling all the problem areas of the economy. At the same time he is remaining flexible enough so that if parts of the economic structure require immediate attention, he can move on them independently. So it is both a yes and a no answer to that degree.

Q Jerry, when will the protocol signed in Moscow at the last summit meeting be submitted to the Congress and the public?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware of which protocol you are talking about.

Q There was a protocol on the construction, replacement, dismantling and notification with respect to strategic offensive arms and the same type of protocol on defensive arms.

MR. TER HORST: I think the State Department would probably be best able to handle your question on that at this point. I have no information I can give you on that schedule.

Q Can you enlighten us on the problems of Mr. Ehrlichman and Haldeman in getting access to their files, how that is being handled?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, I can give you this guidance. I asked Mr. Buchen about that this morning. As you know, he has been deliberating with the attorneys for Mr. Ehrlichman on this matter and he informs me this morning the White House is in the process of reinstating the previous policy on access to the documents which was in effect under former President Nixon. I am told this access has been agreed to by the former President and it will probably become effective starting this afternoon.

Q As I understand that previous policy it was that Ehrlichman could come in and possibly take notes but not copy anything, not have any Xerox copies. Does that mean you won't allow Ehrlichman to take any copies?

MR. TER HORST: As I said, this is a reinstatement of the previous policy and it is my understanding that that was the previous policy.

Q And it has Nixon's okay on it? Who checked with the former President?

MR. TER HORST: I don't know who personally checked with him, but the Ford Administration's decision on this was handled by Mr. Buchen.

Q Does this apply to all the witnesses involved?

MR. TER HORST: This applies to the reinstatement of the previous policy so I would presume the policy would apply to all.

Q Jerry, do any of these people have appointments to come in this afternoon? You said the policy would be reinstated this afternoon.

MR. TER HORST: We don't know for sure if anyone is coming in. There is that possibility of course.

Q Possibility of which one in particular?

MR. TER HORST: I can't tell you. You would have to check with them.

Q Could you detail the policy? I am not quite clear how this thing worked.

MR. TER HORST: It is my understanding that the previous policy permitted former Members of the White House staff to look at the papers they wished to see, but they were not permitted to remove them or copy them, although they could make extensive notes from them. That is my understanding of the past policy.

Q I thought in fact they couldn't take notes, that they had to more or less memorize what excerpts they wished and then carry them outside to their attorneys who made notes. Isn't that right?

MR. TER HORST: That strikes me as a note-taking process. If there is a degree of confusion there, why don't we see if we can clear that up precisely.

Q I wish you would.

Q The lawyers have not been allowed in?

MR. TER HORST: No, the lawyers, I understand, have not been allowed in to look at the papers. If it is a defendant, only the defendant.

Q Did I understand you to say Buchen cleared this with Nixon?

MR. TER HORST: No, I said the policy had been cleared and approved by the former President. As to whether Mr. Buchen personally talked to the former President, I can't tell you.

Q Does that mean the former President controls these papers while they are in the White House?

MR. TER HORST: As you know, the papers are here under custody at the request of the Special Prosecutor's Office.

Q Jerry, Judge Gesell did determine the policy of not allowing the lawyers to go into the files with the defendant not true access to those files. Would you agree with that?

MR. TER HORST: I would be in no position to judge that, not being an attorney. I would think that is a matter that the legal counsel would have to address.

Q Jerry, can I ask you two things about the staff? Is Paul Theis replacing anybody?

MR. TER HORST: Paul Theis will be the senior man on the preparation of speeches and public statements other than legal papers for the President.

Q Who had that job before?

MR. TER HORST: I believe it was Dave Gergen. Dave Gergen is still there and, as you know, everybody who wishes to remain has been asked to stay aboard, but the responsibility for President Ford's speech preparation and public statements and proclamations and so on will now flow through Mr. Theis to the President through Bob Hartmann's office.

Q My second question on that is, has the President decided to put into effect the transition team's recommendations as outlined by Rogers Morton?

MR. TER HORST: Secretary Morton obviously was a member of the transition team and those recommendations have been put to the President but the President has made no decision on them yet. He has them all before him and he has taken no action on it and when he does, he will tell us and I will tell you.

Q Jerry, why have all of the members of the previous Administration been asked to stay on? I understand there is a whole group of people over there, speech writers and others, who now really have nothing to do because they are not being assigned to write speeches for the new President. Why are they allowed to stay on?

MR. TER HORST: The President, when he came aboard as President of the United States, asked the members of the present White House staff who were still here to help him provide continuity and stability to the Government during this transition period. It may well be that members of the Nixon staff will not stay on for the full duration of this current term, the remainder of President Ford's current term, but at the same time there is work that needs to be accomplished and things that need to be done, so he has asked them to stay on, and up to now they have.

Q Does that include Buchanan and Price? Are they still on?

MR. TER HORST: Mr. Price, as you know, has been out in California with the former President. Pat Buchanan is still here but as I understand it, he is preparing to leave.

Q Jerry, can you tell us anything about the President considering removing the price controls on crude oil? I am referring to the current story in the Post.

MR. TER HORST: I saw that story and the wire reports based on it. As you know it is a very complicated subject, the process of decontrolling prices on domestically-produced crude oil which I believe is the story you are referring to, Pat.

The Federal Energy Administration and the Deputies' Working Group of the Committee on Energy, which is chaired by Jerry Parsky, have been studying price control and allocation problems and they are attempting to develop possible alternatives dealing with it. No recommendations have been submitted yet to the Committee on Energy, and of course, obviously if no recommendations have gone to the committee, they certainly haven't gone to the President.

Q Jerry, two things. First, there was a story on the wire that certain citizens of Mackinac Island are toying with the idea of presenting the White House the proposition of creating a Michigan White House there. The first question is, is that possibility being given any consideration at all?

MR. TER HORST: The President was made aware of that proposal by Governor Milliken, and as you say, many citizens in his home State, and he is very appreciative of their offer of hospitality, but when I talked with the President this morning he said he had no plans to undertake any kind of summer vacation, so-called this year, and that it was in my mind a little early to think about what he might do next summer in 1975. So in effect what I am saying is no decision at all has been made on this, Jerry.

Q Can I follow that up? There was a suggestion also in print today that one of the possible results of the economic summit conference would be putting in place of some form of standby controls. Do you have any comment on that?

MR. TER HORST: Well, as you know, the President authorized me to issue in his name, I believe two days ago, a statement saying he was unalterably opposed to wage and price controls and that he did not feel that either labor or management wanted them either, and realistically looking at the Congressional schedule for the next months, the Leaders of Congress at that bipartisan meeting also agreed it was unrealistic to expect Congress to pass any kind of wage price controls.

Q Jerry, did the President and Mr. Khaddam discuss a \$100 million foreign assistance package to Syria, the maintenance of troops on the Golan Heights, and/or the Israeli mobilization?

MR. TER HORST: Do you want to break it down?

Q One, there has been a suggestion that up to \$100 million in foreign assistance be given to the Syrians; two, the U.N. peacekeeping force in the Golan Heights has a mandate which expires in October. Are they considering extending that and --

MR. TER HORST: Let me take the foreign aid one first, if I may.

Q Okay.

MR. TER HORST: Up to now the United States has made no specific commitments to Syria on foreign aid but the Government of the United States and President Ford are prepared to be as helpful as possible. As you know, the aid program now before Congress contains \$100 million in special requirements funds, part of which could be used for Syria if and when Congress approved the program and the projects were agreed to with Syria.

What was your other question?

Q Second, the U.N. peacekeeping force currently separating the Syrian and Israeli forces on the Golan Heights has a mandate which expires in October. Did the President discuss with Mr. Khaddam extending that mandate?

MR. TER HORST: As you know, we are in the process now of a new round of negotiations with all the parties about the next steps in the peacemaking process. Syria made initially a key role in that first process. At this point many ideas and subjects dealing with it are being discussed but I think at this point in the negotiating process it is just premature to predict the outcome or speak of decisions or agreements.

Q The last part of that question was on the Israeli mobilization. The Israelis are in the process of mobilizing their armed forces. Did they discuss that?

MR. TER HORST: The President is very much aware of the remaining tensions that exist in the Middle East along the borders of Israel and her Arab neighbors, and through Secretary of State Kissinger and through his own good offices and through the offices of the State Department, we are very anxious and desirous of making certain that there is no further outbreak of hostilities and that all parties continue to abide by the initial agreements which brought about cease fire.

Q Jerry, do you know when and where the President will sign the pension bill?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, I think the pension bill now is set for signing on Labor Day and I believe it will be here in the White House. That is a tentative guide, but I think that is the way it is probably going to be.

Q Jerry, I am a little intrigued that the President should select as his top speech writer a man who has been involved totally in public and politics for 17 years. Does that mean every statement coming out of the White House is going to have a political note?

MR. TER HORST: No, it doesn't mean that at all because Mr. Theis' job is not going to be to write the speeches but to administer the office which is the kind of function he performed for many years on Capitol Hill and did very well and of course, as you know, he has been an associate of the President.

The President knows him and respects his work and it was just felt that the volume of Presidential speeches, public statements and proclamations, required Mr. Theis' deft hand and that is the reason for the decision.

Q Also, does the President wear glasses?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, he does wear glasses at times. I am not trying to give you a medical decision on when he uses them, but it seems to me he uses them when he looks out at greater distances. I can't tell you whether that is near-sightedness or farsightedness. I need them for reading and he doesn't.

Q Who are the speech writers now?

MR. TER HORST: I don't know if I can think of them all. There are about five or six in the shop at the present time, some of those who were here before plus those who have come from the Vice Presidential staff.

Q Jerry, can we assume that Mr. Buchen consulted with the President in making this decision as to access to Ehrlichman's papers?

MR. TER HORST: I am certain that Mr. Buchen discussed this with the President before the decision.

Q Jerry, knowing that it is pretty unrealistic to deal with some major things this year, has the President given up on health care for this year?

MR. TER HORST: No, he has not. He is still desirous and hopeful that somehow the Ways and Means Committee and the Congress can work out a schedule that will permit him to sign an agreeable health bill and he has so communicated to Chairman Mills.

Q Is he giving any consideration to calling a post-election or even a pre-election special session?

MR. TER HORST: No. I have seen speculation that the President might favor a so-called lame duck session of Congress and the President is sending the Leaders of the Congress a letter -- it probably will come after the recess -- in which he will stress his hope that Congress can complete its necessary work before its normally-scheduled adjournment time this year and I think at that time the President also may suggest some of the matters he would like Congress to give highest priority to, but I don't have that list now.

The President will do that later.

Q Health insurance would be one of those priorities?

MR. TER HORST: I am certain health insurance would be one of them.

Q Is the President giving any thought to the appointment of Elliot Richardson in his new Government?

MR. TER HORST: Mary, I have not heard that. But it is possible. I know he respects Mr. Richardson as an eminent Republican and would like nothing better than to get the support of as many Republicans of Mr. Richardson's caliber as he can find.

Q He will have his support, but will he give him a job? (Laughter.)

Q When you mentioned Mansfield, you said the President wants to have regular consultation. Were you speaking of both the Democrats and Republicans?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, both the Democrats and Republicans.

Q On a regular basis?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, on a regular and informal basis; nothing terribly structured, but every now and then the President feels it would be useful for him to talk to Senator Mansfield and House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill and their respective whips as well, of course, and his on-going contacts with the Republican Minority Leadership.

Q Jerry, as you know, the last White House staff list that was made available to us was dated November 1972. I wonder if from time to time we could get an updated list of White House staff members, including those who are brought in temporarily from other departments to work on the White House staff so we know who we are talking about here?

MR. TER HORST: John, if I can go on BACKGROUND, for a moment, I would love to see such a list myself. (Laughter)

Q Well, they are here. I can't understand why they can't be counted and put on a list.

MR. TER HORST: The problem is -- it is not a problem, really, it is an administrative headache -- is that a list that is published and distributed should be as accurate as possible, and what I would like to avoid is have names appear on the list and then have the names not be on the list, say a week afterward, or have other people join the White House the same day the list comes out and it is inaccurate from that standpoint.

I am hoping we can get -- all of us, for my sake and yours -- get this done soon and I have thrown some weight behind it, what little I have, to see if we can work on that. Right now I can't give you a good target date.

Q How many hours a day is the President working and is he getting at all tired?

MR. TER HORST: No, he seems very active. I wish I had his stamina. He is working very long hours. He takes work home in the evenings and he is at his desk very early in the morning. He is still adjusting, of course, to the idea that he no longer has to commute to the job, but he is a very organized individual and seems to manage to fill every hour of the day with some kind of work.

He tends, of course, in the evenings to also like to relax a little with the family and friends, and I am sure that will continue, too.

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Q Jerry, I would like to ask the Mary McGrory question on Charlie Goodell. Do you have any thoughts about him?

MR. TER HORST: I think I would have to say the same things on Mr. Goodell. I have not heard of any appointments being offered to the former Senator from New York.

Q With the economic summit coming in late September or early October, given the fact that the President has a number of wishes in terms of legislation he wants this Congress to get through before they adjourn, should he come up with a package of economic moves that would include necessary legislation, does that increase the possibility of a rump session or would he simply add that to the agenda that he would hope to pass prior to regular adjournment?

MR. TER HORST: Well, he could do it either way, but I think based on the President's negative attitude toward a lame duck or rump session of Congress that he would prefer not to go that route, and of course, some of these legislative matters, if they are at all complicated, probably couldn't be addressed until January. However, the President would have a great deal of administrative discretion, I think, under the existing law.

As you know, the Cost of Living Council legislation has now been passed by both Houses so that there are things he can do. I don't think the emergence of the program will have to wait, in many instances, Congressional action. But it is still a cooperative program and he hopes to make it part of the Congressional package.

Q Any tax increase, if I understand it correctly, requires Congressional action and I am wondering if you can give us any reading on the sense of urgency with which the President is approaching this whole question of economic moves with regard to inflation, and would he be satisfied to allow this thing to go over where legislation is needed?

MR. TER HORST: Not if it is possible to achieve it this year, I am certain of that. And since Congress is, in the President's mind, a cooperative partner in this program, I am certain that the Congressional Leadership will be able to help him achieve what he needs to do in that field.

I have to be vague because we don't really know what are going to be the elements of the program that would require Congressional legislation.

Q Do you know what his priorities are in the sense of what he would like to see before the final adjournment?

MR. TER HORST: I don't yet. I know the President will send such a letter to the Leaders of Congress.

Q When?

MR. TER HORST: Probably upon the return from the recess.

Q Given the Dow Jones industrial slip below 700 for the first time in four years, how does the President feel with the continuing very, very shaky situation on Wall Street?

MR. TER HORST: All of these indicators, the market, the Consumer Price Index, no matter where you look, one sees and so does the President, evidence that the economy really needs attention and that is the attention he is trying to give it.

At the same time, he also has a responsibility not to act in a cowboy fashion. It should be done orderly and in a way that is effective and certainly not cosmetic.

So, therefore, the President, while he knows the problems are out there and very grievous and need solution now, he wants to try to put into effect a package of proposals which will hopefully stem the inflationary trend and help the market and ease the high interest rates and generally return the United States to a period of economic stability.

Q Jerry, early this week you said it was the wish of the White House that the State Department comment on the possible cut off in aid to Turkey. They have not commented yet. We also asked for a comment on the Freedom of Information Act amendment and you referred us to Justice. They won't comment. I wonder if consistent with the open and candid Administration we could get some answers?

MR. TER HORST: On the matter of American aid to Turkey and to Greece, both of whom are our allies under NATO, with the United States, this is a very complicated legal matter and I understand that the legal office of the State Department is studying this matter, and when they have something to report, I am sure the State Department will so say.

Q And Justice, the Freedom of Information Act amendment, the President -- they won't say what he agrees with and doesn't agree with.

MR. TER HORST: That is also a very complicated process. The Freedom of Information Act, as the Administration witnesses have testified, has attached to it some amendments which in the minds of the Justice Department may not necessarily square with the rights of privacy and some other Constitutional guarantees, and since President Ford came into office at a point when that bill was practically ready to move out of Congress and to the

White House for action, he requested, and the Congressional Leaders agreed to give him a period of time in which to see if the bill could be strengthened or improved in a fashion that would make it possible for him to sign.

He has sent letters to this effect to Senator Kennedy and Congressman Moorhead of the Senate and House respectively, who are the leaders of the conferees, outlining his position, and if you wish, we can make those letters from the President available to you for your guidance. I think they are probably self-explanatory.

Q Yes, please.

Q Would you tell us how many women were actually considered for the Vice Presidential post and could you tell us who they were?

MR. TER HORST: I cannot answer either one because the selection of his nominee was something the President kept very much to himself, and I and other members of his staff learned of his choice after he made it. So I cannot enlighten you on that.

Q Jerry, could you explain or elaborate a little bit about what you meant about cowboy fashion in talking about the economy?

MR. TER HORST: Well, I was thinking of cowboy fashion as someone who runs down the middle of the street and shoots at both sides without really specifying a target and not knowing when he goes past whether he has accomplished what he set out to do.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Press Secretary.

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(AT 12:47 P.M. EDT)