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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JERRY TER HORST

AT 4:51 P.M. EDT

AUGUST 30, 1974

FRIDAY

MR. TER HORST: As you know, you have the President's speech in Ohio, and the pool reports you have or have been posted.

After his return to the White House, the President met with Dr. Dixie Lee Ray for about 30 minutes or so to discuss matters of concern to her, essentially on Atomic Energy Commission involvement in domestic energy production and efforts that Dr. Ray believed are required to strengthen International Atomic Energy Agency machinery.

This was her first meeting with the President, by the way.

Following that, the President met with officers of the American Medical Association for about 40 minutes, 30 to 40 minutes. They wanted to discuss with the President health insurance legislation alternatives, and also the President wanted to receive their report on their recent trip to the People's Republic of China.

The participants -- did we post the members?

Q Yes.

MR. TER HORST: Okay; then shortly after four o'clock, actually about 4:20, the President met with the national student leaders of the major youth organizations in America. Counsellor Armstrong is in with this group and the President. They are meeting in the Cabinet Room and we hope to bring at least one or a couple of the youth leaders out to talk to you after this briefing is over.

This national student leadership group represents 21 major student organizations whose membership is in excess of 30 million young people, or approximately 14 percent of the country's population.

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The groups present represent labor, business, industrial, agricultural, cultural, educational, minority and religious student leaders. And many of these organizations are national with chapters in nearly all 50 States.

Before he became President, the President had met with the national officers of the Future Farmers of America and some others, but this is the first time they have been able to meet with the President at one time.

And after this meeting, the President is meeting briefly with Harold Eberle, Jr., the Director for the Congressional Relations for the Office of Management and Budget, whom you know is retiring, and this is an opportunity for the President to thank him for his service and to say good-bye.

Q Jerry, excuse me. In this little notice to the press, it says the first that the leaders of all these youth organizations have met with the President of the United States at one time. Is that Mr. Ford only, or does that apply to any President?

MR. TER HORST: I can't tell you that. I know it is the first time they met with President Ford, but I am not sure if they met previously with former President Nixon or President Johnson. I am not positive of that. We can try to check that, if we can, or perhaps you can ask them when they are out.

Q Are you finished?

MR. TER HORST: No, not quite. If I can, I would like to go through the schedule for tomorrow a little bit. Tomorrow morning at 8:30 the President will meet in the Oval Office with Secretary of Defense Schlesinger and the Attorney General, William Saxbe, to receive their recommendations on how he can carry out his proposal to provide means for reentry into American society by draft dodgers and military war deserters.

We will have a photo opportunity at the meeting itself -- I am sorry, picture session -- but I don't expect that we will be able to bring anybody out to brief afterwards, but I do hope to be able -- or somebody here will be able -- to give you at least a description of the meeting itself.

These are recommendations to the President. They won't be made public until the President decides which recommendations he elects to employ and, in anticipating a question on that, I can say that the President expects to act in a relatively brief period.

Q What is "relatively brief"? I was going to ask that question.

MR. TER HORST: Well, I can't give it to you in the number of days, but it will be relatively soon. He is not going to wait a long time before he makes up his mind on which recommendations he chooses to accept.

Q You would not expect it before Tuesday, would you?

MR. TER HORST: I would not expect it before Tuesday, certainly, and it might be several days after that.

Then tomorrow afternoon the President hopes to get in a round of golf and following that he expects to leave from the White House for Camp David about 5:30. This is the start of the President's first trip to Camp David.

He tells me he had been at Camp David once or twice as Minority Leader in the House, but only on brief occasions, and that he had never spent the night there before. He was not there as Vice President.

Going with the President will be Mrs. Ford and Steven and Susan. They will be there through the week-end.

No staff are going up. It is a private week-end except on Monday, Labor Day, the President will return to the White House by helicopter for the pension bill signing ceremony here. That will be at 11:30.

And then after the signing ceremony, the President will return to Camp David by helicopter and spend the rest of the day there, have dinner with the family, and then he expects to return to the White House with the family along about eight or nine o'clock Monday evening.

Just a look ahead at Tuesday -- I don't have any schedule to post at this time, but the President does expect to meet with his staff Tuesday morning and he has scheduled a meeting with his economic advisers again on Tuesday.

As soon as we get a schedule that is firmed up, we will post it all for you.

Q Jerry, could you run through press coverage ground rules just so we all understand them for golf and for Camp David and picture opportunities and that sort of thing -- the do's and don'ts?

MR. TER HORST: Well, at Camp David we are going to follow the rules we have always lived under. That is we have arranged to have the trailer brought back inside the gates at Camp David.

That will be there for those who wish to be present to watch incoming and outgoing traffic, if there is any.

Q Does that mean everybody?

MR. TER HORST: No, that will be for the pool. It is a facility for those who want to get up there and cover. You will have to get there on your own. We are not providing any transportation to Camp David for those who want to go, and you will have to make your own living arrangements if you care to stay up there for the week-end.

Q You are talking of the pool?

MR. TER HORST: I am talking about the pool or anyone else, for that matter. In other words, we are not providing a trip for the press out of it. It is just as it always has been in that respect. And if there are any news developments or anything, we will handle them out of here.

We will have someone on duty in the Press Office all the time during those times.

Q There will only be the four of them going -- the President, Mrs. Ford and the two children?

MR. TER HORST: That is all.

Q The two children don't have any guests they are taking?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware of that. They may. Susan or Steve may bring along somebody. We will have to see when they get on the chopper and see who is there.

Q Do you foresee them going to church in Thurmont Sunday?

MR. TER HORST: I don't know what their church plans will be for Sunday.

We do have some pool arrangements where the President has given us permission to take a picture by a very limited pool. This will be sort of a first time -- not only the first time he will have been to Camp David, but the first time we have been given permission to take a picture of a President arriving at Aspen Lodge. So we are selecting a pool for that purpose.

It is essentially photographic because of the limited facilities for handling this. That will be about 11 o'clock Sunday morning, this photo pool, essentially a photo pool, and it will just be for the purpose of seeing the first family at Camp David, and then coming right back out.

Q Will that be silent?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, I think it will be a silent pool, but we will post that so everybody who is involved will know. That is Sunday at 11 o'clock.

Q Are they coming, or going, or just walking out of a building?

MR. TER HORST: No, the President just agreed because I told him that picture taking at 5:30 tomorrow afternoon when he gets there, it is pretty dark and would not be very useful.

So he agreed to cooperate and let a pool come in Sunday just for the express purpose of taking a picture of them at Aspen Lodge.

Q Jerry, may I get to this amnesty question, please? When Attorney General Saxbe and Defense Secretary Schlesinger deliver these recommendations, will they be conferring for some time with him after that on it? I mean for some lengthy period of time aside from courtesies and that kind of thing?

MR. TER HORST: I don't know how long the meeting will run. I really don't know, and I don't know how much discussion the President intends to get into at that particular time.

But the time of the meeting is at 8:30. It could be just a very brief thing, or it could be an hour. I am not sure.

Q When the President makes his decision, Jerry, leading into a matter of days as to what he has decided upon, with whom else will he be conferring? Who are his other advisers on this question?

MR. TER HORST: Well, as he said at the outset when he announced his intention to do this or set this program in motion at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Chicago, he said that he would draw upon not only the Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General, but the Selective Service people, other agencies in Government concerned with the problem of military deserters and draft evaders, and also a broad spectrum of interest groups around the country who are concerned with the question of amnesty.

Q Do you have names?

MR. TER HORST: I don't have names to give you. I presume those names will be reported to the President by the Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General when they make their recommendations to him.

I hope to be able to be at the meeting so I can at least come out and give you some general report on what occurred and then we will have to wait and see what recommendations the President employs.

Q When he makes his announcement -- if I may pursue this one more moment, Jerry -- will he announce it Nationwide in possibly a radio or TV program, or would he announce it through an announcement through you at the White House? What is likely to occur?

MR. TER HORST: I just have no guidance to give you. I just don't know how that will be handled. That is something we will have to take up when the President decides to act.

Q Jerry, on the timing on that, is it safe to say that you think that he will make up his mind by next week?

MR. TER HORST: I can't give you a reading on that. All I can tell you is it will not be a long period of time. He will not let a lot of grass grow on his decision making.

Q Jerry, is the President going to take any action on the Government pay raise this week-end?

MR. TER HORST: That decision is under study. As you know, the deadline for his decision is tomorrow and I hope to be able to report that to you tomorrow.

Q What alternative does he have? Can he either sign it or veto it, or does he have the right to change the percentage on the increase?

MR. TER HORST: It is my understanding that he has a right to offer a deferral, or suggest a deferral of so many months, and obviously he has a veto right, too. But just what his decision will be, I don't know, because that is still under discussion, and he has until tomorrow to act, and I expect that he will not miss the deadline. And therefore I hope to be able to report to you tomorrow on that.

Q Jerry, would you be able -- just in terms of the distance involved -- to provide some guidance on whether he does intend to go to church in Thurmont there on Sunday? If at the last minute he does, it would make coverage pretty difficult.

MR. TER HORST: I would expect the first family -- I will have to put this on BACKGROUND -- I do not foresee church plans this Sunday in the schedule, but I can't be sure of that at this point. I am not aware of any plans for them to go to church Sunday. They will be at Camp David all day Sunday.

As I said, he is going to offer an opportunity for us to take pictures at Aspen Lodge at 11 o'clock Sunday morning.

Q Jerry, what can you say about the ceremony accompanying the pension reform signing?

MR. TER HORST: Well, there will be a ceremony. Congressional leaders are coming in for the signing. Those concerned with the passage of this legislation will be on hand for the occasion. I don't know how large a group it will be, but certainly a dozen or more officials will be there, and possibly even a larger group.

That is still being worked on. After all, Congress is in recess at the moment so we will have to see how many actually come back for this on Monday.

There will be a statement also. He will have a statement and will make remarks at the time of the signing.

Q How about labor leaders? Will there be any there?

MR. TER HORST: Yes; I am sure there will be representatives of labor.

Q Jerry, on the round of golf, where will that be played and who will join him?

MR. TER HORST: I am pretty sure that will be at Burning Tree tomorrow afternoon, but I can't tell you who will make up the group. We will just have to see. And again we will have a pool. As we have done in the past, we will have a travel pool to go out to the golf course and then return when he has finished golfing.

Q Jerry, my office informs me that an Indianapolis paper -- and they didn't identify it -- quotes high military sources as saying they are readying for the Benjamin Harrison and Camp Atterbury to receive war resisters as early as September 3, that they have put out orders to get these two bases ready for them to accommodate between 3,000 and 6,000 persons.

Do you know anything about this?

MR. TER HORST: I saw that wire report and talked to Pentagon officials about it, and they tell me that this is only part of their contingency plan, and has no relationship at all to whatever recommendations Secretary Schlesinger may bring to the President tomorrow.

Q Jerry, how can it have no relation whatsoever? If Secretary Schlesinger were not thinking at all in that direction of recommendations, why would they set up that kind of contingency?

MR. TER HORST: I can't give you more than what they have told me. They have told me that this is part of their process of contingency planning that has been going on for a long time and that it has no bearing directly on what Secretary Schlesinger may recommend to the President.

Q Can you tell us what officials you talked to, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: I talked to Mr. Friedheim, and others in the Secretary's office.

Before I lose track of where I am, let me finish with some more announcements, if I may.

As to the Camp David pool, we will post a sign-up list for those who will be covering Camp David so that we will have the location and telephone numbers of the members of the press in the area so that if we have to reach you we can.

There have also been a good deal of reports in the papers concerning the so-called ten-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax which I had hoped we had laid to rest last week by telling you that it was only one of many ideas that the President's economic advisers were weighing as a means of conserving energy and hopefully reducing gasoline travel and perhaps raising money to assist with the problems of the poor.

I have talked to the President about this because these reports continue to travel around the country and make headlines, and he has authorized me to say flatly that he is not in favor of a ten-cent-a-gallon tax on gasoline.

Q Does he favor anything less than that?

MR. TER HORST: I didn't ask him whether he favored anything less but he is definitely not in favor of a ten-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax. And that ties in with what I said yesterday about the President not planning to seek a tax increase at this session of Congress.

Q Jerry, there are some reporters who felt that you were implying that there would be one next year, speaking yesterday of the tax increase. Was that the implication you meant to leave?

MR. TER HORST: I didn't want to mislead anybody there and I might have. I was asked a question about what the President's tax philosophy was and it was in connection with that that I tried to respond that no President is ever in favor of tax increases, but there comes a time in a country's life, as I said yesterday, when every President, whether he personally or philosophically favors tax increases, has to think of the possibility of tax increases.

And it was in that vein that I suggested he couldn't foreclose any option he might have for next year because we don't know at this point what the need is or what the economic situation is.

So I was answering it in a general and not a specific way. I don't want you to get the impression that the President is preparing a tax increase proposal for Congress next year. That was not my intention nor is it.

Q Can we ask whether there are any tax increase proposals under consideration?

MR. TER HORST: There are many proposals under consideration, including this one which I just told you the President is not in favor of, that is the ten-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax idea.

The President obviously expects his economic advisers to think of all possible ways of trying to control inflation and he certainly hasn't ruled out anything, but that doesn't mean that he is accepting these recommendations or ideas as they come across the counter.

Q Jerry, why does the President not favor this gas tax idea?

MR. TER HORST: Because he thinks it is exorbitant, unwise, unnecessary.

Q Does he not think it would help in energy conservation?

MR. TER HORST: Yes; I think he feels that the merits of a ten-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax idea -- let me say it this way, that a ten-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax has no merit at all in terms of really trying to control inflation or get a handle on energy consumption, that there may be better and more useful ways to go at that.

I have another announcement I would like to make before I forget it, as I did yesterday -- I forgot an announcement -- so let me continue with this one.

As you know, the President met yesterday with his political Counsellor, Dean Burch, and in the process of that meeting, and others that he has held with political leaders, the President does plan to do some political campaigning after Congress adjourns this year.

And the tentative schedule includes four dates that I can give you now, I believe. There may be one or two others still to come, but I don't have those yet. But the dates that I think I can give you are a trip on October 7 to Barre, Vermont, which is going to be a salute to Senator George Aiken, who, as you know, is retiring from Congress. This is a Republican rally in honor of retiring Senator Aiken.

On October 9, the President will go to Philadelphia for a Republican fund-raising affair.

On October 16, the President will be in Indianapolis for a State-wide Republican fund-raising dinner.

And on October 19, he will attend a similar event in Louisville, Kentucky.

And as I get confirmation on any other dates that are being talked about, why I will get them to you as quickly as I can.

Q In other words, you are expecting Congress to adjourn by October 7?

MR. TER HORST: That is the working assumption. We are not sure and I am sure that if Congress is not completely adjourned, we will have to see whether the President's presence is required here.

But these are tentative dates, as I said, and his hope is that much of this will occur following the adjournment of Congress.

Q Now this is for Republican candidates for Congress?

MR. TER HORST: The President's campaign is essentially going to be on issues, not on personalities. He is not going to campaign against anyone. That, incidentally, has been a long-standing Ford policy. He has never campaigned against candidates, but he expects to talk to the people on issues, particularly the economic issues confronting him and to reinforce what he told Members of Congress and the Nation in his address to the Joint Session last week in which he said that he hoped the voters would elect both Democrats and Republicans who would stand with him for fiscal restraint and so that Government can show the Nation that it is living within its budget.

He will carry that theme through each of these appearances and any other appearances that should come on his scheduling.

Q Jerry, talking about issues then, what did the AMA representatives tell the President about national health insurance, and what alternative methods did they impress on him, and what has happened now to the President's thoughts --

MR. TER HORST: I can't give you a report. You will have to ask them, I guess, what they specifically recommend because I was not in on that meeting.

But the President listened to their recommendations and he met with them as Vice President, I believe, earlier this year.

I think it may have been June, but don't hold me to the date.

Q Jerry, you are not leaving the implication here that the President does not want the Republicans to win, are you, when you say that he doesn't care whether they are Democrats or Republicans?

MR. TER HORST: No; I didn't say he didn't care. The President said in the same speech, everybody is aware of which party he belongs to and he intends to be the Republican leader, but at the same time, he is not going to campaign against Democrats.

He is going to campaign for fiscal responsibility, for candidates who will help him bring the budget under control, bring Federal spending under control, and see if in this joint venture, which we have called "economic summitry", and to which Congress is a partner, we can move down the road together -- both the Executive and the Legislative Branch.

Q Jerry, would it be fair to say that the President's campaigning will not be in the nature of a campaign swing of several days on the road?

MR. TER HORST: At this point, I think you can see by the schedule I have given you that essentially these are one-day trips. It is a possibility that on some of these trips other stops may be added, but I don't have anything to give you on that now.

When they do occur, of course we will.

Q He will be coming back to Washington, won't he?

MR. TER HORST: Oh, yes; he won't be staying out on the road. I have no information that he plans anything of that nature.

Q Would there be a possibility that if some Democrat was for fiscal responsibility and the Republican candidate he perceived was not, that he might be campaigning for a Democrat?

MR. TER HORST: In that unusual event, I think it will be well covered.

Q Jerry, did the President and Dr. Ray talk about her tenure at the AEC and specifically any resignation plans she may have?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware that they have discussed that precisely. I also was not in on that meeting, but this is the President's first meeting. As you know, he asked everybody to stay on and he has said he would like to meet with them on a one-and-one basis.

And as the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and other Members of the Cabinet, the guiding rule really is that if they want to work for President Ford and demonstrate that they can, they will stay as long as that condition holds.

Q Jerry, what are current -- let me rephrase this. Could you comment on a report that Greece has asked NATO countries -- Greece is thinking of breaking a number of agreements it has reached in the past with its NATO allies?

MR. TER HORST: I have heard such reports. I can only give you a limited amount of guidance on that, and that is the President has received a letter from the government of Greece advising that Greece will withdraw its troops from participation in NATO, but will remain as a member of NATO.

I can't give you any more details on that, Don, and I guess any other questions along that line properly should go to the State Department.

Q When was that letter received?

MR. TER HORST: I believe the letter was received today.

Q Who signed it?

MR. TER HORST: Caramanlis.

Q What is the President going to do about it if they take over the military base, U.S. military bases? Is he meeting with somebody on that?

MR. TER HORST: We are unable to confirm those reports, Helen.

Q You mean the message doesn't say that?

MR. TER HORST: The message addressed itself to the notification of withdrawal from military participation, but not from the alliance.

Q Do you know anything about a note which the Greek government has sent to all the NATO countries?

MR. TER HORST: I would presume it is possibly this same kind of note, but I have no specific knowledge on that.

Q You don't know who that letter came from, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: Yes; Caramanlis.

Q Has the President responded?

MR. TER HORST: I do not believe that he has.

Q Jerry, a large number of Members of Congress are pointing out that continuation of military aid to Turkey is an abrogation of the Foreign Assistance Law under specific statutes of that law. Is the President aware of that, and does he plan to take any action in this regard?

MR. TER HORST: Well, as you know, the military aid law -- it is a fairly complicated subject. Both Greece and Turkey have been beneficiaries of this aid. Both are members of the NATO alliance along with the United States and because of the complicated law itself, the Secretary of State, as he has said in his own news briefing, has asked the State Department's legal office to look into the situation and give him a report on the requirements of the law and the status of it, and I guess we will have to wait until that process is completed.

Q Can you give us President Ford's reaction to receiving this telegram?

MR. TER HORST: I cannot. It was just received and I am reporting to you the receipt of the letter.

Q Is it a telegram or a letter?

MR. TER HORST: It is my understanding it was a letter.

Q Do you understand it that they are withdrawing their military troops but they are remaining in the political part of it?

MR. TER HORST: They are remaining in the NATO alliance. I would say their arrangement is similar to that which France has undertaken. As you know, France, several years ago, removed its military forces from participation in NATO military affairs, but remains a member of NATO.

Q So it does not affect our base there?

MR. TER HORST: To my knowledge it does not.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(5:25 P.M. EDT)