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#58

NEWS CONFERENCE

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:30 P.M. EST

OCTOBER 30, 1974

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, but there was a Cabinet meeting this morning, which is still going on, and I thought that you might want to know what went on at the Cabinet meeting. So I decided to stay in there as late as I could before coming out here. I apologize for being this late.

Also, after yesterday's guest briefer, I was trying to find somebody else who could do it. (Laughter)

I made a terrible mistake last night on Air Force One, and I failed to give something to the pool. It was a phone call from the President to Hank Aaron. It was made from a holding room at Calvin College, just before the rally. This was to congratulate Hank Aaron on being awarded the Multiple Sclerosis Hope Chest Award at their Annual Dinner of Champions in New York. Everybody on the press plane got it. Unfortunately, because of my mess-up, the pool did not get it.

Do you need any more details on the phone call at this late date?

Q What did he say?

MR. NESSEN: He said, "Hello, Hank." (Laughter) I made very good notes, Helen. It's my old UPI experience.

"Hello, Hank. Nice to talk to you again. The last time I talked to you was when you hit 714."

If you recall, he threw out the pitch at the Cincinnati-Atlanta game where Aaron hit his 714th home run.

"It is great to hear that you have been awarded this Multiple Sclerosis Award. It is a great, great achievement and well deserved. Maybe you are going to be a manager. Let me know in advance."

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Then there was a very long pause, and the President said, "Well, your good judgment will prevail. Good luck to you, and congratulations."

Q Did the President call Muhammad Ali?
(Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: He did not, as far as I know. So I apologize to the pool on Air Force One for this slip up.

This morning the President came to his office at 8:00. He met with staff members, including General Scowcroft, Jack Marsh, Don Rumsfeld, Bob Hartmann, and myself.

The President is meeting with his Cabinet now. It started at 11:00. From the pace of the meeting, it is going to go on for quite some time. I have a fairly extensive report to give you from being in there, and I think perhaps, if you would agree, the best way to do this would be to go through the announcements and then come back to the report on the Cabinet meeting, if that is all right.

At 2:00 this afternoon, the President will meet with representatives of livestock and poultry growers to discuss the problems of the livestock and poultry industry. There will be some individual farmers there, and also leaders of organized groups in this area.

We do expect that there will be photographs allowed at the beginning and that we will have some information available after the meeting. But I do not think we will have a briefing. We already posted a list of who is attending the meeting.

Q Before you go on from there, does that mean you will have nothing to say after this meeting about it?

MR. NESSEN: I think we will have some information, but probably not a full-scale briefing.

Q Could we request that a couple come out, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Let me check into it. The plan, though, at the moment, is to either post or announce information and to not have a briefing.

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Q About what time? About 4:00?

MR. NESSEN: It starts at 2:00, and I suspect it is going to go on for a while. I think maybe not quite as long as 4:00, but I think a while.

Q Ron, why don't you give those people a chance? We go out there and catch as catch can. Why won't you let two or three of them come in here and have a briefing?

MR. NESSEN: Let me check, Sarah. This is the plan at the moment, but I will check into it.

Q In a related question, Ron, in view of the prices in poultry and the rest of it, is the White House going to get a pre-Thanksgiving turkey? Here it is Wednesday, and no turkey.

MR. NESSEN: Thanksgiving is a month away, isn't it?

Q Ron, will this meeting this afternoon include some of the men from the organization -- the National Farmers' Union -- who slaughtered the calves up there?

MR. NESSEN: Isn't there a list posted?

Q The list is posted, but I am asking, will it include some of the very persons who participated in the calf slaughtering?

MR. NESSEN: We don't know, but we will find out for you.

Q Who arranged the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Bill Baroody.

Q Is Butz also there?

MR. NESSEN: Butz will be there.

Q Does this mean it was arranged at the White House request? He said he would be meeting.

MR. NESSEN: It was at their request. They requested the meeting.

The President is going to depart Washington for his Western tour tomorrow, and we may not have all the details of the whole trip before we start. You will get specific details as we go along. But I can give you the rough outline now, if you care to hear it.

Baggage deadline in room 87 of the EOB at 11:00 tomorrow morning. Deadline for showing up at Andrews is 12:15.

If you leave your baggage at the EOB, the deadline is 11:00. If you take your baggage directly to Andrews, the baggage deadline at Andrews is 12:15. If you have left your baggage here by 11:00, you can get to Andrews as late as 12:30.

There will be a bus from the Southwest Gate going to Andrews, leaving at noon, and the press plane will depart at 1:00 p.m.

Q No briefing tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we will have a briefing tomorrow. If we have any information, Jack will give it on the press plane or I will give it on the pool, just as I did last night.

Q What time did you say the press plane was going to take off?

MR. NESSEN: 1:00.

The President will leave the White House at 1:20 and leave Andrews at 1:40. The first stop is the Sioux City Municipal Airport, where he arrives at 3:15 Central Time. He will make a campaign appearance at the airport on behalf of Congressman Wiley Mayne, and will leave the Sioux City Airport at 4:00 Central Time.

That means the President will arrive at Los Angeles International Airport, West Imperial Terminal, at 5:05 Pacific Time.

The President then goes to the Century Plaza Hotel where he will attend a Republican reception at about 7:15, Pacific Time, and a dinner at about 8:15. The speaking time for the President is 9:50 Pacific Time, which is ten minutes of one here in the East.

Q Are these all Standard Times? They are no Daylight Times? The whole thing is changed?

Q Also, can you try and get us some filing time in Iowa, because most of these things -- it is just a dash to a plane again -- and if you could get us just ten minutes there.

MR. NESSEN: I think what we will probably do is let the press plane stay behind just briefly, and then catch up and overtake Air Force One.

The President and the press corps will stay overnight at the Century Plaza.

Let me add something to the President's schedule for today.

At 1:30 in the Oval Office the President will meet with Barbara Hutchison, the Public Information Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo who, you may remember, was held hostage. There will be a picture-taking session at the beginning, and a writing pool.

Q Is he also meeting with a representative of the Mine Operators today?

MR. NESSEN: He saw Arthur Miller yesterday. Do you mean the Operators?

Q That is Arnold Miller.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. We will find out. I have not seen it, but we will find out.

On Friday, the President will depart the Century Plaza at about 10:20, and leave from Los Angeles International Airport at 11:00 en route to the Fresno Air Terminal, getting to the Fresno Air Terminal General Aviation Ramp at about 11:45 for an appearance on behalf of Congressman Robert Mathias.

Q That is at the airport?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

And he will then leave Fresno at 12:45, arriving at Portland International Airport, the National Guard Terminal, at 2:40.

Q On L.A., he arrived, you said, at Imperial Terminal?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Does he leave from there, too?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

The President will go to the Benson Hotel to prepare for his 5:00 appearance at the White House Conference on Domestic and Economic Affairs. I think we mentioned that conference to you a couple of days ago.

Q For those of us who were not here, could you tell me what that is? It is brand new to me.

MR. NESSEN: I just happen to have that right before my very eyes, Jim.

Q Nothing at the airport?

MR. NESSEN: No.

This meeting will be going on all day in Portland.

Q 2:30 or 2:45?

MR. NESSEN: In what city? At 2:40 he arrives at Portland.

This meeting will be going on all day in Portland. It is the fourth in a series of White House Conferences being held around the country under the sponsorship of the White House Office of Public Liaison which is Bill Baroody's office.

The previous ones have been held in Los Angeles on July 25; in Chicago on July 26; and in New Orleans on September 24. Additional conferences will be held in other parts of the country.

Now attending the one in Portland will be representatives of business, labor, consumers, and environmentalists.

Q Is there anybody left?

MR. NESSEN: There are the coal mine operators.

The others taking part, aside from the President, will be Secretary Simon; Secretary Lynn; the EPA Administrator, Russell Train; Ken Cole, who is the Director of the Domestic Council; Bill Baroody, and others.

The purpose of the conference is to focus on major issues on a regional basis. So in other words, this one will deal specifically and especially with the issues relating to the Northwestern part of the country.

Q Will these people fly out with him, or will they be there -- Simon and company?

MR. NESSEN: This is an all-day meeting, so they will have to be there ahead.

I can give you a phone number so we don't take all of our time talking about this meeting, and you can ask additional questions of Jeff Eaves. He works in the Bill Baroody operation. Just ask for him by name through the White House switchboard.

Q This is now called the White House Office of Public Liaison?

MR. NESSEN: White House office of Public Liaison, yes, sir.

Q Before we get off of that, do you have any general idea of how many people will be at this meeting, or should we get this kind of thing from Eaves?

MR. NESSEN: We will find out here. John will check for us.

Q What time is the President speaking at this conference?

MR. NESSEN: He gets there at 5:00, and I would think he would speak pretty close to 5:00.

Q What building will this be in? Where will this conference be? At the hotel?

MR. NESSEN: We will find out.

Q Is that at the coliseum, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I am getting on with that in a second. It says returning to the Benson, so it must be somewhere else.

Q The event is somewhere else besides the Benson?

MR. NESSEN: This event that we just talked about is.

Q But he goes to the Benson first?

MR. NESSEN: The President will go to the Benson to prepare for his thing, and then after he attends this Domestic and Economic Affairs Conference, he will go back to the Benson for a 6:00 Republican reception. Then he goes to the Hilton Hotel for another reception at about 7:30, and a fund-raising dinner at the Hilton at 8:00.

Q For whom? Packwood or the Republicans in general?

MR. NESSEN: I think he is going out there to campaign for the whole ticket. 600 or 700 people are coming to that conference that we talked about. And the location is the Portland Memorial Coliseum Assembly Hall.

Q Does his going there mean the Government will pay for this trip rather than the National Committee?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think we went over this before. The RNC -- its position has been if there is any political element at all to a trip, rather than split hairs, they pay for the entire trip.

At 8:00 is the fund-raising dinner, and he speaks there almost immediately after arriving. I gather he is not going to eat dinner. He is just going to speak. And then right after the speech, he will go to the Memorial Coliseum again.

Q After dinner?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, a fun-filled day. (Laughter)

He is going to the Memorial Coliseum to attend the Fifteenth Annual Auction of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. We will get more for you on that.

Finally, the President should get back to the Benson for the evening at about 9:30, and the press will stay at the Portland Hilton.

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Q Can we ask that a pool be allowed to stay at the Benson?

MR. NESSEN: We will check on that.

Q Ron, in the stop in Fresno, wouldn't it have been more useful to Congressman Mathias if the rally had been in his district?

MR. NESSEN: I am not in charge of scheduling these things. I am only announcing them.

On Saturday, the President will leave the hotel at about 7:30.

Q A.M.?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and will depart Portland International Airport at about 8:05.

The next stop -- Salt Lake City, where he arrives at the International Airport, the National Guard Terminal, at 10:35 Mountain Time. The President will go to the Columbus Community Center, which is a school for handicapped children, to visit a workshop room where about 40 students will be working.

Then the President will go to the University of Utah Special Events Center, getting there at about 11:30 Mountain Time, where there will be a reception and rally for the Republican Candidates in Utah.

Q What time is that, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: 11:30 he has arrived and his speech is at noon. Then he will leave Salt Lake City at 1:00 and will arrive at Walker Field which is the airport for Grand Junction, Colorado, 2:05 Mountain Time.

He will go to the Lincoln Park Baseball Field where he will speak at about 2:30 at a Republican rally. He will then leave Grand Junction at 3:15 and arrive at McConnell Air Force Base, Wichita, Kansas, at 6:00 Central Time.

The President will then go to the Century II Convention Center where he goes to a couple of G.O.P. receptions.

Q What time is his arrival?

MR. NESSEN: The arrival in Wichita is 6:00.

Q Then he comes into the Center shortly after?

MR. NESSEN: He is going straight there from the airport for a couple of GOP receptions and a public rally for Senator Dole, and the President's speech at the public rally will be at 8:30.

Q That is also in the convention center?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. He will leave McConnell Air Force Base at about 9:30. He was originally scheduled to come back to Andrews, but there will be four more stops on the way. (Laughter).

No, McConnell is the end of the campaign trail, and he arrives at Andrews at 2:45, which would be Sunday morning, the way I figure it, and the press plane will trail behind.

Q You have some of us convinced you were not kidding about the four stops.

MR. NESSEN: Of course I was kidding. I said the end of the campaign trail is McConnell Air Force Base.

Q He is not going down to Little Rock, Arkansas, to campaign for Judy Petty?

MR. NESSEN: However, there is an optional plan, which is that the press plane will go straight to Miami Beach for those wishing to, for rest and recreation. (Laughter)

Q Is that the last of the President's campaigning in this campaign?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, sir.

Q Ron, I am sorry I lost you on one turn.

MR. NESSEN: Which day was it? What happens after we leave Andrews tomorrow? That is where I got lost. (Laughter)

Q You did not repeat it, so I guess you did not hear me. Friday he departs Century Plaza and leaves Los Angeles. Would you just fill in the times again, before he arrives in Fresno.

MR. NESSEN: Leaving the hotel at 10:20, leaving the Los Angeles Airport at 11:00, arriving Fresno Air Terminal at 11:45, leaving Fresno 12:45.

On to international affairs.

An announcement is going to be made tomorrow night concerning the President's trip to Japan. That is tomorrow night American time, and since we are going to be away tomorrow, I thought I would give you a little brief so you understand what is going to happen.

Friday morning Tokyo time, which is tomorrow afternoon or evening, or tomorrow night, I guess, our time, after the Cabinet meeting, the Japanese Government will announce a general schedule of activities for President Ford in Japan. We will get these schedules at the same time, and I believe that they will be ready to hand you after we arrive in Los Angeles.

Q Is Mrs. Ford going?

MR. NESSEN: Mrs. Ford probably will not go.

Q What time is this announcement going to be made, roughly; our time?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a precise time because I think it partly depends on the Japanese Cabinet meeting, but based on the way it looks, we will have to give it to you when we get to Los Angeles.

Q Would you say with full assuredness that the Cabinet is not going to decide to postpone the trip or the invitation?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly am not going to speak for the Japanese Government, but I have not heard anything like that.

Q Ron, will the announcements be made in Tokyo before we get them in Los Angeles, just for technical reasons?

MR. NESSEN: We will try to get them to you at the same time, but because of our travel, it may not be possible.

Q Is this going to be a detailed itinerary tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: As I understand it, it is going to be a general schedule, not minute by minute, but each day's events in general terms.

Q Will it be available here?

MR. NESSEN: A good question. Yes.

Q Will he be seeing the Emperor?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the schedule yet, Helen.

Secretary Kissinger is in Dacca, Bangladesh, where I spent a fun-filled month with David Kennerly one time. He completed yesterday a three-day visit to India, where he held extensive conversations with Prime Minister Gandhi and other Indian leaders.

You have probably seen the joint communique issued at the conclusion of the Secretary's visit to New Delhi, and I would draw your attention to the fact that Secretary Kissinger accepted on behalf of the President an invitation from Prime Minister Gandhi to visit India in 1975.

The Secretary, incidentally, has been keeping the President informed with regular reports on his conversations during his travels, and the President has been following the Secretary's cabled reports carefully. The President is pleased that Secretary Kissinger's discussions are going well and proving extremely useful.

Q Last night, the President said that he was encouraged -- this was at the informal cocktail ad lib wherever it was we were, Grand Rapids -- he said he was encouraged by what Secretary Kissinger told him in Moscow, and he cited places along the line.

Can you give us any of the specifics of what encouraged the President in Moscow or at other stops along Secretary Kissinger's route?

MR. NESSEN: Not beyond what the Secretary has said publicly along the way.

Q Do they come in daily or do you have them every morning?

MR. NESSEN: They have been coming in daily or more than once a day.

Q Did they discuss the Arab summit in Rabat?

MR. NESSEN: Has who discussed the Arab summit in Rabat?

Q Has Mr. Kissinger sent any information to Mr. Ford, any news reports?

MR. NESSEN: You probably know that the Secretary made a statement to the reporters traveling with him concerning that. I am told that the State Department has some material on the subject, if you will contact them.

Q Ron, are you taking foreign policy questions now, because if you are --

MR. NESSEN: I have not finished my announcements yet.

Q Can I ask one question related to that?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q At yesterday's press conference, President Ford said apparently for the first time that "We, of course, feel there must be movement toward settlement of the problems between Israel and Egypt on the one hand, between Israel and Jordan or the PLO on the other," and then he went on.

In the past, Secretary Kissinger and other American officials have always made the point that the Palestinian refugee problem should be solved in the context of negotiations between Israel and Jordan and not the PLO.

Does President Ford's statement yesterday represent a shift of American policy?

MR. NESSEN: The President's statement yesterday does not represent any change in American policy, and that policy has been stated on a number of occasions by Secretary Kissinger, and there is no change in it.

The President's answer yesterday was based on preliminary and incomplete reports of the Arab summit, and he stated clearly that we could not draw any conclusions at this stage. Beyond that, as I say, the State Department will be helpful to you in this area.

Q Ron, may I follow up? Are you, in effect, withdrawing that phrase, "or the PLO," which comes after Jordan?

MR. NESSEN: I am not withdrawing anything that the President said. I am simply saying that there has been no change in American policy.

Q What has been American policy?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the Secretary has spoken extensively on that, and if you will contact the State Department, you can get information.

Q I would like clarification then, and this is a more --

MR. NESSEN: I hate to use that word, "clarification."

Q I'd still like explanation, then, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: I think I have given the explanation, which is that the President made no change in American policy yesterday and that American policy remains as Secretary Kissinger stated on many occasions.

Q But it says "or." It says "between Israel and Jordan or the PLO on the other."

MR. NESSEN: I am going to have to direct your further questions to the State Department, which is prepared to comment.

Q Did the President made a mistake yesterday when he said that, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: He certainly did not. As I say, he said his remarks were based on preliminary and incomplete reports and that he was not making any judgments based on those reports.

Q Does he have better information now that would lead him to speak differently if he were out here today?

MR. NESSEN: I have no indication that he does.

Q Ron, is he sending Dr. Kissinger back to the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: I think Dr. Kissinger himself is -- you have probably seen the press reports, but what Dr. Kissinger said to the reporters traveling with him was, probably I will go to the Middle East, but that decision will be made in the next 72 hours.

Q Based on what? Do you know based on what?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean, based on what? The decision. I don't, Helen.

Q Ron, when will these 72 hours be up?

MR. NESSEN: I think he said that about 24 hours ago.

Q Ron, presumably President Ford would make the decision --

MR. NESSEN: On whether he should go to the Middle East? I would certainly think that Dr. Kissinger would confer with the President about it.

Q But presumably the President would make the decision, would he not?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I think the President and the Secretary will confer on it.

Q Is this 72 hours a matter of conferring with the governments with whom he would visit?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to have to suggest that, as I said, that the State Department can give you a good deal more material on this than I can.

Q Ron, so in effect, what you are saying is that the President stands by his statement yesterday that Israel should negotiate with Jordan or the PLO?

MR. NESSEN: I am saying there was no change in American position in the President's statement yesterday.

Q Is the American position that ---

MR. NESSEN: You will have to ask the State Department for the American position.

Q Is it your understanding that the American position is that the PLO is not considered the entity to negotiate with Israel?

MR. NESSEN: I would rather, in the interest of accuracy, that you contact the State Department for the precise American position.

Q You are not prepared to answer that question today?

MR. NESSEN: I said that they have extensive information they can provide you.

Q You said repeatedly the President made no change in American policy yesterday. Did he make a change in American policy earlier, and enunciate it yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Does the President now accept and agree to the idea that the PLO will represent the Palestinian refugees in Geneva, or any other negotiating place? Does he accept that?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, the President made no change in American policy and for the precise details of American policy, you really need to call the State Department.

There is one other announcement today. Fran, I think, and some others, asked a while back about our policy on releasing photos, and I have looked into this, and we made some changes in our photo release policy to try to eliminate some of the problems.

The most noticeable change we are going to make is when the White House provides a photo or a group of photos for a publication or for a network, the same photo or photos will be made available to anybody else who wants it, on the date of publication.

And, by way of starting this procedure from now on, this will be posted, that, "Today, National Geographic is publishing four photos provided by the White House. Here are the copies of them, if you want copies of them. Ollie Atkins will make them for you." That will be posted, but today to get this procedure started, I think I will make the announcement orally.

A photo of the President and Liberty and the dog trainer who has been hired, is being made available for publication tomorrow in the Alexandria Journal of Virginia, and according to the procedure this will be posted, and for those of you who want this same photo for your publications, you can have it made.

Q So there will be one day's notice?

MR. NESSEN: There will be a day's notice; that is correct.

Q What do you do about, say --

MR. NESSEN: Well, let me go down the other seven rules or whatever I have enforced here.

All requests from publications or networks for photos taken by the White House will be approved or disapproved by myself or Jack Hushen, so that nobody else down the line will have the authority to approve these photo requests.

The second part of our plan is that what I have just told you: they will be posted from time to time on the bulletin board, and an announcement that a photo is about to be published from the White House, and that it will be available to anybody else who wants it.

We will make an effort to not flood the market with White House photos. We will also make an effort -- and it has already started, as a matter of fact -- to allow photographers and cameramen the opportunity to shoot their own photos of the President and film of the President.

And I hope that will straighten out the --

Q Does that mean no one can ever have an exclusive?

MR. NESSEN: I just said -- my last point was that we are now making an effort to work people -- in the same way the President is having interviews with reporters, he is also making an effort to allow photographers and cameramen to have exclusive pictures.

Q Ron, I have two questions regarding the Middle East, if I may bring them up now before it gets too late.

MR. NESSEN: Maybe we could just get this photo thing out of the way, and then go to the substantial questions.

Phil.

Q The posting of this picture that is about to appear -- I mean, you are giving others notification of what some individual or some agency may be planning to do, and it seems to me that is a little unfair.

MR. NESSEN: I think the other arrangement is more unfair, Phil, perhaps. I don't agree with you that this is unfair. The Alexandria Gazetteer or whatever the name of it is -- Journal -- plans to publish a photo that we have provided them tomorrow.

In the interest of fairness to everyone, we are announcing today that they will do that, that we have provided them with the photo, and that the same photo is available to everybody else for publication tomorrow.

Q Will you clear up a small point? You are announcing this one day ahead of time, and I understand your original plan was to do it on the same day.

MR. NESSEN: No, no. The day ahead, because Ollie will need time to make the prints people may want.

Q The day before publication, okay.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, sir. And in the case -- there may be occasions where we provide a packet of photos, and maybe we can do it two days ahead in order to give Ollie time to crank these out for those who want them, to coincide with the publication date.

Q This dog trainer, how long has he been hired for, and who is paying him?

MR. NESSEN: It is a she.

Q I beg your pardon. This person, how long --

MR. NESSEN: She is being paid out of the President's pocket.

Q Personal?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, sir.

Q What is her name?

MR. NESSEN: I did not mean to make this a dog trainer announcement. I don't know.

Q Ron, are you enlarging the photo staff to take care of these requests?

MR. NESSEN: No, we are not. It does not need to be enlarged.

Q How large is that staff?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a number for you.

Q Do you have a rough figure of how much the photo operation costs?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have it here, no.

Q Ron, this gives the other papers an opportunity to come in on a tie, taking the theoretical case of the Alexandria Journal.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, that is the whole purpose.

Q No more exclusive pictures, is what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: No more exclusive pictures provided by the White House.

Q Ron, would you like to explain why?

MR. NESSEN: Because of a great number of complaints we have had about the old system.

Q Specifically, the PEOPLE magazine?

MR. NESSEN: That was one of several problems we have had with the photo operation.

Q Can you tell us about the Cabinet meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. I almost forgot the Cabinet meeting. There are so many things here.

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Q Would you take a question on the schedule on the Far West tour?

MR. NESSEN: What was the question you had?

Q I have two questions dealing with remarks by the President, two remarks by the President.

The question of Jordan or the PLO made it clear that the President is equating the PLO with Jordan. Now you referred this point to the State Department. Is it a fact that the President, perhaps inadvertently, gave notice of a change in American tactics, if not policy, and why are you leaving it, the White House, to the State Department to clarify a remark made by the President?

MR. NESSEN: I do not think that the President's remarks need any clarification.

Q Well, let's put it this way: If I understand our previous policy -- and I am subject to correction because I am not sure I do -- then the State Department is going to tell us, no, we are not equating the PLO with Jordan and the State Department, in effect, is going to be contradicting the President and we won't know where we stand.

MR. NESSEN: I really think you need to talk to the State Department and find out precisely what American policy toward the PLO has been as stated on many occasions by Secretary Kissinger, and then match it up with the President's statement tomorrow and you will see that there has been no change.

Q Ron, have you ever asked, as a reporter yourself, have you ever gone through the experience of asking the State Department about a statement made by the President and had them automatically refer it to the White House?

Now, what is this, a shuttle. Really, Ron, he made a statement that is in the minds of almost everyone of us here, opened a new vista of American foreign policy. Can you either withdraw it or explain it or something?

Q It is ambiguous, to say the least, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: I am telling you that the State Department has extensive information to give you on this subject, and I suggest that you take the trouble to make the call or the visit to get that extensive information.

Q Ron, did you **misspeak** yourself a moment ago when you said the President has a statement to make tomorrow? Did you mean yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: On what subject?

Q On this subject. You said this will become clear with the President's statement tomorrow, and I don't know if you meant tomorrow or if you meant yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: On the subject of the PLO? I am sorry, match up what the State Department will give you with what he said yesterday, and you will see that there has been no change in American policy.

Q May I go to the second point; that is, the President yesterday in Michigan said that he did not get the kind of support in Congress that he thinks is needed to help us find the difficult key to the problems of the Middle East, and they are tough and they are treacherous and they are explosive.

What is he talking about, that the Congress did not support him on the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: I have not asked him that specific question. I know that the specific episode that has brought on a number of similar statements concerning Congressional bipartisan support for foreign policy was the action in cutting off aid to Turkey as part of the continuing resolution. That I know ~~was~~ primarily on his mind when he began these statements.

Q But that is not the area, Ron, we are talking about.

MR. NESSEN: Isn't Turkey in the Middle East?

Q Greece is not, is it? The question is, though, he is talking here about the Near East, Israel and the Arabs.

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to go beyond the President's statement. He feels that bipartisan support of the Presidential policy-making power in foreign matters is very important to seeking peace in all parts of the world.

Q Did the President misspeak himself there, Ron? Was he referring to the Turkish and Cypriot and Greek situation, or was he referring to the Israeli-Arab situation?

MR. NESSEN: The President did not misspeak himself, Jim, and I don't want to go beyond what he said.

Q Ron, can I go back to one question about the Japan trip? You said Mrs. Ford probably would not go.

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q I take it because she is still in a stage of convalescence, is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: No, not at all. As you recall, the trip originally was planned as a trip to Japan and back. It has turned out to be a much longer trip involving two other countries, and on the basis of it being much longer, it was decided that she probably wouldn't go.

Q You still say probably. Is it ruled out? That is the question.

MR. NESSEN: I think I would just like to leave that word in there.

Q Ron, to go back to this last campaign trip and the schedule, is there any chance now that the President will call on Mr. Nixon?

MR. NESSEN: I really would like to go through the Cabinet meeting, if you don't mind.

Q Can you answer that yes or no?

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans for the President to visit the former President.

Q Can I ask a follow-up question to that, if I may.

MR. NESSEN: We are just going to wipe out the Cabinet meeting now because -- go right ahead. I think it is important to hear what happened at the Cabinet meeting.

Q In view of the pardon and in view of statements which come from that rostrum about mercy relating to other Nixon officials and in view of the fact that the man is acknowledged to be very sick, how can the fact that Mr. Ford is going to California and not seeing Mr. Nixon be acknowledged as anything but a snub.

MR. NESSEN: Could I get a question that I can answer, please?

Q Tell us about the Cabinet meeting.

Q I think that was a legitimate question.

Q A very legitimate question, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Let me hear the question again.

Q I really did not mean to aggravate you, but the question was, the President did pardon Mr. --

MR. NESSEN: Let me answer your question this way: We do not make interpretations from this podium. That is up to you.

Next question.

Q Now will you tell us about the Cabinet?

MR. NESSEN: The President began by complimenting the Cabinet members -- we have posted a list of participants -- he complimented the participants for sending in their proposed budget cuts. He told them he is now going over their proposed budget cuts. He said, "None is very easy, but they add up to a good figure. Shortly after Congress returns, we will make the submission."

After that he talked a little bit about his economic package. He referred to it as a finely-tuned package. He said it takes into cognizance that we have soft spots in the economy and also takes into cognizance that we have high inflation, which by any stretch of the imagination is the problem affecting the most people.

He said the people who helped him prepare his economic plan under those somewhat conflicting problems -- on the subject of both budget cuts and the administrative actions that he proposed in his economic speech, the President said -- and this is a quote -- let me back up one second.

The purpose of this meeting was for the Cabinet members to report on, first of all, how they were carrying out the administrative actions that the President proposed in his speech, and secondly to report on the progress of legislation affecting their departments in the economic field.

On that basis, the President said that he expects them to carry out both the administrative actions and to push for the legislation. The quote is: "I will hold every department responsible. You have the ball. You must carry the ball, and if you do not score, it is your fault."

Then he began to go around the table and get a report from each Cabinet member on what administrative actions, how he was progressing on the Administrative actions proposed by the President and what the outlook was for legislation in his department.

Secretary Butz went first. He talked about legislation affecting various crops. He also promised that he would have a report ready by January 1 on this proposal concerning the marketing orders that the President mentioned.

Secretary Butz also mentioned he was looking at regulations within his department which might be affecting prices. On the subject of the fertilizer, he said, "There is enough to do the job."

The next Cabinet member to speak was Secretary Dent of Commerce who said that he is conducting a survey to find out how much production each industry is getting per unit of energy and he said he has had promises from some industries or representatives of industries to cut their energy consumption by 10 to 15 percent.

He is going to set up a reporting system to follow the progress of industries in reducing their energy consumption.

Q Would this be because of decreased production and layoffs of workers?

MR. NESSEN: That was taken into account and -- no, it is based on per unit. As I say, it is measuring production against how much energy is used for a unit of production so it takes into account some lagging production.

Secretary Lynn of the Housing Department was next, and he announced that from the new housing program \$300 million already has been committed to mortgages and that he hopes to have --

Q Out of how much?

MR. NESSEN: There is \$1.5 billion, right? Is it \$3 billion in two programs. Anyhow, he hopes to have the entire \$3 billion committed by some time in November.

Q Three billion dollars?

MR. NESSEN: Three billion dollars, right.

Q What date was that?

MR. NESSEN: By some time in November.

Secretary Morton reported that on the legislative outlook for the surface mining bill, he also said that he is moving along on his department's plans for bringing gas down from the Arctic, for leasing coal lands, and for oil shale development.

By January 1 he will have a study of how much interest there is by private industry in developing oil shale and also on the feasibility of using geothermal steam for production of energy. And he said, and this is a quote, "But the best thing that could happen to our domestic energy supply problem would be deregulation of natural gas," and he talked about how this would --

Q What was the President's response to that?

MR. NESSEN: He listened to all these reports.

Q Did he give an inflationary impact statement as to how that would affect the inflation problem?

MR. NESSEN: What he did give, Jim, was a report on how that would affect distribution.

Q Who is "he," Morton or the President?

MR. NESSEN: Morton. Part of the problem with natural gas is when it travels within a single State, it is not regulated. And consequently, gas supplies are held within certain States where it is produced and used by industry in those States.

He indicated that the deregulation of natural gas would allow the greater distribution of natural gas and would avoid shortages in areas where natural gas is not now produced.

Q Did he say which States?

MR. NESSEN: He did not, Sarah.

Q Did he give any price estimates?

MR. NESSEN: He did not.

Q Ron, on that natural gas comment, did Secretary Morton say whether deregulation would lead to increased supplies of natural gas, or whether it would simply lead to a redistribution?

MR. NESSEN: He talked in terms of better distribution.

There is going to be this picture-taking opportunity with the President and Barbara Hutchison. If you go to the side door, the pool is the wires, New York Times, CBS correspondent, UPI audio correspondent, photographers and cameramen, and TIME magazine.

Deputy Attorney General Silberman talked about his progress with antitrust legislation.

Q Where was Saxbe? Is he out of town?

MR. NESSEN: Attorney General Saxbe is speaking in Brownsville, Texas today. Mr. Silberman spoke of his progress with both antitrust legislation and antitrust administrative action. The President asked him to please keep a scorecard showing the number of antitrust cases this year as compared with the number of antitrust cases last year.

He also said that he -- the President said that he had read in the paper recently that the Justice Department is moving against fixed minimum legal fees by lawyers. There were then reports by Secretary Brennan.

Q What did he say about that? Did he approve of that?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he certainly did not indicate any disapproval.

Q Did Silberman mention the investigation of the food industry, by any chance? Did the President say anything about that?

MR. NESSEN: The President is aware of that story.

Incidentally, something along this line. I have apologized a number of times for our failure to give a proper briefing or explanation of the economic speech, and this sort of ties in with what this discussion with Mr. Silberman was about this morning.

In the economic speech, the President said, "My Administration will zero in on more effective enforcement of laws against the price fixing and bid rigging. For instance, non-competitive professional fee schedules and real estate settlement fees must be eliminated."

So this is what the Justice Department is moving toward, and that is why it came up at --

Q Could we have that again, that last sentence of your report there?

MR. NESSEN: This is from the President's economic speech. Some of the things that got overlooked because of our failure to give proper briefings. For instance, non-competitive professional fee schedules and real estate settlement fees must be eliminated.

Q I don't want to prolong the briefing unnecessarily, and I apologize, but I remember reading that at the time, Ron, and wondering whether the word "non-competitive" applied to both, because if it does not, then he is calling for the elimination of all real estate settlement fees. I assume he means only the elimination of non-competitive --

MR. NESSEN: I think non-competitive is an adjective applying to both parts of that sentence.

Q Ron, are you saying, then, he noted with approval --

Q In other words, he just wants non-competitive fees outlawed in both of those areas, right?

MR. NESSEN: That is what he is saying.

Then there were reports by Brennan on legislation concerning the public service jobs program and the unemployment insurance program, and when Mr. Brinegar began his report, I felt that I delayed the briefing long enough and I came out here.

Q When was it finished?

MR. NESSEN: Is it over? It was over at five of one, so it lasted one hour and 55 minutes.

Q What did Brennan say about the public service jobs?

MR. NESSEN: He just gave a report on where it stood in Congress and what its outlook is in Congress.

Q Do you have someone who substitutes for you when you have to come out for those things?

MR. NESSEN: I can get it from Rumsfeld or Chaney or somebody.

Q Will there be a transcript? Is there a transcript of those meetings?

MR. NESSEN: Of the Cabinet meetings? It is not normal procedure.

Q It is not made available, but is there one for you?

MR. NESSEN: I did not see anybody take notes, no.

Q Ron, in terms of the budget, did the President get from the Cabinet officers now the final cuts, final suggested cuts?

MR. NESSEN: No, there is going to be another meeting in that series, Helen. This was something different. Just to say okay, I have them, and I am studying them, but this was, one, to find out what they were doing about the administrative actions like this one on the antitrust, and on the legislative proposals.

Q Ron, do you have a proposal there from Brennan on the -- do you have anything from Brennan today?

MR. NESSEN: Brennan's report was basically on the two pieces of legislation.

Q Ron, what did Secretary Morton say about the surface mining bill?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing. He just gave a report on where it stands in Congress.

Q What kind of report?

MR. NESSEN: I did not make extensive notes on that because I assumed that was public information.

Q Ron, are you through with the Cabinet meeting yet?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, am I?

Q You quoted the President as saying that these figures add up to a good figure in budget cuts.

MR. NESSEN: He gave you the figure yesterday, didn't he, at the news conference? \$7.5 billion, wasn't it?

Q I hate to say it, but do we still have a rule people are not supposed to leave until the senior wire correspondent says thank you, and ends the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of anything that has changed the rules. How is responsible for stopping them? I don't know.

Q Other people are walking out.

MR. NESSEN: Is anybody filing?

THE PRESS: Thank you anyway, Ron.

Q Has the White House been in touch with the hospital on Mr. Nixon today?

MR. NESSEN: Well, Dr. Lukash is keeping President Ford generally informed of the condition of the former President as he has in the past.

Q Was he informed of the critical status?

Q Has Mrs. Ford talked to Mrs. Nixon?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, what was your question?

Q Did President Ford talk to Mrs. Nixon?

MR. NESSEN: I understand Mrs. Ford intended to call Mrs. Nixon about 45 minutes ago. I will have to confirm that the call was made. She intended to try and get in touch with her about 45 minutes ago.

Q Have they gotten the report on his condition?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean, have we gotten a report on his condition?

Q Do you know anything about it?

Q Has Lukash gotten anything today?

Q Any word?

MR. NESSEN: I believe that reports on the former President's health are being made by the appropriate people at the hospital.

Q How is Dr. Lukash getting his information?

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Lukash has been in touch with Dr. Lungren.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END (AT 1:35 P.M. EDT)