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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

#59

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:47 A.M. EST

NOVEMBER 4, 1974

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: I wanted to start off today by confirming a story in today's New York Times by Jim Naughton on Don Rumsfeld's appearance on television. There is a paragraph in the Naughton story saying, "The sources also said that the President would probably be likely to move to a top spot on the White House staff." We can confirm that. I think it was a typo. (Laughter)

The President came to the Oval Office before eight o'clock this morning. He met with staff members this morning including Don Rumsfeld, Dean Burch, Bob Hartmann, Brent Scowcroft, Bill Timmons, Jack Marsh, and myself.

This afternoon the President will meet at 12:30 with Dr. James Fletcher, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and Dr. Howard Johnson, the Board Chairman of MIT.

Dr. Johnson will present the President with a crystal grown in space in Skylab. The crystal was grown as part of an MIT experiment during one of the Skylab missions. The crystal is a semiconductor material, like that used in making transistors. Scientists believe that crystals grown in space permit another step in the electronic circuit miniaturization.

There will be opportunities to take pictures at this meeting, which will be in the Cabinet Room about the time we are finished here at 12:30. Also, we hope to have a written statement by the President on the crystal and its future uses.

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After that, the President will meet with Dr. Fletcher and the NASA Deputy Administrator, George M. Low. This is another in a series of the meetings he has been having with the heads of various independent agencies in the Executive Branch.

At two o'clock this afternoon the President will have his picture taken with Brian Molloy of the Bronx, 12 years old. He is the 1974 Epilepsy Poster Child. He is a sixth grader, and a little league baseball player. There will be photos at that meeting, too.

At 2:15 the President will meet with John Sherman Cooper, the new American Ambassador to the German Democratic Republic. The President will give Ambassador Cooper his final instructions before he departs. Ambassador Cooper plans to arrive at his new post early next month.

Tomorrow the President will meet with President Tolbert of Liberia. We have announced that previously. The meeting will be at 11 o'clock. There will be no ceremony for this because it is not a State visit.

Tomorrow evening the President plans to watch election returns on television here at the White House. At some time during the evening we will probably issue a written statement by the President giving his views on the election results.

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Q Would that definitely rule out any visits to Republican offices or any Republican rallies on Capitol Hill?

MR. NESSEN: Right now there are no plans to go up on the Hill.

Q When would you expect that statement by the President?

MR. NESSEN: I think it really depends on how the returns are going and how soon you can pick up any sort of trend. If you are interested at all, a number of the President's top assistants and counsellors will be here in this wing tomorrow evening and will be available to any of you who want to discuss the results with them. This is the new open Administration, Peter.

Q How did you arrange this, Ron, so we will know whether to turn up or not?

MR. NESSEN: We will be sitting around, walking around. You can send in a message to us. It will all be in the West Wing and I will certainly be there.

Q The mechanics are that we will just contact you?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, that would be the easiest way, I think. Again, as soon as we get some sort of trend, Carroll, on how it is going.

Q Will the President be getting the returns over television?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and he will also be talking by phone and his advisers will be talking by phone.

Q Will he spend any time in the East Wing?

MR. NESSEN: That is not clear yet, and he may spend part of the time there and part of it over here.

Q Will any of the Congress be up here, too?

MR. NESSEN: Most of the Congressmen, I think, will be home in their districts watching the returns.

Q You said something about Hugh Scott and John Rhodes maybe being here.

MR. NESSEN: I just said, as an example of some people he might have over, but as I understand it, both of them will be in their districts. We had talked about Hugh Scott or John Rhodes or others coming over to watch the returns with him. Those two, as far as I know, will be in their home States, but if he does have people watching with him, I will let you know tomorrow evening.

I don't have anything to give you on the schedule for the rest of the week. However, next week, on Thursday the 14th of November, the President will travel to Las Vegas, Nevada and to Phoenix, Arizona, and come back to Washington later that same night.

In Las Vegas he will address the National Association of Realtors at 10 o'clock Pacific Time. He will then go to Phoenix and spend the afternoon preparing for an appearance before the National Convention of Sigma Delta Chi at 6 o'clock Mountain Time. The President will have some opening remarks at Sigma Delta Chi and then will take questions.

The details of who asks how many questions has not been worked out yet. What I would hope to work out is something where the Sigma Delta Chi members would ask some and the White House press corps would ask some.

Q What was the date on that?

MR. NESSEN: The 14th of November.

After the Sigma Delta Chi appearance, the President will return to Washington, getting back sometime after midnight.

Q Will that appearance be available for live coverage?

MR. NESSEN: It will be available for live coverage.

As you have seen from the reports on the wire, Secretary Kissinger was in Belgrade, Yugoslavia for talks with President Tito, and he will go to Rome later today to deliver the opening address at the World Food Conference tomorrow morning.

As you have also seen in the press reports, the Secretary has announced that he will visit the Middle East following the World Food Conference. He plans to visit Cairo, Riyadh, Amman, Damascus and Israel.

The purpose of this trip to the Middle East is to consult with the parties about the significance of the Rabat summit and possible next steps toward a Middle East peace.

The Secretary has also announced that he will visit Ankarah, Turkey on Friday and Saturday to confer with Turkish leaders on the question of Cyprus and other matters of mutual interest. We expect Secretary Kissinger to return to Washington sometime over the weekend.

I mentioned to some of you that the Secretary is keeping the President informed and is in contact frequently with him by cable on his discussions with various leaders at each of his stops.

The President has followed these reports closely and is providing guidance and advice to the Secretary as his talks with various leaders have progressed.

We have a number of routine announcements to hand out, and because some were out here and some were inside, maybe you didn't get your little packets, but as you go back inside, they will be ready.

In the packet you will find a letter from Ken W. Clawson to the President resigning effective November 7, and you will find a letter of response from the President.

Q What about a replacement?

MR. NESSEN: There will be no replacement.

That is all I have.

Q What about Jerry Warren? CBS was carrying an announcement that he is to become a Deputy Press Secretary.

MR. NESSEN: We are in the process of doing some reorganizing in the Press Office, and I think I will wait and announce the reshuffle all at one time.

Q When will you make that announcement?

MR. NESSEN: I would hope in a day or so.

Q Ron, it has already been reported, either confirm it or deny it.

MR. NESSEN: I am saying that I will wait and announce all the Press Office reorganization at one time, John.

Q Can you confirm that he is not leaving the White House staff?

MR. NESSEN: Can I confirm or deny that Jerry Warren is leaving the White House staff? I think I will just wait and make all my White House Press Office announcements at one time.

Q Ron, has the President decided on what to do on the Flanigan nomination? Has he resubmitted it?

MR. NESSEN: Has the President decided to resubmit the Flanigan nomination? All the nominations except routine ones and Governor Rockefeller were brought back to the White House prior to the recess or at the time of the recess. And as far as I know, Flanigan is still the President's choice for Ambassador to Spain.

Q Ron, what is the President going to do about the impending coal strike?

MR. NESSEN: I think to talk about a coal strike is premature, and I am told that Mr. Usery can answer your questions on the subject.

Q Does that mean that the President still hopes to avert a strike?

MR. NESSEN: It certainly does.

Q How?

Q We can't hear the questions.

MR. NESSEN: Helèn was wondering whether the President still hopes to avert a coal strike, and the answer to that is yes.

Q Will the President invoke the Taft-Hartley Law if necessary?

MR. NESSEN: That question is much, much too premature.

Q Ron, there was a story in the paper this morning about the President giving his consent or approval of a bolder and more urgent arms program for Israel which was suggested by Secretary Schlesinger.

MR. NESSEN: The question was about a story that appeared in the paper this morning. Was it a story or was it in a column?

Q The Alsop column.

MR. NESSEN: The Alsop column, an Alsop column item about Schlesinger urging the President was it?

Q Giving his consent, the President's approval of a bolder and more urgent arms program for Israel.

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything on that.

Q Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, Phil.

Q Has the President requested a report on what the effects on the economy will be of a coal strike?

MR. NESSEN: All I can say is that talk of a coal strike is premature, Phil.

Q Ron, Mrs. Marjorie Lynch is supposed to undergo confirmation by the Senate Judiciary Committee after Congress returns for the number two spot in the Bicentennial Commission. Is the President aware that this woman was born and educated in England?

MR. NESSEN: Sarah's question is, is the President aware that the woman nominated to the second position on the Bicentennial Commission was born and educated in England. I don't know, and I will have to check.

Q Ron, on the President's statement the other night in Wichita, we asked you if he had any political remarks or any estimates on rumors or any comment he would like to make after concluding the campaign. Has he said anything to you to indicate how he feels he did for the Republicans?

MR. NESSEN: The question is does the President have any feeling about how he did for the Republicans as he campaigned around.

There are some indications that the President helped the candidates in the stops where he campaigned.

The President won't have any -- I think he told you himself that he doesn't want to get into numbers, and I think at this late date, just before the people are about to vote, he would rather not get into individual races now. He has done what he set out to do, and it is up to the people to choose now.

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Q Ron, you said the President still hopes to avert a coal strike. Does he expect that a coal strike will be averted?

MR. NESSEN: I think I would just like to leave it that it is premature to talk about a strike in the coal industry.

Q Excuse me, Ron, talks have broken off and the situation in the coal industry is such that they need quite a bit of lead time, and it really is at the decision making time now. I don't see how you can say it is premature when talks have broken off and coal operators are beginning to plan for shutting down the mines.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I suggest that you contact Mr. Usery, who I am told has some information that will put the state of the negotiations into a little clearer light than the way you report them.

Q Ron, have you tried to check out the Alsop story that the President has approved new, urgent aid to Israel, or are you just not answering the question?

MR. NESSEN: No, I need to check that out, Helen.

Q How will we find out what your answer is?

MR. NESSEN: We will either post -- we will probably post or give it to you tomorrow.

Q Ron, when you say there are some indications that the President helped candidates in spots where he campaigned, are you going beyond just the money he raised, that he actually expects that he will improve the voter turnout for Republicans as well as just fund raising?

MR. NESSEN: He thinks he improved the voter turnout. He thinks he raised some money for Republicans, and he thinks he helped the candidates.

Q You talked about announcing some changes in the Press Office. When do you expect this to be announced?

MR. NESSEN: This week.

Q Is this going to be what you would categorize as a major reshuffle?

MR. NESSEN: I will let you decide on whether it is major or minor, Phil. It is just that I have had a chance now to take a look at the Press Office operation, and I think the changes will improve it.

Sarah.

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Q Ron, we have been told that Mr. Brad Patterson is going to be on Mrs. Ford's staff. Now, today we are told that he is going back to the White House, to the West Wing in the reorganization over there. Where is he going when he goes back?

MR. NESSEN: The question was concerning Mr. Patterson working on the East Wing for Mrs. Ford.

On October 4 the President asked Mr. Patterson to help improve the staff coordination of Mrs. Ford's staff. He has completed that task and has returned to his former position of executive assistant to Len Garment.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:04 PM EST)