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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:55 AM EST

NOVEMBER 25, 1974

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: Okay. It's Monday, so this must be Washington, right?

Well, I am not going to try to tell you that this is the most significant briefing since the end of World War II, and I don't expect you to be dazzled by it either.

I see everybody's in good humor this morning. We have a new secretary in our Press Office. That ought to brighten some of your days. Her name is Judith Ann Haugh, and you will see her when you do business with the Press Office.

The President came in a little late this morning, too, getting to the office at 9:20, and since then, he has met with Jack Marsh, Dick Cheney, who you know is Don Rumsfeld's deputy, Bill Timmons, Bob Hartmann and myself.

During the time that I was in the office, the President called Governor Rockefeller and asked about Mrs. Rockefeller's condition.

Q Is that after the operation?

MR. NESSEN: It was about an hour ago, and I am not sure what time the operation was, Fran.

The President said Mrs. Ford was concerned, and Mrs. Ford had thought about calling herself, but it was decided that the President would call and the President said "Mrs. Ford asked me to wish Happy the best."

Mrs. Ford has sent flowers and said "You give her our love, our prayers are with her. When you get a little clearer picture, call us back."

Tomorrow morning, the President will brief leaders of Congress on his talks in the Far East.

Q What time?

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MR. NESSEN: We don't have -- we are a little slow coming together here today, and we do not have the exact times on a couple of things that are happening tomorrow, but we will get it for you by the end of the day, or before the end of the day.

Q Ron, a question on that. Will he, at that time, tell the Congressional leaders the aggregate number of delivery systems?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding, Jim.

Q He will give them an actual number?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, right. The meetings will be attended by the leaders of the two parties in Congress in both the Senate and the House, as well as the Chairman and ranking Republican on the Armed Forces, Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs and Appropriations Committees.

Q Would you run those by once more?

MR. NESSEN: Armed Service, Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs and Appropriations, as well as the leadership.

Q What do you consider the leadership; how far down do you go in the leadership?

MR. NESSEN: Let me get you the thing later on because, as I say, we are operating at about half-speed here today, at best.

Also, tomorrow -- and again, I don't have the times or the details -- you are going to have a signing of the Mass Transit Bill, and there will be a briefing on that. I will get you the times and details later on. You also have the budget cuts going up for the Fiscal Year 1975, going up tomorrow. Roy Ash will do the briefing on that, and again, we will let you know the time and we will have a package of material on that.

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Q What fiscal year did you use?

MR. NESSEN: 1975.

Q Can you give us an idea what the figures are?

MR. NESSEN: No, I can't give you that right now, Fran.

Q Can you give us any guidance on the timing of these two things; both in the morning, the signing of the bill and the ---

MR. NESSEN: I would say roughly without the thing being firmed up yet you will probably have the bill signing in the morning and the budget cuts in the afternoon, and the moon at night, from the song of the same name, Dick.

The President for the rest of today will be meeting with his staff members to discuss the budget cuts for 1975.

We do have a time on the bill signing. 10:15 on the bill signing, Dick, so you can plan your day, in the East Room. Congressmen, Mayors, and Governors have been invited to the signing. We do not have the list right here. There will be a briefing after that.

Q Will there be coverage?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q What time is the briefing?

MR. NESSEN: Shortly afterward, I think. We just have not made up the schedule for that yet.

Looking ahead, a few items of interest. Thanksgiving Day, as you know, the President is having the brunch with his former high school football teammates, called the 30-30 Brunch Group. There will be coverage of that. I don't have the exact time. I think it is like 11:00 or noon. Eleven o'clock then.

Then later on in the day, Thanksgiving dinner for the family here at the residence.

Saturday is the Army-Navy Football Game in Philadelphia, which the President plans to attend.

Next Wednesday, December 4th, is the Trudeau visit, and next Thursday, the 5th of December, is the Schmidt visit, and the 14th, 15th, and 16th is the trip to Martinique for the meeting with the French President.

Q The 14th, 15th, and 16th?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

The President will send to the Senate for confirmation the nomination of Frank G. Zarb to be Administrator of the Federal Energy Administration. Some paper on this and a biography and so forth should be out momentarily.

Q When is he going to announce that, today?

MR. NESSEN: The paper will tell you.

The President emphasized the importance of this post as being most critical to development and implementation of the national energy policy.

The Federal Energy Administration, as a member of the Energy Resources Council, is the essential staff supporting all the Federal Government activities in the energy area. The Administrator of FEA is one of the President's senior advisors on energy, and the Administrator also serves to help keep all energy oriented agencies working together toward the common national objectives.

As Associate Director of the Office of Management and Budget for Natural Resources, Energy and Science, Mr. Zarb has become uniquely qualified for this role. Upon confirmation he will, or until confirmation, I should say, Mr. Zarb will continue to serve as Executive Director of the -- let me back up -- when he is confirmed as Administrator he will also serve as Executive Director of the Energy Resources Council.

Q He is that now, isn't he?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and he will continue.

To anticipate your questions, all of his FBI checks and security clearances, conflict of interest statement and other checks have been made and he has passed.

Q What is a conflict of interest statement?

MR. NESSEN: A statement that all White House officials must file and have approved.

Q Since when?

MR. NESSEN: Well I don't know what went before, Fran, but certainly since I have been here.

Q Are we going to have questions and answers now?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot find anything else to announce.

Q The first question, then, is, is the President making any plans to brief Henry Jackson on the arms limitations talks inasmuch as I don't believe he is direct leadership, or falls in the category of any of the committee chairmanships you mentioned?

MR. NESSEN: I'll have to check on that.

Q My second question is, does the President have any plans for church on Thanksgiving Day?

MR. NESSEN: I'll have to check on that one.

Q What about plans for a TV speech?

MR. NESSEN: None that I know.

Q You don't expect one on the trip?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q There were reports that he would make a nationwide TV speech on the Far East trip. Are you now saying that definitely is not going to happen?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, how will these numbers be communicated on ICBMs and others -- how will they be communicated to the American people?

MR. NESSEN: There will be a way.

Q Ron, did the President speak to you --

Q He does plan to tell us the details, doesn't he?

MR. NESSEN: Of course.

Q Did the President speak to you about your statement about how much President Ford had accomplished in the three months compared to the previous President in three years?

MR. NESSEN: Well, we talked about the -- yes.

Q What did he have to say?

MR. NESSEN: He was not critical.

Q What did he say?

MR. NESSEN: He was not critical.

Q Ron, if Congress is still in session at the time the President had planned to go to Colorado, will he delay his departure for Colorado?

MR. NESSEN: We have not announced any Colorado trip, have we?

Q More or less.

Q The President talked about it on the campaign trips.

Q He also said he plans to be in Colorado Christmas, but he did not mention dates.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any plans to change.

Q This involves a sort of foul-up in rooms --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any plans to change the trip to Colorado.

Q Ron, is the President still making decisions on the budget deferrals and decisions for '75?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and I am going to have to leave you shortly and go to the meeting, which started ten minutes ago.

Q Ron, is there anything out for Andrew Gibson to announce?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, if the President does plan to communicate the numbers involved in the SALT Agreement to the American people, and by the same token does not plan to hold a nationwide televised speech, do you anticipate he will be holding a press conference in the near future, or can you give us some indication of what means he might use to do this?

MR. NESSEN: Well, in keeping with his normal timetable of news conferences every two or three weeks, I would think one would be due fairly soon.

Q Ron, when is the President going to act on the GI Bill, the Veteran's Education Bill?

MR. NESSEN: He has until the 29th, doesn't he?

Q I am not sure.

MR. NESSEN: I think he has until the 29th.

Q It came down the day you arrived.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q You have no indication exactly.

MR. NESSEN: Not on the precise date, no, but obviously sometime before the next four days.

Q Are the President's sons coming home for Thanksgiving?

MR. NESSEN: Is not Sheila handling most of the arrangements and discussion of the Thanksgiving dinner? Why don't you give a call to Sheila.

Q Along the same lines Ron, logistically, you said there will be coverage of the brunch. Does that mean just a photo, in effect?

MR. NESSEN: There will certainly be pictures taken and film, and I would think reporters will go in for a while.

Q Could you tell me, or could you find out for me if there are any other requests for pardons by Watergate people, formal requests?

MR. NESSEN: Aren't those pardons supposed to be sent through the normal channels to the Justice Department?

Q This is where the final authority is, however.

MR. NESSEN: You better check first and see if there have been any sent to the Pardon Attorney over at the Justice Department. That is where they go first.

Q Ron, I may have missed an announcement here, but I have two questions about this ---

MR. NESSEN: I missed a day or so here ---

Q --- about this list of meetings; Trudeau on the 4th, Schmidt on the 5th, and, of course, D'estaing on the 14th to 16th.

Two questions about it. One, would you assume, or can we assume that he will be briefing these Western leaders on the SALT Agreement and the Far East meeting with President Brezhnev, and secondly, where is Wilson in this picture? Have you announced anything on Wilson?

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall announcing anything on Wilson.

Q Would you expect he would be meeting with Wilson along in the same period sometime?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything on that, Jim. The agenda for these talks -- I have not seen an agenda for these talks, so when the question of SALT would come up -- I suppose it could if they were interested in it, but I have not seen an agenda.

Q Is there any particular reason why the White House would schedule an announced meeting with leaders of France and West Germany and not the Prime Minister of Britain?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any reason.

Q Ron, did the President have any comment on Michigan losing out in the Rose Bowl?

MR. NESSEN: I think I told some of you who were on the trip that he found out about it from Major Barrett when he got up on Saturday morning Vladivostok time and was disappointed, and then he asked Major Barrett to get the statistics on the game, and the statistics indicated that Michigan had outplayed Ohio State but still lost in the score, and he again expressed disappointment.

Q Does he want a recount --

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard that he did. I have not heard anything about a recount.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:15 PM EST)