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NEWS CONFERENCE

#123

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JACK HUSHEN

AT 12:10 P.M. EST

JANUARY 13, 1975

MONDAY

MR. HUSHEN: Good morning.

The President arrived in the Oval Office at 7:45 a.m. He subsequently met with Jack Marsh, Dick Cheney, Bob Hartmann, Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, Ron Nessen, Max Friedersdorf, myself, Bill Simon, Alan Greenspan and Roy Ash.

Q Separately?

MR. HUSHEN: Both separately and together. Some of the people were together and some were separate.

Q Did he see Kissinger separately?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, he did.

Q Can you tell us which were separately, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I think he met with Jack Marsh separately. I believe he met with Dick Cheney separately, Bob Hartmann separately and Henry Kissinger separately.

At approximately 10:15 a.m., there was a group meeting of Marsh, Friedersdorf, Hartmann, Cheney, Nessen and myself.

Q On what?

MR. HUSHEN: General matters.

Q Did that meeting decide whether we have a speech tonight or not?

MR. HUSHEN: I will get to that in a minute.

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The President has been working this morning and will be working much of the afternoon on his State of the Union Message, which, as you know, he will deliver at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

At 11:00 a.m., he met briefly with Senator Hruska, the ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, to discuss matters coming before that Committee in the new Congress.

Q Did they discuss the nominee for Attorney General?

MR. HUSHEN: That was brought up in their meeting.

Q Was a name brought up?

MR. HUSHEN: There was a discussion about the new Attorney General nominee. We have nothing further to say on that at this time.

Q Did he inform Senator Hruska he was going ahead with the nomination of Mr. Levi?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know whether he did or not, Jim. He certainly has indicated his preference in the past.

Q On that subject, do the President's remarks about Mr. Levi in the Time interview indicate that the President has definitely decided to nominate him?

MR. HUSHEN: No, I think the President has indicated --

Q He talks about having an identifiable Democrat in the Cabinet, and there is a direct reference to Mr. Levi. Isn't that an indication the President intends to nominate him?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the President has indicated his support for Mr. Levi, but until we announce it from here, there is no formal nomination.

Q Did he indicate his support for Mr. Levi in Vail?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe he indicated his support for Mr. Levi in Vail.

Q Did they discuss -- that is, the President and Senator Hruska -- any difficulties connected with the nomination. In other words, did Senator Hruska tell the President of any difficulties connected with it, and did the President say, let's talk about them and try to work something out? Is that what the purpose was?

MR. HUSHEN: The President confers on many matters in trying to work out any problems that may arise. But as to what was discussed in this meeting, I can't go into the details. I was not present at it. I just know there was a meeting, and it was for the purpose of discussing the Attorney General nomination.

Q Did Mr. Hruska ask for the meeting or did the President?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe we asked for it.

Q Jack, did you say it was for the purpose of discussing the Attorney General nomination?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, we asked for the meeting.

Let me go on. I believe the President is meeting now with Secretaries Kissinger and Butz, Chairman Greenspan, Director Ash and Brent Scowcroft to discuss international food programs.

At 2:00 p.m., the President will meet with Senator Russell Long, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, to discuss the energy and economic proposals and the State of the Union Message and other legislative matters. As you know, he met with Senator Long's counterpart, Congressman Ullman, last Friday.

The White House has requested time from the television networks for President Ford to deliver his speech to the American people at 9:00 p.m. tonight, Eastern Standard Time. The purpose of the speech is to outline the highlights of the President's economic and energy programs and to tell the American people what is required of all of us to make these programs work. The speech will last approximately 20 minutes, and the President will deliver it from the library in the Residence.

Q Will there be an advance text?

MR. HUSHEN: We expect to have a text available about 5:00 p.m.

Q Why did he decide to jump the gun on his own State of the Union?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think it is a matter of jumping the gun, Helen. I think, as he said himself, these are very serious matters facing the American people, and I think he wants to tell them directly what he is going to ask of them.

In view of that, I think you have to view the State of the Union Message as a much longer and detailed document discussing matters that would not be of as much general interest to the American public.

Q He takes the steam out of it, doesn't he, by giving a speech tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: We don't think so.

Q Is it to counteract the Democrats?

MR. HUSHEN: No, ma'am.

Q Does this mean the State of the Union speech is going to be a more general, laundry list type of thing since the energy-economic is going to be taken out of the State of the Union?

MR. HUSHEN: The State of the Union Message will go into more specific details, some items which would not be covered in the speech tonight. It will be much longer.

Q Jack, what is the format going to be? Is he going to be behind his desk, maybe standing by the bookshelves there, or how?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure if it is all ironed out, Bob. Most of you have seen the library. Of course, it is filled on all four walls with books. There is a desk in there.

Q Jack, can you give us any reason for this? How did this come about, when the State of the Union was already billed for Wednesday?

MR. HUSHEN: The President has been working on this, on the State of the Union, and finally this morning the decision was made that he wanted to talk to the American people.

Q When was the speech begun to be written, the speech he is going to give tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure, Norm. There have been several drafts and several different ideas, recommendations, and there had been no decisions made until they finally decided to go with the State of the Union on Wednesday.

Q Would you say they have been working on it for a week or more, approximately?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the State of the Union has been worked on longer than that.

Q I don't mean the State of the Union -- tonight's speech.

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure when they started working on it.

Q Jack, just how detailed is the President going to be tonight? Is he going to tell the American people we will have an X billion dollar tax cut and things like that, or is he going to talk in big generalities?

MR. HUSHEN: Tune in.

Q I plan to, but obviously the speech is well along. Is he going to talk in specifics as far as his tax cut plans?

MR. HUSHEN: I am just not going to go any further than that right now.

Q Was this a formal request or can you compare this to the Kansas City speech, which was a direct appeal to the American people? Is that the major thrust of the speech tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: I won't contrast it to the Kansas City speech or compare it with it.

Q Have you gotten the television time? Did you hear about that?

MR. HUSHEN: The request was made. As I said, all this occurred this morning, and I don't know whether we have heard back or not.

Q My question, Jack, is whether this was a normal request or whether this could be compared to the Kansas City speech, that an offer was made, the networks decided against it and then you requested it?

MR. HUSHEN: No, it is nothing like what occurred regarding the Kansas City speech. The scenario was not at all like that.

Q I think in the Kansas City case, first of all, it was simply made available.

MR. HUSHEN: That is true.

Q In effect, now you are doing immediately what you did finally there. You are making a Presidential request.

MR. HUSHEN: That is true.

Q Can you say whether tonight's speech will include the major elements of the President's State of the Union speech?

MR. HUSHEN: It will.

Steve, to make sure we are both on the same track, we did finally make the request for time in the Kansas City speech, but, regarding the speech tonight, it was not announced and then finally requested.

Q I understand that, but it was a formal request?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q Which is all the further you went finally in the Kansas City speech.

Q Jack, while we are here, can somebody check whether you have heard from the networks?

MR. HUSHEN: We will tell you as soon as we have heard.

Q Does that mean at this moment you have not heard?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know.

Q Jack, when will you announce the Secretary of Transportation?

MR. HUSHEN: I have nothing to announce on that today. For those of you who saw Time Magazine, you certainly saw the President intends to nominate Mr. Coleman.

Q Jack, with reference to Time Magazine, did the Secretary of State review the text of the interview before it was published?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know the answer to that.

Q Did the Secretary of State meet with the President about the comments that he made before they were published?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know the answer to that.

Q Did the President review the interview before it was published?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know the answer to that.

Q Can we get the answers?

MR. HUSHEN: I can give it a try.

Q What is the significance of the President giving an interview of this kind at a time when the situation on the Middle East is so tense that he himself, as well as the Secretary of State, have spoken about quiet diplomacy?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think there is any significance to be attributed to the granting of an interview to Time Magazine at this time.

Q Do you mean an interview with Time is something other than quiet diplomacy, or is part of quiet diplomacy?

MR. HUSHEN: I think I know what you are driving at, but I can hardly say the entire interview was on one subject.

Q There are elements in it that were characterized both at the department and here as inimical to anything but quiet diplomacy. Here we have interviews given by the President and the Secretary of State in four publications within about a month dealing with the Middle East. Why?

MR. HUSHEN: We didn't program the questions, Joe.

Q But you programmed the interviews.

MR. HUSHEN: It is a matter of requests that are being honored.

Q Will you give the Jewish Telegraph Agency an interview with the President?

MR. HUSHEN: I think we would certainly consider it.

Q Let it be a formal request being made now.

MR. HUSHEN: Submit it in writing to Mr. Nessen the way the other publications have.

Q Jack, could I follow up on a question of a minute ago? I think if you could say the speech tonight is going to contain the major elements of the President's State of the Union address, does that mean, in effect, the President will spell out his position on a tax cut, and secondly, will there be any major aspect of the State of the Union address that is not known tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: As I said when I made the announcements, the purpose of the speech tonight is to outline the highlights of the President's economic and energy programs. There will be things in the State of the Union that will not be included in the speech tonight.

As I said, the speech tonight is approximately 20 minutes long. The State of the Union will run considerably longer, and there may be additional material on top of that.

Q I said, would there be anything major in the State of the Union address that will not be in there tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: I have not seen the State of the Union Message, so I can't accurately respond to that.

Q Jack, there is a point I would like to make. Will he withhold any major announcement from his speech tonight and put it in the State of the Union Message? I think this is the import of the question.

MR. HUSHEN: When you say withhold, it sounds like something --

Q I don't mean it that way. Will there be anything in the State of the Union Message of a major nature that will not be in the speech tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: How much more major than energy and the economy?

Q We don't know what he is going to talk about in specific terms.

MR. HUSHEN: Those are the two major issues.

Q It will be specific. It will be chapter and verse, in dollar signs and so forth?

MR. HUSHEN: He is going to tell the American public what he is going to ask of all of us.

Q Will it tell what he is going to ask of Congress?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't want to go into all the details of the speech tonight.

Q Is it safe for us to assume from your language what would be required of all the American people to make it work? Is it safe to infer from that language that they are going to know enough facts to know how much is going one way, how much is coming another way in broad outlines?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the American public will have a good idea of what the President is going to both be asking them and will be requesting from Congress as a result of what he says tonight.

Q Jack, there is a question I think you can answer here, and that is this: The transcript reveals that last week Ron said, "I will check the statute number for you, Les." This is the law which allegedly allows President Ford to send classified briefing material to Mr. Nixon. After the briefing you said, "We will get right on it."

The question is, what is the statute number, if any, because Congressman Moss charged this morning that the President is "clearly violating Executive Order 11652," a copy of which he provided me with, with the appropriate sections underlined. Now, what is the statute that justifies the President sending classified information to Mr. Nixon that you said you would get right on?

MR. HUSHEN: Executive Order 11456, which was signed by former President Nixon on February 14, 1969.

Q This exceeds it, sir. This is signed by Nixon on March 8, 1972, so that exceeds it. Is there anything else?

MR. HUSHEN: What does that say?

Q This says, "Richard Nixon, the White House, March 8, 1972, Revocation of Executive Order 10501..." and about seven other words. In other words, it exceeds all of them. Now, what law do you cite, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: As far as I am concerned,
Executive Order 11456 is still the --

Q That is the only one, right?

MR. HUSHEN: -- that is still the Executive
Order under which briefings are provided to former
Presidents.

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Q Is there a precedent for the President making an address to the nation as a preview of his State of the Union Message, or is this a first?

MR. HUSHEN: You are probably in a better position to talk about precedents than I am.

Q I thought maybe someone in the White House had checked into that.

MR. HUSHEN: I can't answer that.

Q Jack, you were asked in the very beginning why the President decided to do this, and it appears, as I read my notes on your answer, you didn't answer why he decided to jump the gun. You just said what he is going to do. He is going to make a speech to the American people to outline the highlights of his economic and energy programs. That doesn't answer the question "Why?," that just says what he is going to do. I would like to know why he is doing it.

MR. HUSHEN: I hardly think it is a matter of jumping the gun.

Q It is two days before the announced State of the Union.

Let me rephrase the question. Why is the President of the United States going to give the economic and energy highlights of the State of the Union Message to the American people two days in advance of his scheduled State of the Union Message?

MR. HUSHEN: Because the President thinks it is important to do so.

Q Jack, why was it decided not to have a prime time State of the Union Message instead of having two speeches?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe Congress invited him to make the State of the Union at 1:00 on Wednesday.

Q Is that why he requested prime time tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure.

Q That answer implies that he could not have made his speech on prime time Wednesday evening. Is that what you mean, they would not let him do it on Wednesday night?

MR. HUSHEN: No, there was no discussion of that.

Q Your answer, as to why it wasn't prime time, was because they invited him for the 1:00?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the thing you have to keep in mind, Ted, is that the State of the Union, as is now envisaged, is going to be a much more lengthy document. It is going to go into much more specific detail. It will discuss legislation. It will discuss some other programs that are not major programs, and the President wants to discuss the major elements, which are the economy and energy. That is why he asked for the prime time.

Q It is not because they wouldn't let him come there in the evening, that they insisted it be 1:00?

Q Was 1:00 their choice, or was that agreed upon? You give the impression Congress decided on the 1:00 time.

MR. HUSHEN: I guess it would be a mutually agreed upon time, but I am just not sure.

Q Did the fact that the Democrats released their economic program this morning have any bearing at all on the President's decision to go on television tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: Absolutely none. I am sure he is looking forward to working with the Congress to get a quick resolution of these things. I am sure he hopes that it is his plan that goes forward.

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Q Jack, is the President concerned that the Democrat program, if it goes too far, would be inflationary? Is he concerned about the breadth of the Democratic program?

MR. HUSHEN: The breadth?

Q Is he concerned that it will go too far?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't really think he has had a chance to study it in detail.

Q Is he going to give any specific responses to the Democratic proposal tonight?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Jack, I am curious as to why it is going to be from the library. Could you give us the reasoning on that? These speeches are traditionally made from the Oval Office, at least that is where he and his predecessors made theirs. What is the thinking behind having it over there?

MR. HUSHEN: As you know, we have checked out several different locations to present the President, and the decision was made to give this speech in the library.

Q Has the President authorized the United States Air Force to resume reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam?

MR. HUSHEN: I have no comment on that from this podium.

Q You won't confirm whether they are taking place or not?

MR. HUSHEN: I will not.

Q Would you say whether the President would concur with such action if it is taking place?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Why can't you confirm it? It seems to me the Pentagon already has, haven't they?

MR. HUSHEN: I refer you over there.

Q There was a question and the question was, did the President authorize this or did it come from the Pentagon? That is a fair question.

MR. HUSHEN: There was a question, and I said I would have no comment on it.

Q Is it fair to say it wouldn't be happening if the President didn't want it to happen?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not going to comment on that. You know who the President of the United States is, and you know who sets the foreign policy of this country.

Q Jack, can you explain to us why there is no comment from this podium on this subject?

MR. HUSHEN: Because I am just not going to comment on it.

Q Was it on orders from the President?

MR. HUSHEN: No. I am just not going to comment.

Q Are you under orders from anyone not to, or did you decide this yourself? I mean, did Mr. Nessen say to you not to if the question was raised, or did the President say to you not to if the question was raised, or the Secretary of State?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Jack, where is Ron today?

MR. HUSHEN: He is working with the President on the speech for tonight.

Q Jack, could you tell me, since a previous inhabitant of that podium has described Ron Nessen -- has charged him with absurdity and charged the President with neglect regarding Mr. Nixon, I am just wondering now that he is going out for \$2500 a speech to peddle this stuff, is the White House just going to say no comment at all on Mr. Ziegler? Doesn't that suggest that maybe there is some truth in what Mr. Ziegler is now contending? Will you let the President and your boss be attacked like this, Jack, without any word from you?

MR. HUSHEN: I think we straightened out the error --

Q How did you straighten it out? I didn't see that in the news. How did you straighten it out, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: It is my understanding the original story left the impression the former President was being billed for that flight from roughly Jefferson City to El Toro when the fact is that that flight is being paid for by the military on orders of the President.

Q Jack, are any of the President's economic advisers going to be available today to explain how the economic program works?

MR. HUSHEN: No, we are setting up time schedules for briefings for the State of the Union.

Q Will that be before or after on Wednesday, the briefings?

MR. HUSHEN: It will be before.

Q Why should one not be available this afternoon? I mean, since he is going to explain it to the American people, why shouldn't someone be around just to make clear that we understood what it is that he is explaining?

MR. HUSHEN: From reading the papers, I thought you all did. Let's take a look at that after the briefing and see what we can work out for you.

Q Are there any plans for a press conference this week?

MR. HUSHEN: None before Wednesday. Beyond that, I don't have any answer. I think not.

Q Jack, let me ask you a couple of house-keeping questions about the State of the Union, not tonight's speech, but the State of the Union Wednesday. Do you know yet -- as I say, these are strictly house-keeping -- approximately how long the State of the Union Message will be and when we might expect on Wednesday to get the text of it?

MR. HUSHEN: If we used the length of the first, it was going to go up in book form.

No, right now I don't. There is still a lot of work to be done on it, and for your guidance, we are looking for something early Wednesday morning in terms of a briefing.

Q Jack, can you elaborate again on the Time Magazine interview when he talks about Israel and since we know and you have reminded us again that it is the President who sets foreign policy, there is an obvious threat here about Israel, he says, "Unless some real progress is made, the United States will not guarantee the existence of Israel."

Can you elaborate on that or tell us how that came into being? Has Israel already been notified of this position, and does Israel know what real progress means?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the President's words have to speak for themselves.

Q They don't in this case, Jack, and we have had an experience where his words did not. So, I think that calls for some clarification here, either how it came about, and the usual thing. Does this meet with the approval of his very close advisers and does Israel know what real progress means?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not going to go beyond what he has said.

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Q Jack, why couldn't we get somebody out here that can answer some of these questions? You have said "No" on everything. That is a legitimate question he is asking, and you have just given us no answer on anything.

Q Jack, will you finish answering my question?

MR. HUSHEN: As I said, I think the President's words -- they are clear enough to me, and I am sorry they are not clear enough to you.

Q Can you tell us what real progress means, then, if they are clear to you? Obviously they are unclear, at least to me and, perhaps, one other of my colleagues -- I don't know.

MR. HUSHEN: I am just not going to go beyond what he said.

Q Jack, can you tell us why the President chose to raise the issue or the question of a security guarantee by the United States for Israel, when this has not been, to my knowledge, a formal or official part of our policy in the Middle East, why he chose to say there has been talk about it and, then, to raise it to the level of a policy offer or a policy possibility, when the United States -- if my memory is correct -- has never been willing to say that this was part of its policy?

Why did the President chose to bring it up at this time?

MR. HUSHEN: As a matter of fact, he didn't bring it up, it was in answer to a question.

Q What was the question?

MR. HUSHEN: "Would you guarantee the security of Israel?" That was the question.

Q No, that is not the question, Jack.

Q The existence of Israel --

MR. HUSHEN: It says, "There has been a suggestion that the United States might formally guarantee Israel, is that a possibility?" That is the question, and I think he reaffirmed the United States' commitments to Israel and spoke about our interests coinciding.

Q Let's read the next question. He said, "But in the final analysis, we have to judge what is in our national interest above any and all other considerations."

MR. HUSHEN: That is right, and that seems to be very clear.

Q Is that a change in U. S. policy, or is that the same?

MR. HUSHEN: No, I don't think that is a change in U. S. policy. I think in the final analysis that is what we have to do.

Q Jack, does that say as long as Israel occupies large chunks of Arab territory that U. S. interest and Israeli policy are not necessarily the same thing?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not going to respond to that.

Q Is there going to be a decision on world food today?

MR. HUSHEN: No, but it is getting close.

Q What is getting close?

MR. HUSHEN: A decision.

Q Of how much food?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q Jack, also, a housekeeping question. Now that the President has decided to outline the highlights of his economic and energy proposals tonight, does that mean the State of the Union Wednesday will be expanded to include something besides energy and economics, say, for example, foreign policy?

In Vail we were told, as I remember, that that would probably be delivered in a later message to Congress -- foreign policy would be included in a later message to Congress. The State of the Union would be limited almost exclusively to energy and the economy.

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know whether foreign policy will be included or not. I know there will be some other measures that will be included.

Q Jack, can you tell us something about any possible visit at the end of the month or next month by President Sadat of Egypt? There have been reports that he is coming to Washington.

MR. HUSHEN: I have no information on that at all.

Q Jack, I would like to go back to the Ziegler interview. In that interview, Ziegler levels some pretty serious charges against the present occupants of the White House. What is the White House reaction to that, to the charges that you are keeping all the former President's souvenirs, you are not sending out the mail and you are generally just taking a callous attitude towards the former President?

MR. HUSHEN: I think, on the contrary, we have done everything we can to facilitate the movement of this stuff, material, mail. However, as a result of court orders and Congressionally enacted legislation, many items cannot be turned loose, and we are trying to work that out.

The last thing we want to do is hold up these things from going to the former President.

Q In that connection, did someone talk to Ziegler? Did Nessen, the advisers or did someone on the staff call Ziegler?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Will the President meet with Foreign Minister Alon of Israel this week?

MR. HUSHEN: I have nothing to announce on that; nothing has been set. If such a meeting were to be scheduled, we will announce it, but we have nothing to announce right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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(AT 12:45 P.M. EST)#123