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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:03 P.M. EST

JANUARY 31, 1975

FRIDAY

MR. NESSEN: Before we start, I wanted to remind you that most of you have been, or will be, invited to one or another White House social events as guests. I am sure most of you know that when you are invited to a social event as a guest, you are not supposed to be there as a reporter.

I realize it is impossible to completely separate that, but I am told that at last night's dinner, for instance, some Administration officials talked to guests and then woke up this morning and found what they had said to their table partners, or something, in the newspapers. So, it is a long-standing rule that, as guests at a social event, you will just have to put aside for that evening, at least, your role as a reporter.

Q Where can we find these nuggets? (Laughter.)

MR. NESSEN: Where are the nuggets? The nuggets are on one of the wire services. I don't know which one.

At 11 o'clock, the President met with Prime Minister Wilson. The Prime Minister is just now departing, and the pool has gone to cover the departure. I expect that later in the afternoon, probably after the Prime Minister's appearance at the Press Club, say around 2:30 or 3:00 p.m., we will have some information to put out here on the meeting.

At 2:30 p.m. this afternoon, the President is going to drop in at a meeting of 22 National Indian Tribal Chairmen and two other Indian officials, who represent 150,000 Indians from six Western States. These tribal chairmen and Indian officials were invited here by the ACTION program to discuss their concerns and to offer their evaluations of the ACTION program. The meeting is being held in the Cabinet Room, and as I said, the President is expected to drop in just briefly on that meeting.

Q Do you have a list of participants?

MR. NESSEN: I do.

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Q Can we get it later?

MR. NESSEN: I think it would be better to get it later, yes, because there are quite a few of them here.

At 3 o'clock, the President is going to meet with Roy Ash to receive the first bound copy of the 1976 fiscal budget and to talk about Roy's budget briefing tomorrow. I would think, if there was interest, we would arrange for photographers or cameramen to go in there.

At 4:30 p.m., the President is having another one of his regular meetings with the Vice President.

At 6 o'clock, the President will be the host at a reception and dinner for about 45 or 50 Republican Members of Congress, and, also, attending that will be Secretary Kissinger, Alan Greenspan and some other Administration officials and Vice President Rockefeller. The purpose of this is to talk primarily about the President's energy program and the need to push it through Congress quickly.

I suspect there will be other dinners with other Members of Congress as we go along, but this is tonight's.

Q Are they Republicans and Democrats?

MR. NESSEN: No, all Republicans.

Q Do you have a list?

MR. NESSEN: I do not at this moment, but we will later in the afternoon.

Q What kind of coverage on that?

MR. NESSEN: It is a private working dinner, so there won't be any coverage.

I can give you a few details of Atlanta, if there is any interest.

The President is going to hold a press conference in Atlanta on Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 local time.

Q Is that Eastern time?

MR. NESSEN: It is the same time that we are on, Eastern time.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: At the Hyatt-Regency Hotel.

If anybody wants to cover it on television or radio, they can. At 3 o'clock this afternoon, we are going to put up a list where you can sign up, if you want to ask questions.

Q How long will it be?

Q Is this going to be one of those things where you have a mixture of local questions --

MR. NESSEN: Wait just a second. It should run in the area of a half an hour, maybe a shade longer.

It will be something like Phoenix, in the sense that half the questions will come from the locals and half from the White House, which is why we need this sign-up list. We will take the questioners in the order that they sign up. I think we will have to put duplicates of the same news organizations at the bottom of the list -- I mean the second person from the same news organization.

Also, while there, the President is going to have dinner on Monday night. It is an informal working dinner on Monday night with the Governors of eight Southeastern States. That would be at 7:30 p.m., and that is also at the Hyatt Regency House, eight Governors from Southeastern States. The States are Alabama -- who is the Governor there? (Laughter) -- Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina and Tennessee.

They have all been invited, and they have all accepted the invitation. Obviously, there will be coverage with cameras and a pool at the beginning of the dinner, but it is a private dinner, so there won't be any coverage after some pictures at the beginning.

Q What time is the speech on Monday?

MR. NESSEN: It is about 5:00 or 5:30 p.m.

Q What is the name of that organization?

MR. NESSEN: That he is speaking to on Monday?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: It is the White House Conference.

For departure and so forth, the press bus is going to leave the Southwest Gate on Monday at 1:15; baggage deadline 11:30 in Room 87 of the EOB; check-in time at Andrews, 1:30 -- that is, if you want to go straight out there with your bag -- and the press plane will leave Andrews at 2 o'clock.

Q What time does the President leave?

MR. NESSEN: The President will depart shortly thereafter, at 3 o'clock.

The press plane will arrive at Dobbins Air Force Base at 3:30. When the press plane gets in, whichever ones of you who wish to do so, you can get on a bus and go immediately to the Hyatt-Regency Hotel, so you can be in place for his arrival and his speech. The rest of you, if you would like, can get on another bus and drive in in the motorcade.

The President will arrive at 4:30 p.m. at Dobbins Air Force Base.

The press will be staying at the Stouffers Hotel. The telephone number is, Area Code 404, 881-6000. The press room will be in the Georgia Ballroom Center, one level above the main lobby.

Q Of the Stouffers Hotel?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is that near the Hyatt-Regency Hotel?

MR. NESSEN: Stouffers is six blocks away from the Hyatt-Regency House and in a rundown section of town. (Laughter.)

Q Is the President staying at the Hyatt House?

MR. NESSEN: The President is staying at the Hyatt House.

Q How long will the speech be?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know; I have not seen the speech yet.

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Q Is there going to be a press room at the Hyatt-Regency House where things are happening?

MR. NESSEN: We were talking yesterday about having two press rooms. We will have two press rooms.

By tomorrow morning I hope we can give you at least a tentative bible. I think we will just go ahead and skip the briefing on Monday. If we have anything to announce, we will post it about 11:30 and that will give you an hour and 45 minutes to file.

Q Ron, is he returning right after the press conference Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: There are no other events on Tuesday.

Q Ali Bhutto arrives in Washington Tuesday.

MR. NESSEN: I think it is Wednesday. The President is coming back right after the news conference.

Q What is he doing Tuesday morning?

MR. NESSEN: Down there? Isn't that when he goes to the OIC?

Q He has a breakfast with the editors and publishers on Tuesday morning, and then this --

MR. NESSEN: All right.

Q Ron, if we had a briefing at 11:30 on Monday, we still would have time to file.

MR. NESSEN: I think we will just go ahead and post on Monday.

If you don't go to Atlanta, Alan Greenspan and members of his staff will conduct a briefing in Room 450 of the EOB at 9:30 on Tuesday on the President's Economic Report to Congress, which you know goes to Congress at noon on Tuesday. We expect to have copies of the economic report in the Press Office late Monday afternoon.

Q Will our White House passes get us in there?

MR. NESSEN: In the EOB for that briefing? Let me get to that part of it.

To go to the Tuesday morning briefing on the economic report, you should go in the Seventeenth Street entrance. Somebody from the Press Office will be there starting at 8:30 to help you get in. If you are sending somebody from your offices who doesn't have a White House press pass, you should call John Carlson for your clearance. His phone number is 456-2876.

Q Does this replace that briefing you had warned us might be replaced, the 4 p.m. briefing on the economic report that you announced the other day? You warned it might be delayed.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q That has been scrubbed?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, will you have copies of the economic report in Atlanta?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we will, no.

Q Ron, is he still going to make this speech on Tuesday in addition to the news conference?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. The schedule for Tuesday basically is a breakfast with editors and publishers from the Southeastern States, the speech to the OIC --

Q What time is that?

MR. NESSEN: Did we announce a time on that? I thought I had a little tentative schedule here. I guess I don't.

John suggested that you ought to call Jerry Warren's office to get people cleared into the economic briefing rather than his office.

Tomorrow night the President and Mrs. Ford will attend the 28th Annual Washington Mardi Gras Ball of the Louisiana State Society. That will be at the Sheraton Park Hotel. Susan Ford will be a princess in the King's court, where they have 35 queens and 27 princesses.

We will put up the names of the travel pool this afternoon. If you are on it, you should be here by 8 o'clock tomorrow night. Larry Speakes will be your escort, and he will have a corsage for all of you.

Q Ron, is there coverage allowed at this?

MR. NESSEN: I guess you have to get in touch with the Louisiana State Society.

The President and Mrs. Ford will leave the South Grounds at 8:30, get to the Sheraton Park at 8:40 and that is it.

Q Is that a costume deal or what are they going to wear?

MR. NESSEN: That is Sheila Weidenfeld's department.

Just to give you now what I have, this is a tentative schedule for Atlanta so the times may change somewhat.

Q There is nothing tentative about the events, though; in other words, the press conference is definite?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

As I say, he leaves here at 4 o'clock on Monday, gets into the -- the date on the schedule is January 27. That is when we were talking about a barnstorming tour.

You have the nomination of Peter H. Dominick of Englewood, Colorado, to be Ambassador to Switzerland. He is succeeding Shelby Davis, who is resigning.

Senator Dominick, as many of you know, was a Member of the United States Senate from 1963 to January 1975. He was a Member of the House of Representatives from 1955 to 1961. You have his biography in more detail.

The President also is announcing the appointment of six persons to be members of the President's Bio-medical Research Panel. We put out some information on that.

The duties of the panel are to review and make recommendations with respect to policy issues concerning the subject of biomedical and behavioral research conducted and supported under the programs of the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Mental Health.

The panel is in business for 18 months from now, and at that point it will send a report to both the Congress and to the President on its findings.

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Don't forget tomorrow is the budget briefing, and that is over in the State Department auditorium. Actually, all the details are being handled by OMB. I think we indicated that the stuff would be available some time later today.

I think from this point on you ought to call Whit Shoemaker. You know Whit, most of you, at OMB. Do they have to get cleared to go into the New EOB? That is in Room 2801, where the material will be available. You should call in and find out what time it is available and also arrange to clear yourself into the State Department tomorrow. His phone number is 395-3524.

Q Ron, is the only thing you can give us on the President's schedule tomorrow that dance tomorrow night? It would be more helpful to us whether we will have a briefing here tomorrow on what the President is going to do.

MR. NESSEN: No, I am not going to have a briefing here tomorrow. I have not seen his schedule for tomorrow. I don't think there is anything over here that would require a briefing.

Q Ron, can you confirm a release by a PR firm in New York that the President will make a major speech at a Rockefeller dinner in New York in February?

MR. NESSEN: I am familiar with the release. I wish I had made a tape recording of my phone conversation about 15 minutes ago with Mr. Novotney.

There is under consideration a trip by the President to that dinner. It has not been decided whether he will go or not.

Q Will he, as the release says, make a speech of major importance to the Nation?

MR. NESSEN: First of all, it is not decided that he will go or not.

Q I understand that.

MR. NESSEN: If he does go, it is not decided whether he will speak or not, and if he speaks, it has not been decided the content of the speech, which I told Mr. Novotney, with certain expletives deleted.

Q Ron, do you have an agenda for the meeting, or the dinner meeting with the Southeast Governors?



MR. NESSEN: Most of these Governors have at one point or another asked to have meetings with the President to discuss things that they wanted to talk about, so it was decided that since he was going to be down there and he had requests from almost all of them that he would have this working dinner in which they would have a chance to talk about what they wanted to talk about.

Q Will he attempt to explain the facts of his energy program at this dinner?

MR. NESSEN: I would not be a bit surprised if the energy program came up.

Q Has he ever met George Corley Wallace before?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Walt.

Q Would you have any comment on Judge Richey's decision or reaction from the President of any form?

MR. NESSEN: That just came over the wires before I came out here.

Q What was the question?

MR. NESSEN: Judge Richey's decision.

I just have not had the time to even read it very carefully.

Q Ron, when Governor Wallace asked to see the President, what did he say he wanted to talk about?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Bob. I am not sure whether he was one of those who did.

This looks like a little later schedule, and again it is tentative.

The President would leave at 3 o'clock and arrive at Dobbins Air Force Base at 4:30, go by motorcade to the Hyatt-Regency House and then speak to the White House Conference for about 20 minutes, beginning about ten minutes after five and then have his dinner with the Governors at 7:30. Then I think he goes to bed, or he goes to his room, anyhow.

Then the breakfast with the editors and publishers at about 8 o'clock Tuesday morning.

Q Is that a closed session?

MR. NESSEN: It is, Frank.

Q How many of those will be there, Ron, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the list yet.

Then he goes to the Marriott Hotel, where he makes this OIC speech, speaking there at about ten after one.

Q How long is that speech?

MR. NESSEN: That is about a 20 minute speech.

Then he goes back to the Hyatt-Regency House, where he has his news conference at 2:30 and immediately after that, he leaves, getting back to the White House South Lawn at about 5:15.

That is tentative.

Q Is he having anybody for lunch on Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean does he plan to eat it? The OIC is a lunch.

Q Will you have an advance text on the remarks on Monday at 5:10?

MR. NESSEN: On the evening remarks? Yes, we probably will put them out on Air Force One, I think.

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Q What about here?

MR. NESSEN: If we get them done early enough, we could put them out here.

Q What about the press plane?

MR. NESSEN: If we get them done.

Q Ron, you say his return to the White House at 5:15 is tentative. Does this suggest the possibility of another Atlanta event before he returns, I mean, following the news conference?

MR. NESSEN: No, it shows the news conference ending at 3:05 and the President getting in his motorcade, driving to the air base, getting there at 3:30, taking off at 3:35, getting to Andrews at 4:55, getting the helicopter and coming here.

Q What about between breakfast and the OIC at 1 o'clock? He has about four hours between the breakfast and the OIC.

MR. NESSEN: Not really, because the breakfast will probably end about 9:20, and he will take some work down with him. He will have about two hours in the suite before he has to leave for the lunch, and he will need to do some work down there.

Q Ron, are these editors and publishers from this whole Southeastern area, such as the eight states, or are they just from Georgia?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is from the whole area.

Q What is it going to be? Are they going to ask questions?

MR. NESSEN: At the breakfast?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the format is going to be. I don't know.

Q Would they be allowed to report what they heard?

MR. NESSEN: No, they are guests, too, of the President.

Q Will he be taking any of his staff down with him? What I mean is, like, will Greenspan or any of these people be going along with him?

MR. NESSEN: I think a fair number are. The White House Conference is attended by key White House officials. Those things are organized so they hear from a number of government officials. I don't know what the list is, but they are there, or will be there.

Q Ron, the last time this was done by his predecessor, there was a pool in that type of meeting --

MR. NESSEN: At the breakfast meeting?

Q The editors and publishers.

-- in which there was a pool from which we got a pretty good report, question and answer period. Would that be possible?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that is in the plan this time, Bill.

Q Will you have something later today on the Richey decision?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Really, I don't know whether the lawyers have seen it, or if the papers have to be sent here. I don't know how soon they arrive. I will look it up as soon as I get off this platform.

Q Somewhat in that connection, the President has a couple of times said he would be delighted to have his taped conversation with President Nixon released if there is no objection by the Federal prosecutor. I am wondering what steps, if any, he has taken to release those tapes?

MR. NESSEN: Well, they are not his tapes. The tapes all belong in this whole bundle, whatever the disposition of the tapes is. He does not really care.

Q Ron, the judge decided that the present occupant of the White House could assert or not assert Executive privilege.

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean?

Q He said the current occupant has the power to assert Executive privilege on the Nixon tapes or his own tapes.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the story about the decision was just coming over the wires when I came out here, and it is something that the lawyers need to look at and think about.

Q Ron, what is the current state of detente with Russia, and is it still in existence; and if it is, what evidence is there of it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand why you suggest that there is not state of detente with Russia.

Q There is a pretty good story from Al Ahram in Cairo, which has a pretty good running track record on its reports from Moscow, quoting the Politburo as telling the Egyptians that the detente is gone with the wind -- in their phrase -- and that Brezhnev survived a Politburo crisis only by ditching the detente policy with the United States.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can really comment on Al Ahram. Dick, just without any reference whatever to Al Ahram, other than what the President and Secretary Kissinger have said about the trade bill being a setback to detente. That does not have any broader implication other than its effect on the trade bill itself. I see no evidence from here that there has been any change in the detente.

Q Ron, are any more meetings scheduled between the President and Al Ullman?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q A question on Senator Dominick. Since he was suffering from ill-health during the campaign last fall, has the President received a medical report, or other assurance, that his health is sufficiently strong to handle the job?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he has received a medical report. I assume Senator Dominick knows whether his health is strong enough for the Ambassadorship, and obviously, he thought it was.

Q Ron, you said that there would be some information later on this afternoon about the talks between the Prime Minister and the President.

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Will that be in the form of a communique?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there is a plan to put out a communique, but it will be a report on the meetings.

Q Ron, has the White House had any chance to review Senator Church's proposal yesterday for the government buying petroleum and redistribution to the consumers? He put out his own energy program yesterday. Have you been over it?

MR. NESSEN: I have not even seen it.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:32 P.M. EST)