

This Copy For _____

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

#149

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JACK HUSHEN

AT 11:32 A.M. EST

FEBRUARY 21, 1975

FRIDAY

MR. HUSHEN: Good morning.

As some of you know, Ron is attending the Cabinet meeting this morning. If it breaks up before this briefing ends, he will give you a report at the conclusion of my briefing. If not, if there is something to report, we will have a second briefing on the Cabinet meeting.

The President began work in the Oval Office this morning at 7:50. He held his usual round of meetings with the senior staff.

About 30 minutes ago, the President began the Cabinet meeting. The last Cabinet meeting was held on January 29.

At 2:15, the President will say farewell to Ken Cole. Ken, as you probably know, came to work in the White House in 1969. He has served since January 1974 as Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and as Director of the Domestic Council. He will leave the White House on March 2, to become Vice President of Union Camp Corporation in Wayne, New Jersey.

The President accepted Ken's resignation with deep regret in a letter dated December 15, 1974.

At 2:30 this afternoon, the President will meet with Prime Minister Eric E. Williams of Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Williams is visiting the United States to examine investment opportunities for Trinidad and relations between the United States and Trinidad. You will have an opportunity to photograph the opening of that meeting.

Q Jack, is there going to be a ceremony in connection with Ken Cole's departure?

MR. HUSHEN: No. He and his wife are just coming in to say goodbye to the President.

MORE

#149

At 9:10 p.m. this evening, the President will depart the South Grounds by motorcade for the Washington Hilton Hotel, where, at about 9:30, he will receive the Reserve Officers Association's highest award, the "Minuteman of the Year Award." The President is the 18th recipient of this award, and he is the first President to receive it.

Senator Stennis will make the presentation. The President will make some remarks, and we will have the text available after the briefing, which is embargoed for release at 6:00 p.m. tonight. There will be open press coverage of the award presentation and of the President's remarks. The travel pool, which we have posted, should assemble here by 9:00 p.m. CBS is the pool network.

Q Jack, without sounding at all critical, why a 6:00 p.m. embargo on the text? It seems like a good idea, but isn't it different than you usually do?

MR. HUSHEN: No. I think, whenever possible, we will be using an a.m. or p.m. release time.

Q But this is the first time you have done that on a Presidential speech.

MR. HUSHEN: No, it is at least the second.

Q The budget was the first, right? (Laughter.)

Q What are you going to do, put it out at 3 o'clock in New York? That is the reverse of what happened the last time.

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q You say we are going to get it right now?

MR. HUSHEN: After the briefing.

We have one personnel announcement for you today. I think you already have the paper on that. The President announces his intention to nominate Wiley T. Buchanan, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to Austria. He will succeed John P. Humes, who is resigning. Mr. Buchanan is presently engaged in the private investment business. He was Chief of Protocol of the United States, with rank of Ambassador, from 1957 to 1961, after serving as Ambassador to Luxembourg.

Let me just give you some of the additional details on our trip to Hollywood, Florida. You should have your baggage to Room 87 of the EOB by 10:00 a.m., Tuesday. The press bus will depart the Southwest Gate for Andrews at 11:30 a.m. Check-in time at Andrews with baggage is 11:30 a.m.

Q What was the press bus departure?

MR. HUSHEN: It will depart from the Southwest Gate at 11:30 a.m., and for those who are going directly to Andrews with your baggage, you should be there by 11:30 a.m.

The press plane departs Andrews at 12:15 p.m. for Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. You will arrive there at approximately 2:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time.

The President will depart from the White House at 12:55 p.m., from Andrews at 2:30 p.m. and will arrive at Fort Lauderdale at 3:30 p.m.

Q Departs Andrews at 1:30 p.m., you mean?

MR. HUSHEN: It must be 1:30 p.m. We have got 2:30 p.m. here.

It leaves Andrews at 1:15 p.m.

Q It does not take 35 minutes to get there.

Q Do that over again.

MR. HUSHEN: A slight correction --

Q When does it leave the White House?

MR. HUSHEN: 12:55 p.m. is the scheduled departure from the White House. 1:15 p.m. is the scheduled departure from Andrews. 3:30 p.m. is the scheduled arrival at Fort Lauderdale.

Q What do you mean, Fort Lauderdale?

MR. HUSHEN: Fort Lauderdale International Airport.

Q Any particular spot there, any particular terminal?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't have that yet.

Q Is it going to land at the Hollywood International Airport?

MR. HUSHEN: It is the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. It is the same one where the press plane will land.

Q And then? Will he take a helicopter?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't have any more details on that particular aspect of it, except to say that I think you know the President, White House staff and the press corps all will be staying at the Diplomat Hotel in Hollywood, and the phone number there is Area Code 305-923-8111.

We expect to have the bibles out Monday afternoon, which will give you the rest of the details of it. I just wanted you to have this information so you could make your plans.

Q Can you say whether there is a motorcade or a helicopter?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Have you announced the ~~mayors~~' dinner?

MR. HUSHEN: I am about to.

On Tuesday evening, after his arrival, the President will host a working dinner for the Mayors of Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Mayors from eight States in the Southeastern region, which are Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana --

Q Mayors of these States?

MR. HUSHEN: Mayors.

Q Mayors of various cities in these States, and they are what?

MR. HUSHEN: Let me go through the list of the States.

-- Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. These mayors represent a bipartisan group from both large and small cities.

MORE

Q How many will that be, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: We will have to check that.

Q Are all mayors from those states invited that care to come or are there specific invitations to specific mayors?

MR. HUSHEN: There will be specific invitations, and we will have to check and find out how many were invited. It would be a workable group.

Q Jack, what about coverage of that dinner?

MR. HUSHEN: There will be just a photo pool at the beginning. I would expect that Ron would come down after the meeting and have a briefing. If we follow the practices of the past, he would probably have some of the mayors with him.

Q What time will that be? About 8:30?

MR. HUSHEN: It will be in the bible.

Q What time is he going to speak on Tuesday?

MR. HUSHEN: We announced that yesterday.

Q This comes after his speech, right?

MR. HUSHEN: Correct.

At the White House Conference, I think it was around five o'clock.

Wednesday morning, the President will host a working breakfast for about 45 news executives. Most of those invited are from Florida, but some from the Southeastern region, who were not able to make the Atlanta or the Houston meetings, were invited to this breakfast. That breakfast will be at 7:30 a.m. at the Diplomat.

As we previously announced, the press conference is scheduled for 11 a.m. Wednesday.

Jim, did you have a question on the trip?

Q I just wondered if you had a return day and time for the President?

MR. HUSHEN: The return will be on Wednesday, and it depends on whether or not the President plays golf.

Q On Wednesday he meets George Meany?

MR. HUSHEN: I know of no plans.

Q He still has not decided whether he is going to play golf?

MR. HUSHEN: As far as I know, he has not decided.

Q Why has he not decided?

MR. HUSHEN: Maybe he has other things on his mind.

Q I mean, is there a possibility he would do something other than play golf while he is down there?

Q What is the name of that tournament he is going to play in?

MR. HUSHEN: The Jackie Gleason Inverrary.

Since we are talking about next week's schedule, let me just mention that at three o'clock Monday the President will meet with the NATO Secretary General, Joseph Luns. Secretary General Luns will be here for consultation with the President and other Administration officials on issues of current interest to the North Atlantic Alliance.

Q Could we ask, could Dr. Luns be brought here and talk to us afterwards?

MR. HUSHEN: We will work on that on Monday.

Q Will the news conference be televised or open for television?

MR. HUSHEN: It is open.

The White House Conference speech is at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Q Jack, is it logical to infer that there will be no briefing here on Tuesday?

MR. HUSHEN: That is correct.

Q Jack, is that thing going to be like the others, the President talks and then some other people will talk after he gets through, the senior staff, the 4:30 thing?

MR. HUSHEN: His is the closing speech of the conference. Any questions you have about the format of the conference you should address to Bill Baroody.

Q Somebody wishes to ask the Sarah McClendon memorial question at this point.

MR. HUSHEN: Can we get an answer on that? I suspect we are. It is standard china with the United States seal on it. It is not the White House china.

Q Is Mrs. Ford going, by the way?

MR. HUSHEN: We will check on that.

Q It is what, the standard --

MR. HUSHEN: -- china that is used. It is not the White House china. It has the seal of the United States on it, not the seal of the President.

Q Where is it used?

MR. HUSHEN: Among other places, I understand the State Department uses it.

Q Why don't they just use the hotel china instead of carrying the china all the way down from Washington and then carrying it all the way back? Would it not be a lot simpler?

MR. HUSHEN: The President is hosting the breakfast, not the hotel.

Q Do they take knives and forks, and salt shakers, napkins, glasses? Do they bring the food, too?

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

Q Jack, is somebody going to wash this china between the dinner and the breakfast?

MR. HUSHEN: We may go to paper plates. (Laughter)

Q Will it be brought back to Washington to be washed?

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

Q In that connection, there is a little squib in the Wall Street Journal this morning that there were some complaints that these breakfast meetings with publishers were too expensive, costing too much money, and that Nessen overruled the move to stop them, arguing that they were necessary. Is that correct? How much do they cost?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know how much they cost.

I understand that there was a question raised about it, and Ron was strongly in favor of continuing them.

Q Was the question raised because of the cost, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know.

Q Who raised the question?

MR. HUSHEN: Again, I don't know.

Q Who raised the question.

MR. HUSHEN: I just said I do not know who raised the question.

Q Was the question raised within the White House staff, outside or what?

MR. HUSHEN: You really better talk to Ron about that because he was the one who took part in it, not me.

Q Jack, can you find out how much they do cost? Obviously, the White House is billed for it.

Q I think we can check that.

Q Does the White House consider this a tempest in a teapot?

MR. HUSHEN: No, we don't consider it a tempest in a teapot.

Q Ron, who does pay for these?

MR. HUSHEN: The President.

Q The President pays for them out of his --

MR. HUSHEN: -- allowance.

Q Out of his allowance?

Q The food, do they take that, too, or do they buy it locally?

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

Let me just divert your attention momentarily.

Q No, we would rather talk about this.

MR. HUSHEN: I know.

The President of Columbia, Alfonso Lopez-Michelsen, has accepted President Ford's invitation to visit the United States later in the year at a date to be mutually agreed upon. This is a state visit.

Q The Columbians say it will probably be in March. Is there anything to that?

MR. HUSHEN: We don't have a date set.

Those are all the announcements I have.

Q What is the President going to do this weekend?

MR. HUSHEN: As far as I know, he will be here in the Residence. He will be working tomorrow morning.

Q Are you going to brief tomorrow?

MR. HUSHEN: No, no briefing tomorrow.

Q Does he plan to play golf over the weekend?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't have anything to announce on it, if he does.

Q What time will the text for tonight's remarks be available?

MR. HUSHEN: It is available at the conclusion of the briefing.

Q Jack, has the President been told about the sentences given to Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Mitchell and Mardian this morning, and if so, does he have any comment?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure whether he has been told. It occurred after my meeting with the President, so it was not discussed there, and he went into the Cabinet meeting at 11:00.

I would think that if someone knew about it in the Cabinet meeting, they would have mentioned it to him, but we have nothing to give you on that.

Q Jack, what is the purpose of the Miami trip? What is the President going to be asking the mayors to support him on?

MR. HUSHEN: It is twofold. The White House Conference, of course, which he has been an active participant in, and then, of course, another major segment is to go over the details of his energy and economic program because I think we are finding as more and more people come to understand the comprehensive nature of the program, we are gaining more support.

Q More than was gained from the Governors?

Q Will he now go to these various regions and meet with more mayors? Is he now moving to the mayor level?

MR. HUSHEN: We have no additional trips scheduled, so I can't really give you an accurate answer to that.

Q Will this be the last for a while?

MR. HUSHEN: This is the last one announced.

Q Jack, Governor Evans said yesterday that they are trying to work one up for the 13 far Western Governors that he has missed, on their own home ground.

MR. HUSHEN: That is the one group of Governors that we have not met with, and I think we are certainly trying to put together a meeting like that.

Q How about the New England Governors?

MR. HUSHEN: He met with the New England Governors here.

Q Jack, can you explain why the President did not meet with the mayors in Houston?

MR. HUSHEN: With the mayors in Houston?

Q When he was in Houston. Why did he not meet with mayors on that trip?

MR. HUSHEN: There was only so much time on the schedule. He met with the Governors. This does not rule out meetings with mayors. He met with the Governors there.

Q There were mayors in the meeting with the Governors in Atlanta, weren't there, and then they were sent away and then the Governors went up to talk with him afterwards. Weren't there some mayors in that session? Maybe not.

MR. HUSHEN: It is news to me.

Q Jack, this Florida trip will make three trips that the President has made to the Southeast part of the country, which is the largest number to any particular region. Why is he concentrating on the South? Does he have reason to believe that the South is more supportive of his programs and he wishes to concentrate there, or what is the reason for the emphasis on the South?

MR. HUSHEN: Are you counting the Houston trip as part of the Southeast?

Q I said Southeast; I meant the South.

MR. HUSHEN: It is not an overemphasis on the South. It is just as we go around talking to all the various groups, we will be going to other parts of the country, too.

Q Jack, did the President have a reaction to the rather substantial vote by the Governors against his program and in favor of the 90-day delay in spite of all his wining and dining of that group?

MR. HUSHEN: Do you mean the final vote?

Q A substantial majority in favor of the 90-day delay was less than the three-quarters required by their rules, but way over a majority.

MR. HUSHEN: I think he wasn't dissatisfied with the way the final vote went. The vote you are talking about, I think you have to take a look at who makes up the majority of the conference.

Q Was he surprised by this in view of the fact he told his last press conference that he had not heard any of the Governors supporting this Congressional bill, which a substantial majority of them did support in their vote?

MR. HUSHEN: Was he surprised by the --

Q Was he surprised that the Governors, who he told his last press conference he thought were supporting him, had turned out to be supporting the other side?

MR. HUSHEN: I think if you examine what it is that they said they supported, you will find it is not that far out of line with the President's proposal. They said that they wanted, first, to go to jawboning, secondly to allocation, and if that does not work within a couple of months, to go to the pricing mechanisms. I think they are seeing the wisdom of the President's program.

Q Jack, are you saying that allocation is not that far out of line?

MR. HUSHEN: No, not allocation. I am talking about the pricing mechanism, which is the President's program.

Q Jack, what is the status of the veto?

Q Could that come today or tomorrow?

MR. HUSHEN: It only arrived here, as you know, late yesterday. All I can really say is that it will go back to the Congress within the allotted time. I cannot give you a date.

Q He is not going to hurry it, though, because of the urgency of the problem?

MR. HUSHEN: There is nothing lost during this period of time, the tariff is in effect.

Q Jack, Al Ullman is putting together an energy package built around the gasoline tax with a 10 cent a gallon tax going on progressively over a four-year period, building up to an eventual 40 cent a gallon tax coupled with rebates. Does the White House have any comments on this program?

MR. HUSHEN: No, the President has a program, and as you have heard us state here several times, we think it is the best program and we would hope they would examine that. I think we will find that if they come to understand it, we hope they will agree that that is the proper program.

Q Jack, the President has also said that if the Congress comes up with another program that would do the job, he would consider that. Apparently, Mr. Ullman has come up with another program. Is the President going to consider it?

MR. HUSHEN: Let me just go back to the quote we were trying to find yesterday, and I think it applies. It turns out it was something the President said to the economic writers when they were in here. What he said was: "We think that what we have proposed is sound, but this is a government where you have the Executive and Legislative acting as co-equals, so we will do everything we can to sell our program, but we do have to end up with what the judgment is of the Congress."

Q Jack, is he planning some more meetings in the next week or so with Members of Congress?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't have any to announce.

MORE

Q Jack, are there any scheduled?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, he is in continual liaison with the Congress, but I don't have any meetings at the White House to announce.

Q Jack, you were looking for that quote yesterday in relation to questions about the tax cut, and now, you are employing that quote in response to questions about an alternative energy proposal. Now, which does it apply to? Both?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, the President has said that he thinks that his proposals, both in the energy and tax areas, are sound and that both of them should go forward, and we will do everything we can to convince the Congress of that.

Q Jack, at what stage does the President concede there are alternative proposals? Do they have to be final votes sent to him, on his desk?

MR. HUSHEN: I think there is no question about the fact that there are alternative proposals, but we don't see much on paper.

Q That is why I am asking the question.

MR. HUSHEN: The question came up yesterday, for instance, about the strip mining. Where we commented from this room on the strip mining was when it was in the conference, not when it was just in the committee for the first time and had not gone through all the other steps.

Q The question remains the same. Given the sense of urgency, at what stage is the White House willing to say, "Okay, here is something that we will consider, and let's start compromising"?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, we have not seen anything.

Q I know.

MR. HUSHEN: At this stage, it is up to the Congress. We have got our package up there, 167 pages.

Q Has a decision been made by the President at what point he is willing to start working with the Congress on a compromise on their alternative? Do they have to come out of committee?

MR. HUSHEN: Steve, there is nothing to work with.

Q Jack, does the White House have a copy of the tax bill that came out of the Ways and Means Committee?

MR. HUSHEN: You say, does the President?

Q No, does the White House? Have you been able to obtain one?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know.

Q Jack, I would like to go back to Gaylord's question for a minute. The President made that statement at the meeting of the economic writers in response specifically to a question about his tax program, his economic program. The impression has gained currency that he is more willing to compromise on taxes than he is on the energy program, which I think was the reason for Gaylord asking you, are you now applying that statement to both? I would like to repeat that for the sake of clarity.

MR. HUSHEN: Well, as regards both issues, to restate what I have just said, the President's plan is before the Congress. He thinks it is well researched, well thought out, very comprehensive and will establish a national energy policy.

Q Still, you have this time in this briefing read that statement in response to a question about the energy program, whereas it was made in response to a question about the economic or tax program. Does that carry the implication that you are implying that statement to both?

Q Does it not apply to everything, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I think you all know the relationship with the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch in terms of passing legislation.

Q Jack, let's ask it this way.

MR. HUSHEN: I am not trying to --

Q I mean, yesterday we got different positions, one on energy and one on taxes. Now, today, we seem to be getting a response which is identical to both. Now, has anything changed since yesterday?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Do you have a better forecast on being able to sustain a veto besides hope?

MR. HUSHEN: No, we are still hopeful.

Q Jack, what can you say about a message Mr. Ford sent to the president of the South Vietnamese Senate?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, the president of the South Vietnamese Senate, as I understand it, along with several other South Vietnamese Senators, are in the United States on a visit, and I believe the president of the Senate is addressing the National Press Club today.

Q That is correct.

MR. HUSHEN: Beyond that --

Q You are not aware of a message Mr. Ford sent to him in connection with his Press Club --

MR. HUSHEN: I understand there is a message. I have not seen the message, and I don't know what it says. We will try to get it for you.

Q Jack, was the White House surprised by the Consumer Price Index figures today?

MR. HUSHEN: No, not surprised. The numbers are encouraging and pretty much in line with what our expectations are. If it is projected to an annual rate, it would be 7.2 percent, which is about, also, in line with our projections for the year.

Q Jack, can I ask you a question about the White House Conference? Which of the economic advisory groups is representing the Administration down here?

MR. HUSHEN: I have not seen the manifest.

Q Will Ron be coming out with another briefing after the Cabinet meeting?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, the Cabinet meeting, as you know, is 90 minutes and may go a little longer.

Q Would you advise people to wait?

MR. HUSHEN: From looking at the agenda, I didn't see that much on it, but Ron will have a report.

Q Can you set a time?

MR. HUSHEN: It is quite conceivable the easiest way to handle that would be through a posting.

Q Do you expect there will be a comment at some point during the day on the sentencing of the defendants in the Watergate?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q You are willing to give us -- is there going to be something later?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q You do not expect the President to make any comment on it at all?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Jack, would you set a time this afternoon when Ron will come out and talk to us about the Cabinet meeting, please?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, why don't we plan to post at 1 o'clock.

Q Can he plan to come out and talk to us at 1 o'clock?

MR. HUSHEN: If there is something that needs to be handled in more detail than a posting can handle. Otherwise, let's plan to post at 1 o'clock.

Q Are you in a position to rule out a Presidential veto this weekend on the tariff legislation?

MR. HUSHEN: No, I just cannot give you any guidance on that, on when the message will go forward.

Q Jack, the President has had more time now with the Secretary of State. Can you give us more guidance on what the President is thinking about what the Secretary has reported about his Middle East tour?

MR. HUSHEN: No more than Ron gave you yesterday.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:08 P.M. EST)