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NEWS CONFERENCE

#153

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:05 P.M. EDT

FEBRUARY 27, 1975

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry I was late today, but there were about two pieces of information I thought you might want and it took me a little extra time to get them.

The President met this morning at 10 o'clock with Ambassador Richardson, who is preparing to leave for his new post as Ambassador in London. It was in the nature of a farewell call, and Secretary Richardson had asked for an opportunity to come in and pay his respects.

Q When does he actually go to London?

MR. NESSEN: I do not have the precise day.

Q How long was the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: It lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The President began meeting at 11:30 with various Members of Congress. This is one of those periodic hours he sets aside to see various Congressmen and Senators who have requested time. Among those meeting the President today are Representative Don Mitchell, a Republican from New York; Representative Carroll Hubbard, a Democrat from Kentucky, who is the President of the Democrat Freshman Club; Senator John Sparkman of Alabama; Representative Barry Goldwater, Jr., of California; Representative Lud Ashley a Democrat from Ohio, and Representative Bob Bauman, who is a Republican from Maryland.

At 5:30 this afternoon, the President will see Ambassador Mark Evans Austad. I think a lot of you know Mark Evans. He will be departing on March 10 for his new post as Ambassador to Finland. This is in the nature of a farewell call, also.

At 5:45, the President will meet briefly with Ambassador Fernando Berckemeyer, who is retiring after 22 years as the Peruvian Ambassador to the United States. The President and Ambassador Berckemeyer have known each other for some time.

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We have given you the announcement that the President intends to nominate Frederick B. Dent, of Spartanburg, South Carolina, to be the Special Trade Representative. He has been serving as the Secretary of Commerce since February 1973.

Q When will the nomination go to the Hill, Ron, and do you have a replacement yet at the Commerce Department?

MR. NESSEN: We do not have a replacement at the Commerce Department.

Q When will the nomination go to the Hill?

MR. NESSEN: It goes today.

Q Will there be a replacement, or a successor, soon?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any timetable on that, Helen.

Secretary Dent served from January of 1971, until he became the Commerce Secretary in February of 1973, as the first Assistant to the President for International Economic Policy, and he also was the first Executive Director of the Council on International Economic Policy. We have handed out a biography to you.

This evening the President will attend a reception honoring Congressman Olin Teague. This is in the Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2318. My understanding is this has been announced at the Hill, and it has been announced that there will be open coverage.

Q Would you take a question on Mr. Dent?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Would you comment on reports that --

MR. NESSEN: Maybe what I ought to do is finish the Olin Teague arrangements.

Q Do you have the time on Olin Teague?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and that is why I wanted to push on with it. The Room is open from noon until 5 o'clock. All the equipment has to be in place by 5 o'clock, so they can do their security sweep. We will be taking a travel pool from the White House. The names will be put up later this afternoon. The pool should be in the Press Room at 7:00, and the President, with the pool and his motorcade, will leave at 7:10. Pappy Noel will be handling the pool, and either Pappy or Eric Rosenberger can help out with any more questions about the event.

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The President is expected to make some brief remarks at the reception, and that will take place at about 7:40 -- the President speaking. And he should be returning to the White House shortly after 8:00, and if there is any advance text on his remarks, which I doubt, we will get that for you later in the afternoon.

Q Why is he being honored?

MR. NESSEN: They are unveiling a portrait of him because he is Chairman of the Space Committee.

There was a question on Fred Dent.

Q Ron, would you comment on reports, in connection with Mr. Dent's nomination, that it replaces that of Mr. Silberman, whose nomination was withdrawn as a "sacrifice" to Senator Long, in connection with the need for Senatorial support on the upcoming veto?

MR. NESSEN: Did you have an opportunity to look at the statement that we put out on the pool coming home last night from Florida?

Q No, I was not on that trip. I asked and it was not available.

MR. NESSEN: If you take a look at it, I think it will answer all your questions.

Q What is the secret? Tell us all.

MR. NESSEN: Basically, a number of names were discussed, as always, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Long, and the ranking Republican, Senator Curtis, as well as other members of the Senate and House. There was a feeling by those members that this was a job that needed a particular background and experience, and there was a feeling that some of those names sent up there did not have the proper background and experience. And so, the names were pulled back. Secretary Dent's name was sent up.

Just to read you a portion of the statement that the President wanted issued last night -- it says, "To imply a connection between the question of the oil tariff deferral legislation and the nomination of a Special Trade Representative is not accurate, and any misunderstanding could do an injustice to the people involved."

The fact of the matter is, there is no connection that Senator Russell Long did vote against deferring the oil tariff. There is simply no connection between the two.

Q Ron, the question we did not get to ask you after we saw that pool report last night was whether or not the President and his advisers, in this area, felt that Mr. Silberman was qualified?

MR. NESSEN: Questions like that were asked on the plane, Jim. There is no question of his integrity or his intelligence, and it is clear that Larry Silberman would have been overwhelmingly approved by Congress.

This is a job, though, where the Special Trade Representative works very closely with the committee involved and its chairman and ranking Republican, and it was felt that if those gentlemen and others in Congress felt that the position required a man of greater background in the particular area -- that the various names were pulled back.

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Q I would like to follow that up, if I may. I do not think that quite answers my question. My question was, did the President and his advisers believe Mr. Silberman to be qualified to be Special Trade Representative, leaving aside these other matters?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think you can leave aside the other matters, Jim. The whole purpose of consultation, which, as you know, goes on with every major appointment, is to get various opinions of other people.

Larry Silberman was not selected for the job. There were a number of names on which Congress was consulted.

Q Is Silberman going to be appointed to some other position?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he is.

Q Why was Silberman's name sent up there in the first place?

MR. NESSEN: It was one, among others, that the President wanted to consult with Congress on and get their opinions.

Q Ron, wasn't that the President's first choice for the job?

MR. NESSEN: It was among several names sent up there, Tom.

Q Ron, has any commitment been made on Dent's deputy's job?

MR. NESSEN: As a Deputy Special Trade Representative?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q This morning Colonel Lockridge of the Corps of Engineers verified reports that all of the Corps of Engineers' military and civilian personnel that work in Saudi Arabia have to get a visa, which he said requires either a baptismal certificate or a letter proving church membership or evidence of a church wedding or a birth certificate which lists religion.

Colonel Lockridge explained, in his words, "The Saudis do not object to Jews, per se, just Zionists."

So, I asked if a Jew has to get baptized to prove he is not a Zionist and to serve the U.S. Government in Saudi Arabia. He did not know, so I am asking you, as spokesman for the Commander in Chief of the Corps of Engineers, how long will this specific practice be tolerated?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President spoke on that subject at his news conference yesterday.

Q I know he did, but has he ordered the Engineers to stop this, either to tell Saudi Arabia we do not discriminate against Jewish officers or Jewish personnel? Has he taken any action on this, or is this just something in the vague future?

This is of great concern to a great many people in the United States.

MR. NESSEN: The President, as he said yesterday, is asking Justice, Commerce and Defense --

Q No, he said Justice, Commerce and State.

MR. NESSEN: -- and State, I am sorry. Let me add he is also asking Defense to look into this matter.

Q Thanks.

Q Ron, I would like to follow up, if I may, with a related question. U.S. representatives and representatives of Saudi Arabia are meeting to discuss a number of questions, and will this question of boycott and charges of discrimination also be discussed?

MR. NESSEN: I do not know that.

Q Ron, on the same topic, the President said yesterday that appropriate action will be taken under the laws of the United States if it can be proven that discrimination is in fact occurring. Could you give us any examples of the type of action that would be provided for under the laws of the U.S. to stop this discrimination?

MR. NESSEN: That is one of the matters that the four departments are now looking into, to find out, first of all, whether there is any action that is in violation of American laws and, if so, what action can be taken.

Q At this point you do not know what sort of possible steps are available?

MR. NESSEN: That is one of the things they are looking into.

Q Ron, does the Trade Representative do much negotiating with Arab counterparts?

MR. NESSEN: That I don't know. I hope you are not suggesting what I think you are suggesting because it is even farther from the truth than the speculative stories that Russell Long had asked that this not go forward in return for his vote because what you are suggesting is even farther from the truth.

Q Is he going to take this aide of Long's with him?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what aide you are talking about.

Q I am talking about the man whose name I cannot remember, who was -- you know who I am talking about.

MR. NESSEN: If you don't know, I don't know.

Q You know the man who was controversial here.

MR. NESSEN: There has been no deputy selected.

Q Is there any promise or agreement that he will take him?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Ron, you leave me with the impression that when the President decides he wants somebody appointed to an important post, he sends a list of names up to the Hill and some committee chairman or powerful member of the committee that is involved then gets to pick who gets the job.

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't mean to leave that impression.

Q How does this process work?

MR. NESSEN: It is a very longstanding process and certainly goes back long before this Administration. When there is an important job to fill, the President normally has several names to review, and there are considerations on which of the names he picks.

One of the considerations is how the committee chairman and other ranking Members of Congress who will be dealing with him closely in the future would react to that kind of relationship, and it one of the considerations that goes into his selection of the final candidate.

Q But he does send several names up to the committee chairmen in question and find out which one the committee chairman might or might not get along with?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is oversimplifying it, but it is a longstanding policy to consult with Congress, and especially the appropriate committee chairmen, on names he has under consideration.

Q Ron, I think you will find, if you look into it, that the customary practice is to take a name up by an individual and sound the man out about this one man, not send up a list.

MR. NESSEN: It is very often that several names are checked out for a position.

Q Several names are checked out, but one is checked out, and if he does not do then they bring back some others, but they don't usually send up a list and let somebody pick out a choice.

Q Ron, was Mr. Dent's name on the list that was sent up that included Mr. Silberman?

MR. NESSEN: No. As the statement said last night, all the names sent up there were pulled back, and a fresh name is being sent.

Q Ron, how many names were there?

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

Q Can you find out for us how many were sent up at the time, in the list that included Mr. Silberman?

MR. NESSEN: I could try. I think it is probably academic at this point, but I could try.

Q There was more than one name?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know. That is what the statement last night said.

Q Ron, it is as Sarah said, a very unusual procedure -- maybe it is not in this Administration -- to send up several names.

MR. NESSEN: It is not a question of sending up, Adam. It is a question of consultation. You are familiar with the consultation procedure.

Q That is the way you said it, Ron.

Q I am quite familiar with it, Ron, and I don't think you know what you are talking about.

MR. NESSEN: In this case there were several names sent up, Adam.

Q Is there going to be a veto message tomorrow, and has the President had a chance to look at the Democratic energy program?

MR. NESSEN: Which one, Sarah? I mean, Helen.

Q Thank you.

MR. NESSEN: Sorry. All you women lookalike.
(Laughter)

Q I am honored.

MR. NESSEN: That is why I said it.

Q Answer the question now.

MR. NESSEN: As for a veto message tomorrow, I don't anticipate one. As for a chance to look at --

Q Can you rule out the weekend then?

MR. NESSEN: I am not ruling out anything, but I am saying I doubt if it will be tomorrow.

Q Isn't the deadline tomorrow midnight?

MR. NESSEN: The deadline is Tuesday midnight.

Q Ron, I would like to refer to --

MR. NESSEN: Let me just finish Helen's question.

Has he had a chance to look at the Democratic energy proposals? I don't think any of them are in any sort of shape to sit down and look at. There are a number of competing ones, and those are being changed frequently.

Q Ron, I would like to return to the question on a nonemotional basis and no speech is attached to it. You said that Justice, Commerce and State have been asked to look into these charges?

MR. NESSEN: The President said that yesterday.

Q Now, the Colonel, the Corps of Engineers flat out stated that they do not assign Jewish officers to it. Now, I do not think there is much room for investigation there. If the Corps of Engineers do not assign Jewish officers to Saudi Arabia to oversee projects, they do not assign Jewish officers.

Is the President going to do something about that specific thing, without any big investigation about what the policies of the Saudis are, or what the policies of the State Department might be in relation to it? Is he going to tell the Corps of Engineers to stop that practice?

MR. NESSEN: He has to look into these things, as I mentioned, not only to determine what is going on, but to determine what, if any, American laws apply.

Q Does this same thing apply to the military personnel who go into Saudi Arabia and these other countries to advise them?

MR. NESSEN: You need to check with the Pentagon on what their personnel policy is.

Q On the same grounds that my friend here, the minister, brought the question to you, I am bringing the question to you, too. Since it has gotten to this level where the President has put it with three Cabinet posts, naturally it is a level where the President can put it with a fourth Cabinet post -- the Department of Defense.

MR. NESSEN: I am not clear on what your question is.

Q You said he put this before three people, three departments -- Justice, Commerce and State -- to consider.

MR. NESSEN: He is asking them to look into it, and as he said yesterday --

Q What about asking DOD to look into it, too?

MR. NESSEN: That is what I said to Les, I think, that he is also asking them.

Q You sent us back to the Department of Defense to find out ourselves. Why don't you find out?

MR. NESSEN: You asked what the policy is with advisers and trainers and so forth, and that is something we don't have yet.

Q I asked if this policy exists. Apparently if it exists with Army Engineers, it exists with all these other people, too.

MR. NESSEN: That is what I don't know, Sarah.

Q We don't know, but I think it is time for the White House to find out.

MR. NESSEN: Before we get too far along in this discussion of what he is or he is not going to do, I want to remind you of the very firm and strong statement he made yesterday of his personal views and what the policy of the government is and what the policy of the government will be. We ought to think of this within that framework before we get into the specifics.

Q I assume he would certainly do this with the Department of Defense, would that be a correct assumption?

Q What did the statement deal with?

MR. NESSEN: The statement itself dealt with discrimination or alleged discrimination by companies, but I think it is clear when he said that "discrimination is totally contrary to the American tradition and repugnant to American principles," he is speaking beyond an issue of commercial discrimination or something like that, to the whole question of his feelings about discrimination.

Q Ron, wouldn't it be more clear if the President picked up the phone and called and said, "Is this practice going on and if it is going on, stop it." Would it be possible for the President to take immediate action, because they tell me at DOD that this has been going on for years and it was arranged by the State Department?

I said, "Who in the State Department?" Nobody knows. Now, could the President conceivably pick the phone up and say, "Is this going on, yes or no?" and they would say yes and he could say stop it right away.

Is that possible or not?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think you make policies or handle your dealings with foreign countries on the basis of that kind of phone call, Les.

Q I am not saying a foreign country. I am saying he is Commander in Chief of the Army.

MR. NESSEN: This is a matter of relations with a foreign country.

Q Ron, it is a matter of principle with the United States, and it is based on some very well-known documents we have. Are we going to give up the principle of --

MR. NESSEN: That is why I call your attention to his views on discrimination expressed yesterday so we don't get too far away from those.

Q Would it be correct to assume then that the President is going to apply this, not just to Justice, Commerce and State, but to all departments of government?

MR. NESSEN: Of course.

Q Then you have answered our question, it will apply to the Department of Defense.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by "it."

Q That this policy will apply to the Department of Defense.

MR. NESSEN: It is a guiding principle of the President that he opposes discrimination and finds it repugnant to American principles.

Q Is he going to enforce it?

MR. NESSEN: He certainly will. That is why he is having these requests go out, to find out what the situation is, what laws they may violate and what can be done to correct it.

Q Then may we assume the answer to Mr. Kinsolving's question is yes?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot tell you the President is going to pick up the telephone and give the kind of order that Les suggested he should give.

Q But before that he asked you a question, and you dodged that and then you referred me to the Department of Defense. Can we assume now that the President will apply this policy to the Department of Defense and all other departments of government?

MR. NESSEN: The principle of his firm opposition to discrimination as repugnant to American principles? You can certainly say that that is his policy in dealing in all matters.

Q He will enforce this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by enforce this.

Q Enforce his policy. You gave me a general answer on "this is his policy or his guidelines." Will he enforce this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by enforce. He is having the appropriate departments look into it now and find out what the situation is, what laws may be violated and what can be done to correct it.

Q That does not answer the question of will he do something about it.

MR. NESSEN: About what?

Q Will he do something about enforcing our policies in this country against discrimination?

MR. NESSEN: He does it all the time, Sarah.

Q Ron, would you tell us to whom his directives to the Pentagon have been addressed and what they said, in specifics? Were they sent just to the Corps of Engineers, or was it to the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Secretary of the Defense or who did he send it to?

MR. NESSEN: I need to check that, Mort, and find out who specifically got that.

Q I ask that specifically because this is the second occasion on which there has been a problem with the Pentagon. The last time it was with General Brown on the general issue of attitudes toward Jews, that sort of thing, and I just wonder whether he perceives this as a Pentagon-wide problem or merely a set of isolated incidents.

MR. NESSEN: I really would not leap to the conclusion that there is any sort of connection between General Brown's remarks and this other policy, and I certainly would not think you should leap to the conclusion that it is a Pentagon-wide policy.

Q Ron, on a Democratic economic program, about two hours ago Senator Pastore and Congressman Wright had their final policy committee session with the leadership, and they brought out the details of their energy package.

They said they would like to have a compromise session with the President before the legislation gets to the floor. Is that the kind of package that President Ford is waiting for to sit down and make a compromise with?

MR. NESSEN: I would like to see, or he would like to see what is in the package.

Q But I mean, is that the kind of thing President Ford is waiting for when he said he would not begin negotiating a compromise until he got some firm specifics from Congress?

MR. NESSEN: It is hard to tell whether what you describe are firm specifics and because I have not seen it and I know he has not seen it...

Q Wouldn't you think some of his staff people -- Mr. Friedersdorf's office -- would be in touch with the policy committees?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, they have not seen it, either.

Q But wouldn't they be in touch with these people? Is there some channel of communication there?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly there is a channel of communication, but whether they have seen this specific set of proposals, as far as I know they have not.

Q If two Members of Congress say they want to sit down and discuss a specific legislative package on energy with the President -- her question was, I believe, is the President willing to sit down and talk to these two Members of Congress?

MR. NESSEN: He is willing to sit down and talk to any Members of Congress.

Dick?

Q Ron, is the President willing to discuss this package before it receives floor votes in the House and Senate?

MR. NESSEN: Didn't he explain at his news conference fairly clearly yesterday what he had in mind on this negotiating process, that when there is a full and comprehensive Democratic energy proposal, that he was willing to sit down and negotiate and make what accommodations he could?

Q Ron, that is a little unclear. Could a program be considered full and comprehensive without having gone to a vote on the floor of both Houses?

MR. NESSEN: I think so.

Q Ron, I am puzzled by your raising a question of violation of law, when the Corps of Engineers has admitted a practice which the President unequivocally condemned yesterday. What difference does it make whether any laws were violated?

MR. NESSEN: Dave, I think he needs to look into precisely what the Corps of Engineers is doing and its personnel policies and what rationale that is based on and what the foreign policy implications of it are and so forth.

Q The Corps has been pretty clear in stating what it is doing.

MR. NESSEN: It has been clear on what it is doing, Dave, but the question is, why and what foreign policy aspects there are to it. And it is not something that you can pick up the phone and bark and order --

Q Ron, isn't it a long accepted and world-wide policy that any foreign government has a right to accept or reject any person for its own reasons, who is being sent into that country by a foreign government?

MR. NESSEN: What I have been trying to get at -- and perhaps not as clearly as you have put it -- that is one of the considerations that needs to be thought about, among others, before reacting to the situation.

Q Ron, you are suggesting by that statement there may be some room for compromise on that question?

MR. NESSEN: I just have no idea at this point because it is still being looked into.

Q Ron, if the Corps of Engineers testified that there is a country which said, "We do not want any black military officers," and therefore, it was discovered that the Corps of Engineers was excluding all black military officers, would the President investigate it, or would he give an order?

MR. NESSEN: I suspect he would go through the same process as he is going through now.

Q In other words, if the Corps of Engineers testified that in adherence to the demands of a foreign government we were weeding out all blacks from our contingents there, that he would tolerate this while investigating, or would he stop it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I gave any idea that he is tolerating any of this. I do say, though, that there are these kind of foreign policy questions that need to be looked at before he can react to this situation.

Q Ron, I have another foreign policy question.

Q Would you agree that a foreign government has a right to exclude anybody it wants to from its country, but the United States is not obligated to send a group, or team, or any particular number of persons to that country to fulfill a project if the terms and conditions are not in line with expressed American ideals?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I do not know, really, that I can make a judgment on that question.

Q Ron, on another subject, can you rate President Ford's forecast of Cambodia's chances to survive on a scale of zero to 100?

MR. NESSEN: I think you have heard Dr. Kissinger's forecast and Secretary Schlesinger's forecast, and the President's views are about the same.

Q The New York Times says they have a private --

Q If I may follow on that for a moment. There is now some dispute about Schlesinger and Kissinger's forecast, based on their public versus their private statements. Does the President think that Cambodia has a better than 50/50 chance of surviving if we continue to give it aid?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I do not know that you can put odds on it, Tom. There are things that cannot be weighed quite that precisely. I think it is fair to say the President feels that without any more aid there is a good chance that Cambodia will be taken over by the communists. With the aid, there is no guarantee that they will not still be taken over, but that they will certainly have a better chance with the aid than they will have without the aid.

Q How much chance will they have with the aid? How much will it improve their chances?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think you can measure it that precisely that you can put odds on it.

Q The Administration often speaks of a commitment to Cambodia and South Vietnam. Can you tell us where is this commitment? Where is it written? What is this commitment?

MR. NESSEN: I really think the latest and most precise Presidential view of the situation in Cambodia is in the letter he sent to the Speaker the day before yesterday, and I think it really covers all the questions that you are raising here today.

Q Can I go back to this other line of questioning, with relation to the question of the Arab discrimination, or whatever you want to call it?

I do not know whether you have been asked whether the President has put any kind of time deadline on getting these reports back from the four departments. Has he told them a time frame within which he wants to get these reports on what their policies are?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no deadline, but clearly, from the statement he made yesterday, they realize he feels strongly about it. I do want to clear up one point. When I said he was asking the Defense Department to look into the matter of the Corps of Engineers' personnel problems, that appears, at least, on the surface, to be not a legal question. I did indicate that -- the other three departments -- he was asking them to look into possible violations of the law, what those laws might be and what could be done about it.

The Pentagon is a matter of looking into the policy, what the rationale for the policy is and what the foreign policy implications are. I wanted to straighten that away.

Q Ron, is this across-the-board for all branches of the service in the Pentagon, or is it only the Corps of Engineers?

MR. NESSEN: That is what I mentioned to Sarah; I thought you had better check the Pentagon for their personnel policies because I don't have it here.

Q You misunderstood me.

MR. NESSEN: You mean, the looking into it for all branches --

Q Right.

MR. NESSEN: Sure, across-the-board.

Q Across-the-board as to the Pentagon only?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, that is the only place where this matter has arisen.

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Q What about the diplomatic assignments to Arab countries -- and I refer also to the Agriculture Department, all embassy personnel. Is there any ethnic restriction on that kind of assignment?

MR. NESSEN: You have to ask the State Department what their policy is. I don't know.

Q Has he asked for a similar report, for instance, on all government agencies that have activities or operations abroad; for instance, the foreign aid program? Has he asked whether or not the foreign aid agency, as a matter of acceding to the wishes of Arab nations, does not send Jewish personnel --

MR. NESSEN: There has not been a suggestion that there is that kind of thing, Jim.

Q I understand that, but nevertheless, it is a question of whether or not -- does he want to know whether this is going on with respect to other agencies besides the Corps of Engineers?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no suggestion that it is going on.

Q I did not ask that. I asked whether the President wanted to know it. Do you happen to know, does the President want to know whether this is going on?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, again I think you need to stick with what he stated yesterday as his very firm beliefs as to the principle of nondiscrimination and so forth.

Q One of the things we have been trying to get at here, Ron, is something I know that you understand that that is the very important question in the government of followthrough. The President issues a statement, and it is a strong statement and so forth and so on, and if there is no followthrough, as many persons have commented, nothing happens.

So, I am asking you, is he going to follow through to the extent, for instance, of finding out whether other government agencies are doing this?

MR. NESSEN: He certainly followed through already to the extent of asking three departments to look into any legal violation, and the fourth department, being the Pentagon, to look into the policy considerations, and if there are any other indications that there is any other discrimination anywhere else of this kind, he will certainly look into that.

Let me just read a note I have here. I am told that the Defense Secretary has already asked all the military services to look into their personnel practices across the board to ensure that there are no discriminatory practices being followed.

It seems to me that would apply to Les' question concerning black officers, and that the Secretary of Defense took this on his own initiative without waiting for the President to direct him to do it.

Q Why didn't they tell me this this morning? Why was there no sign of this in Colonel Lockridge's office, and what is going to happen if the Saudis don't buy this? Are we going to pull out of Saudi Arabia or not, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think we better just wait a bit before we get to that stage, Les.

There is a gentleman here who wants to ask a question.

Q It has been reported that Emperor Hirohito has accepted an invitation to come to Washington late August or early September.

MR. NESSEN: Could you tell me where that report comes from?

Q Mutual.

MR. NESSEN: What have they said?

Q That was exact. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: He broadcast that right out on the radio?

Q In Japanese, Ron.

Q What was the question?

MR. NESSEN: The question is, the Mutual Broadcasting network has announced the Emperor will be coming to the United States.

There will be a joint announcement made this evening by the Japanese and American governments.

Q Why don't you make it now, Ron?

Q Has the embargo been broken?

Q We are back to that old embargo problem.

MR. NESSEN: Has the embargo really been broken?

"Their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress of Japan, have accepted the invitation of the President" -- I just destroy embargoes on the spot. (Laughter) Does this mean I won't be allowed to ask a question at the next news conference?

Q You will be the 64th.

MR. NESSEN: -- "to pay a state visit to the United States. Their Majesties are scheduled to engage in official functions in Washington on October 2 and 3."

The other details concerning their Majesties' visit, which will last about two weeks, remain to be worked out. I think what you better do is say that the White House said this after the announcement was released prematurely in the press, or something like that.

Q By whom?

MR. NESSEN: By the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Q Why don't you say something about an enterprising reporter?

MR. NESSEN: Who listens to the radio?

Q What does "engage in official functions" mean? Meetings at the White House and State dinner?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't have any other details of the visit at this point, Fran.

Q Before we forget, will you make a note to get the answer. You said you did not know, when I asked you, if the matter of the boycott was going to be taken up with the Saudi representatives meeting with U.S. officials, and you said you didn't know.

MR. NESSEN: Are they meeting with them?

Q They are meeting with them on trade matters, and one thing and another, and I asked you if the boycott question will be taken up.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, and I will find out whether it is or not.

To clear up one earlier question, Ambassador Richardson will be leaving Washington later today, and his arrival in London is scheduled for Monday, March 3.

Q What did Sparkman see the President about today?

MR. NESSEN: Let me just check on that.

Q Why is it taking him so long to get there?

MR. NESSEN: Maybe he is taking the boat.

The purpose of the visit with John Sparkman was to introduce to the President a gentleman named George T. Fowler. George T. Fowler is the Small Businessman of the Year in Alabama, and also the Nation's Outstanding Small Businessman for 1974.

Q Do you have his home town, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have George T. Fowler's home town. He started off with a Small Business Administration loan.

Q It must have been so small you cannot even find the paper. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: He has written a book on making good as a small businessman. This will give you an idea. (Laughter)

Q Ron, I would like to raise a housekeeping or inhouse matter. There was a period of several hours yesterday when we were in the garage at the Inverrary Country Club when basically, if we had queries, we could not do much with them because the press aides who were available were out on the golf course.

The Press Office was manned by a single secretary. Now, I probably should put it in the form of a request, that in future such instances that a press spokesman who can handle questions and matters of substance be available, personally available.

MR. NESSEN: Let me say this about yesterday. I do think the press arrangements for yesterday's trip were not up to the standards that we try to maintain in the Press Office for out-of-town trips. And not by way of any excuse, but there was some difficulty with the hotel and their cooperation, and also some difficulty with the country club, as far as their cooperation went.

I do think that we might have handled the afternoon a bit better, and I have already told people on my staff that we need to not have some of the things happen that did happen yesterday.

Those are mostly convenience and arrangements kinds of things.

As for a Press Secretary not being there, I was working on what later turned out to be the statement we put out on the plane. Jack and I were at the end of the phone, and in fact, I got, myself, four or five phone queries and Jack got some, I know, where he was.

I think it probably would have been a better idea to have a Press Secretary physically in the Press Office, but the fact is that we were as close as the phone. I was right next to a phone, and I did get phone calls throughout the afternoon from people who had queries.

I know Dick and Helen had one about the mad parachutist, which I got, and some others.

Q What was that?

MR. NESSEN: You missed that? Wasn't that in the pool report?

Q What was the mad parachutist?

MR. NESSEN: I did not see him, but there was one.

Q Ron, one problem is this. For example, when we arrived there, the last press bus, it took us 15 minutes to find out what hole the President was on. We were supposed to pick up the President at the tenth hole, and we could not even find out exactly where he was on the course. It was like that.

MR. NESSEN: I know. I think what happened was that we got too many people from the Press Office out with the President thinking that that is where the problems would be, and not enough back in the Press Office to deal with problems. That is where we got messed up a little bit.

Q Ron, did you ever find out who on the White House staff made the decision, housekeeping decision or whatever you want to call it, to give Governors six-course meals and take dishes down and bring dishes back? Did you ever find out who made that decision on the staff? I am sure it was not President Ford.

MR. NESSEN: I do not know who picked the precise menus and the number of courses.

Q Who made the decision to take the dishes? I am sure that was not President Ford originally.

MR. NESSEN: No, it was President Ford.

Q It was President Ford who decided to take the dishes down and bring them back?

MR. NESSEN: He decided --

Q Who suggested this to him?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that anybody needed to suggest it to him.

Q Did they wash them the last time?

MR. NESSEN: I think there was time to wash them yesterday. I don't know that anybody needed to suggest to him, and I don't know that they did. I know it was his choice that when he had guests at official functions he wanted to show them the courtesy of having this government china. It is not White House china. It is sort of standard government dishes.

Q Does the President really think Congress is to blame for his lousy golf game?

MR. NESSEN: Did he say that?

Q That is what he said.

MR. NESSEN: I did not hear that.

Q Ron, did Congressman Derwinski visit the President this morning?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see it on the schedule. I have to check that.

Q What did they talk about with Richardson?

MR. NESSEN: I guess they reviewed policy. They did not talk about this series of interviews in that meeting.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:50 P.M. EDT)