

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 6:54 A.M. EDT

MAY 13, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: The merchant ship Mayaguez at last report was anchored close to the island of Koh Tang, 30 miles off the coast of Cambodia. During the night Washington time, it was escorted by two Cambodian naval vessels from the point where it was originally boarded, toward its present location. The ship is being kept under observation by U. S. military aircraft. The President was kept informed of developments during the night.

Now let me give you the spelling of that little rock island that we talked about yesterday. The name of that island is Poulo Wai, P-o-u-l-o W-a-i.

Q Where is it located?

MR. NESSEN: That is the one we talked about yesterday, 60 miles or whatever.

Q Ron, is this the first statement that you have made beyond --

MR. NESSEN: This is the statement.

Now I am going to anticipate a couple of questions and then you can go file.

There is no NSC meeting scheduled at the moment.

It was learned that the ship was not in Kompong Som late last night.

Q Not in Kompong Som?

MR. NESSEN: Not in Kompong Som. We didn't say yesterday that it was, but I think the impression got around that it was moving toward Kompong Som. We learned late last night that it was not in Kompong Som.

Q How do you spell that?

MR. NESSEN: Kompong Som, K-o-m-p-o-n-g S-o-m, the big port on the gulf.

Q Through aerial intelligence?

MR. NESSEN: The latest that I have for you now is we know this through reconnaissance.

Q You know what?

MR. NESSEN: We know all of this through reconnaissance aircraft.

Q Did you say in that original statement, Ron, that the President had been kept informed all night?

MR. NESSEN: That is the last line of the original statement.

Why don't you go file.

Q Is there a limit on international waters there?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q It is a Cambodian island, Koh Tang?

MR. NESSEN: That also may be contested. We are checking with the State Department.

Q Ron, any comment on the reports that we are working through Peking?

MR. NESSEN: No comment.

Q Do they know if anything was said by the Cambodian naval ship as they threatened --

Q Is that an island?

MR. NESSEN: Which one?

Q Koh Tang.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, Koh Tang. I said it was an island.

Q Did they threaten these people by word of mouth or something or did they just give a signal they were going to shoot across them or what, or did they shoot across them?

MR. NESSEN: We said yesterday that they were fired on.

Q They were fired on?

MR. NESSEN: We said that yesterday.

Q But nothing said?

MR. NESSEN: By way of a threat?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: You know, we don't have a lot of information.

Q I didn't know Cambodia had a navy.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 7:00 A.M. EDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 9:53 A.M. EDT

MAY 13, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I just thought I would keep you posted as we go along, and also, I don't really have anything major, but I wanted to keep you posted as we go along this morning, a couple of tidbits, and also to answer some of the questions that have come into the Press Office.

As some of you have inquired about wire stories quoting Pentagon sources concerning the movement of Marines to Thailand, on that question, we will simply have to say that we cannot discuss any possible military movements.

Q Any possible military movements?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

To anticipate questions, I will tell you that there is an NSC meeting at 10:15.

Q On this subject?

MR. NESSEN: We never discuss the subject, Fred, but use your imagination.

Q Is Kissinger back?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen him this morning.

Q Is he being summoned back?

MR. NESSEN: Not summoned back, not as far as I know.

Q Is he going to be there?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Was that a yes to Helen's question?

MR. NESSEN: Just a moment.

Let's put that in reserve for a moment while we check.

Q Put what in reserve?

MR. NESSEN: The question of whether Kissinger will be back.

For timetable fans, here is a little rundown on the President's activities during the night. He talked to Brent at 10:30 p.m. for an updated account, and he talked to Brent at 2:25 a.m. for another updated account. He woke up again for good at 5:20 a.m.

Q That is a call, or just a wake up?

MR. NESSEN: No, he normally wakes up at 5:20 to 5:30.

Q Was he called?

MR. NESSEN: No, that was his normal wake-up time.

He talked to Secretary Schlesinger at 7 a.m., and he had his regular morning meeting -- it wasn't an emergency or anything, it was the regular morning meeting -- with Brent to go over the intelligence report at 7:40.

That is really about all I have in the way of an update.

Q Do you have anything as to the status of the crew, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything further on that.

Q No observations from the reconnaissance plane?

Q Were there any signs of life seen on the ship at all or anything by the planes?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything on that.

Q Why can't we find that out? It is very simple.

MR. NESSEN: I will check.

Q There was a report on the radio that some of the crew were wounded. Do you have anything to confirm that?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q This report over the radio came from a man named Peter Lindstrom, who was active in the PUEBLO, who says he was informed by a State Department source that four men were wounded seriously.

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything on that, Sarah.

Q Would you say definitely then that since you do not have anything on it that it is not true that any crew were wounded?

MR. NESSEN: The last I have heard is what I said yesterday, which is that I have not seen any reports like that, but I will check since there is this radio report.

Q Ron, do you know where the ship is?

MR. NESSEN: The ship is stopped -- whether the anchor is dropped or not, I don't know -- close to this island called Koh Tang, which is 30 miles generally South of the Cambodian coast.

Q Close to the island? Is it in a port or is it just out in the waters?

MR. NESSEN: Just close to the island is as much as I have.

Q It did not get to Kompong Som, did it?

Q How far is it from the closest land? About 30 miles?

MR. NESSEN: Thirty miles from the mainland, yes.

Q In what you consider international waters?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is the President considering a military response?

MR. NESSEN: I can't talk about that right now.

Q Ron, if I may follow up with Phil's question, some of those islands there in that particular area are used like port facilities by the Cambodians where they have little small boat bases, and then they go out to the larger boats on a ferrying type operation.

MR. NESSEN: This is a very small island, and it is not clear. The State Department was trying to determine whether this is one of the islands that is contested between Cambodia and Vietnam.

The last time I checked, no answer had come back as to the ownership of the island.

Q But it does not seem to be in and of itself a port facility?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is a very small island.

Q Ron, can you tell us about the contact?

MR. NESSEN: The island where the boat was intercepted is called Poulo Wai -- I think we gave the spelling of it earlier -- which is another 30 miles South. In other words, just to clear up what may have been a misunderstanding, the boat started off being boarded off this island called Poulo Wai.

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Q Is that eight miles off that island?

MR. NESSEN: Eight miles off that island.

Q South of the present island?

MR. NESSEN: Let me do it this way, Ralph.

Q I am sorry.

MR. NESSEN: It started eight miles off that island yesterday and during the night, it moved 30 miles almost due North to this other island, which in turn, is 30 miles off the mainland of Cambodia, if you follow.

Q It steamed under its own power there going that 30 miles?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, as far as we know.

Q Ron, can you tell us the reaction of the Cambodian government, what the contacts have been?

MR. NESSEN: No, I can't tell you that.

Q Have there been any direct contacts?

MR. NESSEN: I can't talk about it.

Q Yesterday, you said no, and now you are backing off of that.

Q I can't talk about it.

Q Ron, your statement yesterday called for the immediate release of the ship or face serious consequences. Have you any time deadline in mind on this?

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you that, Ralph.

Q Is there one?

Q If the boat was seized eight miles off an island claimed by Cambodian and South Vietnam, and the standard accepted international limit is 12 miles, how can we say this was not in their territorial waters?

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kissinger will not come to the NSC meeting. He will be back tonight at around 9:00. He is going to go ahead and keep his appointment to speak in Kansas City.

Q Where is he now?

Q When is Dr. Kissinger scheduled to speak?

MR. NESSEN: At noon. I didn't know about this news conference.

Q Is there one?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q I would like to ask the question a different way, about the wounded.

Q How about letting us have an answer to Tom's question.

Q It appeared he is closing his briefing.

Q I am sorry. Would you repeat the question?

Q The question is, if the boat was seized eight miles off an island which is claimed both by Cambodia and South Vietnam and the standard accepted limit to territorial waters is 12 miles --

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that is the standard accepted limit.

Q It is not the accepted limit?

MR. NESSEN: The use of the word "piracy" clearly indicates we considered that to be international waters.

Q Ron, do we have any word as to whether Cambodians are aboard the ship at this point?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q There are Cambodians aboard the ship?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q The boarding party?

Q Do we have an estimate as to how many -- a handful?

MR. NESSEN: No. The radio, as I told you yesterday, has not broadcast any more from the ship, so we don't --

Q Do we know that from reconnaissance reports or from radio reports that there are Cambodians on board?

MR. NESSEN: From the radio reports before the radio went out.

Q Can I ask a question about the wounded? You said you cannot confirm the reports of wounded.

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of any reports until you mentioned them to me.

Q I think that clears my question, but was there anything in the Mayday distress signals which went out to suggest that there were wounded, whether or not you can confirm it or not?

MR. NESSEN: I did not hear anything about any report from the ship of any wounded.

Q So, you are basing the Cambodians on board from yesterday, not from any new observations?

Q Not seen today. This is what we are getting at. Not seen by the planes today?

MR. NESSEN: Let me just say that there are Cambodians aboard.

Q Are the Americans still aboard or have they taken them off, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that.

Q Ron, I think that the American people have a right to know whether the President is pursuing this very actively through diplomatic channels and I don't understand why you cannot say at least that without going into detail.

MR. NESSEN: I think the State Department talked a little bit about that. The President did order the State Department, after all, to make the demand for the release of the ship and I think the State Department will have to tell you as much as it can tell you about how that demand is being delivered.

Q Well, the President of the United States is involved in this. Why can't we know whether the Chinese envoy was summoned in, and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: I think I would prefer, at this point, now, since the NSC meeting will start in less than 15 minutes, to wait until after that.

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Q Any comment on the Thailand report that they would not allow American military forces?

MR. NESSEN: No, I can't comment on that.

Q Ron, how did the ship get in? Was it towed? You said it went under its own power.

MR. NESSEN: We know it went under its own power.

Q That indicates that they were either ordering the pilot to take it in, or they were piloting it in themselves.

MR. NESSEN: There is no radio contact, so we can't confirm those.

Q Ron, two things. First of all, are you aware we were told on background -- and I am willing to put this comment on background, if you want to -- we were told on background just before you came out that we should stay away from the story that 1,000 Marines are on their way to Thailand. We were given the clear impression in reading that that it was a false report --

MR. NESSEN: From here?

Q Yes, from here.

You seem to have opened it up again. We have already called our offices and told them on background to stay away from the AP version, while the UPI was not ruled out.

Q The AP version is changed now. -- will be flown.

Q What?

Q The AP is saying "will be flown."

Q "Will be flown," but that still is an affirmative that it is an order that will be carried out, whereas UPI leaves it up in the air as it may be only an alert to be prepared to, if ordered to, at a later time.

We were given the impression that we should stay with the UPI version of that; also that the number was wrong, which seemed to indicate that some Marines were involved in something. So, we would sure like a clarification because we have been calling in this updated information as we have gone along.

Q Can't you give us something on background, Ron, without quoting you directly?

MR. NESSEN: If we can all agree for background --

Q Ron, an hour ago we went with the report from a source outside the White House that 1,000 Marines from Okinawa have been told to be prepared to move to U Tapo. That that has already been reported.

Q I withdraw my request for background.

MR. NESSEN: In that case, we will just say then we are not going to talk about any possible military movement.

Q One last question, Ron. What about the Panamanian ship? Have we learned anything about --

MR. NESSEN: The Panamanian ship that was mentioned casually yesterday, I find out now that on the 7th of May -- and I don't know when exactly that was, six days ago --

Q Is that a Panamanian registry or is it a Panamanian ship?

MR. NESSEN: Panamanian registry.

Q It could be a United States ship, then?

MR. NESSEN: It could be. The identity of the ship is not clear even now.

It was detained in the Gulf of Thailand and later was released.

Q Why? Do we know why? We really don't know why, or you just won't comment?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q How long was it detained?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the exact time.

Q Couldn't that possibly have a great deal of bearing on why we were stopped, whether or not it is a dispute over territorial waters, et cetera?

MR. NESSEN: That is all I was able to find out yesterday afternoon.

Q Ron, there is something very peculiar. Are we not being able to get information about that ship registry from the Panamanian government, or are we not being able to get it from our own merchant ship seamen?

MR. NESSEN: I just have not been able to find out anymore about the Panamanian ship.

Q Can you follow through on the idea of giving us some background on the status of the military? I am a little puzzled why with one organization going with it why you still can't give us on background the accuracy or inaccuracy of that.

MR. NESSEN: I just would rather say we are not going to --

Q This gives the impression that the White House can't talk, but the Pentagon and the State Department can. You should be able to tell us about the wounded, if there are any wounded.

MR. NESSEN: I had not heard of any wounded until I --

Q Well, now, at the State Department it sounds pretty good --

MR. NESSEN: Is the State Department saying that there were wounded?

Q This man is saying he has it from a State Department source that four were wounded severely.

MR. NESSEN: I promised I would check on that, which I will do.

Q Ron, don't you think that somebody in this Administration has an obligation to clear up as clearly a muddled situation as the status of these 1,000 Marines that may or may not be moving to U Tapo, apart from sources in varying forms of the Pentagon and of the State Department? Don't you think that in the interest of national sanity that we ought to have some clarification?

MR. NESSEN: There are several competing interests, Tom.

Q The report is out; it is broadcast.

MR. NESSEN: I know it is out.

Q Now you have knocked down the knockdown, and so the report stands. I am going to go back and tell the folks to take the lid off again.

Q We have been getting varying degrees of advice and guidance on this thing, and it has gotten to the point of just utter confusion, and I think it is bordering on irresponsibility to let it continue this way for all of us.

Q But if it is the case the troops will go, that is different.

MR. NESSEN: I think that is all we have now, and I will come back after the NSC meeting.

Q About 11 o'clock?

MR. NESSEN: I can't pin it down that tightly because I don't know how long the meeting will last.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 10:27 A.M. EDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:15 P.M. EDT

MAY 13, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: As you know, some of you who have been here since early this morning, the President came to the office at 7:42. He held his regular morning meeting with Brent Scowcroft to review the intelligence briefing. It lasted from 7:45 until 8:08, a total of 23 minutes. That is slightly longer than the usual morning intelligence meeting.

The National Security Council, as you also probably know, began meeting at 10:22. The President left the meeting at 11:18. The meeting continued until 11:30. I am not able to tell you anything that occurred at the NSC meeting.

Q Was Schlesinger here?

MR. NESSEN: Schlesinger was there.

Q Who else was there, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: One of the statutory members was out of the city, as you know -- Dr. Kissinger.

The President, at 11:18, after he left the NSC meeting, began one of his Congressional hours. I think you know that that is when he has a series of short meetings with various Members of Congress who have requested brief appointments with him.

Today's appointments were with Senator Javits; Congressman John Anderson, Republican of Illinois; Congressman Joe Waggoner, Democrat of Louisiana; Congressman Frank Horton, Republican of New York; Congressman Garry Brown, Republican of Michigan; Congressman Marvin Esch, Republican of Michigan, and Sidney Yates, Democrat of Illinois.

Q Were they together?

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MR. NESSEN: No, each one has a short, separate meeting with the President.

Q Can you tell us who was at that NSC meeting, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: The President, the Vice President, Secretary Schlesinger, Brent Scowcroft, Director Colby, and General Jones, Chief of Staff of the Air Force and Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Q Anybody else?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Was anybody there from the State Department?

Q Was Sisco there?

MR. NESSEN: Let's check on who was there.

Q You say Jones is Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

MR. NESSEN: General Brown, I understand, is in Europe on NATO business in Brussels.

Q He is Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs?

MR. NESSEN: Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, as well as the actual Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Q What is his first name?

MR. NESSEN: David Jones.

This afternoon the President will meet at 2 o'clock with Governor Carey of New York and Mayor Beame of New York City. This meeting was requested by the Governor and the Mayor to discuss the financial problems faced by New York City.

I think there will be an opportunity to take pictures at the beginning of that meeting. Also, a writing pool could go in at the beginning of the meeting.

The White House will have at the meeting the President, the Vice President, Secretary Simon, Bill Seidman, Director Lynn, Dr. Greenspan and Jim Cannon and Dick Dunham from the Domestic Council.

I don't anticipate that the President will give a final answer to the Governor and the Mayor at this meeting. What I do think we could do, if you would like it, would be to give you 15 or 20 minutes to interview the Governor and the Mayor and then bring Jim Lynn out here, who can give you a fill in on what occurred at the meeting.

Q We would like that.

MR. NESSEN: Let's think about roughly 3 o'clock, but we will wait to give you time to talk to the Governor.

Q I thought you said they made the final meeting.

Q What is that at 3 o'clock, Ron, Lynn or the other two first?

MR. NESSEN: About 3 o'clock, after there has been 15 or 20 minutes elapsed to talk to the Governor and the Mayor.

Q Outside or in here?

MR. NESSEN: Outside.

Q Why not in here?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Let me check on it, but why don't you count on talking to them outside. That is the normal way to do it.

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Q Would you answer the question about what you said yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Secretary Simon has indicated Administration policy as of this time, and the President obviously is going to give him a hearing and listen to their appeal. He will give a final answer, I would think, in the next day or so.

Q Is he only going to give them 30 minutes?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think the meeting is scheduled for longer than that. It begins at 2:00.

Q Ron, why was no member of the Federal Reserve Board invited to attend this meeting?

MR. NESSEN: That is an independent agency.

Q Well, Chairman Burns obviously sits in often with the President on matters of economic importance.

MR. NESSEN: As I understand, the request that the Governor and the Mayor are making has to do with something they want from the Executive Branch of the Government. I believe you have to check with them, but I think they probably already have talked to the Fed.

Q Ron, could I ask one more question on this?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Do your remarks indicate that the President is keeping an open mind on New York City's request?

MR. NESSEN: At this moment, the Administration policy is as stated by Secretary Simon. He will give them a hearing, listen to their case, and will give a final answer in the next day or so.

At 4:00, the President is holding an economic and energy meeting. There are two items on the agenda for this meeting. One, to review the current state of the economy; two, to consider the revised budget and economic assumptions.

We talked about this yesterday. I have had a chance to nail down what may have been a somewhat confused explanation I gave you but the facts are that on June 1, it is legally required that the budget be recalculated -- expenditures and revenues -- based on the latest information.

Now, that obviously requires that the assumptions, as printed on the famous page 41 of the budget, be revised and updated. It is not legally required that a new page 41 be published. At this time, the question of whether to publish a new page 41 is being considered, and I don't have a definite answer for you on that.

The participants at that energy and economic meeting -- I suppose it would actually be fair to say it is an economic meeting -- are Secretary Simon, Bill Seidman, Jim Lynn, Secretary Dunlop, Alan Greenspan, Dr. Burns, Frank Zarb, Don Rumsfeld, and Dick Dunham, of the Domestic Council.

Q Ron, before we leave this, you say the meeting would consider the revised budget and economic assumptions. Does this mean the revised numbers are ready and are going to be presented to the President?

MR. NESSEN: No. Let me see. There are some updated figures that are available now, and they will be looked at this afternoon, among other things.

Q Ron, could we get back to Dr. Greenspan to give us a report on this meeting afterwards?

MR. NESSEN: I was going to have John Carlson there. I can talk to Dr. Greenspan and see if he would like to come out and do it.

Q Can you give us any of those figures that are available?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check on that.

Q Ron, is it a fact that page 41 was not based on the fact that there would be budget deficits this year and next, and that the Keynesian effect of budget deficits was not cranked in and therefore, the figures were much worse than they believed them to be?

MR. NESSEN: That is an updated version of your question yesterday, and as I said yesterday, as far as I know, that page was --

Q I was not here yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: Somebody asked that question yesterday.

It was based, as far as I know, on all the available information at that time.

Now, you have already gotten a package of announcements; is that right?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Just to run over them quickly, you have the intention to nominate Galen L. Stone to be Ambassador to Laos.

Q Will he supervise the evacuation? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Sarah?

Q I ask that in all seriousness, because we have a report, and maybe you can confirm it, we are taking Americans out of Vientiane.

MR. NESSEN: In all seriousness, no evacuation has been ordered.

He replaces Charles S. Whitehouse, who has been named Ambassador to Thailand.

Do you want to ask that question?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: No.

Also, you have the appointment of Charles S. Gubser, of Bethesda, Maryland, to be Chairman of the United States Section of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense of the United States and Canada.

The appointment of three people to be Commissioners of the United States Section of the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission.

Q Is that like a Debris Commission? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Also, you have the resignation of Duane K. Craske, of Guam, as the United States Attorney for the District of Guam.

Also, you have the resignation of Joseph A. Mendenhall as Ambassador to the Malagasy Republic. There is no successor named. Mr. Mendenhall is retiring from the Foreign Service.

That is about all I can string it out to, today.

Q Don't you have anything on Moynihan today?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, will the United States land Marines in Thailand over Thailand's objections?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any comment on that.

Q Can you confirm reports of an alert of Marines in Okinawa now, please?

MR. NESSEN: I can't talk about any possible military moves.

Q Congressman Anderson and Senator Javits both came out of the White House today saying they were confident that the President would consult with Congress before he made any military moves. Is that a valid impression?

MR. NESSEN: That is a valid impression.

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Q Could you put it in positive terms that the President will consult with Congress before he takes any military action?

MR. NESSEN: If he decides to take any military action.

Q Has the President consulted with the Congress in the last 24 hours since we last talked yesterday in any more formal manner?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Can you tell me about consultation, Ron, with the usual group that heads the --

MR. NESSEN: If there were any decisions to use any military force, the War Powers Act contains the requirements.

Q Ron, has the President put a time limit on how long it might be before he would take military action, if he should decide to take military action? Is there a deadline?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Would the consultation be before or after the military action of the War Powers Act.

MR. NESSEN: Whatever the act requires.

Q And it might be after the action?

Q You mean it might be after?

MR. NESSEN: I did not say that.

Q The question is, would it be after the action?

MR. NESSEN: I said whatever the requirements of the act are, he would live up to them. I certainly didn't say "after." I hope nobody heard me say "after."

Q The question was "before" and you said that was a valid impression.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Can I take it one step further? Is the President now consulting with Members of Congress or leaders on the steps he is taking in terms of an alert or precautionary --

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, I think, as I recall the act, he can permit the troops to take military action before consulting. Is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the exact words of the War Powers Act.

Q He has 48 hours.

Q Plus the gray area over safety of American lives.

MR. NESSEN: As you all know, the War Powers Resolution of November 1, 1973, provides that "The President shall in every possible instance consult with the Congress before introducing U.S. armed forces."

Q In every instance?

MR. NESSEN: It says "in every possible instance."

Q That is not mandatory.

MR. NESSEN: It says "shall," "shall in every possible instance." Shall is the mandatory word, I think, as used in legislation.

Q "In every possible instance." That does leave the possibility that he would not do it, would not be required to do it.

MR. NESSEN: Look, Tom, let's not go down that track again.

Q Can you tell us that he has made a commitment to Congress that he will consult with them before he makes any --

MR. NESSEN: Somebody asked me here, would he, and I said whatever I said.

Q Then you went on to say that under the act he would meet the requirements of the act.

MR. NESSEN: Somebody asked me what the language of the act was, and I happened to have it here. Somebody said back here would he consult with Congress before, and I said yes.

Q What I am saying then is that your next statement was that he would meet the requirements of the act, and the act even as drawn and when the legislation was being considered thoroughly contained a kind of loop-hole for the President to take military action before consulting with Congress.

MR. NESSEN: Tom, come on now. This is hypothetical. He has not ordered any military action, and I said he would abide by the provisions of the War Powers Act.

Q I understand that.

MR. NESSEN: Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Q And he has made a commitment to the Congress that before he does take any action, they will be consulted.

Q How does that read, "will consult with Congress"?

MR. NESSEN: "Shall."

Q "Shall," okay.

MR. NESSEN: — "in every possible instance consult with the Congress before introducing U.S. armed forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities or in the situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances."

Q Ron, what does he understand the definition of "consulting with Congress" to be?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, come on. You know, we are very far ahead of ourselves here. The President has ordered no military action.

Q I know.

MR. NESSEN: All right.

Q You want to say the President has not ordered certain precautionary military --

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to talk about possible military moves.

Q Ron, I wonder if you could add anything to the conversation that was related by Congressman Waggoner this morning when he said that the President took ahold of his arm and said, "I have got a tough decision to make here on the ship."

Is he going through some decisions right now on whether or not to introduce military forces?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q What did he mean by that?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will leave Congressman Waggoner's words where they are.

Q Ron, do you have the name of this Panamanian ship?

MR. NESSEN: No, the name is not accurately known.

Q Do we have anything more on the Panamanian ship? Are we trying to find out why it was held, how it got loose, and see if it is applicable to our case?

MR. NESSEN: The Panamanian ship was detained and was not moved anywhere for about 36 hours on May 7 and ending on May 8 and it was then released and sailed on.

Q Did they say why it was held?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Can you explain why we know that much but we don't know accurately its name and who owned it?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I can't. It is not that I won't. It is that I just don't have the information.

Q Ron, have we been able to establish contact with the Cambodian government to relay the message?

MR. NESSEN: As Secretary Kissinger mentioned, I think this is a period when it is wise not to talk about how the President's directive of yesterday is to be carried out.

Q Ron, do you know if there were any refugees on that Panamanian ship?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard that there were any.

Q Was the ship taken into port?

MR. NESSEN: No. I said it was detained on location and then let go.

Q Ron, you indicated earlier this morning that there were Cambodians aboard this ship.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q I am wondering if you have any updated information on whether or not they have spotted any Americans?

MR. NESSEN: Spotted any Americans?

Q Still on the ship.

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't have anything beyond what I said this morning.

Q Ron, yesterday you were able to say flatly that there had not been any private or public communication with the Cambodian government.

MR. NESSEN: I am just not going to talk about how the President's directive is carried out.

Q Ron, do we know whether the Cambodians on board this ship were part of the original boarding party?

MR. NESSEN: You know, the radio on the ship went out sometime ago, yesterday, as a matter of fact, and there is not any accurate information.

Q Ron, how do you know they are military people, then?

Q Is it a safe assumption that the Cambodians on the ship are military people?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q What was the question to which you just said yes. It is so rare for you to say yes.

MR. NESSEN: He was stunned into immobility.

Q Right.

MR. NESSEN: The question was, is it a safe assumption that the Cambodians on the ship are military people.

Q How can you see Cambodians and you can't see Americans?

Q Ron, if these are Cambodian military, why did the President use the term "piracy" and who does he feel should -- I mean, where is the appropriate trial of pirates and so forth. Why did he use the word "pirates" if these are Cambodian military people?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, that was a descriptive --

Q Is there any possible information that we have that the crew might have been removed from the ship?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Wait, what was your question again?

Q Do we have any information that the crew might have been taken off the ship?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to be able to go into any more details about that.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: I can't.

Q You do know something but you can't tell us; is this correct?

MR. NESSEN: I am just not going to talk any more about that.

Q You cannot say if any of the crew were wounded?

MR. NESSEN: We have no reports that any members of the crew were wounded.

Q How about the ship's cargo, did they ever decide what that really was?

MR. NESSEN: The company that owns it and has the bills of lading, I suppose, gave a fairly detailed rundown that I read in The Times this morning.

Q Ron, do you know if the President, in his own mind, has set either a personal timetable or a deadline or a diplomatic timetable or deadline for release of the crew and the ship?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, you don't know, or he has not?

MR. NESSEN: I said before he has not.

Q Ron, you said earlier that our planes have a ship in sight. Are they actively patrolling around the ship?

MR. NESSEN: What did the statement say, that they were keeping it under observation?

Keeping it under observation.

Q Ron, is the ship still in the same place that you reported it at a quarter of seven this morning?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, yes.

Q Ron, concerning the Panamanian ship, had it come to the attention of the U.S. authorities at the time why this American ship went into those waters?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure but the Pentagon may be able to help you more with that aspect of it.

Q Ron, you say today that the President has not set any deadline on action. What did he mean yesterday when he demanded the immediate release of the ship?

MR. NESSEN: The way I sense the question was that if by a certain hour and moment—and he has not done that.

Q What does he mean by "immediate"?

MR. NESSEN: Immediate is immediate. He wants it released now.

Q Ron, why can't you say whether the crew has been taken off the ship or not?

MR. NESSEN: I am just not able to.

Q Have we compromised them in any way, any more than they are?

MR. NESSEN: I just would rather not say, Helen.

Q Ron, what do our intelligence analysts think is the significance of it not being taken to Kompong Som as we had assumed that it would be?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of an analysis being made of that development.

I do want to point out that we were fairly careful yesterday to say that it was moving toward, or to, I forget the exact words.

Q But to get to its destination, did they have to turn around?

Q Was it the radio report that came from the ship that said they were headed for Kompong Som?

MR. NESSEN: Frankly, I don't know what the basis of that was, but at that time --

Q Could we find out?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, let me look into that.

Q Ron, are we encouraged or discouraged by that move?

MR. NESSEN: What?

Q Are we encouraged or discouraged by the fact that it did not go into that port city?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can answer that.

Q Ron, has the President had even a glimmer of hope after his request that they get out immediately? Just a glimmer of hope?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I will take that question.

Q Ron, is there any evidence that the Khmer Rouge has received the President's order or his request?

MR. NESSEN: I can't talk about how the President's directive is being carried out.

Q The question is, Ron, do we know whether they have received it or not?

MR. NESSEN: I can't say.

Q Does he plan a meeting with leaders of Congress on this today?

MR. NESSEN: It is not scheduled.

Q Can you tell us why we are being blacked out on information concerning this?

MR. NESSEN: I think we have given out a good deal, both last night and yesterday afternoon, and this morning several times.

Q Ron, the ship was moved largely at night, I believe, from its original location to its present location. Do you expect it to be moved after night falls, or I believe it is nightfall.

MR. NESSEN: No, I think that is not right. The movement was during the daytime hours there.

Q Ron, what time was the first initial reconnaissance of the ship made by U.S. forces?

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean ever, or a confirmation that it was where it is?

Q I will take either one.

MR. NESSEN: There was a positive sighting in the early morning hours of Cambodian time, which would have been late evening Washington time, and then the confirmation that it was where it now was -- I am trying to keep my time straight -- about nightfall Cambodian time, which was this morning Washington time.

Q Carrier-based aircraft?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot say.

Q To get to its present location, did it have to change course or reverse the course from the course it was following to Kompong Som and how far is the present location from the place it was seized initially?

MR. NESSEN: Let's do it this way. From the place where it was seized initially to Kompong Som was 60 miles. To get from where it was seized to Kompong Som would have to sail in a mostly north or northeasterly direction. It did sail in a North or Northeasterly direction for 30 miles and then stopped. So, it was on a course toward Kompong Som, but stopped halfway there.

Q Ron, do we have any Naval vessels in that area?

Q Ron, is this one of the islands the Cambodians used to offload deep water vessels and then they take the cargo off and then put it on barges and ship it into the shallow water ports?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that much about the details of this island.

Q To get back to the Panamanian freighter, I think you were asked a few moments ago when the White House found out about it. What was your answer?

MR. NESSEN: No, I was not asked that, and I have not been able to track down all the details of the Panamanian freighter.

Q When you do, would you also try and find out why a warning was not sent out to other ships in the area to be cautious because of this type of interdiction?

MR. NESSEN: Okay. A warning has been issued to mariners in that area.

Q When was it issued?

MR. NESSEN: I have not got the exact time, but I think what you want to know that it was after the seizure of the American freighter.

Q Who issued that warning?

MR. NESSEN: Whoever handles international warnings for Mariners.

Q What does the warning say?

MR. NESSEN: It is fairly standard language that is used in international warnings to mariners.

Q Ron, where is the Cambodian gunboat now?

MR. NESSEN: Beside the freighter.

Q Just one?

MR. NESSEN: Two.

Q Ron, do we have any U.S. Naval vessels in that area?

Q Ron, where specifically is that freighter? Is it at a dock or is it docked offshore and how far offshore?

MR. NESSEN: I have not nailed down that detail yet.

Q Ron, who gave us the information on the Panamanian ship?

MR. NESSEN: You know, these are international radio communications between ships and their home offices or their regional offices, and it is not something that is directed to the United States Federal Government and that is why it has taken some time for word to work its way up through the system.

Q Ron, there was a broadcast this morning saying to stay far offshore at that point because the water is too shallow. Are you sure the ship is not aground?

MR. NESSEN: The freighter, the Mayaguez?

Q The relief captain broadcast from Hong Kong.

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard that it was aground. We have no report that it is aground.

Q Do you know who monitored the Mayday call from the Mayaguez?

MR. NESSEN: I mentioned yesterday that one place that it had been picked up was in Indonesia, by a commercial radio operator in Indonesia.

Q Ron, are there any U.S. Naval ships in that area, or have any instructions been issued to them?

MR. NESSEN: Bill, I cannot talk about Naval movements.

Q Well, we talk about aerial reconnaissance.

Q Have any of the U.S. planes that have been monitoring or flying over the ship been fired upon by Cambodian forces; that is to say, if a plane got low enough to see that there were Cambodians on the deck, that is low enough for a Cambodian rifle man to point a gun up that way.

Have any of the U.S. planes in that area taken any fire of any sort from either the Cambodian naval ships or the Cambodian soldiers, armed forces?

MR. NESSEN: Let me check that one, Walt.

MORE

Q Ron, is it possible that one or more of those Cambodian ships were the gift of the United States Government or at one time were American Naval gunboats?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think anybody has had the time to check that, yet.

Q Ron, is there any description of those ships at all?

Q Ron, is there any evidence that these ships were doing anything besides carrying cargo?

MR. NESSEN: No. That is just a flat and simple no.

Q Ron, I would like to ask a question about the President's attitude toward all this. Does he regard this as a special kind of test growing out of the loss of Cambodia and Vietnam and having wider international implications than merely the capture of a ship?

MR. NESSEN: All the discussion that I have been privy to has been related specifically to the ship and I have not heard any consideration to possible wider significance of it.

Q Have we had any demands from Cambodia as a result of this?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q Ron, the President demanded immediate action or, as I understand, he said there would be serious consequences. There has been no such action. I am wondering how long immediacy means, and will the President allow them to take this ship into port?

MR. NESSEN: I think I had better not speculate on what might happen.

Q What does immediate mean when he says, "I demand immediate action or there will be serious consequences"?

MR. NESSEN: Immediate means right away.

Q Well, what? A day, two days, a week? What?

MR. NESSEN: I think I said to someone that the President has not set an hour or minute deadline.

Q Ron, when does the President intend to report to the American people on the progress, or lack of it, with relation to this ship?

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans at the moment for such a report other than the information that we have been giving out.

Q What is the U.S. attitude toward the recognition of South Vietnam by Britain?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any comment on that.

Q Wasn't there a Filipino ship also detained in these same waters?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q Was there a South Korean ship fired on last week?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Do you know what day that was and where it happened?

MR. NESSEN: Ten days ago, roughly, which would make it about the 3rd.

Q Fired on by Cambodians?

MR. NESSEN: Apparently.

Q What kind of ship was it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, it was a Korean freighter.

Q How long ago was that?

MR. NESSEN: Ten days ago.

Q Surely that information was conveyed to our shipping people before this incident, right?

MR. NESSEN: I have only the very vaguest information about the Korean ship other than that it was fired on; it was not detained, it just moved along. It was not hit and it continued on its way.

Q Was it in the same area, exactly?

MR. NESSEN: The same general area.

Q Fired on by another ship or from a land battery?

MR. NESSEN: From another ship.

Q A patrol boat?

MR. NESSEN: As far as we know.

Q Cambodian?

MR. NESSEN: Apparently.

Q Ron, on this warning, more specifically, are American ships being told, stay away from this area, in the Gulf of Thailand?

MR. NESSEN: What the wording of an international warning to mariners is I don't know, but I feel very sure that the Pentagon can give you the precise wording of it.

Q Ron, why was the warning not sent out sooner if we knew that a South Korean ship had been fired on and a Panamanian ship had been seized or detained?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, this word took some time to get back to authorities in the United States, and I can't give you a very precise answer to your question.

Q Are you satisfied with the intelligence apparatus that is transmitting this intelligence back to the United States?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard any questions raised about that.

Q Was the other incident in the general area?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Since the South Koreans are major allies of ours, do you mean the South Koreans did not relate to us until after this incident what had happened to their boat?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure where or how the word of the Korean episode reached us.

Q Can you check that?

MR. NESSEN: I will. I know of the interest.

Q We have a Central Intelligence Agency, which, by common knowledge, spends billions of dollars a year. We also have a Defense Intelligence Agency. We have a National Security Agency, I believe it is called, that again by common knowledge, monitors radio broadcasts of governments and private individuals all over the world. Are you saying that this vast intelligence network didn't come up with this firing on the South Korean freighter and the detention of the Panamanian freighter in time to issue a warning to American ships? Is that the gist of it?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, the gist of it is that it took time for both of these episodes to become known because, as I say, the communications -- it is a commercial ship communicating with its home office or with commercial radio receivers --

Q I am talking about --

MR. NESSEN: Let me finish.

Q You talk about the NSA overhearing or monitoring these messages from these ships to their home offices, one of them ten days ago, and I think the other Panamanian thing was several days ago.

MR. NESSEN: Seven.

Q Where was the National Security Agency and its hundreds of millions of billions of dollars it spends monitoring radio messages? Where were they?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot answer that question other than to say that the issue that you are raising and others are raising is not one that I have heard addressed here at the White House.

Q Are these the only two episodes?

Q Isn't it about time that we do have some consideration given to getting better intelligence? Is anyone talking about that, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I have not heard that issue addressed here at the White House.

Q If you could provide us some guidance here, it would seem, from your answers on the business of you know Cambodians are aboard -- we are not talking about Americans -- there would seem to be no reason that you would not be perfectly willing to say that yes, we have seen Americans on the ship, unless you are worried that you have not spotted Americans and you think there are none. Now, can you give us some guidance in this area?

MR. NESSEN: I can't, Phil.

Q Are these the only episodes you know of, the Panamanian and Korean?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. That was Ted's question.

Q You are leaving the impression in this room, I believe, that those Americans have been taken off that ship.

MR. NESSEN: I don't mean to leave that impression.

Q Do you wish to leave that impression?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly don't, Jim, and I hope others have not gotten the impression that you have gotten. I simply say that the question is not one that I am able to talk about.

Q Yet, you are able to say that there are Cambodian military personnel, but you are not able to say that there are Americans.

MR. NESSEN: Jim, the presence of Cambodian military people on that ship was contained in the last radio messages from the ship.

Q Ron, let me ask a different question.

Q You said the planes spotted Cambodians on the ship?

MR. NESSEN: When did I say that?

Q I thought I heard you say that.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I said that.

Q I thought I heard you say that earlier this morning.

Q You said the planes had been surveying since the radio went dead, and someone said, are there Cambodians aboard, and you said --

MR. NESSEN: Let me straighten this out. We know that there are Cambodians on the ship, and I can't go beyond that.

Q How do we know it?

MR. NESSEN: I can't go beyond that.

Q You will not say that there are Americans on board?

MR. NESSEN: I can't go beyond that.

Q This is ridiculous.

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, Helen.

Q Ron, maybe I can help you out. (Laughter)

Can you tell us why you are purposefully withholding some information gathered by U.S. intelligence sources on this incident?

MR. NESSEN: No, I can't.

Q Why? Is it for national security or what?

MR. NESSEN: I just can't talk about it.

Q You seem to be very emphatic that no one was wounded, and you said it now several times.

MR. NESSEN: I said we have no reports of anybody being wounded.

Q Ron, is it a matter of Americans not being seen so that maybe they could have all been stowed in the hold or held below the deck or something like that?

MR. NESSEN: I am just not going to be able to talk about it.

Q Ron, do you have any evidence that this is an official act by the Khmer Rouge government or in fact it could be a piracy act by some renegade navy people?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything on the motives behind it.

Q Ron, may I ask what about this radio transmission? You keep talking about it. There must be a transcript of it. Why can't it be made public?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have it here, but if you want to, try the Pentagon, and I will talk to the Pentagon, also.

Q Do you favor making it public?

MR. NESSEN: I have no position on it one way or the other.

Q Do you expect an update this afternoon on this?

Q What do we have in the way of lids, further briefings and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: I would say go ahead and talk lunch until 3 o'clock. Those of you who are in the pool or want photos of the beginning of the New York meeting, that is 2 o'clock. But, as far as information goes, I guess if you want to catch the people coming out, the meeting is scheduled for 45 minutes, so maybe a lunch lid until 2:45, let's say.

Q And the economic meeting would be over about what time?

MR. NESSEN: About 5:00.

Q And Carlson, as far as you know, will come out?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 12:55 P.M. EDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 7:35 P.M. EDT

MAY 13, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Number one, there is an NSC meeting tonight at 10:30.

Number two, I don't anticipate having anything to announce after the NSC meeting; therefore, we are giving a news lid. If there is something to announce after the NSC meeting -- and I don't anticipate that there will be -- we will do a full call-out.

Next, there is a story on some of the wires quoting sources as saying that the MAYAGUEZ is moving. We have no information that the MAYAGUEZ is moving. It is exactly where it has been.

Q Are you speaking for the Administration as well here; this Administration, the Pentagon, the State Department, and White House? They have no information?

MR. NESSEN: The Administration is the Administration, Walt. Everybody has the same information.

Q Say that again. We have no information --

MR. NESSEN: We have no information that the MAYAGUEZ is moving.

Q Do you know that it stopped? (Laughter) You know that it is still where it was?

MR. NESSEN: It has not moved from where it was at 7:00 this morning when I first greeted all your smiling faces.

Q How about the gun ships, anything about that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything on the movement.

Q Ron, you are not only saying you have no information on it, but you are saying that this story is flat out --

MR. NESSEN: As far as we know, it is not moving and the story is incorrect.

Q Why is this emergency meeting of the NSC being called?

MR. NESSEN: It is not an emergency meeting.

Q What do you mean? How often have you had a 10:15 NSC meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Moving on, tomorrow morning, I don't plan to have the Press Office manned as early as it was today because I don't anticipate having anything that early. If there is anything early that would help the morning TV shows or updating overnight wires, we would do a full call-out. Otherwise, I plan to come in at the regular time, about 7:15.

Q Would it be fruitful to ask you any of the questions that were asked during the briefing that you could not answer then?

MR. NESSEN: No, it would not be fruitful.

Q Let's find out. What has the President been doing in connection with this crisis?

MR. NESSEN: Keeping up-to-date on all the information.

Q Ron, are you calling the NSC meeting this evening routine?

Q Exactly what are you calling it?

MR. NESSEN: Come on, fellows, let's be serious. We are all tired. It is late and we want to go to dinner. There is an NSC meeting at 10:30.

Q What you are saying is that you don't anticipate anything from it?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Could you tell us a little bit more, then, about how we are looking at the situation?

MR. NESSEN: You mean the things I don't anticipate coming from it, Peter?

Q No. All day long, it has been, we are calm, we are cool, mini-crisis, and yet, the NSC is meeting at 10:30. I mean, this is a change in the situation? That is what I am trying to get at.

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Will the Secretary be back for that?

MR. NESSEN: The last I heard was he will be back at 9:00, so I expect he will be there at 10:30.

Q Is that why it is being scheduled at that time?

Q Is that why it is so late?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q When you talk about a full call-out tonight, if you have any information --

MR. NESSEN: Which I don't anticipate.

Q Yes, I understand -- are you talking about a possible briefing here or information by phone, or what?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate anything.

Q But Ron, you made the point if there was anything, there would be a full call-out.

MR. NESSEN: But I don't anticipate we would do a full call-out. If there was something that needed a briefing, there would be a briefing. If there was something that could be delivered by telephone, it would be delivered by telephone.

Q That is all I am asking.

Q Do you have anything on the Naval reconnaissance plane which was fired on?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Can you tell me, was it hit? The Reuters story said it was hit and sustained minor damage.

MR. NESSEN: I think the Pentagon has given about as much detail as can be given; I have been reading all the detailed accounts out there.

Q If you don't anticipate anything out of the NSC meeting, that means you know the agenda, and you figure there are going to be no decisions that would involve any announcements?

This is a crisis now, and we have been here all day. You are having what I would consider an emergency meeting, and then you say everybody go home to the seashore, you know, rest, all have your dinner. This is not the way we operate.

MR. NESSEN: Helen, you are perfectly willing to stay. I am going home.

Q Well, then, just tell the policeman that we will be here.

MR. NESSEN: I will not.

Q Who will be here from your staff?

MR. NESSEN: No one.

Q No one?

MR. NESSEN: Because I will talk to the people after the meeting.

Q Ron, can I ask a policy question.

Will the United States respect the pleas of the Cambodians to respect their neutrality by not augmenting U.S. forces there?

Q You mean Thailand?

Q Excuse me. I mean Thailand.

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to comment on the statement.

Q As a general matter, would the United States respect the wishes of a country to remain neutral by requesting that troops will not be sent there?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, I won't comment.

Q There won't be any bar to our using the press room as long as necessary tonight? We are still covering the story.

MR. NESSEN: Let's clear that with the policeman.

Q He is not here today.

MR. NESSEN: He is not here?

Q He has been moved to South Carolina.

Q The NSC meeting would be put on the 2233 number?

MR. NESSEN: Sure, if there is any.

Q Ron, you said that the Mayaguez has not moved. How about the other ships? Do you have any word on them?

MR. NESSEN: I said that I am not going to talk about any possible movements of the Cambodian ships.

Q No, the gunboats.

MR. NESSEN: That is what I said.

Q Kissinger has been doing a lot of talking to reporters.

MR. NESSEN: I have been reading that. He is the Secretary of State and the President's National Security Adviser.

Q Whatever he says is so, we can just --

MR. NESSEN: He is the President's National Security Adviser, and Secretary of State.

Q And you will not repudiate any of his statements so far?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Really, for those that were not there, we would like to pick up everything he said.

MR. NESSEN: And you want me to do what?

Q Just say that he is speaking.

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I am not in Kansas City.

Q Neither am I.

MR. NESSEN: But your colleagues are.

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: Do you repudiate your colleagues' ability to get the quotes right?

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: Okay.

Q But he is talking to those who are traveling with him privately.

MR. NESSEN: Helen, you know I cannot do anything about that.

Q Can you say anything more about the Americans on the ship, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Can you say that the President will reject a PUEBLO-style quid pro quo on this and say there is no deal?

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kissinger talked about that, didn't he?

Q Yes. Will you support what he said?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, he is the President's National Security Adviser, and Secretary of State.

Phil?

Q I know you say that you are not going to man the office in the morning. I assume I will have to be here anyway planning live inserts. Is there someone we can contact in the morning to get the routine, mundane, up-to-date report?

Q Like how many times the President was awakened?

Q That kind of stuff.

MR. GREENER: I will be here at a quarter til 6.

MR. NESSEN: Are all three networks interested in that?

Q We are interested in everything that happens.

Q If he didn't do anything.

MR. NESSEN: If there is the interest. We will have someone here at 6 o'clock, if there is the interest.

Q I am sorry. What did you say?

MR. NESSEN: I say, if there is the interest, we will have someone here between 6 and 6:30. There is certainly no anticipation that there is going to be anything.

Q Ron, can you clear up the number of Marines en route to Thailand?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q There are Marines en route to Thailand?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot talk about troop movements.

Q Ron, I think it would help if you had someone here at 6:15.

MR. NESSEN: Yes. I said I would have someone here at between 6 and 6:30.

Q Whether there is something or nothing, you will have it on the phone tonight?

MR. NESSEN: If there is nothing, there will not be anything on the phone tonight.

Q All right.

MR. NESSEN: If there is something, we will do a complete call out, plus the phone.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 7:42 P.M. EDT)