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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:43 P.M. EDT

JUNE 13, 1975

FRIDAY

MR. NESSEN: The President came in at 7:30, to the office this morning. At 8:00, he met with the bipartisan Congressional leaders, as you know.

After that meeting, some of you were here for a briefing by Secretary Dunlop and Frank Zarb on the recommendations to the President of his Labor-Management Committee, having to do with the electric utility construction. I think we passed out some papers on that.

The President does endorse the recommendations. The recommendations were unanimous by both the labor and management members of that Committee, and draft legislation is being prepared and will be sent to the Hill to carry out these recommendations. Some of them are administrative actions and he will be taking the administrative actions recommended.

For those of you who were not here, there is a transcript available of the Dunlop and Zarb briefing.

It is a somewhat complicated subject, although an important one, and there is a gentleman in John Dunlop's office named Dick Lukstat, and his phone number is 523-6151. After the briefing this morning I talked to John Dunlop and Frank Zarb and they agreed Dick would be sort of the collection point for questions and he would answer what he could and would get the answers to the ones that he did not know himself.

At that meeting, the Bipartisan Congressional Leadership Meeting, in addition to that subject I mentioned to those who were here this morning that there was also a discussion of the President's proposals for regulatory reform. And he asked the Congressional leaders to name 10 Members of the Senate, and 10 Members of the House, to come to a meeting at the White House later this month with the leaders of the regulatory agencies to begin the process of reforming the regulatory agencies which the President has spoken of.

Q Do you mean the chairmen of all the regulatory agencies?

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MR. NESSEN: Of 10 agencies, that is correct.

The middle item on the agenda this morning was energy. The President spoke in somewhat the same terms he did yesterday, perhaps more strongly, saying "It is mandatory that we move on energy. We just can't wait for a crisis and then move. Time is running out."

He said he thinks his plan is the best plan, but he is willing to sit down and talk to Members of Congress to get Congress to move on energy.

Q Would you read that quote again?

MR. NESSEN: "It is mandatory that we move. We just can't wait for a crisis and then move. Time is running out."

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Q Was there any Congressional response? Did they agree, or did they say, "Mr. President, we still don't like your plan?"

MR. NESSEN: No, there wasn't any. Frank gave a factual rundown on the action or lack of action on the total package of energy proposals that the President sent up. They number 13.

Some yesterday were asking, at my briefing, "Where do we go from here," since the House has voted down most of the substance of even their original weak bill. I did not have the material in front of me yesterday, but Frank did run through it. There are 13 separate energy proposals, carrying out various parts of the President's plan, and some of them are making some headway. Congress is not acting very quickly on others, and he gave a status report on that.

At 11:00, as you know, the President went over to the Interior Department, where he witnessed the swearing-in of Stanley Hathaway as the new Interior Secretary. We will have an as delivered text for you. We did put out an advance text of the President's remarks.

There was another swearing-in, here, at the White House, at 12:15, of Paul McAvoy, to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers. It was done in the Oval Office.

Mr. McAvoy was appointed on June 10th, and we do have some biographical material for you now, if you misplaced the previous material.

Tomorrow, as you know, the President is going on a trip to Fort Benning. The bible is just about done for the trip. I will run through some of the times with you. As I said yesterday, the press check-in time at Andrews is 6:45. The Press Plane takes off at 7:15. The President will be leaving the South Lawn by helicopter at 7:55, and he will leave from Andrews in Air Force One at 8:15.

He is arriving at Fort Benning at Lawson Field at 9:50, and he will speak at about 10:20. As I said, we will have the detailed schedule for you soon. The day is basically made up of some demonstrations by the Army of various things it does, which the President will witness.

The text of what the President will say at 10:20 tomorrow will be available later this afternoon. I think we might as well go ahead and make it a flat p.m. embargo. That is, 6:00 in the morning embargo.

The President will be back here at 5:00, and I would think the Press Plane would not be very far behind. After the President has witnessed the 200th anniversary celebration and demonstration at Fort Benning, he will drive to Columbus and meet at a hotel there at the invitation of the Executive Committee of the Georgia Republican Party. They did ask for this. He decided it would not be proper to hold such a meeting on the military base, so they moved it to a motel. And we will have coverage of that by a somewhat expanded pool.

Q What about the cost of Air Force One down and back, as a result of the partly political nature of the trip?

MR. NESSEN: It is basically a public event, the Fort Benning part of it, and this meeting was asked for by the Georgia leaders after they found out the President would be in their area. So, the cost of Air Force One would be paid for as a normal governmental trip by the President.

Q Did they ask for the meeting? Is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: The Georgia Executive Committee of the State Republican Party.

Q Ron, you said expanded pool coverage -- are you saying we are going to be allowed to go into the meeting with the Republicans and film that?

MR. NESSEN: I would think there would probably be some film at the beginning, although I have not worked out those exact plans yet.

Q Is he going to make a speech there?

MR. NESSEN: No, he is just going to sit around and talk to them.

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Q Did they say what they wanted to speak to the President about?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Nothing specific other than politics in general?

MR. NESSEN: Politics, I am sure.

The President gets back here at 5:00, and at 6:00 he and Mrs. Ford will go by helicopter to Camp David for the weekend.

As you know, Sunday is Father's Day. Jack Ford is in town and will go to Camp David somewhat earlier than they do. The other children are at various other places and will not be here. The President would stay Saturday night and all day Sunday and would come back to the White House from Camp David on Sunday evening.

The announcements that I think we have already handed out -- there is an Executive Order that relates to the Executive level appointees. There is a memo to the Vice President and others setting up a President's Panel on Federal Compensation, which will look into Federal pay and how to determine appropriate levels of compensation that balance out against private industry salaries. The President is asking for that report by November 1st.

You also have the designation of U. Alexis Johnson to lead the Delegation of the United States to the memorial ceremonies in honor of the late former Prime Minister Sato of Japan.

Q Is that supposed to be a handout?

MR. NESSEN: It is a posting. It also will show you the American Ambassador in Tokyo, James Hodgson, is the other member of that delegation. And you also have the signing of the second supplemental appropriations bill. If you remember, we talked about it the other day. It has \$15 billion to run various departments and agencies and it provides this money, finally, to the Veterans Administration to catch up on the checks they have missed while Congress has failed to pass the bill. It is now passed.

Also, what we talked about yesterday, the Interagency Classification Review Committee progress report is available here in the press room after the briefing. As I mentioned yesterday, this group was established in 1972. It reports to the President once a year on what progress is being made in the declassification of various national security information and material.

We also have, because of what I think will probably be some interest in this, William L. Brown, who is the Executive Director of this Committee, and he will be here after my briefing to answer your questions specifically on the progress of declassification.

That, basically, completes the announcements I have to make.

Q Ron, could you go into the Executive Order on pay? It appears that you are terminating something.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know much about it but let me see who we can get.

Why don't you talk to Carlson after the briefing and he can help you.

Mort?

Q What is the President going to do with the Youth Opportunity Program that was passed by the Senate yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Which one is that? Is that the summer jobs program?

Q The summer jobs program.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, yes. He is going to sign it as soon as it gets here, which is anticipated to be, when, later today?

Well, whenever it comes, he will sign it promptly because it is getting late, and Congress wasted time with that other bill, and the summer has already started and the kids are out of school, so he wants to get this money flowing out for the jobs.

Q Ron, Tip O'Neill said this morning that in the meeting with the President there was an air of conciliation about ---

MR. NESSEN: Yesterday or today?

Q Today. I am a little puzzled by why the President would be conciliatory in private with these Congressmen when in public you and others have been saying Congress is not meeting its responsibility. Could you explain that a little further?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the details of an energy program or the progress or lack of progress the House is making on an energy program really did not come up in any detail today, so I don't know that he was referring to that. The President always has a conciliatory air towards Members of Congress. There was no specific energy legislation discussed today other than it was a presentation of the changes on electric utility ---

Q They did not go into the House Labor dispute over the energy bill?

MR. NESSEN: Not in any detail.

Q Aren't you violating your own rules here, by saying you are going to sign some bill before it even got here and even before you study it? I am rather shocked to find you saying you are going to sign something before you have had a chance to study its effect on the country. This is an extraordinary procedure, here? (Laughter.)

MR. NESSEN: Well, I am sure you know that foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of a small mind. (Laughter.)

Q Bob Pierpoint brought up -- it does seem true -- you are being more conciliatory, now, toward Congress, or at least, you are not coming out with these statements criticizing them every day, as you were some weeks ago.

MR. NESSEN: It seems to me that Herblock and the New York Times and the Washington Post have taken up that chore and taken some of the burden off of me.

Q Anyway, what I wanted to ask, if you could refresh my memory, when is the third dollar of the President's import fee supposed to go into effect -- July 1st, or has a decision been made on it? Because, if he is going to be conciliatory now, would he consider delaying that third dollar?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is fair to say that a decision has not been made on the third dollar.

Is that about it? God, that is easy. I can't believe it.

Q What about the HEW post?

MR. NESSEN: The HEW post?

Q Is Matthews getting the job?

MR. NESSEN: We can't announce any personnel changes until they are ready to go. (Laughter.)

Q Ron, has the President seen Mr. Macomber, the Ambassador to Turkey, or is he going to see him?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen Macomber on the schedule. He has not been in that I know of.

Q Isn't it a little odd that we would have an Ambassador of an important country like Turkey, right now, the Ambassador who figured in the White House plumbers? He was not indicted, but he was definitely listed there as one of the strategically important members.

MR. NESSEN: I did not know that, Sarah.

Q It is definitely in the proof of the Watergate hearings. It is in the printed testimony there, and his activities --

Q His activities are there. It listed, "Mr. Krogh said this in a letter" -- and I think Mr. Ehrlichman approved it. It is all there and it lists his participation. I have been wondering about this for a long time. I can't figure it out.

MR. NESSEN: I think the record ought to show that nobody here seems to be convinced that that gentleman was involved, and I think it is probably not proper, Sarah, to ---

Q It is on the record, Ron, that he participated in this. And also the record shows that. As a matter of fact, he was asked about this yesterday at an appearance here and he admitted it, but he said he had some qualifications on it. Also he is the one, you know, who made the cablegrams available for E. Howard Hunt to draw up the cablegram on Kennedy.

MR. NESSEN: I can assure you we will ---

Q He was at the State Department working with the White House Plumbers. He was called in on several things and worked with them on that.

MR. NESSEN: I can assure you that the record at this point will insert precisely what Mr. Macomber's background is, Sarah, because I think it is not entirely proper to do this sort of thing, that nobody else seems to recall. (SEE ATTACHED MATERIAL)

Q You can get the record of it.

MR. NESSEN: What is your question?

Q My question is: Isn't it peculiar for us to have him as an Ambassador of a major country?

MR. NESSEN: I think the first thing to do is to determine what, if any, involvement he had previously in the activities you are talking about.

Q It is in the record of the Senate. Don't take it from me.

MR. NESSEN: We won't.

Q I got it out of the Senate Committee.

MR. NESSEN: Well, we will confirm exactly what his background is.

Q Is there anything on the Scheel visit Monday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything at the moment.

Q There was a story in the Post on food stamps this morning. Has the President received a report to do away with the food stamp program? Do you have anything you want to say about food stamps?

MR. NESSEN: No, only that the court ruling came yesterday and the Agriculture Department is studying it to see what, if any, changes need to be made in its procedures.

Q Does he have any plans for a meeting with Helms?

MR. NESSEN: No, sir.

Q If love is the answer, what is the question?
(Laughter.)

Q Ron, what is the President doing this afternoon? Does he have any plans?

MR. NESSEN: He has a lot of meetings with staff people this afternoon.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 1:03 P.M. EDT) #246

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Ambassador William Macomber has a long and outstanding record of public service. The President retains full confidence in him and has no plans to remove him from his post as Ambassador to Turkey. The State Department briefing of May 9, 1973, addressed the allegations made today about Mr. Macomber's involvement in the so-called "plumbers operation." That briefing is available upon request.

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