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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 2:55 P.M. EDT

JULY 3, 1975

THURSDAY
(Cincinnati, Ohio)

MR. NESSEN: I did not get all the names of the environmentalists who were around the table, unfortunately, so when I give you some quotes from them, I am not going to be able to pin it to anybody by name.

The only one that I was sure about was Laurance Rockefeller. I think you saw the scene. They sat around a long table on folding chairs, and they all took their coats off and conducted the meeting in shirt sleeves. That building is not quite finished yet, and the air conditioning is not working, so the windows were open and two fans were running.

The first speaker talked to the President in general terms about the environmentalist movement and said that the President should not consider the environmentalist movement to be anti-business or anti-growth.

Let me say parenthetically each of the speakers had one particular area of environmental protection that he was particularly interested in. That first speaker -- and unfortunately I don't have the names --

Q Was he the one who started reading from the beginning?

MR. NESSEN: I was not in at the beginning, Helen. I straggled in about a minute late. Anyhow, he talked about land use and the need for land use planning. Laurance Rockefeller spoke only briefly and said that he was overwhelmed with gratitude that the President had shown his interest by coming to this dedication.

Then, for a moment, there did not seem to be any more speakers and the President said, "I get more benefit out of listening than talking," and that is the way the meeting went.

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The President made very little comment, and the environmentalists did most of the speaking.

The next speaker talked about the need for a population control program, both nationally and internationally, and also about the need to change what he called wasteful lifestyles.

Q Who was that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the name of the speaker. It was one of the environmentalists. He also told the President that the President, when he made decisions, should have -- the way he phrased it was, he said, "You should have improvement of the environment input when you make decisions."

He urged the President to use the Council on Environmental Quality more when he was making decisions.

Also, that speaker talked about the need for a continuing procedure of having environmental impact statements, and the President said that he had met with Governors a while back -- he did not specify which meeting -- and he said the Governors had complained about delays in various construction projects caused by the need for environmental impact statements.

Then the President said that he had had a meeting with Russel Peterson, who explained to him how the procedure worked, and he said, "I now understand it better." He said, "We have improved the procedure now. It can be done with a minimum of delay."

The President said he was totally opposed to the no-growth concept. He said, "If you don't have growth, you won't have jobs." He talked a little about his energy program and he pointed out that -- as he referred to it -- it had two legs. He said one leg was the need to increase production of energy supplies -- he said both the normal fuels and what he called the exotic fuels -- and he said the other leg of his program for energy was conservation.

He said, "If we don't do something in this field in the next decade, we will have abandoned our obligation to the next generation." Then he talked about the need to build a water treatment plant and that he had recently checked to find out what progress was being made on that.

Then one speaker said, "What we need is a conduit, a better rapport with the President on the issue of the environment." The President replied by saying, "this is only the opening chapter of a dialogue." He said, "I will agree with some of your points and not with others, but we ought to do this periodically from time to time."

Then there was a discussion of various environmental problems. Somebody brought up the problem of putting out poison to kill coyotes in the West who are eating the sheep. The President has had some meetings on this subject over the past couple of months, so he was familiar with it.

One of the environmentalists said, "Don't make a decision on whether to ban such poisoning until a study is finished this summer." He said that this question of coyotes versus sheep and that if you let the coyotes continue to kill the sheep it will cause a food shortage, he said that is pretty much a faulty statement.

He said, "Coyotes killing eagles, our national symbol." He said poisoning of coyotes is wrong because not all coyotes kill sheep. The poison also kills other animals. He said it is like killing a fly with a sledge hammer. He also said coyotes keep other undesirable animals down.

Then there was a discussion of whales.

Q I can't quite tell which side the man was on.

MR. NESSEN: The environmentalists are opposed to planting poison out West to kill coyotes, which kill the sheep. The sheep people want the coyotes killed, and the environmentalists don't, at least by the method of poisoning.

Q Kinsolving is with the sheep and not the coyotes.

Q Who said it was like killing a fly with a sledge hammer?

MR. NESSEN: The environmentalist, whose name I don't have.

Q Was there any discussion of disposable beer cans and bottles?

MR. NESSEN: No. There was a discussion next of whales, and the President was told that there is a possibility that environmentalists would demonstrate against the Emperor of Japan when he comes because the Japanese do kill a lot of whales.

The President said, "Well, I think you should remember that the Emperor does not make decisions in this area and it would be extremely lacking in courtesy," and he said that he would not like to see any embarrassment caused to the Emperor during the visit.

There was a discussion of primitive areas in the West, and the President was urged to look at various recommendations from the Departments of Agriculture and Interior for preserving wilderness areas in the West and especially he was urged not to allow the cutting of timber in primitive areas.

Another environmentalist spoke up and said, "In some cases cutting timber can be a conservation measure," and the President laughed and said he was glad to see there was a difference of opinion. "That sometimes happens in politics, too."

Then, the meeting closed with one of the members saying that "Russ Train and Russ Peterson are our spokesmen or the spokesmen for the environmental issue in the Government, and if you will listen to their views before making your decisions, we will be satisfied that you are giving environmental concerns proper attention." And that is all there was.

Q When is Hirohito to visit?

MR. NESSEN: In October.

Q Ron, what is Jack Ford doing here, and did he come on the plane?

MR. NESSEN: He is spending the summer at the White House as kind of an observer -- unpaid intern, if you will -- and he has been attending senior staff meetings and sitting in on various other meetings around. He has a special interest in the environment. He was a forestry student at Utah State and has worked on a ranch and also as a forester. His degree is in forestry so he is interested.

Q Is he on a paid job?

MR. NESSEN: No, I said he is an unpaid observer.

Q Has the President been in contact with Wallace or with Kissinger on this Dinitz meeting, or do you have anything on that?

MR. NESSEN: He has not. As far as I know, he has not been in contact with Wallace. I am not sure whether he talked to Henry today or not.

The State Department, I am told, confirmed at its briefing today that Dinitz had gone to the Virgin Islands and he had held two meetings with Henry on Tuesday.

Q Why was it secret?

MR. NESSEN: It is not secret if I am telling you about it.

Q Yes, it is. You tell us two days later.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, I don't think there was any effort to keep it a secret.

Q Why wasn't it announced?

MR. NESSEN: That is a State Department matter and I don't know.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 3:05 P.M. EDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 6:27 P.M. EDT

JULY 3, 1975

THURSDAY

(Cleveland, Ohio)

MR. NESSEN: The plane did blow a tire when it landed. Let me try to explain to you which tire it is.

There are four tires on each side of the plane and two on the nose wheel. This was the set of four tires on the left side of the plane. There are two in front and two in back. We are talking about the back tire on the left side of the plane, and it is the inboard tire of the rear on the left side of the plane.

Now, it blew out through the tread. The tread wore down and it hit the inner tube and blew it out. It also ripped the side wall close to the rim.

It did not blow out as the plane touched down, but as the plane was rolling. The tread wore down to the air, essentially, and the side wall of the tire was ripped close to the rim.

The pilot is not entirely sure how it happened. He is fairly sure that it did not hit anything on the runway. This airplane has an anti-skid braking system which releases and then tightens the brakes, depending on whether the runway is wet or dry. As you know, it rained here and there were dry patches and wet patches on the runway.

The pilot thinks what happened was the anti-skid braking system failed to release that wheel so the wheel was locked and was in a sense skidding along the runway, wearing itself out on the pavement. That is his belief at the moment.

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The man we are talking about, who was the source of this information, is Lieutenant Colonel Lester C. McClelland. He is the aircraft commander and he was also at the controls during the roll.

Did I say he believes that the anti-skid braking system for some reason caused this wheel to lock because the runway was dry in patches and wet in patches, and it just wore itself out going along the runway? They are checking the anti-skid braking system to make sure that there is no malfunction in it.

They carry two spare tires on Air Force One, in the hold. They carry one spare main tire which this was, and they carry one spare nose wheel tire, so they simply took the spare out of the hold and they are just now completed changing the tire. The way they do that is they have a hydraulic jack -- they lift up that set of wheels and change the tire, and they have done that.

As I say, they are checking the anti-skid braking device to see what caused the malfunction. They are also checking anything else that may have been damaged by the blow-out, but they have not seen any other problems right now.

The men in the cockpit, Colonel McClelland and the others, did not hear the blow-out although the pool and others sitting in the rear of the plane did hear the blow-out, and McClelland did not know there had been a blow-out until the tower called him as they were almost taxiing to a stop and said someone on the ground had thought they saw a blow-out. He did not hear it but when everybody got off and they checked the tire there was a blow-out.

He did not have any difficulties landing. As I say, the blow-out occurred after the landing, as the plane was taxiing or rolling. He had no problem with steering or braking or anything else.

He remembers one other flat tire on Air Force One. He did not have the date but it happened in Charlotte, North Carolina. President Nixon was the President and in that case something on the runway was run over and caused the flat. Again, on that occasion, the spare tire was used and again it took about 20 minutes.

Now, as the pool may have told you, at about the same time that they heard this noise or a few seconds afterward, the little overhead compartments opened and dropped the oxygen masks out. Colonel McClelland says, "That was one of those embarrassing things."

Q Was that related to the tire blowout?

MR. NESSEN: It was not related to the tire blowout. There is a little switch at about this position among the controls in the cockpit, and it is the switch that drops, that opens the compartments and drops the oxygen masks out.

Colonel McClelland thinks as they were going through their post-landing check, throwing switches off, that somebody accidentally hit the switch that drops the oxygen masks.

That is essentially all I have to tell you. Colonel McClelland is still at the plane, if you have any further questions.

Q Ron, the other incident in which there was a blowout, was Nixon aboard Air Force One at the time?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Did the oxygen masks come down in the President's compartment, too?

MR. NESSEN: They did, yes.

Q Did anyone put them on?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Did you have a rough flight up, as we did?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know if we would call it rough. I think essentially it was the same as yours.

Q The President didn't hear the blowout at all?

MR. NESSEN: The people in the cockpit did not hear the blowout. I have not had a chance to talk to the President yet.

Q Did you feel anything on the plane, Ron? Did it feel like a normal landing?

MR. NESSEN: I think Helen would say yes.

Q As I saw the plane taxiing up, there was a big chunk of rubber flopping around. It was very visible.

MR. NESSEN: That is right. My understanding from Eric is that the pool cameramen and the wire service photographers took pictures of the tire so there is that for you.

Is there anything you want me to call Colonel McClelland back on? Does that do it?

Q What is his home town?

MR. NESSEN: Good question.

Q Will they fly now?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the tire is changed. They were just letting down the jack when I had him on the phone.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 6:35 P.M. EDT)