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NEWS CONFERENCE

#268

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 10:35 A.M. EDT

JULY 14, 1975

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: As a result of his meeting this morning with the Congressional leaders and also because of his late return to Washington last night, the President is going over his statement on the oil price decontrol, doing some editing and modifying on the statement -- modifying it and editing it to reflect his meeting this morning with the Congressional leaders.

So, the President would like to come down here and read you his revised statement soon, probably not before a half hour from now, somewhere shortly before 11 o'clock.

Q Is he going to change the actual plan or just the wording of his statement?

MR. NESSEN: The only really major change is that the decontrol proposal will not go to the Hill today. It will go up in the next few days, sometime this week.

Q What is the reason for that?

MR. NESSEN: One of the reasons for that is that once the proposal gets there, the clock starts running, so to speak, and there are five days in which Congress has to act. The President felt that this is an extremely complicated subject that needs a good deal of discussion and public dialogue, and that it might be wise to take a few days to have this kind of discussion and have the issues debated before the clock starts running.

Q Does that mean he could conceivably change major portions of the program -- incidentally, we have all said that he sends a plan to Congress.

Q Do you want us to withdraw the plan?

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MR. NESSEN: There is no plan to change the elements of the plan. As I stated, the only change is that it will not go today.

Q We are all on the record --

MR. NESSEN: You can say that he certainly revealed the details of his plan today and said that he would send it to Congress sometime this week.

Q Was there something in the leadership meeting, Ron, that made him change his mind?

MR. NESSEN: There was some discussion that he wants to reflect in his statement, which you will see when you get the statement.

Also, I think there was agreement at the leadership meeting on the complexity of the subject and on the need for a kind of public dialogue and discussion of it before this relatively short five-day period begins to run.

Q Ron, what was the nature of the disagreement that has now delayed this plan going up?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any disagreement.

Q Is there an idea perhaps of reaching a compromise before the clock starts running?

MR. NESSEN: There was nothing said at the leadership meeting this morning that would indicate that there was any alternative offered by the Members of Congress that could lead to a compromise.

Q Would the delay give them a chance to put that together?

MR. NESSEN: There was no discussion today that would lead anybody to believe that they had an alternative that could be matched up in compromise.

Q Ron, who was the most persuasive, the most talkative on this, among those who attended?

MR. NESSEN: Everyone. All the Members spoke and all had different ideas. There was no agreement among the Congressional leaders, which is why I say that -- there was nothing discussed there today that would indicate a compromise.

Q Really, this is the most extraordinary thing that has ever happened, really. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: My goodness. Since creation?

Q All the stories say he will send a message to Congress. He really is retracting it.

MR. NESSEN: Let me just explain it this way, Helen. The only substantive change is that it will not go to Congress today, but it will go this week. The reason for that, as I say, is to give an opportunity for a public discussion and a Congressional discussion before the clock starts running.

The substance of the proposals -- the phase-in period of 30 months, the ceiling of \$13.50, the other elements of it -- there is no plan whatever to change those elements.

Q Did he say that he is postponing it at the request of the Congressmen who were here today?

MR. NESSEN: No, there was no such request. It was his own idea.

The idea of the delay, let me say for Phil, in sending it up there originated with himself and his advisers.

Q As a result of the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: After the meeting, yes.

Q No, not as a result of anything that was said at the meeting other than a general feeling by both sides of the complexity of the subject and the need for further public discussion.

Q Are standard briefing rules in effect here, or can we change stories now that we have previously put out?

MR. NESSEN: My reason for coming out here at the President's request was to tell you as --

Q I am up against a deadline.

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you go ahead, Walt. I don't think anybody would object.

Q Ron, is he changing this from administrative action to sending up a bill for Congress to act on?

MR. NESSEN: No, no. The only change -- let me make clear -- is in the date of submission.

Q But it still will be this week sometime?

MR. NESSEN: One day this week.

Q Is this right; in other words, if he decides to decontrol or put his plan into effect, he can just do that and each House has five days to decide --

MR. NESSEN: You should not say, Bob, if he decides. He has decided. This is his plan, and it will go up this week. The only change is on the date of submission.

Q . That is the way this works, in other words?

MR. NESSEN: That is right. Under the law, he can propose this and then one House or the other of Congress has five days in which to, if it chooses, disapprove it.

Margaret?

Q Ron, is he delaying because there was some evidence in the meeting that the gears are meshed to knock this down within five days and he is bidding for time?

MR. NESSEN: No, as I said, there was a wide variety of opinion from the Members, but the universal feeling by people in the White House and from the Congressional side of that meeting was that there is a good deal of confusion, and it is a complex subject.

Before the clock starts running, the President wanted to make sure there was ample time for this issue to be discussed and understood. I think you will see Administration officials making some speeches, holding some news conferences. I would not be surprised if the President spoke out himself in the next few days in a more elaborate way on why this is being --

Q In other words, what you are sort of saying is that these fellows told him, "Look, we don't have the votes to back this up. You have put it in effect, and" --

MR. NESSEN: No, there was a wide range of opinion.

Q Is he trying to sell it? Is that it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I would use the words "sell it," Helen. I would say that there needs to be a discussion of this complex subject.

Q Did they tell him they didn't think they had the votes?

MR. NESSEN: Let me answer Bob's question. There was no agreement among the Congressional Members on that aspect or any other aspect and no alternatives on which there was any agreement.

Q What aspect was that?

Q What was the question?

MR. NESSEN: Bob's question was, was the President told that this cannot be sustained in Congress. I said there was no agreement among the Members.

Q But there was some talk --

MR. NESSEN: Some Members thought yes, some thought no.

Q The issue was raised?

MR. NESSEN: Some of the Members raised it.

Q Have any of the President's advisers told him that he does not have the votes right now?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q You said he is going to speak out in a more elaborate way. Is he going to address the Nation?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that the plans have yet been made final.

Q Do you expect him to speak out this week?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is the Zarb briefing still on or off?

MR. NESSEN: That is the other part of what I want to tell you. Frank has gone to the Hill. His plan is to go up there to do briefly whatever it is he is doing, and tell the Members that he needs to get back here to do the briefing.

So, I would anticipate that the timetable would be something like this: I think the President will be out within a half hour, or maybe slightly longer.

Q He is going to make a statement now?

MR. NESSEN: He will make the revised version of his statement, and then Frank will be back here as fast as he can. I would think that would be within 45 minutes to an hour from now.

Q You won't be briefing until probably noon sometime, then?

MR. NESSEN: I wonder if I really need a briefing today. Does anybody feel a burning urge?

Q Why don't you just brief now?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure I have all the answers, but I can try.

Ted?

Q Before we leave the subject, you said the decision for the delay was made after the meeting with the Congressional leaders?

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q I am wondering if it had not rained and he would have been on the golf course by now, would that have made a difference? Would he not have done this?
(Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I have never known the President to fail to deal with a substantive issue in favor of playing golf, Ted.

Q Ron, tomorrow H.R. 7014 is supposedly to come before the House for a vote.

MR. NESSEN: Is that the Dingell bill?

Q Yes, and there are several amendments that are supposedly going to be offered, and one is Dingell's for 1 percent decontrol with a rollback to about \$11.25. Is there some indication this morning that the President will wait to feel out and to see what happens on the floor in discussion?

MR. NESSEN: No, this is his plan, and he is sticking to it, and will stick to it and will send it to the Hill later this week.

Q No matter what happens on the floor?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q What has Zarb gone to the Hill for? To tell them the President has changed his mind?

MR. NESSEN: No. He is testifying at Senate Finance.

Q Ron, can I have the sequence of events once more?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Did he decide not to send it up to the Hill after talking to people from the Hill, or did he decide in conversations with his advisors here before the breakfast meeting?

MR. NESSEN: After.

Q And when he learned in that meeting -- the meeting with the Congressional leaders -- what he learned in there is what decided him?

MR. NESSEN: What he learned in there that decided him was that there was a certain amount of misunderstanding or lack of understanding, that it was a subject too complex to just send up there, start the clock running and have it decided within five days before there was more of a public discussion of the complexity of the issue.

Q Can you say whether Scott and Rhodes were among those who expressed the view that this would not get through Congress at this time?

MR. NESSEN: They were not.

Q Does that mean the President encountered a lot of resistance to this in the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No, the Congressional opinion was so wide that it would not be possible, and in fact at one point in the meeting there was no open discussion but there were a lot of little separate discussions going around the table. I do not recall that ever happening in a meeting with the President.

Q Did you say there was so much misunderstanding?

MR. NESSEN: I said misunderstanding and lack of understanding.

Q On the part of those ---

MR. NESSEN: No, the President felt it was a reflection of the need for further public discussion of the complexity of it.

Q Isn't this totally new, though? He has been talking about it for months.

Q Does he also feel that the Congress has not done its homework on energy, and that is one reason for the lack of understanding?

MR. NESSEN: No, I would not say that.

Q Ron, why didn't you have down here, in addition to some of these leaders, some of the men who are more knowledgeable on oil? There was not a man there that knew anything about oil, really.

MR. NESSEN: Carl Albert gave a rather elaborate discussion of 600-foot wells versus 3,000-foot wells, and so forth. I think Carl Albert knows a fair amount about oil.

Q Ron, was there party patterns among these guys?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q The European Security Conference has agreed on a summit date of July 30. Does that mean the President is going to go?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I have been involved with oil all morning. If you will let me slip away here and pick up some other information, I will.

Q Slip away from the oil?

MR. NESSEN: Slide away, ooze off. (Laughter)

Why don't I go see what I can find out about that, and what other subjects are you interested in today?

Q Greece.

MR. NESSEN: As opposed to oil? (Laughter)

Q Pardon me. The other day we were having a discussion on the justification of the White House request for numbers of staff, and we ended up, I believe, saying that we would like to see the justification for this and the Office of Management and Budget request as sent to the Congressional committee, which accompanies every request for a bill, and you said something about that you would try to get it for us.

MR. NESSEN: And I posted it at 3:30. I don't know if you had an opportunity to come back and look at it.

Q Sorry I brought it up again. I didn't know that.

MR. NESSEN: I was not entirely precise in my ---

Q It was my question and usually you call me to tell me you got the answer to my question.

MR. NESSEN: Actually, I was not entirely precise in describing that process. The fact is the Administration asked for -- on the authorization for White House slots my understanding is that the White House asked for no ceilings or floors or anything else, but that this was imposed by Congress and that the White House didn't want any numbers in there. Isn't that correct?

So it was not that we went up and asked for 95. It was that the committee, I guess, put in 95.

Q But did you get for us the statement from -- that is not unusual to have that given out publicly -- the justification for the bill and for the request from the OMB so we can read this and see?

MR. NESSEN: There was no request.

Q OMB always -- they have to make a statement on what they think about a bill when it goes to a Congressional committee.

MR. NESSEN: All right. I will get that.

Q That is what I want.

MR. NESSEN: We will get the testimony if you have ---

Q It is not in the testimony.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, that is where the statement would be.

Q It would not be in the testimony. It would be in a communication to the committee.

MR. NESSEN: The statement would have been put into the testimony.

Q Maybe not.

MR. NESSEN: What else?

Q While you are working on that, would you tell us if you would anticipate any other domestic travel between now and CSCE, by the President?

MR. NESSEN: I will check.

Q I want to know if Butterfield was fired by the President because he revealed the tapes?

MR. NESSEN: I can give you that answer right now, a flat no.

Q Why was he fired?

MR. NESSEN: I think you read the exchange of letters, Sarah, and I won't go beyond that except to say to Helen, flatly, the answer is no.

Q As I recall, on Butterfield, at the time he left FAA there was no indication that there was anything here but just a mild, well, he is resigning and leaving. It was very, very nice. And now it sounds as if it is very bitter.

MR. NESSEN: I don't get that feeling.

Q From the television cast last night it sounded like there was a very bitter feeling against Butterfield at the White House, and also that President Nixon had something to do with that.

MR. NESSEN: That is also not true.

Q Can you tell us if, at the time of the resignation and the exchange of letters, if the President was then aware that Mr. Butterfield may indeed have had some contacts in the White House with the Central Intelligence Agency?

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand the question.

Q Well, was the President aware of the charges which are now being leveled at Mr. Butterfield when at the time of Butterfield ---

MR. NESSEN: How could he be aware of the charges a couple months ago when they were just made last week?

Q I understand that, but was there any smoke there at the time?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think the answer to your question is that Mr. Butterfield's leaving the FAA had absolutely nothing to do with anything that did or did not go on in the previous White House.

Q Why was he dismissed?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't feel it is my proper role to explain that. I know the reason but ---

Q You do?

Q I do think it is your proper role.

MR. NESSEN: I know that because if you read the exchange of letters you will see ---

Q Those letters don't tell.

Q Did it have to do with the administration of the agency, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is much closer to the correct reason.

Q Did Dr. Kissinger report to the President yesterday on the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: He reported to him last night, after the President returned, yes.

Q For how long?

MR. NESSEN: We will have to check. I have not had a chance to get down there and talk to Henry this morning.

Q Ron, could you look up something for us? There is a thing called Project Pacer which is an energy project of scientists at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. They thought it involved mile-low volume nuclear explosions in salt domes on the Gulf Coast and it was supposed to be a thing that might provide us with energy for utility plants and also energy for breeder reactors, and it was killed because of -- well, OMB was operating on it -- but according to scientists it was killed because of the opposition of mainly Louisiana Congressmen.

Could you get a statement from the President about this, because it really knocks in the head a big research project that might have solved the matter given as project Independence?

MR. NESSEN: I will get you something but probably not a statement by the President.

Q Anything further on the President's birthday celebration plans other than what was in the pool report last night?

MR. NESSEN: There are some plans which I will keep you up on as the day goes on, but it is probably not good to have the President read about it on the wires before it happens. (Laughter)

Q Will there be coverage on whatever the plans are?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Are you going to have your regular briefing?

MR. NESSEN: This is my regular briefing. I am going to get the answers to CSCE, Kissinger reports to Ford, and Project Pacer.

Q Why is the tendency here to say no statement from the President? This would be a matter that ---

MR. NESSEN: No, that answer is here somewhere, and I have seen it and I will get it and give it to you, and I don't think that it requires a statement by the President.

First of all, the Kissinger meeting lasted from 9:48 to 10:57 last night.

Ted?

Q The American Jewish Congress issued a statement yesterday criticizing the Justice Department for saying that it would refuse to enforce the anti-boycott law.

MR. NESSEN: I have never heard the Justice Department say that.

Q Well, there is a statement that you have put out.

MR. NESSEN: But I have never heard the Justice Department say it would not enforce the anti-boycott laws.

All right. I owe you the answers to three questions. Maybe the best way to do this would be to have the President come down and read his statement, and then while we are waiting for Frank to come back from the Hill I will give you these answers, and then we will have Frank's briefing on the decontrol.

Q Will that statement be prepared?

MR. NESSEN: That is what is being done now -- oh, you mean to hand out?

Q Will we have it?

MR. NESSEN: It depends on how fast we can type it and reproduce it.

Q Will he answer questions about his statement?

MR. NESSEN: No, Frank will handle that.

Q When will he be down?

MR. NESSEN: As soon as the statement is typed and he has a chance to make the final ---

Q Is the Justice Department investigating the LEAA?

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you address that to Justice. I don't know what the answer is.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 10:45 A.M. EDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:08 P.M. EDT

JULY 14, 1975

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: I think I can do in about five minutes what I was asked to find out, and then I have one other item to give you. To coin a phrase, I would like to "incentivize" you to stay on.

Frank is our secret undercover grammarian.

Q What language?

Q Ron, while you are thinking about that, who did give you this tie? A male chauvinist pig?

MR. NESSEN: I don't remember.

Q You don't remember?

MR. NESSEN: No.

On the CSCE, if you read the wires carefully you will see that the wires do not report any final agreement to go to Helsinki. I will say that there has been considerable movement toward a late July date but there are still a few matters remaining to be resolved.

If the final agreement is reached-- and as I say, the reports from Geneva are that there has been no final agreement--but if there is a final agreement to hold a meeting in Helsinki at the end of the month and at the summit level, then the President certainly would go to the meeting.

Now, the other question was on Dr. Kissinger's report to the President last night. The Secretary gave the President a report on each of the elements of his European trip, which included meetings with Rabin, with Gromyko, with Sauvagnargues and with Schmidt and Genscher in Bonn, and with Callaghan in London.

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Q What about Giscard?

MR. NESSEN: He didn't see Giscard, I don't believe, did he?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I am not able to give you any details of what he reported to the President.

Sarah asked for the justification for the White House staff budget. Sarah, this is the statement sent by the President to the Speaker. This is the report of the committee, and on page 496 of the hearing record is the justification of estimates for 1976. So I will turn this over to you, and you may get your information.

Q Thank you very much.

MR. NESSEN: Operation Pacer, Project Pacer was never a real project. It was a paper project, a two-year study by the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory and Research and Development Association.

The Energy Research and Development Organization decided not to fund further developments during this year because they discovered that it would take 14 years to build a pilot plant at the earliest, and that it would cost \$1.2 billion. So Project Pacer was merely a study and not a real project.

Q So would you say the cutbacks referred just to this year or would you just say it is out?

MR. NESSEN: I would say that following the pacer study the ERDA decided not to go forward with the project.

Q Ron, since I was not here earlier, could I just get some understanding of what the status of this fact sheet is?

MR. NESSEN: I made the point, Mort, that the only change made this morning in anything, aside from the wording of the President's statement, was in the very first line of the President's statement and in the fact sheet, too, it says that, "I will send to Congress today" ---

Q There were other changes.

MR. NESSEN: In the statement.

The substantive proposals for the method of decontrolling have not and won't change. It is only that he has delayed the submission to Congress in order to allow further public discussion and understanding of the complexity of the issue.

Q I apologize for not being here this morning. What is operation, or was Operation Pacer?

MR. NESSEN: Sarah asked about a project that was, as I say, given a two-year research study. It involved digging a mile-deep hole in the ground, dropping a nuclear weapon into the hole, and using the heat and so forth to produce energy.

Q Did you get an answer to my question as to whether we would have any more domestic non-political travel between now and July 28?

MR. NESSEN: Go get the long-range schedule and let's see what it is.

Now the one new item that I wanted to give you was that Dr. Lukash this morning gave the President his six-month physical examination. Dr. Lukash's procedure is to give the regular annual physical that most people have and then at a six-month interval, which happens to be the President's birthday, to have a shorter physical examination. That was done this morning early here in the White House.

Dr. Lukash says he found the President to be physically fit, and the results of the laboratory test and the examination were completely normal. These were all routine tests, including an EKG.

Q Got the lab tests back already?

Q I want to ask about that. Did they really get the lab tests back, because he had a previous physical where we waited for the lab tests, as I recall it, in the ordinary period of time?

MR. NESSEN: It may be that -- I know that when he gave me mine, you have the lab tests made a couple of days ahead of time, and then he has the results back and ready to consult with you and do the rest of it on the day of the exam.

Q Did he do that in this instance?

Q Did he do that here in the White House? Where was this examination?

MR. NESSEN: Here in the building.

Q Ron, do you have any guidance ---

MR. NESSEN: I have not finished yet.

Q Where in the White House? In the family quarters?

MR. NESSEN: Ask him where it was, Ted. There was some question last night as to where it was going to be.

No travel until the end of the month. No travel before the end of the month, Walt.

Q Thank you.

MR. NESSEN: The President has kept his weight between 195 and 200, and he has continued to follow a daily exercise program.

Q What is his height?

MR. NESSEN: Six feet, one inch.

Q Six feet, one inch, did you say?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

In addition, the completion of the new swimming pool, the doctor believes, will provide him with an opportunity for short periods of relaxation that can be fitted into his schedule.

Dr. Lukash sees no reason not to be confident that the President will maintain his good health.

Q Respiration?

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Lukash has decided not to give out the specific numbers.

Q Ron, why did the President stumble on the ramp last night?

MR. NESSEN: I am told that he did. I didn't see that myself. Dr. Lukash looked at his knee as part of this examination and describes it as fine.

Q He was wearing a bandage on his right knee when he was playing tennis yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: He always does that.

Q He always wears a bandage?

MR. NESSEN: Every time I have seen him play tennis he has.

Q As I remember, the President's knee acted up from that old football injury when he skied a lot in Vail, and I remember it being stiff out there, and I am wondering if the stumble yesterday was the result of the vigorous exercise on the tennis court and golf course. I mean, Lukash said that the President is having problems with that knee.

MR. NESSEN: No, I just said that Lukash looked at his knee this morning and said it was fine.

Q But does he not have a problem with that knee?

MR. NESSEN: Well, you know he did the exercises, the weight-lifting exercises -- he does them, in fact, to strengthen the knee and so forth.

Q Then it is still a troublesome problem for him?

MR. NESSEN: Well, Lukash says it is fine and the President ---

Q When did he stumble, Ron? That is what John Osborne asked you originally. Do you have an answer to that question?

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

Q Ron, if I can follow-up on that, does he wear glasses, or when he does not wear glasses does he have trouble seeing?

MR. NESSEN: The President wears glasses for distance viewing, not for close-up work.

Q Has he abandoned his contact lenses?

MR. NESSEN: I think you remember when he went over to the Navy Dispensary and had contact lenses fitted, and he just didn't like them and has never worn them.

The President took his physical examination in the Study of the Residence. The lab tests were taken this morning and the results are back already.

Q Why doesn't Dr. Lukash put out some of these other figures?

MR. NESSEN: That is his preference.

Q Such as pulse and respiration rate?

MR. NESSEN: He has just preferred not to, but he is available to talk to, if you would like.

Q Ron, on a different subject, would you find out for us, please, why the President stumbled? Well, you know, he might have slipped.

MR. NESSEN: I think probably not.

Q And also on this subject, Ron, if I read my notes correctly you said Dr. Lukash found the President physically fit, and then you went into the lab tests. Normally, on this there is a pronouncement that the President is in excellent health or fine health. Does your description physically fit ---

MR. NESSEN: Physically fit, and laboratory tests and examination are completely normal.

Q How long was he examined?

MR. NESSEN: Would you call Lukash and ask him?

Q Ron, what do you know about discriminatory practices in assigning personnel to Saudi Arabia?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that there is no discriminatory assignment policy at the Pentagon.

Q Well, some General just completed the study, as I read in the Times this morning, and found discrimination there and discrimination among assignments in Turkey and Greece, and discrimination of shapely women.

MR. NESSEN: For or against?

Q For.

MR. NESSEN: Towards shapely women? I can go along with that. I have got the wrong necktie on to say something like that.

Q Are you sure you don't know who gave you that male chauvinist pig tie?

MR. NESSEN: My wife asked me that and that is the same answer I gave her, Les. She reads my transcripts, too, Les.

Q She does?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry. I am not familiar with the study. Does that find that in the past, or going on now?

Q Going on now.

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into that. The Pentagon has said there is no discriminatory assignment policy.

Q But the Saudi Arabian Embassy has never given us any information other than when you are assigned to the Corps of Engineers you have to have a baptismal certificate in order to get in, Ron. Now, that has never been altered by the announcement from the Pentagon or the Saudi Arabian Embassy.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that that is not American policy.

Q I know. It is Saudi Arabian policy that we put up with and discriminate against Jewish officers.

MR. NESSEN: I cannot speak for the Saudi Arabian Government.

Q Ron, is there any change in the President's policy about seeing Solzhenitsyn?

MR. NESSEN: I thought everybody who was along on Saturday understood that had the President been asked at his news conference he would have said that he is willing to see Mr. Solzhenitsyn ---

Q Let's take it a little further.

MR. NESSEN: --- would be pleased to see Mr. Solzhenitsyn if Mr. Solzhenitsyn wants to see him.

Q I am sorry I missed that.

MR. NESSEN: I said the people who were along on the trip on Saturday know that if the President had been asked about Mr. Solzhenitsyn he would have said that he would be pleased to see Mr. Solzhenitsyn if Mr. Solzhenitsyn wants to see him. I am not aware of any request that has come in since then or indeed before then.

Q Is Solzhenitsyn still in the country?

MR. NESSEN: He was on Meet The Press yesterday, so I guess he is.

Q Ron, Senator Jackson has invited all Members of the Senate to the Caucus Room tomorrow afternoon -- all Members, of course, meaning the Vice President. Now, the Vice President's office said that the Vice President met with the President this morning. Does the President have any objection to Vice President Rockefeller going to Senator Jackson's meeting in honor of Solzhenitsyn, tomorrow afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea.

Q Ron, I want to check on the President's plans tomorrow.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is it still the plan for him to watch the Apollo lift-off from his Oval Office?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, yes.

Q Can we expect any statement after the lift-off?

MR. NESSEN: I would anticipate something. I don't know if it will be in the form of a Presidential statement, but certainly some reaction.

Some of you who also were not on the trip this weekend know that the President will go to the State Department auditorium tomorrow morning. I am afraid at the moment I don't have the exact time, but I think it is in the 8:00 area. He will watch the launch of the Soyuz from there, with Ambassador Dobrynin of the Soviet Union and other members of the Diplomatic Corps. He will have some remarks before the launch and that is open for whatever coverage you care to give it.

I understand from the networks anyhow that there is some arrangement where the Russians are providing television coverage of the launch.

The physical examination lasted from 7:00 until 7:35.

Tom?

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Q On the Helsinki trip, in some speculative stories it has also been said that the President may go to Europe -- East and West. Would that still be his intent if he can work out the timetable around the Japanese Prime Minister trip?

MR. NESSEN: It is not set that he is going to Helsinki yet, and so it is impossible to say what else he might do or might not do.

Q May I ask, Ron, what happened to those foreign policy considerations, which you said prior to Saturday were a part of the reason why the President would not be meeting with Solzhenitsyn?

MR. NESSEN: I would dearly like to straighten out the record on this because I have read some things that I am supposed to have said about foreign policy considerations. I think if you read the transcript, you will see that I was asked about that aspect, and what I said was that any Presidential visitor who comes from a foreign country or has any involvement in foreign policy considerations, it would be natural for the President to hear the views and suggestions of Secretary Kissinger, which he did receive.

As for what Secretary Kissinger's advice was, I from this platform have never relayed that because it is not normal or natural that we do pass on the private advice to the President. So, I should not be tagged with some of the stories that purport to represent what Secretary Kissinger's views were.

Q We won't say that you said it (Laughter), but we will say --

MR. NESSEN: I thought I was just here to answer these four little questions.

Q A senior U.S. official, who often appears in one star conjunction or another with Secretary Kissinger, said that there were foreign policy considerations that led to a recommendation not to see Solzhenitsyn, and if you will take it on that basis, can you please tell us what was the reason for the change? Regardless of who said it, what was the reason?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to accept your report of what a senior American official might have said. I will only say that I don't feel that it would be fair to call this a change because the only issue ever dealt with here was why didn't Solzhenitsyn come in on the 30th of June, which was the date proposed or suggested by Senators Helms and Thurmond.

That was indeed a busy day, and no time on the President's schedule. We never really addressed the question of a meeting on a date by Solzhenitsyn before and have never said -- I think I am right -- that the President just flatly refuses to see Solzhenitsyn.

Q Can you say that he didn't say that? Can you say that the President did in fact, after Secretary Kissinger made his recommendations, that the President did not agree with Kissinger on Kissinger's recommendations? Will you say that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what Secretary Kissinger's recommendation was, frankly.

Q You mean you are not aware that the President and Kissinger decided that it was not a very good thing to have Solzhenitsyn visit that weekend in Washington?

MR. NESSEN: Let me soften something just to keep my own credibility up here, such as it is.

I do know what Kissinger's recommendation was. I was just mulling it over in my own mind. I do, but I will not --

Q What was it?

MR. NESSEN: -- I will not say what it was.
(Laughter)

Q What was it? Ron, this is twice today that you come out here and say, "I know something but I can't help you." Don't do that.

MR. NESSEN: It is not proper ever, I don't think, to reveal the private advice of a Presidential aide to the President.

Q You did make it clear that the President did act on the advice of the National Security --

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall ever -- I had said that --

Q Discussed by the National Security Council.

MR. NESSEN: I never said that, either.

Q He can't make up his own mind.

MR. NESSEN: That it was discussed at a National Security Council meeting?

Q No, Council staff.

MR. NESSEN: Look, this is all ancient history. The fact is the President would be pleased --

Q Last week is ancient history?

Q Murray says he is willing to see him, so it is not ancient history at all.

Q You cannot explain what happens now unless you are able to explain fully the back-up, too.

MR. NESSEN: I think I have explained the back-up, Sarah.

Q No. It is putting you in a bad position when the staff people and others try to make you do this. In defense of you, I say that.

MR. NESSEN: I am not trying to do anything except to say that he would be pleased to see Solzhenitsyn. He was not able to -- let's just review the bidding. There was a suggestion that he come in on the 30th of June by Helms and Thurmond. He could not see him that day.

On the general proposition of would he see him, he would be pleased to see him if Solzhenitsyn wants to see him. Now, whatever advice he may have received from various people on the staff, it is not proper to reveal the private visit to the President.

Q Ron, did he receive advice from others on the staff other than Secretary Kissinger?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, why doesn't the President just invite Solzhenitsyn to a meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has indicated through --

Q The fact is that there was a flat and you changed your mind. Why can't you say that?

Q Why can't you let him answer my question?

Q What was your question? (Laughter)

Q The question was, why doesn't the President just invite Solzhenitsyn to a meeting in the White House and we will get away from all this baloney?

MR. NESSEN: Where it stands now is that he would be pleased to see him if Solzhenitsyn wants to see him.

Q Was the issue here one of timing somehow connected with the Kissinger meeting with Gromyko and/or the space shot?

MR. NESSEN: I just have not heard that aspect ever discussed.

Q Not the Gromyko meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I did not.

Q Ron, modern history, could you tell us or find out for us -- it may take some time -- on the overall number of people that travel with the President, not only on Air Force One, but on any other means before and during this trip last weekend, and could you give us the total cost of the operation, both on advancement, staff people, Secret Service and the like? I would like very much to know this.

MR. NESSEN: It will take some time, and I will make the effort.

Q Do you think you can get that?

MR. NESSEN: I will try.

Q I have two more questions on Solzhenitsyn.

Q One more jump back to the Middle Ages. You did address the Solzhenitsyn question in the context other than just June 30 because I asked you when you gave me the reasons why the Helms-Thurmond thing would not come off you said the President could not see him that day. I said fine, Solzhenitsyn will be in town for one more week, and does the President have any plans to see him then?

You said no, he does not, that his schedule is too busy. I think Mr. Deakin said something to the effect about would it damage detente, have something to do with that. You said no, as far as you knew that had nothing to do with it.

At the time you said that, did you know that Kissinger had said something to the President about Solzhenitsyn, and if you did, why did you say the idea that it would damage detente was nothing that you knew nothing about.

MR. NESSEN: I said at the time that Secretary Kissinger offered his views, and he did.

Q I have two questions. One is, what is the public reaction count in the White House on the Solzhenitsyn matter?

MR. NESSEN: I have not made one, or I have not asked for one.

Q Secondly, did the question of Mr. Solzhenitsyn seeing him go back to the NSC or its staff after the initial turndown? You told us that the question was referred to the NSC staff and then subsequently the President --

MR. NESSEN: As always.

Q Yes. -- subsequently the President decided and staff decided that he was not going to see him.

MR. NESSEN: He was not going to see him on the one date proposed, and that there were no plans for that week -- last week, I guess it was.

Q Did the question then go back to the NSC or the staff?

MR. NESSEN: Not in the formal sense of go back and think about it again and come up with something else.

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Q Ron, if you could just tell us why the President changed his mind about that, it seems to me it would end all this discussion on a principle.

Q It is a minor affair anyway.

Q Minor?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will leave it, John, where it is.

Q Ron, can you give us any guidance as to a possible speech by the President?

MR. NESSEN: He is pleased to see Solzhenitsyn if Solzhenitsyn wants to see him.

Q Has Solzhenitsyn, to your knowledge, indicated that he would not accept an invitation? He invites soccer players and this vast conglomeration, including Billy Zeoli and Sonny Jurgenson, and so forth. Why has he not extended an invitation to Solzhenitsyn, if we are to take this seriously, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think the only question I can answer there is the specific one. I, like most people, watched Solzhenitsyn on Meet The Press yesterday. He was asked a question by Larry Spivak -- as far as I could tell he did not answer it directly, so I don't know what Mr. Solzhenitsyn ---

Q Are we at the point where the President is inviting him to a particular date in time or certainly extending an invitation formally, or are we not? Are we just going to leave it where Solzhenitsyn may or may not come in?

MR. NESSEN: The President would be pleased to see him if he wishes to see the President.

Q Is this the invitation that he is conveying to Solzhenitsyn, or is he going to call him on the phone and extend it personally?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can do much more on this one.

Q On the subject of detente, does the President have any reaction to the Soviet press attacks on Schlesinger?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I have heard.

Q Can you explain a little more clearly, are the wire stories in error about the European Security Conference? Why can't you just come right out and say the President is going? I mean, I have seen on the Reuters and the other two wires that indeed there will be a conference the 30th of July and you, as I understand it, said that there is a summit conference and everything is going to work out -- the President will go. Why can't you say he is going?

MR. NESSEN: Well, because it is not certain that he is going so I don't want to say it unless it is sure that he is going. I think if you read the wires carefully, Walt, you will see that it says there is no final agreement to have a conference on that date.

Q Ron, has the President been talking with Secretary Kissinger about the Secretary's speech tomorrow night in Milwaukee about the United Nations?

MR. NESSEN: Well, they had an hour or so together last night, and I don't know whether that came up or not.

Q Ron, what does the President think about the possibility of having U.S. troops or U.S. technicians stay over there in the Middle East watching these border areas? Does he think that is a good idea?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know his views on the subject, or why it would come up.

Q If it comes up, would you please ask the President what he thinks about that, and let us know?

Q Ron, was the Turkish aid program raised this morning and, if so, what came out of it?

MR. NESSEN: It did come up in, I would say, a minute or two, and it was really more or less a progress report on the committee action, what the vote was. The President asked what is the timetable for considering on the Floor, The Speaker gave him the timetable of when it would get a rule and when it would come to the Floor, and that was the total of the discussion.

Q Any views on regulatory reform out of that meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Would the President be pleased to see Mr. Solzhenitsyn if the suggestion by Senators Helms and Thurmond still stands -- that he see him?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will just leave it, Ted.

Q Ron, did the President get any advice from San Clemente on the role of Mr. Butterfield in the Federal Aviation job?

MR. NESSEN: No. I answered that this morning.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:34 P.M. EDT)