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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN AND  
BILL GREENER

AT 11:30 A.M. EDT

JULY 22, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. GREENER: Ron is still in with the President, and he will be down to complete the briefing as soon as he gets out of there. I just wanted to get some announcements out of the way, two additions to the schedule.

At 4:30 this afternoon, the President will be meeting with the Associated General Contractors Officials of the Associated General Contractors.

At 7:30 this evening, he will be having a trip on the SEQUOIA with the bipartisan Congressional leaders.

Q     What is he talking about?

MR. GREENER: Common situs picketing.

Q     Are they for it or against it?

MR. GREENER: They, I imagine, are against it.

Q     How many are there, and will their names be posted, if there are relatively few?

MR. GREENER: Yes, the names will be posted, and I will tell you how many in just a moment.

Q     Will you give us a guest list for the SEQUOIA, also?

MR. GREENER: There are seven officers of the Associated General Contractors.

Q     What is the subject matter?

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MR. GREENER: Most of these will be out of the city by the time the President gets back from Europe, and it is the first opportunity the President has had to have the bipartisan leaders aboard the Presidential yacht.

Q Do you anticipate, should the House reject this decontrol plan, energy matters would be one of the things they discuss on the boat tonight?

MR. GREENER: I think it is almost purely social. The wives are attending.

I have two other announcements for you.

One, there will be a background briefing tomorrow afternoon on CSCE in Room 450 of the EOB with Counsellor Sonnenfeldt and Art Hartman. That will be at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon in Room 450 of the Executive Office Building. It is a background briefing on CSCE, and there is an on-the-record briefing on Friday at 11 o'clock with Secretary Kissinger in the same room.

Q Friday at 11 o'clock is on the record?

MR. GREENER: Friday at 11 is on the record, and it is for the entire trip.

Q Will it be available for broadcast?

MR. GREENER: I will have to check.

Q The Hartman thing is not for the entire trip?

MR. GREENER: Basically CSCE. I am not sure he can answer questions on the remainder of the trip, but basically he will talk about the Helsinki portion of the trip.

Q Will that be at 11?

MR. GREENER: It is planned for 11.

Q There won't be a White House briefing on Friday?

MR. GREENER: We haven't settled it. I don't know.

I think that covers all the announcements.

Q If you have a briefing Friday, could you arrange it so one person could be at both of them, both Nessen's and Henry's?

MR. GREENER: We certainly will.

Q What is going on now? Are you taking questions?

MR. GREENER: I think Ron is on his way here now.

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MR. NESSEN: Bill told you about the additions to the schedule today and the briefing schedule for the European trip.

The Consumer Price Index -- is that out yet?

Q What do you think of it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think it would be fair to say that the increase was higher than expected. It is not anticipated that we would get rises of this size every month but I think it does point out what the President has been trying to say, which is that inflation has by no means been defeated and that vigilance is needed to avoid the kinds of budget deficits and spending programs that would reflate inflation.

You have been told about that, and contractors and the trip on the Sequoia. Do you have the guest list on the Sequoia?

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: We are going to post it.

Let me tell you one thing about the trip. The deadline for signing up for the trip is really 6:00 this afternoon and that has to really be firm, not only signing up for the trip but also turning in your photographs.

You remember, that was 10 passport size color photographs, and your passports and the forms have to all be filled out and in by 6:00. This is really important because some of these countries are requiring forms and pictures, and if we don't get them in by 6:00 you are going to miss getting your visas for those countries.

Thym Smith has the forms. Three countries in Eastern Europe need the forms filled out. Ten passport size photos -- color is preferable. Some of the countries actually have requested color. If you don't have time to get color, we will try to sneak through with black and white, but it is better to get color, and your passport which will be returned to you after the trip.

Now, once again we are going to have two airplanes -- one a TWA and one a Pan Am. Normally what we do would be to manifest the writers on the TWA plane and the technical people on Pan Am. If you have any problem with that you should get in touch with Ray Zook and get yourself manifested on the plane you want, but truly now, to avoid any problems getting into the three Eastern European countries, you should get all this stuff in by 6:00, to Thym Smith. If you don't have the forms, get them from Thym Smith.

I tried to talk to some people yesterday afternoon, after I saw a story on the wire saying that the President was considering calling Congress back into session during the recess in case they don't pass a decontrol plan before they go.

What I tried to say yesterday, without much success -- and let me try again today -- is that that is not correct. The President does not intend to call Congress back into a special session. There is time to pass his compromise phased decontrol plan before they go and just let me say strongly he does not intend to call Congress back during the recess.

Q Ron, on that subject, they were supposed to be voting around noon. Are you going to come out with any type of reaction statement this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I will have some reaction after Congress acts.

Q Ron, are you open to questions now?

MR. NESSEN: I think I am, yes.

Q Since the President has been fighting inflation for about a year, on whom does he blame the CPI rise?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he would blame it on anybody, Peter. As I said, it is just a signal that inflation has not been defeated and it is a warning that it needs continual concentration, and Congress should not do anything in the way of excessive spending that would make it worse.

Q Hasn't Congress been doing just that for the last year or so, and the President has been vetoing everything that was over the budget?

MR. NESSEN: I would have to look at the figures and see where the primary increase came.

Q You did not mean to suggest by your remarks -- or did you -- that the budget deficit and spending programs are responsible for the latest round of increases?

MR. NESSEN: I did not say that. I said it is just a warning there needs to be continual attention paid to that so that inflation does not get back to the levels where it was before.

Q Ron, yesterday when Bill announced the trip he was asked about London, and he said he didn't know where we might refuel. Is there any chance he will meet with Wilson if he stops there to refuel, and have the refueling stops been set?

MR. NESSEN: There will not be a refueling stop in London. The President will meet with Prime Minister Wilson in Helsinki.

There will be a refueling stop on the way home, but it will not be in London.

Q Where will it be?

MR. NESSEN: That is not settled yet.

Q Will it be the Azores? Is that being considered?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why the mystery about where he is going to stop?

MR. NESSEN: It has not been decided yet. It is just an airfield where you put down and buy some fuel.

Q It is definitely not London?

MR. NESSEN: There was some thought, as many of you know, for landing in London for fuel, and meeting with Prime Minister Wilson at that time. Prime Minister Wilson will meet with the President in Helsinki and the refueling stop will be a convenient place to pick up fuel.

Q He will not meet with officials in whatever country you happen to set down in?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Will he get off the plane?

MR. NESSEN: It just simply isn't arranged yet. It is a minor technical matter of taking on fuel and it is not a major political issue.

Q Maybe he will stop in Shannon and buy a camera.

MR. NESSEN: Shannon is one of the possibilities for a refueling stop.

Q Can you tell us some of the others?

MR. NESSEN: Some airfield in England that I had not heard of -- Mendenhall.

Q May I ask about the extension of the voting rights bill? The President addressed that the other day but it was not clear to me if he was willing to sign this 10-year extension.

MR. NESSEN: That is the straight 10-year extension?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he will sign that.

Q But he does favor extending it to all States.

MR. NESSEN: The President's own personal view is that he believes in extending it to all 50 States but his concern is getting the basic bill extended and in order to do that without having it lapse -- which he feels would not be a good thing to have happen -- he will sign the simple extension. His own personal view is that he would like to have it extended to all 50 States.

Q Would he sign the House bill as well?

Q The House bill does have some extension in it. It is not a mere extension of the present bill but it has some other provisions included in it.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he would sign that.

Q Just for the record, how does that observation of yours that he will sign the bill square with what we have been told is the longstanding practice of not commenting on the bill?

MR. NESSEN: I guess it does not square.

Q Will the President sign the HEW, the education bill?

MR. NESSEN: That bill is not here yet.

As you know, it is considerably over his recommended figure. I don't have a flat answer of whether he would sign it or veto it.

Q Ron, what does it mean when you say the President's personal view? Does this mean he will not act in any way to try to see that Congress does extend it to all 50 States, or does it mean at some time he will indeed ask them to do that?

MR. NESSEN: I can't talk about the future, Marty, because I don't know, but at the moment the important thing in his view is to not let the bill lapse. In order to not let it lapse, he feels the way to do it is a simple extension.

Q In other words, when you say it is his personal view, is that a distinction for when you just say it is his view? His view usually winds up with him asking Congress to do something or not do something.

MR. NESSEN: I am often asked what his personal views are, and I often can tell you what they are.

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Q There is a story in the paper this morning that says at the time John Kennedy was assassinated there is now information that the CIA was somehow or other passing some sort of assassination tools to somebody or the other.

In other words, the question is, there was something going on there in connection with an attempt on Castro's life at the time that Kennedy was assassinated and this was not known by the Warren Commission.

I just wonder, as a member of the Warren Commission, has the President commented on this or does he think any new action is called for now?

MR. NESSEN: The President feels that looking back on the findings of the Warren Commission, he has seen no evidence that would cause him to believe that the findings were not correct.

Q Does he disagree with Senator Schweiker that there are some flaws in the Warren Commission report?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure what Schweiker said. I thought Schweiker also said there was no evidence of anything different than what the Warren Commission found.

Q He said there should be an additional probe, if I understand it.

Q He said the evidence had come out of these hearings that would indicate a need for extension because now there was sufficient evidence of motive on the part of the Cubans.

MR. NESSEN: The Rockefeller Commission also looked into that and found no justification for reopening an investigation, and the President feels the same.

Q You checked this with the President since Schweiker made his announcement?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Since the House vote on the Snyder amendment would seem to have illustrated Bo Callaway's statement about how the public feels about any concessions on the Panama Canal -- Dr. Kissinger has written six Senators that the House vote was an unwise initiative.

What I would like to ask is, which is closer to the minds of the President, the view of Callaway in the House or the view of Dr. Kissinger?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure that it is an either-or question, Les. Dr. Kissinger certainly reflects the President's view. Let me leave aside the merits of the topics being negotiated and just say that on the Constitutional question Dr. Kissinger reflects the President's views that it is not Constitutionally the role of the House to interfere with or attempt to direct or control treaty negotiations.

As for the substance of the negotiations themselves, let me make a couple of points.

One, as I said before, the President has no intention of negotiating away the basic rights of the United States in the Panama Canal zone or anywhere.

Secondly, if and when a treaty is negotiated, it certainly would be submitted to the Senate under the Constitutional procedures, but even before it is submitted to the Senate, there has been and will continue to be a close consultation with Congress on these negotiations.

The negotiations have been going on for a very long time through, I guess, ten years, three Administrations, and they continue.

Q Ron, will the President seek the Senate's advice and consent on the Helsinki agreement?

MR. NESSEN: The Helsinki Act is not a treaty. It is not a legally binding treaty. He obviously will and has through the whole process of his Administration consulted with Congress on the Helsinki Act.

But, it is not a treaty with legally binding obligations. So, it will not be submitted to the Senate.

Q Could I follow that? In his consultations, does he find approval, disapproval, skepticism or what? What does he find?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that I have ever heard any sort of generalized response to the Helsinki Act.

Q It has not been published, has it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is right. In fact, I think they are now having copies printed in the various languages and so forth to be ready for the meeting.

Q How could he consult with Congress? Has he told them what is in it?

MR. NESSEN: He has kept Congress informed on the progress.

Q On the contents, is that what you mean?

MR. NESSEN: On the progress that they have made as they went along, and now that they have an agreement he has or will keep them posted on that. Hal Sonnenfeldt and Arthur Hartman will talk about the CSCE final act tomorrow.

Q Do we have the document itself?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is one of the reasons for scheduling the briefing tomorrow -- to await the arrival of the document. I would say I don't want to get into a briefing on this because it has taken a long time and is a complicated document.

But I would say this: I think it would be wise to stay away from simple kinds of generalizations about this final act to be signed at Helsinki. It has a lot of parts to it. It in no way legally settles borders in Eastern Europe and it is one very important thing to keep in mind.

It merely provides an obligation not to attempt to change borders by force but the United States and the Western allies and the neutral countries insisted on language providing for the peaceful change of borders.

Also, if you go back a little into the history of the CSCE document you will find that before the United States and its allies would even consent to begin this process, it insisted on a number of steps which were taken, and that included a new Berlin accord and it also included a formalized improvement in relations between West Germany and the Eastern European countries.

So I only want to say that by way of a preview of the kind of detailed explanation that you will get tomorrow.

Q Ron, what was the President's reaction to Mr. Solzhenitsyn's criticism?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the President reiterates that Solzhenitsyn has an open invitation to visit the White House. It is true there have been some problems in arranging the visit and the President regrets that. The President hopes that perhaps it will be possible to work out the visit while Solzhenitsyn is still in the United States.

Q Did Secretary Kissinger advise the President to not see Solzhenitsyn?

MR. NESSEN: I think Dr. Kissinger, during his most recent trip to the Midwest, described at some length his views on Solzhenitsyn and his advice to the President.

Q Ron, is the White House actively seeking a meeting with Solzhenitsyn?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, just to review the bidding a little, you know there was a meeting arranged for 5:15 a week ago tonight. Solzhenitsyn was not able to keep the appointment. After that, it was made clear here there is an open invitation and I think that is where it stands.

Q Can you tell us what the plans are? Now that we have a European Security Conference scheduled next week, what are the plans for Secretary Brezhnev to have a summit conference in Washington with President Ford this fall?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no change in the plans.

Q That is September, tentatively?

MR. NESSEN: No date has been set. It somewhat depends on progress of the SALT II technical level talks.

Q Would you anticipate the Ford-Brezhnev meeting in Washington this October would still come about?

MR. NESSEN: I have heard nothing to lead me to change that.

Q It is conditional on an agreement at SALT?

MR. NESSEN: The President feels that the technical people should be able to resolve most of the issues. It may be, as in the case of the Vladivostok meeting, there would be some matters that would need to be concluded at the summit level.

Q What was the President's reaction to Secretary Weinberger's speech at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard any reaction, Les.

Q He has not seen it, or you have not asked him about it; is that right?

MR. NESSEN: He has seen it and made no comment.

Q Ron, just to go back to Solzhenitsyn, Solzhenitsyn's statement seemed to be a refusal to see the President because it said he was going to ratify the despotism in Eastern Europe, but the President still believes a meeting can be arranged despite Solzhenitsyn's statement yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, one more question about this assassination story. The story makes a point. It says, -- referring to this information the Warren Commission did not know about -- it said, "The incident would appear to constitute a striking illustration of evidence that was withheld from the Warren Commission in its investigation of the Kennedy assassination."

The President, you say, does not want to reopen the investigation. But does he now feel that information was withheld from them in light of all that has come about?

MR. NESSEN: I think he has reviewed in his own mind -- I know he has -- what was known at the time, and the Rockefeller Commission's findings, and based on that he sees no evidence that would justify reopening the investigation.

Q Have you talked to him specifically about whether he thinks something was withheld or whether he feels now information was withheld?

MR. NESSEN: He says it was 11 years ago and he does not remember each and every detail that was told, but he sees no evidence that has come to light since that would justify reopening it.

Q Ron, did you discuss that with him today? In other words, after that story appeared, for example?

MR. NESSEN: I have discussed it with him several times in the past several weeks.

Q Have you discussed it with him since this new information appeared?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, with respect to his meeting with the Associated General Contractors on picketing, what are his views on that?

MR. NESSEN: I think it would be fair to say his general views are that he would approve that kind of picketing if it was done with 10 days advance notice and approval by the national union involved, in writing.

Q Ron, will the President have anything hopeful to say to the families of the MIA's this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know precisely what exact words he will tell them. I feel sure he will point out that as long as North Vietnam refuses to live up to what it agreed to in Paris in terms of allowing inspection teams and providing an accounting, that that is the main problem, that he and his Administration will continue to press for a full accounting, but will certainly point out that it is North Vietnam which is prolonging these families' inability to find out what has happened to their husbands and sons.

Q Ron, on the common situs picketing, I am not sure about this, but isn't this a switch or a change in direction from the position that he may have taken when he was in the House?

MR. NESSEN: I frankly don't know what his position was in the House. I know he spent a great deal of time on this issue and that is his view.

Q A great deal of time recently?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, quite a bit.

Q How is the President planning to observe National Prayer Day?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard the exact plans yet but I will let you know when we find out.

Q Will there be a news conference before the week is over?

MR. NESSEN: No, there will be no news conference before we go to Europe.

Dick?

Q Going back to oil for a second, there was a story in the Times this morning which says that the President's advisors are working up a second plan to offer Congress assuming that the House rejects his plan for decontrol. Can you elaborate on that?

MR. NESSEN: That is an incorrect story. That is not correct. The President's planning has only gone as far as yesterday's veto, today's vote on his own compromise phased decontrol, and I guess Congress is sending along a simple six-month extension which he intends to veto unless Congress approves the phased decontrol today. His planning has not gone beyond those three steps.

I think Frank told you yesterday he had had some talks over the weekend and again yesterday afternoon with some Members of Congress. I think it would be fair to say that those talks have resulted in no agreement at all on a phased decontrol plan.

Q Are you ruling out that he might submit a second plan, though? Are you merely saying that no such plan is being devised at the moment?

MR. NESSEN: I say his planning on this whole area stops at this moment with the anticipated veto of a simple six-month extension.

Q Senator Fannin, when he was with Congressman Rhodes at the news conference here yesterday, in this briefing room yesterday, said there was time for another plan to be submitted.

He went on later to say this was not the end of the road if this was disapproved.

MR. NESSEN: I think I said afterward to go light on that and also I think Congressman Rhodes was quite correct in describing the talks that Frank Zarb was having, but since then, late yesterday afternoon, those talks resulted in no agreement whatever.

Q Ron, on that subject, doesn't today's CPI report which was attributed mainly to increases in oil and gasoline, make it more difficult for the President to convince Congress that it should adopt his program, which would further increase the price of oil and gasoline?

MR. NESSEN: I would think quite the opposite, Ted. It points out what happens to your economy and inflation rate when it is held hostage by a group of foreign producers who take the money.

It does not come into the American economy. It does not create jobs in the United States. It allows them to, at will, set a price. You are dependent upon them for 40 percent of your oil. And as the New York Times and the Washington Post have both now endorsed a phased decontrol program and spelled out the reasons why they believe it is the correct course, I would say that today's figures simply reinforce what the President said in his veto message yesterday, which is that we need to free the American economy from control, to a large degree, by foreign producers.

Q Are you saying that most of the increase in oil and gasoline was due to foreign producers rather than to the President's imposition of the \$2 levy?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the breakdown of that, but as I said very often here, the only way to look at this program for energy is to look at it in the longrun and not look at one weekend's gas pump figures or one month's cost of living figures, but when you get 10 years down the line and you are getting more than half your oil from foreign producers and they control the price -- that is the purpose of the President's program.

And the President, as he said himself, there is no cheap way to do this. Congress clearly cannot or will not make the hard decisions. But as evidenced by both the Post and the Times editorials, there is support for making the hard choices and doing the hard things that will get the American economy back in the control of Americans and will create jobs in the United States, and will keep the money here.

This cost of living increase caused by oil -- I just want to remind you one more time -- that money would be going back to Americans in the form of a tax revision and refunds if Congress would pass that part of the President's program.

Q Ron, can we infer from your answer a moment ago that if the information in the Post article on the CIA assassination plots is correct, that that information was not unknown to the President 11 years ago?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, it was 11 years ago. He does not recall every bit of evidence reviewed at that time.

Q Is it likely you would forget something like that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that, but I know that in the meanwhile all the evidence he has seen since -- and I am talking about evidence now, not newspaper stories -- there is a difference -- none of the evidence he has seen since has led him to believe that the findings of the Warren Commission are inconclusive.

Q Did this come as a surprise to him today when he read it in the paper, or did he know about it beforehand?

MR. NESSEN: That is a nifty question, Bob. I think I will leave it where it is.

Q Have the Soviets given us to understand that they regard the Helsinki agreement as in no way legally setting the borders in East Europe? I thought that was the purpose of the whole thing.

MR. NESSEN: That is why I cautioned against using a simplistic shorthand description of the Helsinki Final Act. That is written into the Act -- as you will see when you get a copy of that -- it is specifically spelled out that this is not a legal final determination of borders in Europe.

Q Are we given to understand they regard it that way?

MR. NESSEN: They are prepared to sign the agreement, the Final Act.

Q Ron, can I ask one more question on this minor detail you described? Was there any difficulty involved with the British that led the President to not land at London to refuel?

MR. NESSEN: No, I said he is seeing Wilson in Helsinki.

Q Is the President going to have a policy of meeting behind closed doors with checkbook Republicans, influential businessmen, and so forth, and not allowing at least a minor White House press pool to even be on the same floor with him? Is this going to be a policy that he maintains?

MR. NESSEN: What was the occasion?

Q Last night the pool was not even allowed on the same floor with the President.

Q Or within sight of the room.

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check into last night.

Q This was a policy he maintained in his Vice Presidency. I wondered if it was a policy he was going to maintain now.

Q It was my understanding that travel pools were supposed to go where the President goes, and be with him.

MR. NESSEN: And I think we have improved that quite a bit.

Q As of last night, there was no improvement.

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into what last night's arrangements were.

Q I have a question about an AP story in which Senator Benson says the President should not attend a summit meeting in Helsinki until the extent of Soviet intervention in Portugal is determined. Benson says the CIA told him the Russians have given more than \$10 million a month to the Portuguese Communists.

So my question, I guess, is in two parts. One, what is his response to Benson's suggestion he not go to Helsinki until these assurances are given? And secondly, does he have any such information from the CIA or other sources?

MR. NESSEN: I can't answer your second part.

The first part, he is going. The Final Act, to be signed at Helsinki, was worked out in years of negotiations, parts of it insisted upon by the United States and the NATO Alliance, and the neutral countries, which is another reason why I urge you to attend and hold off getting locked into your mind what the CSCE final agreement is all about. That is all I would say.

Q Ron, on the MIA's this afternoon, the families you mentioned, he is going to tell them Hanoi has not lived up to the Paris Accords -- will he assure them that the United States will not provide any aid to Saigon or Hanoi or extend any diplomatic recognition until the MIA question is solved?

MR. NESSEN: Whether or not it will come up this afternoon -- and it could well -- I would say the President's personal feelings are no aid to Hanoi or Saigon.

Q The same for any diplomatic recognition of any kind in the future in his Administration?

MR. NESSEN: It is difficult to talk about the future, but certainly at the moment those are his views.

Q In relation to the MIA, as the question was phrased?

MR. NESSEN: It is unrelated to what he will say this afternoon. It is his view at the moment.

Q He is not tied to the MIA question?

MR. NESSEN: He is not tied to the MIA question, but it is just his general view on North Vietnam and Saigon.

Q Since this conference in Helsinki is not binding, and is of so little importance, why is the President going?

MR. NESSEN: Peter, I don't know where the phrase "of so little importance" came from.

Q You seemed to have been downgrading it by suggesting this language is not what it seems.

MR. NESSEN: It certainly is not downgrading something worked out by 35 countries over such a long period of time.

Q Does that give it a special virtue, 35 countries?

MR. NESSEN: I am trying to set what I have read a bit straight, which is this somehow legally confirms the borders of Eastern Europe, which is not true. It contains, as I said, many things that the United States and its allies, and the neutral countries, have pushed very hard for and have obtained in hard bargaining. It is a worthwhile act to sign. It does contribute to the various steps that have been and are being taken to reduce the threat of war, and that seems like a worthwhile process.

Q Doesn't that thing obviously recognize the current borders, providing for ways to change them peacefully?

MR. NESSEN: The word "recognize" is not used in the document, deliberately not used at the insistence of the United States and its allies.

Q On the treaty or agreement, or whatever, two points. First, you keep calling it an act. Is that the formal name of it?

MR. NESSEN: That is the formal name, the Final Act.

Q Secondly, can you tell us the Congressmen the President has conferred with about this during the negotiations?

MR. NESSEN: I have heard it come up a number of times in his weekly meetings with both Republican and Bipartisan Congressional leaders.

Q In terms of conferring with them?

MR. NESSEN: Explaining what the process is and what the various unresolved issues have been, and how the United States wanted to have them resolved.

Q But my question goes to the word "conferring." In other words, have Senator Mansfield and Senator Sparkman of the Foreign Relations Committee and others been consulted in advance on parts of the treaty or Act?

MR. NESSEN: I need to check on the exact number of consultations and discussions.

Q Ron, if the Ford Administration is committed, as I understand it, to the survival of Israel, why is there so much pushing by the Administration on Capitol Hill to get permission to sell so many batteries of Hawk missiles to Jordan, who has just allied itself with Syria?

MR. NESSEN: The arms sales to Jordan have been going on for quite some time. There has been no change or increase.

Q They deny that. They say that \$350 million is more than I think in the last decade to Jordan.

MR. NESSEN: The arms relationship with Jordan has been an old one and has been going on for some time. These particular batteries have been under discussion for several months.

And the other point to remember is that these are purely defensive weapons.

Q You said today there is no updating of Eastern European borders. Why is it this point has been written about over and over again by responsible correspondent groups --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know why. There is a misunderstanding, but I suggest you read the Final Act. I suggest you attend the Hartman and Sonnenfeldt briefing and the Kissinger briefing because I do think this has been somewhat generalized and oversimplified.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:15 P.M. EDT)