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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

#356

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 9:13 A.M. EDT

OCTOBER 22, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. GREENER: I talked to Dr. Lukash. The President has been without fever for over 24 hours. He is continued on antibiotics and decongestants through the completion --

Q Slower.

MR. GREENER: The President has been without fever for over 24 hours.

Q Does that mean that his temperature is normal now?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

He will continue on antibiotics and decongestants through the completion of the course. He still has a slight bit of nasal congestion.

Q What do you mean through the completion of the course?

Q Yes, what does that mean?

MR. GREENER: You have had that. Dr. Lukash was correct in saying -- you know, I have been given, for example, penicillin or something like that and they tell you, "Take these four times a day for 10 days; even though you feel better, continue until the end of the treatment," and that is all it is.

Q How long is the end of the treatment?

MR. GREENER: I think it is 10 days but I will check to see how long the antibiotics are taken. (Laughter)

No, I don't know.

Q Well, let's say he is continuing on these things.

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MR. GREENER: Fine, continuing on these things.

He will expand his activity today; he plans on dressing. The doctor will encourage a couple of rest periods during the day. Dr. Lukash says his physical condition is very much improved.

Depending on how today goes, he will expand his schedule more tomorrow. He has three meetings scheduled today -- Rumsfeld, Greenspan and Seidman at 11:30.

Q In the office or upstairs?

MR. GREENER: Upstairs in the Residence.

Q Rumsfeld --

MR. GREENER: Greenspan and Seidman for an economic update.

Q All together?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q What time?

MR. GREENER: 11:30.

He has his regular meeting with the Vice President at 12:00.

Q 12:00?

MR. GREENER: Twelve o'clock.

Q What is that on?

MR. GREENER: Just his regular weekly meeting with the Vice President.

Q Will that be in the Residence also?

MR. GREENER: Yes. All of these are in the Residence.

Q He is not going to the Oval Office today?

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge.

Q Why?

MR. GREENER: And he will have a meeting with the Vice President, Lynn and Cannon at 12:30. That, also, is a regular weekly meeting.

Q What do you mean that is a weekly meeting?
We never heard of this before.

MR. GREENER: Pardon me?

Q We never heard of this before.

MR. GREENER: We have announced it before.

Q Rocky, Lynn and Cannon regularly meet with
the President?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

That is everything I have.

Q On Ralph's question, did he watch any of the
World Series last night?

Q Yes, that was a serious question. It was
an exciting game and I wondered if he saw it.

MR. GREENER: I will be glad to check.

Q Even I watched it.

Q I guess one of the questions -- what time
did he go to bed -- that would answer it.

Q So he is going to dress and work in the
Residence?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Has the doctor told him to stay in the
family quarters?

MR. GREENER: Recommended it, yes.

That is it. Thank you.

Q What time did he get up this morning, by
the way? 7:20 again?

MR. GREENER: We will check both of those for you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 9:17 A.M. EDT)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:35 A.M. EDT

OCTOBER 22, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I wanted to start off today reading you my horoscope. My horoscope today is: "The more you ask, the more answers you are likely to obtain."

Maybe I ought to be on the other side today.

Q Do you have a cold?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't.

I want to clean up a couple of questions that have been dangling around for a few days. The Secret Service report on the Hartford episode was dated October 20, arrived here on the evening of October 20 and got to Don Rumsfeld yesterday.

Q What does it say?

MR. NESSEN: Only that it answers all the questions raised concerning the episode.

Q You can't say anything more?

MR. NESSEN: No, I really can't.

Q Is the White House satisfied now in its main concern that you expressed -- the effect of how could this have happened, how could this have been allowed to happen? Are you satisfied?

MR. NESSEN: We are satisfied that we now know how it could have happened, or did happen, and satisfied that if any changes in security procedures are needed they will be made.

Q What about Fran's question about the city manager, I believe, of Hartford, who wants \$9,000 for --

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that he sent that bill over to the Republican National Committee for payment. It was an RNC trip and I suggest you ask them whether they intend to pay it or not.

Q Ron, you said if there are any changes in procedure --

MR. NESSEN: If required, they will be taken, right.

Q Are there any changes?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't think I can go into that much detail on what the report included, Peter.

Q Was there a report of what the Hartford police have said?

MR. NESSEN: What, that they took responsibility for the episode? There is nothing to believe that that is not right.

Q Ron, will the report be made public?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, has Rumsfeld's pique been lowered?

MR. NESSEN: I would not have called it "pique" in the first place.

Q Well, obviously there was no secret made of that but he was irritated. Does he feel that --

MR. NESSEN: I think he has all the facts now and, as Jim said, he now understands how it happened.

Q Has the President seen the report?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q You said they will be taken. Any changes needed will be taken, which means they have not been. There have not been changes in procedures?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he has not been out driving in traffic lately.

Q I am not completely sure that you answered the second part of the question, which was to look at the future. Does this report satisfy the White House that adequate precautions are going to be taken to ensure or at least to guard against a repetition of this kind of thing in the future?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Okay, the Consumer Price Index for September, as you probably know, went up a half a percent. This is about in line with the expectations. As you know from reading the announcement, food prices went down for the first time since earlier this year; the largest increases were in transportation, education and medical services, and utilities.

The figures pretty much speak for themselves and, as I say, the half a percent rise is about in line with the expectations.

Q Was there any thought ever expressed that an increase will not be a way of life; that there can be a month where we will not be talking about a minimal increase but talking about no rise at all?

Q Has he ever expressed that view?

MR. NESSEN: Well, it is certainly to be hoped for.

On New York City --

Q Ron, on that line about the increase being in line with expectations, does this mean then that the Administration is holding to its past predictions?

MR. NESSEN: The answer is yes, and I think it is interesting, Dick, that you know there has been a lot of economic statistics that have come out over the past couple of days and I think they all speak for themselves as to the direction of the economy.

It is interesting, I think, to look back to January or earlier in the year when there were a lot of scary predictions about a new depression being here and there would be bread lines, 25 million unemployed, or some people predicted 10 percent unemployment.

Q Who are those people who are making all these scary predictions?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think you remember who they were, Peter. I think you remember who they were, but let me make my point, if I can.

There were calls for massive Federal spending to head-off these predicted results and the President held firm to what he believes is an even-handed, steady economic course without what he called the kind of quick fix, and this is where we have reached with that policy.

Q Well, unemployment certainly has not gone down very much. Are you saying you are satisfied?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, you know better than that, Bob.

Q Well, where have we reached, then?

MR. NESSEN: Well, you can read the statistics and see what they add up to and what direction they point to.

Oh, I notice the pool coming back so I better go back and do something I forgot to do, which is the President is having an expanded schedule today although he will spend the day in the Residence.

He met with Don Rumsfeld this morning, and with me. At 11:30 he began a meeting with Alan Greenspan, Bill Simon and Bill Seidman for a review of the current economic situation. That will be followed--and, in response to some requests for pictures and an opportunity to see the President, a pool which you have seen return went over there to watch the beginning of that meeting. The President is dressed today in a red sport shirt --

Q I noticed it to be a white sport shirt.

MR. NESSEN: Earlier it was a red sport shirt. He must have changed his shirt.

I will let you give the pool report then. Earlier today he had on a red shirt and dark gray trousers.

He will see the Vice President for their regular weekly meeting at about noon and, immediately following that, he will see the Vice President, Jim Lynn and Jim Cannon for his regular weekly meeting with them.

Maybe we ought to stop at this point and ask John to give his pool report.

Why don't you get up at the podium and see how it feels.

John, my horoscope today says: "The more you ask, the more answers you are likely to obtain." So, ask a few questions.

MR. MASHEK: Helen said this was the first time that the press has seen the President since church services on Sunday.

MR. NESSEN: Is that an exact quote? (Pause)

Q Slow down, will you, John? (Laughter)

MR. MASHEK: Greenspan, Seidman, Cheney and Rumsfeld were up there with him. He said -- this is a quote -- "I am feeling much, much better. I am very encouraged. Doctors can do almost anything." (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: What did he mean by that?

MR. MASHEK: He said he watched the World Series up until the end of the 7th inning and he said, "It must have been an exciting 3 or 4 innings," meaning the wind-up of the game.

The pool thought his voice was a little husky and his eyes were still a little drawn, but he insisted that he felt much better.

He was asked if he felt better enough to sign some legislation that might help New York.

MR. NESSEN: Good question. Who asked that one?

MR. MASHEK: His words were that he did things not on how he felt but what the facts were, and the facts were that there was no indication of any change. He said that "they" -- referring to the leaders of New York City and New York State, I assume -- "must do what is necessary to meet the problem themselves."

MR. NESSEN: Oh, we have heard all that before, John.

MR. MASHEK: From Ron Nessen. (Laughter)

Q Would you repeat that again, please?

MR. MASHEK: He was asked about the New York Times story and he said, "I don't know where that rumor came from."

He was asked if he had heard from Dr. Kissinger in Peking and he said that he had one or two communiques daily from the Secretary. I didn't see this. Howard and Helen mentioned that he did have a folder in front of him.

Q It was a red folder Rumsfeld handed him and said it was the latest communique from Kissinger.

MR. MASHEK: He was asked about California next week and he said -- this is a quote -- "We haven't discussed plans beyond Saturday."

Q What was the question?

MR. MASHEK: If he was still planning to go to California next week, and he said, "We have not discussed plans beyond Saturday."

Q What was the date for the California trip?

MR. MASHEK: It has not been announced, I don't believe.

Q Good, John. Good.

MR. MASHEK: He said that he caught the cold after playing tennis Sunday and he said he was playing with some pretty competitive people. Leon Parma was one of the players; also Major Barrett and Dean Burch.

The President was wearing a blue blazer with white sport shirt and gray slacks.

Doesn't that jibe with what you said?

Q Ron says he changed clothes this morning.

Q Was he wearing his green socks today?

Q John, where was this?

MR. MASHEK: I don't know.

MR. NESSEN: Was he in the Study or was he at the end of the West Hall?

MR. MASHEK: The end of the West Hall.

MR. NESSEN: That is the family living room, really. It is the end of the long hall that runs the whole length of the upper level and it is at the end of that second floor closest to this wing and it is used as the family living room.

Q Did he ask you to do the Franco imitation?

MR. MASHEK: No.

Anything else?

MR. NESSEN: Thank you, John. Real good. That is good, John. Do you want to, by any chance, do this every day?

Q Could we put it to a vote?

MR. NESSEN: Well, you now have the President's own views on New York City which I am happy to say are the same as what I have told you they were. (Laughter)

Q Are you a little apprehensive that he might blurt out the truth or something?

MR. NESSEN: I can elaborate on a little bit of this.

Just to bring you up to date on the mail and telegraph count, between October 2 and October 22, which is today at 11 o'clock, those people who favor aid to New York City who have written or called or telegraphed number 1,659. Those who are opposed to aid to New York City number 1,970.

Q Did you say this includes telephone calls?

MR. NESSEN: Phone, mail and telegrams, right.

I have a sample of them here and since these people have not given permission to have their stuff read I won't tell you their names, but I think it is interesting that a couple of these -- and I don't pretend to tell you that this is -- not the phone calls, but telegrams and mail, I am sorry. Thank you, Larry.

You know, I don't mean to tell you that this is a trend or anything else, but it is interesting that some of the letters have come from people who live in New York City. A man who lives on Morton Street says that he lives in New York City:

"I was recently laid off from my teaching position during the latest financial blitz of this City. I am writing to express my support of your policy on no Federal aid to New York City. Although I have every reason to resent being laid off, I do not. Being involved in this irresponsibly run system it is high time that New York City bureaucrats be shown that incompetency does not go rewarded. I urge you to stand firm on this matter. If New York City is to survive -- and it will -- it will take the form of finally realizing that incompetent workers be dismissed and positions be filled with good, reputable workers," and so forth.

Q Are you reading that as something that is typical of the mail that is coming in?

MR. NESSEN: I said, I thought, a moment ago, that I was not; that I was just giving you an idea that there are people in New York City as well as elsewhere in the country who support the President.

Q What are people saying in the State of New York?

MR. NESSEN: I need to get a sample of those letters too; I don't have them.

There is another guy here who --

Q Let's see. That leaves 213,999,000 to go, doesn't it?

MR. NESSEN: A lady who lives on West 24th Street sends a telegram saying: "Thank you for understanding the plight of the people of New York City who work for a living. They know they must live within their means. The people who govern New York City should also manage the taxpayers' money so that they will have a balanced budget, not a default. Please hold fast and fight against aid for New York City."

Then other letters from elsewhere in the country -- Hollywood, California.

Q What does Ronnie have to say?

Q Is New York one of the topics for discussion in that meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think that they will bring the President just as quickly up to date on the standing of that.

Q Are you going to read the Hollywood letter?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I can read the Hollywood letter but I don't sense there is any burning interest in hearing it, but I will read it to you.

Q Just for balance. (Laughter)

Q Geographic balance.

MR. NESSEN: Larry, why don't you see if you can run quickly and get me a handful of pro aid to New York City letters so we can be absolutely fair about this, as we try to do.

Q Listen, I don't need this. If someone else does --

MR. NESSEN: Trudy was curious. It is kind of fun.

"I would be remiss in my duty if I didn't convey my feelings regarding the present New York City fiscal crisis and discussions of Federal aid to keep it from bankruptcy."

This is from Yucca Avenue in Hollywood, California.

"As a registered Democrat, I will guarantee you my vote in 1976 if you successfully resist all the pressure to bail out New York City. The reasons are obvious -- corruption and insane public employee pressures over the years come to mind immediately. We cannot subsidize irresponsibility, especially in government," and so forth.

Q Signed Sam Yorty. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Is it? No, it is not Sam Yorty.

Q John Wayne.

Q Mrs. Reagan says hello, too.

Q Ron, I don't understand where the rumor came from any more than the President does, but the Secretary of the Treasury, in the conference with the New York Congressional delegation yesterday, said point blank the President will sign any reasonable bill.

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen that but, as far as I know, Secretary Simon understands the President's position.

Q Which is?

Q Will he sign any reasonable bill?

MR. NESSEN: No, but I have some updated views by the President.

When I say that Simon understands the President's position, I don't mean to say that Simon, in what he said yesterday -- what you told me he said yesterday is reflecting the President's position. I find on this issue I have to be very careful with my words.

The President said this morning -- well, speaking of words I notice that somehow something I said yesterday gave somebody the idea that I was saying the President was not unhappy with the New York Times story. The fact is, the President was irritated by the New York Times story, was unhappy about the New York Times story because he said to me, "I never told anybody that." He said, "There was no indication by me to anybody in the Administration that I feel this way."

Q Could you go a little slower?

MR. NESSEN: "I never told anybody that," meaning what the New York Times reported yesterday a source told it.

Q I beg your pardon?

Q Could you read that again? "I never told anybody that" what?

MR. NESSEN: "I never told anybody that."

Q Then you went on after that.

MR. NESSEN: Then the second quote was, "There has been no indication by me to anyone that I feel that way."

Then, to reiterate for Bob, which he did again this morning and I guess did to the pool, he does not believe that any Federal legislation would be necessary if New York City and State will do the things they have the means to do to restore their fiscal responsibility of the City and thereby restore confidence to the investors who would buy their notes and bonds.

He says, "There is no legislation that I have seen or heard of that I would approve."

Q When you quote him as saying there has been --

MR. NESSEN: That is really a paraphrase, that last thing.

Q "No indication by me to anyone that I feel that way" is --

MR. NESSEN: The way the Times describes him as feeling.

Q As being willing to sign a bill if it had different conditions; is that what that reference is to?

MR. NESSEN: Well, whatever the Times story said.

Q Ron, that says there is no bill that he has seen or heard of that he would approve. Does that mean he would veto them?

MR. NESSEN: Well, let's not go the way we went yesterday.

Q Could such a law become law without his signature?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no change in his position and I don't see going through yesterday's exercise again.

Q Ron, excuse me, but we are not asking that at that point. We are just asking, does he mean that -- "I would approve" -- does that mean he would not approve and therefore would not accept any legislation?

MR. NESSEN: These are his words and I feel that it is my responsibility to give you his words.

Q Ron, has he decided to consider looking at it? Has he seen or heard of that?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he has heard of it, certainly.

Q And the Wilbur Mills idea, has he seen that?

MR. NESSEN: The Wilbur Mills idea he is also aware of, yes.

I said a moment ago that he was irritated by the story. The reason for the irritation is that he believes that it is terribly unfair for someone who is uninformed -- he believes the source is uninformed as to his views -- it is unfair for that uninformed person to give investors the hope that somehow there is going to be a free and easy way for them out or a free and easy way for their investments to be underwritten because there is not a free and easy way.

Q These are all paraphrased words of his?

MR. NESSEN: It takes hard work to solve this problem and hard decisions, and the President thinks it is too bad that the people who are working on these hard decisions of getting New York City back on a fiscally responsible basis should be diverted from their work by what he referred to as "the false anticipation of an easy solution." That is a quote.

Now the President used a little analogy when we were talking about this this morning and the analogy was not the wayward daughter but rather a man who has some important reason to get to the fifth floor of a building because there is something there that he badly needs to do. Now rather than start the hard climb up the five flights of stairs to get there, somebody has told him that if he just hangs around the lobby long enough there is going to be an elevator coming. Well, there is not going to be an elevator coming and the sooner he gets started climbing the five flights of stairs the sooner he is going to get to his important chores on the fifth floor.

Q Did the President give any indication during this conversation that he expects Congress to pass any kind of a bill? Did he say anything on that?

MR. NESSEN: His feeling is the same as I said yesterday, that he thinks there is a very large question that Congress will pass a bill.

Q Ron, were you just unaware of this irritation yesterday, or what?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't think he demonstrated the irritation yesterday that he did today.

Q I see.

MR. NESSEN: And also I mentioned to him that there had been several other stories in addition to the Times, including the one you mentioned to me yesterday -- CBS and Tom's last night, and Irving's story on NBC, and so forth. I think it was really the combination of all these stories which may or may not be based on the same source but which irritated him.

Let me make sure you understand. The irritation is based on his belief that the source is uninformed; that he never told anybody what the stories claim, and that he is irritated because the stories hold out this false anticipation which is diverting people from the hard work they need to do to solve the problem.

Q Ron, he just didn't realize the extent to which this story was going around, and that is why?

MR. NESSEN: Maybe that is it but he just didn't show the irritation.

Q Ron, is he irritated with the Vice President saying he is confident that there will be an elevator' -- (Laughter) -- which is really what he has said? He said he is confident that Congress will pass legislation that will save New York City.

MR. NESSEN: Well, he didn't specifically direct his remarks to anyone. I think you know basically where the President stands with his Administration policy and I think you know that the Vice President has a minimal difference with that policy.

Q Does he regard the Vice President as among the uninformed people?

MR. NESSEN: I would not think so, Peter.

Q Does he believe the stories or the staff who have been spreading these stories?

MR. NESSEN: No. You see, that is why I was trying to be careful in talking to Bob to say specifically what the irritation was.

Q So he is angry about the stories?

MR. NESSEN: No, he is not angry, for one thing.

Q He is irritated.

MR. NESSEN: He is irritated because, first of all, he never told anybody that. He believes the source is uninformed and mostly because it holds out the false anticipation.

Q Does he also believe that Secretary Simon is uninformed in what he is quoted to have said yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I certainly would like to see what the Secretary said because the Secretary knows the President's policy and has supported it.

Q Ron, isn't that a vital point? If the Secretary did say what he has been quoted here as saying, does that not lead all of us to the conclusion that the President might not veto a reasonable bill which is really the key to this whole discussion and one to which you have refused to address yourself until now?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think I have made clear the President's views as updated this morning.

I would like to do one other thing on the New York City matter and that is something that I had not done enough research on to answer yesterday, but it has to do with the column that somebody mentioned to me stating that Felix Rohatyn had called here at some point early on in last Friday's activities and said, you know, don't sweat it, Shanker is going to come to the rescue.

Well, as far as I can determine from talking to a lot of people, the report that he did is simply not true. The sequence of events were these -- that Bill Seidman was designated by the President as part of this monitoring team to keep up with the events of New York City and that at about 15 minutes after midnight -- early Friday morning, in other words -- Rohatyn called Seidman as part of this monitoring arrangement and Rohatyn said -- and this is a paraphrase -- it looks like the City will default tomorrow, it may well happen tomorrow because the teachers are refusing to go along with part of this package.

Bill Seidman said, "Are you absolutely certain? Is there any chance that they won't default?" And Rohatyn said, "It does not look to me like there is any chance but there is a meeting at 7 o'clock in the morning." That was the gist of the conversation.

As for any later indications that the Teachers Union pension fund might pick up the \$150 million in notes, as I told you, the President's first indication of that was from a piece of wire copy which I showed him. Bill Seidman says that his first notification was also the wire service story.

Seidman talked to Rohatyn several times during the day on Friday and in each conversation Rohatyn said, "The meeting is not over yet," and did not at any time say, you know, don't worry; the teachers are going to do it.

So that is that story.

Q Is that what the meeting is about over in the House now?

MR. NESSEN: It is a review of the current economic situation.

Q And not New York City?

MR. NESSEN: I would think that that would be part of it.

Q Ron, does the President believe that Vice President Rockefeller or somebody in his office was the source of the story in the New York Times?

MR. NESSEN: He said he did not know who the source was.

Q Ron, who initiated that conversation about the New York Times irritation? Did you or the President?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by the New York Times irritation.

Q Meaning the story that irritated the President.

MR. NESSEN: It is not the story that irritated the President and I hope we are clear about that.

Q The uninformed source.

MR. NESSEN: It is not the uninformed source. It is the false anticipation that the story held out that irritated the President.

Q Who initiated it?

MR. NESSEN: I did.

Q You initiated it?

MR. NESSEN: Now you want some pro New York City letters?

Let's just see how they go. I have not read them myself.

Here is one. It is a real nice postcard.

Q Ron, before you get into that, just to go back for a second to what the President --

MR. NESSEN: Just to be perfectly fair to the people we ought to find out those who favor the aid.

Q Will those include letters from outside of the State?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, they will.

Here is somebody from the Boxwood Press.

Q Boxwood where?

MR. NESSEN: Georgia.

Q Really?

Q Let's hear some.

MR. NESSEN: This is two people, it must be -- well, it is two people from College Point, New York: "We deplore your refusal heretofore to assist New York City in its efforts to avoid financial catastrophe. It is most urgent that Federal guarantees and moral support be provided. Financial default in New York will have severe adverse effects on municipal operations for all our Nation's cities and will be harmful to the total economic situation of our country and has, as you must be aware, caused great concern abroad. We urge you to come to the aid of New York and to give your urgent attention to the solution of urban problems throughout the United States."

This is a postcard written in red ink from a lady who lives on West 14th Street in New York.

"We simply cannot understand your disdainful dismissal of the greatest city in the world. Friends abroad are appalled. It is true we have a lot of foreigners living here but it was the decree of the Federal Government which funnelled them into New York and created this terrible drain on welfare and services. As Republicans we are dismayed by your irresponsible attitude considering how much has been done for inefficient and bankrupt private industries like Lockheed."

Q Ron, what instructions has the President sent to the Justice Department to take in the case involving the effort to have him appear as a witness in a televised deposition?

MR. NESSEN: Let me answer that but let me just say that Larry has handed me a note saying that the mail room people tell him that they have a hard time finding pro New York City mail from outside New York City and New York State. The mail room man says that a majority of the letters favoring aid to New York City are from New York City and State, but he does not have an accurate percentage.

Q Does that mean that the rest of the country does not care what happens? I mean, how do you interpret that?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, I think I will leave it to you to interpret that, Helen.

Q You know, your laughs and your smiles and so forth are spreading through the country and people are really wondering whether you are enjoying this plight.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, Helen, I am sure you don't believe for a minute that the President or anybody else -- why are you laughing?

Q I am just laughing because you are appearing on television quite often with your big grin and people are wondering.

MR. NESSEN: Have you ever seen my grin during a discussion on New York City?

Q Yes.

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Well, it certainly does not lack any lack of seriousness here at the White House about the seriousness of this situation.

The question is about the court order in Sacramento for the President to give a deposition by videotape in the case of Lynette Fromme. The answer to that is that the response to that order is being handled by the Justice Department.

Q The question was, what instructions did the White House give the Justice Department to take in a response?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I have seen, there have been no instructions sent from the White House.

Q They are acting strictly on their own without any direction from the President?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q Is the President going to do it?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think you need to talk to the Justice Department, Bob, about the response they are going to make to that order.

Q Well, when are they going to make it, and does the President have any objection to giving what he saw?

Q How will the President find out what he is supposed to do? Will they call him?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q I would like to ask why the President could possibly object to testifying in a criminal case, a very serious felony in which he was a material witness to a mere commission of a very serious crime?

MR. NESSEN: It is something you will have to talk to the Justice Department about.

Q I talked to the Justice Department on it and in response to that question they gave me three answers, and we discussed this last night.

One, it raises a difficult Constitutional issue; two, the President's appearance as a witness would disrupt the Nation's business and; three, they don't like the precedent of the President having to testify in other cases -- for example, a traffic accident in front of the White House.

This is not a traffic accident in front of the White House. This is a case where an attempt was made on the President's life and he was a material witness.

Now, what objection does he have to testifying in that case?

MR. NESSEN: Walt, off the record.

Q Ron, has the White House received any messages from local or State leaders in New Hampshire urging him not to enter the primary? And, two, is there any consideration underway here now to possibly not go into that primary?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of any such letters. Two, I have heard just in the course of casual conversation -- and it is an area I have not gotten into very much -- there is a feeling that the President's organization in New Hampshire is well along and well organized.

The third question was, is there any consideration of him not going in there? Not that I know of.

Q Ron, if in the course of the New Hampshire Presidential primary the President is asked to appear on a panel to discuss such things as the budget or other important things along with Governor Reagan, will the President be willing to do this or will he refuse?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of any such proposal.

Q I could get you one by tomorrow morning, Ron.

The question is, will the President appear with Ronald Reagan or not?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen any such proposal, Les, and I don't have an answer to the possibility.

Q Would it be possible for you to inquire because I think this would certainly be interesting to the country to see a discussion with Governor Reagan and President Ford. Don't you?

MR. NESSEN: I was not aware that he was a Presidential candidate.

Q Ron, in light of what the President said today, is there a possibility he will cancel California next week?

MR. NESSEN: At the moment, those plans have not been altered.

Q At the moment, is there any consideration of postponement?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, you announced a dinner with Sadat or for Sadat.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we have announced the full schedule for the Sadat visit.

Q Could we have it now, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: No, not to announce.

Q Ron, yesterday in Denver the Vice President was asked what the Administration position was on S. 1, the bill that codified the Criminal Code, and he said he didn't know what S. 1 was. What is the Administration position on that bill? Do you endorse that?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, the Attorney General has been up there testifying any number of times and has given the Administration position. We could get the transcript from Justice or from the Hill.

Q Is it your general understanding that you are in support of that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is something you can give a general understanding on. You would need to look at the testimony given by Administration witnesses.

Q Ron, would you be surprised if Callaway soon left his present post?

MR. NESSEN: I would be astounded.

Q Astounded?

MR. NESSEN: I would be dumb-struck, which is not a bad idea.

Q Dumb-struck?

Q Would you be surprised if Mary Louise Smith left her post?

MR. NESSEN: If who?

Q Mary Louise Smith?

MR. NESSEN: I would be surprised. (Laughter)

Q What was the question?

MR. NESSEN: Would I be surprised if Mary Louise Smith left her post?

Q Why, Ron? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I surprise easily.

That is a joke.

Q Would you check and see whether a senior American official traveling with Secretary Kissinger said that there would be no summit meeting with Brezhnev in Washington?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I have checked and the situation totally remains unchanged, which is that Secretary Kissinger said on the record he believes that SALT negotiations, the two or three remaining outstanding issues, can be resolved in the coming months, and that after that it would take -- in the next months, I believe, was the expression -- and that after that it would take about six weeks to work out the arrangements for the Brezhnev visit.

Q So that does postpone it beyond this year if you calculate by your timetable.

MR. NESSEN: Not necessarily.

Q Well, what do you mean? Six weeks to negotiate in the coming months? We only have two more months.

MR. NESSEN: Well, that is eight and two, which is ten weeks left.

Q Brezhnev is coming to Vail.

Q Is there any serious concern here about the Reagan threat in New Hampshire, or is Ford politically sort of sloughing that off? Is Reagan not taken very seriously in New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President was asked that at his last news conference and gave you his assessment of Reagan.

Q Well, I don't quite remember his answer being as a direct response to that question, and I want to know if the White House takes Reagan seriously as a threat in New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President said he expects to win the nomination and he expects to win the election.

Q Ron, if you can get ahold of what Kissinger said in China, could you find out what Simon said yesterday on the Hill?

MR. NESSEN: I would be interested in seeing it. Was it in a closed hearing?

Q It was in a meeting with the New York delegation.

MR. NESSEN: Open or closed?

Q One of our reporters was in there so it must have been open.

MR. NESSEN: Not necessarily. I would like to look.

Q It is important, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Well, in any case, I have told you what the President's policy is.

Q Ron, in that vein, can you tell us if you have ever asked the President his position on the veto?

MR. NESSEN: I have given you the President's position.

Q Have you specifically asked him or told him of all the inquiries that you get here about a veto, and have you asked him specifically if he would veto any legislation coming from the Hill at this point?

MR. NESSEN: I am reflecting to you his views at the moment.

Q Does that mean that the answer is yes?

MR. NESSEN: I don't hear that. I am telling you what I have said the past couple days. What I have always said, I hope, is an accurate reflection of the President's views.

Q Yes, but obviously some of your answers are not at least --

MR. NESSEN: As full as you would like them.

Q Exactly, and so I am just wondering whether you have ever asked him that question?

Q Ron, is the first time you have heard about what Simon is supposed to have said here this morning, in this briefing?

MR. NESSEN: As to what he is supposed to have said?

Q As to what Saul said that he said on the Hill yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: Somebody called me last night and said that the Newhouse papers had another source story similar to the four other source stories, and that is all I had heard until this morning, I think. I don't know whether they are the same two things.

Q The reason I am asking that question is that it seems to me that if the President is really unhappy that this uninformed source is giving false hope on New York that --

MR. NESSEN: Does anybody really know what Simon said?

Q As Secretary of the Treasury wouldn't he talk to Simon and say --

MR. NESSEN: What did Simon say? I don't see how we can talk about it without knowing what he said.

Q Is that something you are able to find out, what he said?

MR. NESSEN: Jack, I got so carried away that I may have lost your note. No, here it is.

The envelope, I may have an answer, and that would be a switch.

Can I use this word in front of a family audience?

Bill Simon has been spoken to by the Press Office a short time ago as to what he talked to the New York delegation about. Specifically as to Saul's report that Simon told the New York delegation that the President would sign legislation that came to him, Simon said that was -- (Laughter)

Q Spell it then if you can't pronounce it.

Q Was that defecation or fornication, Ron?

Q A little of both, Les.

MR. NESSEN: Bill Simon says they -- well, he says it is nonsense.

Q Aw.

Q Ron, why don't you let us see it and we'll pass the word around.

"They got my message loud and clear. I told them the President's position hasn't changed one iota. He is opposed to Federal aid to New York City. It is absolutely untrue that I even hinted that he would sign such legislation. They tried to raise some hypothetical proposals" -- that sounds familiar -- "and I told them they were wasting their time."

Q Has he talked to the President about this?

MR. NESSEN: He is in this 11:30 meeting.

Q Is he?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he was scheduled to be in it, wasn't he? Seidman, Greenspan, Simon I thought and Rumsfeld. You better check.

You could say that that was Simon's word relayed through the Press Office after a phone call.

Q Ron, you may as well tell us what he said because we would like to use it.

Q It is an earthy expression, an expletive.
(Laughter)

Q Is it an expletive deleted?

Q Ron, if the President was irritated by the New York Times story --

MR. NESSEN: He wasn't irritated --

Q I know.

MR. NESSEN: He was irritated that an informed source had held out false anticipation to the people who should be working hard to solve this problem.

Q Right. If that provoked his irritation, what did Vice President Rockefeller's minimal objection provoke? Was he not irritated? Was he just neutral or what?

MR. NESSEN: I think I have answered what the President's reaction was on this, Les.

Q He was not irritated at all at Vice President Rockefeller's minimal objection?

Q Ron, is the President irritated by these stories that draw the conclusion that he is carefully refraining from saying he would veto legislation?

MR. NESSEN: Would you say that again? (Laughter)
I need to be so careful.

Q Is the President also irritated by a number of news stories which have drawn the conclusion from your remarks and others that the President is carefully refraining from closing the door on legislation or from vowing to veto such legislation?

MR. NESSEN: We didn't specifically discuss those stories.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (12:20 P.M. EDT)