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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:17 P.M. EST

NOVEMBER 4, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Well, I am sorry. This is not a regular occurrence and I apologize for today.

We have two things to pass out that you have not already received, one is a statement by the President concerning the meeting he had this morning on the Government's consumer activities. Have we got that ready to go?

Secondly, I want to pass out to you a letter that the President has sent to Senator Church. He sent the letter on October 31 -- sent it to Senator Church and each of the members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Those members, in case you have forgotten, are Hart, Mondale, Huddleston, Morgan, Hart, Tower, Baker, Goldwater, Mathias and Schweiker.

Q What is this?

MR. NESSEN: It is the letter that bits and pieces of which have been leaked by somebody on the Hill and I thought it would be, in all fairness, proper for you to see the entire letter and the President's entire views on the matter.

Q Ron, why couldn't we have seen that last Saturday when the press was --

MR. NESSEN: What happened to the consumer statement?

MR. GREENER: It is being passed out.

Q Has he gotten an answer to this letter yet?

MR. NESSEN: He has not.

Q Ron, what about the report --

MR. NESSEN: The report? As I understand it, Mrs. Knauer is having a news conference at HEW. What time is that, John?

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MR. CARLSON: She is not. She is merely responding to questions and calls.

MR. NESSEN: She is not? She is responding to phone call queries.

Q Without having read the letter, and I apologize for that since we could not get it on Sunday, inasmuch as the President said that the Senate Committee was the appropriate place to investigate this issue and to make public whatever information should be made public, why is he now proposing that they do the opposite?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I don't agree with your characterization of what he is asking them to do and if you look back at what he said at his June 9 news conference, which is quoted here in the letter, as he says on Page 2, "It is not a question of withholding information that is required by the committee for both its investigative and legislative functions and it is not a question of withholding information needed for Justice Department investigation for possible prosecutions because that has been done and done in a very large way. You know how much information has been sent to the Church Committee. The White House has helped the Church Committee uncover documents and information. As the President says in his letter, there is a distinction between providing all the information needed to the Church Committee, all the information needed by the Justice Department, the Rockefeller Commission report, ordering the Rockefeller Commission report, undertaking a study leading up to both administrative and legislative changes in the way the intelligence community operates.

The question here is not providing the information because that has been done. The question is whether this information should be made available to potential adversaries in a way that -- or just simply made available around the world in a way that would be harmful to the security, harmful to foreign policy and, as the letter says, possibly endangering the lives of people.

Q But if this goes into a court of law, Ron, how will the President or anyone else prevent this information from being made public.

MR. NESSEN: Well, Peter, my understanding is what the Church Committee has done is to vote to send the entire matter to the Senate in a closed session of the Senate for the Senate to review these arguments made by the President.

Q No, no, you missed my point.

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry.

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Q The President says that there can be legislation if deemed necessary and prosecution if warranted.

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q In the event of a prosecution, how do you prevent this information from being --

MR. NESSEN: I am not that much of a lawyer to know how you do that, but I think it is important to keep in mind that there are really three separate things here. All the information has been given to people to carry out their investigative functions and there is also the question which he refers to in here of balance, and it is a difficult balance, but the President feels that he has more than fulfilled the requirements of Congress and of the Justice Department and it is simply a question of not harming security, foreign policy or the lives of individuals by publishing it.

The President has said that if there was a way to put this in the hands of every single American citizen, he would do it, but there is no way you can do that and keep it out of the hands of people who don't have the best interest of the United States at heart.

Q Is there a moral issue involved in this somewhere that if the United States Government really tried to assassinate foreign leaders the public should know about it?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, it is what I am talking about the balance. It is a very difficult balance between the right to know and the potential damage to security, foreign policy and the lives of individuals and the President feels that he has struck the best balance by giving all the information, making it available to the people who need to investigate, need to use the findings for legislative purposes and to the people who will investigate for possible prosecution.

Q What are the safeguards the President has set up that this will go on since there obviously does not seem to be much supervision of the CIA?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know why you say that.

Q Well, was not all this run-away or does the President agree that Presidents always gave their approval to these attempts?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has said before that he is not going to make a judgment on what happened before he had the responsibility.

Q Why not?

MR. NESSEN: I think he spelled that out. And I think you know that he has said firmly over and over and over again that as long as he is President he is not going to condone, approve or permit any kind of plans or assassination plans -- for assassinations or actual assassinations.

Q Ron, are any of the individuals to whom harm might be done if this information is disclosed still a member of the United States Government?

MR. NESSEN: Peter, I can't answer that question.

Q Because you don't know.

MR. NESSEN: Because I don't know.

Q Ron, a peripheral question. Is it a matter of public knowledge who leaked this letter on the Hill?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know who leaked it on the Hill.

Q Because you said it was leaked on the Hill.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I guess I really didn't answer Jim's question, which is why I didn't put this out on Saturday or Sunday or whatever day.

The letter was sent to the committee with the understanding, I guess, that it would be a private communication. After all, the committee was the one that had the responsibility for voting on this, but pieces of it did leak out and I think the pieces that leaked out didn't quite give the full explanation of the President's views, so today the President decided that he would like to have his full views on this matter understood and that is why he asked me to distribute it today.

Q Could I ask, Ron, if the President or the Secretary of State or anyone in the Administration has ordered an investigation of the news leaks relative to the re-shuffling of the President's staff?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Question?

MR. NESSEN: Walt is wondering whether there is going to be an investigation of the news leaks concerning the shuffling of the staff and my answer is no.

Q As a follow-up to that, was the President at all upset about the premature disclosures?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know if I would use the word upset.

Q What word?

MR. NESSEN: He planned to do it on a slightly different timetable -- speeded up a couple days.

Q Do you know how it got out?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't. He would have announced this on either Wednesday or Thursday of this week, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

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Q Would the Rockefeller announcement also have been put out at that time?

MR. NESSEN: No, that would have gone yesterday.

Q He would have fired Schlesinger on Sunday and not released it until Wednesday or Thursday; is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: No. I don't know frankly what his original timetable for talking to Schlesinger was but the announcement phase of it at least got moved up because of it.

Q Did the firing phase get moved up?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that.

Q Would you check that?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is Rumsfeld going to continue on here as Chief of Staff until he is confirmed, or is he going to go over to the Pentagon for some training before --

MR. NESSEN: The timetable is that his nomination was signed this morning by the President, as was Mr. Bush's, and that will then go on up to the Hill later today or tomorrow, and then there will be hearings, I suppose, and, as I understand it, Under (Deputy) Secretary Clements will be acting as the Defense Secretary until Don is confirmed.

Q Has Dick Cheney taken over already?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he has not moved into the corner office yet.

Q I mean, is he officially the White House Chief of Staff?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check out on the legal status of everybody. I don't know what that is.

Q What about Schlesinger? He is not there any more?

MR. NESSEN: You have to check precisely when he is going to be leaving, Bob. My understanding is that he will be leaving -- I mean, he will be going on whatever leave period he has one day this week and then will continue to have the title of Secretary until Don is confirmed and sworn in.

Q In answering Rudy's question, does that mean Rumsfeld will be here until he gets confirmed?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that. He is here today but I will have to find out what his status is.

Q What happens to Colby now and how are you going to handle the continuing Congressional investigation?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President said last night that he would continue to carry out the President's orders in terms of being cooperative with the committee and obviously he would serve there until Mr. Bush comes back and is confirmed.

Q Has the President indicated that the President may feel that the Congressional investigation of the CIA may have gone far enough?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see that in this letter. He understands their responsibility and has cooperated fully with the investigation.

Q Colby will remain Director?

Q Is Clements running the department now? Is that right?

MR. NESSEN: After the departure of Mr. Schlesinger and before the arrival of Don Rumsfeld --

Q Which will be some time this week?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is it will be.

Q What about Clements? Is he going to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that he will.

Q What about Colby? Will he be running the CIA until Bush is confirmed?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, yes.

Q So that is different than the Pentagon operation. In one case Schlesinger retains the title, but does not function, but Colby retains the title and continues to function.

MR. NESSEN: I am going to check on Bill Colby's status but, as I understand it, that is Jim Schlesinger's preference.

Q Schlesinger refused to stay on as Defense Secretary under these circumstances; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: That is the first I have ever heard.

Q You just said, though --

MR. NESSEN: I said it is his preference to go on a leave -- period.

Q Did the President ask him to stay?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that. I don't know.

Q When is Bush coming home? Do you have any idea?

MR. NESSEN: That is somewhat up in the air because of the China trip.

Q After the President visits China?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure whether he is coming back before or after.

Q Ron, there is some confusion or uncertainty about the China trip, the length of it. Could you give us some status of it right now?

MR. NESSEN: The status of it right now is that the President is looking forward to his visit to Peking, he is anticipating the trip this year, and the planning for the trip is going on and as soon as we have completed the detailed arrangements we will make an announcement on it.

Q Ron, did I understand you to say that it is possible at least that Ambassador Bush will come home before the China trip of the President and that the President will go to China?

MR. NESSEN: I never got a firm answer on that this morning. I was looking into it and never was able to tie it up.

Q The snafu on the advance team, has that been resolved and has the advance team left yet?

MR. NESSEN: The advance team has not left yet, as I understand it.

Q Why were they pulled off the plane?

Q Have there been some changes in the last 48 hours or so on the planning for the China trip?

MR. NESSEN: No, the planning continues.

Q Or in the tentative schedule that you had been working toward?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any changes, Tom.

Q Do you still anticipate the trip?

MR. NESSEN: This year the President anticipates going and expects to go.

Q In November, the beginning of December?

MR. NESSEN: I have heard of no change in that timetable.

Q Why was it stopped yesterday? Why were they stopped from going?

MR. NESSEN: I am told that there was some kind of mix-up as to when they were supposed to go but that basically there are a lot of scheduling and other technical issues which are worked on and I don't know what all of them are myself, actually.

Q Have actual dates for the China trip been set but just have not been announced yet?

MR. NESSEN: No. Secretary Kissinger gave a kind of a rough couple of days period when he expected it to start.

Q And that you still expect to --

MR. NESSEN: I have heard of no change in that.

Q Is the advance team going to other countries as well?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to announce on any other countries.

Q When were Mr. Schlesinger and Mr. Colby told that they were being let go?

MR. NESSEN: I think most people know that the President saw Bill Colby on Sunday morning at about 8:00 and Secretary Schlesinger on Sunday morning at about 8:30.

Q Is that the first they heard that they had been --

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q What kind of a mix-up was it that you described on the China trip? You say there was a mix-up. What kind of a mix-up?

MR. NESSEN: I am just not clear on all those details. I have not gotten into the advance party stuff very much.

Q Ron, can you tell us when you expect the advance team to leave?

MR. NESSEN: Before too long, I would expect, we will have something for you.

Q Ron, isn't the problem that we have not heard back from the Chinese on whether our proposed dates are acceptable? Isn't that the problem?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there is just a lot of scheduling and technical issues that are being worked on, Tommy.

Q Have we heard from the Chinese? Have the Chinese signed off on this trip?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check and find out. I don't know.

Q May I put the question this way: Is the Chinese trip in jeopardy?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the President anticipates and expects to go to Peking.

Q So that means no, the Chinese trip is not in jeopardy?

MR. NESSEN: I have heard of no change in plans.

Q Ron, will you tell us when the President first found out from the Vice President that the Vice President did not intend to run in 1976?

MR. NESSEN: Last Tuesday there was a regular weekly meeting with the Vice President and I think Bill Greener has the times. I think it was in the afternoon at some point but that was the time that the Vice President first told him.

Q Ron, did the President think about it or accept it right then? I mean, why the gap between Tuesday and the letter being made available?

MR. NESSEN: I was not in on that meeting and I don't know the exact nature of the discussion.

Q Did they discuss the issue before then, without specifics, as to actual resignation?

MR. NESSEN: I talked to the Vice President this morning and he told me that that was the first time that he had mentioned it to the President.

Q Was it mentioned as a categorical fact or was it mentioned as a subject for discussion, or do you know?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that he informed the President then that he intended to take this course.

Q Ron, what is your understanding of the President's reply? Did the President ask him to think about it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have that.

Q When did this happen?

MR. NESSEN: Last Tuesday, a week ago today.

Q Ron, have you accepted a position with NBC or any other outside firm?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Do you know of something open? (Laughter)

Q Are you looking?

Q Make him an offer.

MR. NESSEN: Would you see me later if you know of something?

Q You could come back to us, Ron, if you like.

MR. NESSEN: What, to the Episcopal Church?

Q No, no, WAVA news. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: The meeting last week between the President and the Vice President in which the Vice President said he first mentioned this to the President was on Tuesday between 4:40 and 5:45 in the afternoon.

Are you checking out Bill Colby?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

MR. NESSEN: What was the other question we had?

Q Ron, at that point that they met between 4:40 and 5:45 last Tuesday, had the President showed the Vice President the text of his speech before the Press Club or an outline thereof?

MR. NESSEN: When was the speech before the Press Club?

Q Wednesday.

MR. NESSEN: The next day?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I didn't ask that.

Q The speech had been announced at that time, Ron; the subject matter had already been announced.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether he showed him the speech.

Q Rumsfeld had by that time already seen a draft.

MR. NESSEN: No. Wait a minute now, I remember this. They did not discuss the speech at that meeting but the Vice President had been informed ahead of time that he was going to make that proposal at the speech.

Q Had he been consulted as to the contents of the speech prior to it being made?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how you would describe that. He had been told what the President was going to say.

Q Did he know specifically about the remarks about New York City, State officials and New York bankers?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether he saw the text or not. He was told what the proposal would be.

Q Ron, when did George Bush know that he was coming back?

MR. NESSEN: What?

Q When did George Bush know that he was being named by the President to another post?

MR. NESSEN: Toward the end of last week or over the weekend.

Q When Bush was here on his last visit he did say that he expected to be back here following the China trip and before the end of this year. Is it possible that he knew before that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so.

Q Ron, would you be dumbfounded if Rogers Morton wound up at the President Ford Committee in one capacity or another?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I would be dumbfounded if he was not anything but Secretary of Commerce into the new year, and after that I think the President's statement last night said that Rog had offered to be of assistance.

Q So that is a yes?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q On the matter concerning Mrs. Knauer, it was supposed to be a White House effort to head off consumer legislation on Capitol Hill. I am just puzzled to know why we are not getting the report, why the White House is making a big thing about what action you are taking to head off that legislation?

MR. NESSEN: Why can't they get the report from Virginia Knauer?

MR. CARLSON: Report?

MR. NESSEN: Is there a report?

MR. CARLSON: It was just an update on the status of the various plans.

MR. NESSEN: That was the purpose of the meeting, to give an oral report?

MR. CARLSON: Yes.

Q Ron, have you heard anything about plans for Rogers Morton replacing Bo Callaway at any point in the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, could you clarify the Tuesday business? When was the Vice President told about the President's Press Club speech?

MR. NESSEN: They had discussed it before Tuesday. They didn't talk about New York City at that meeting but he knew ahead of time that the President was going to make the speech and a general outline of what he was going to say.

Q Before Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q On Monday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know when it was but before the speech.

Q Did they spend that whole meeting discussing Rockefeller's pending departure?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q Is General Graham leaving as head of the DIA and is General Allen leaving as Director of the National Security Agency?

MR. NESSEN: Well, whether General Graham is leaving or not you will have to find out from the Pentagon. I can tell you that if he is leaving, and I don't know that he is, he is not leaving through any instigation from the White House, but I don't know whether he is leaving or not. You have to get that from the Pentagon. If he is, it didn't come from here.

The Lou Allen thing, I have never heard of him leaving except what I read in the paper.

Q Ron, with the President now replacing these Cabinet members there is only one that stays in and that is Agriculture Secretary Butz. What is his status?

MR. NESSEN: A member of the Cabinet.

Q Will he remain there until next year, through the election?

MR. NESSEN: I have every expectation that he will.

Q Ron, would you be dumbfounded if he --

MR. NESSEN: I would be dumbfounded if he didn't.

Q Ron, in your talk with Vice President Rockefeller or with the President, what reasons have you heard for the decision of Mr. Rockefeller not to be a candidate?

MR. NESSEN: Well, other than the reasons stated in the letter, I think you need to talk to the Vice President.

Q What reasons are stated in the letter?

MR. NESSEN: You have the letter, Phil.

Q There are no reasons stated.

MR. NESSEN: If there are not sufficient reasons in your view, I think you need to talk to the Vice President. I should not speak for the Vice President.

Q Ron, to follow up on that, has the President requested or instructed Vice President Rockefeller to make no public statements?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard anything like that.

Q Ron, will the Vice President continue to preside at these district meetings?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President made very clear last night, and I have heard him make the same point in private conversation, that he is highly pleased with the --

Q That is not the answer.

MR. NESSEN: Well, let me finish my answer, Sarah.

Q Well, may I finish my question?

MR. NESSEN: Well, go ahead and finish your question.

Q My question was, will Mr. Rockefeller continue to preside at the regional meetings of the Domestic Council which are going to be held between now and the first part of December?

MR. NESSEN: Those meetings that he is scheduled to preside at he will preside at and the President is pleased -- extremely pleased -- with his performance as Vice President and is pleased that he will have these talents and experience of the Vice President until January of 1977.

Q Will he also continue actively as Chairman of the Commission on Productivity?

MR. NESSEN: He will continue actively at all the jobs he has now and the President is pleased that he will.

Q Does he regret the Vice President's withdrawal?

MR. NESSEN: He said last night that he accepted it, Phil.

Q Did the President regret it?

MR. NESSEN: You are asking the same question. He didn't answer it so how can I answer it? (Laughter)

Q Ron, the Vice President has been giving some press conferences at these regional meetings. Will he continue to do those?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to ask him, Sarah. I have no idea.

Q Was he so highly pleased with the way the Vice President is performing his duty that he attempted over this past week to argue the Vice President out of his decision?

MR. NESSEN: I think he said -- you know, he answered that question last night, too, Eric.

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Q Ron, you know we are in a situation now where the Vice President of the United States is not pursuing his political career, is bowing out, and nothing is said in the way of regret, that he liked his performance very much, and no reason has been given. There is a big gap in the story and that is why is Rockefeller leaving? Is he leaving because he has been a bone that has been thrown to the Reagan forces or is it New York, or what?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, the President and the Vice President both know and have both stated firmly, because it is the fact, that this was at the initiative of the Vice President.

Q Yes, but why?

MR. NESSEN: The letter speaks for itself, and the President and the Vice President have a complete understanding on the letter.

Now, as I said to Phil, if you feel that there is further reason that you want to explore, you need to do it with the Vice President.

Q Can you say whether Rockefeller told Ford the reason why he is leaving?

MR. NESSEN: The reason stated in the letter is what they talked about.

Q It took them an hour and five minutes to go over that letter?

MR. NESSEN: They discussed the matter.

Q Ron, the understanding that you are talking about -- and I speak only from the President's standpoint -- does part of that understanding include the political reality that Nelson Rockefeller was a liability in 1976?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how to answer that question, Phil. I think the President has stated his views, the Vice President has, the letter is public. I don't see what I can do further.

Q Ron, when are the new arrangements or the new organization of the President's working schedule going to go into effect?

MR. NESSEN: They have not been worked out yet.

Q Ron, going back to the Tuesday meeting a week ago, did Rockefeller come in and tell the President he had made an irrevocable decision or did he come in and say, "Mr. President, I am thinking about giving you a letter that I will drop out as a candidate?"

Did he solicit the President's views on that or did he present the President with a fait accompli?

MR. NESSEN: John, it was a private meeting which I obviously didn't attend but the Vice President said today that that is when he told the President his decision. You know, I think you really need to sit down and ask the Vice President some of these questions.

Q Had the Vice President prior to that meeting informed the President that he was thinking of taking this course of action?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q The Vice President and the President -- were there others present at that meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No, there were not.

As I think you know, Lou, they often discuss Domestic Council business in those regular weekly meetings and Jim Lynn and Jim Cannon attend but they were not at this meeting.

Q What kind of reaction are you getting to the President's action?

MR. NESSEN: Well, at the bipartisan leadership meeting last night Member after Member around the table of both parties said, okay, we will support you, you are the President, you pick whoever you want as your close team and we will go along with you. I don't think it is any secret that Bob Byrd raised some of his thoughts about Jim Schlesinger leaving but he was truly the only one around the table who expressed any reservations, and the rest of it, including the Speaker and Phil Burton and others expressed support.

This morning at the Republican leaders meeting it was not discussed.

Q What about public reaction, telegrams, telephone calls?

MR. NESSEN: I have not checked this morning, Ted.

Q Ron, can we go back to the President's letter to the Church Committee?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Can you explain why the President thought this should be totally secret in view of the stand he was taking that it was of some importance to the American people?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he quoted in the letter his June 9 news conference when he said he knew that Members of Congress would exercise utmost prudence in the handling of this information. I mean, the President has done --

Q It is the President's stand that we are talking about, the President's expression of his view that the information should not be made public. Why should that in itself be a secret?

MR. NESSEN: It is not a secret. You have got the letter in front of you.

Q We have it now but he had planned not to make it public.

MR. NESSEN: He wanted to explain his views to the Church Committee which has the responsibility for this.

Q Does he also want to put pressure on the Senate now?

MR. NESSEN: I think he will certainly send a similar letter to all the Members of the Senate.

Q Ron, last night the President said in answer to Pete Lisagor's question that he was not afraid of anybody -- he said it with great cheer and verve and ebullience and so forth. Now will he accept the invitation from WLNH to debate Reagan in New Hampshire or not, if he is not afraid of anybody?

MR. NESSEN: As two Presidential candidates?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't know that Reagan was a Presidential candidate.

Q In the event, Ron. If he is not afraid of anybody, that was the question. That certainly included Reagan, didn't it?

Q Ron, did the President ask Mr. Colby if he would want to be NATO Ambassador? Did he ask Mr. Schlesinger if he would be interested in being Director of the Export-Import Bank?

MR. NESSEN: He offered both of them other high positions in the Administration.

Q Were these the positions or other positions that you are not going to say?

MR. NESSEN: No, that sounds right to me.

Q What did they do, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: They respectfully declined.

Q Could I just follow that up? Were they not given the usual graceful opportunity to resign?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean.

Q Well, were they given the opportunity that is usually done -- to submit resignations and have their resignations accepted instead of being fired?

MR. NESSEN: Well, that is the way it is being done. They are going to submit their resignations and they will be accepted.

Obviously the meetings were very private meetings between the two people involved but afterward I did hear that both meetings had been very cordial. (Laughter)

They were.

Q Smile when you say that.

Q Were they charitable?

Q Were they friendly?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, they were friendly.

Frank.

Q Secretary Kissinger wearing his one hat, will he continue to have his morning hour with the President?

MR. NESSEN: The President indicated last night in general terms that the procedures in the national security area are going to be revised and that is one of the matters that will be decided in the revision.

Q A final question on another subject, if I might.

MR. NESSEN: How do you know it is the final question?

Q Because everybody is getting antsy.

Q Don't make a speech, Wally. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Do you want to know why the President felt happy and ebullient today?

Q Why?

Q Is there anything new about a Ford meeting with Asad?

MR. NESSEN: No, there is nothing new on it.

Q Ron, will Dick Cheney be the White House liaison with the Election Committee or is somebody else going to take over that part of Rumsfeld's job?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he has been and I don't think we have simply moved that far yet into who is going to be doing that.

Q Who is going to replace Packard with the committee now on fund raising?

MR. NESSEN: Who is going to take Packard's place?

Q Has Packard already left and who is taking his place on fund raising? Surely they won't leave that --

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you ask Peter Kaye. They have their own press secretary over there now.

Q But I am asking you.

MR. NESSEN: But I don't know. Why don't you go to where the information is?

Q It is not Peter Kaye's decision.

MR. NESSEN: Peter Kaye is the press secretary, Helen.

Q I am asking you.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Ron, going back to Cheney, there have been no questions about him last night or today? Is the man capable of taking over those big shoes of Rumsfeld?

MR. NESSEN: You bet he is, and the President would not have given him the job if he didn't think he was going to do it.

Q Could you have Cheney come out and submit to questions?

MR. NESSEN: He has been, I think you know, the deputy of Don Rumsfeld almost from the beginning, and under the deputy system at the White House he has been completely interchangeable with Don Rumsfeld. They do the same work. They have equal access to the President. They speak with equal authority both in terms of bringing information to the President and taking information out from the President and parceling it out.

The President feels that Dick has performed this job brilliantly and the President has every confidence that he is the best qualified person he can find to take this job of coordinating the White House staff activity.

Q Ron, will you bring him out here for questioning?

MR. NESSEN: I will certainly ask him.

The Sadat meeting tomorrow, I understand, has been moved to 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Q Will we get a communique afterwards?

MR. NESSEN: You will get some information afterwards.

Q Are we going to get Packard's letter of resignation?

MR. NESSEN: Not today.

Q Are we going to ever get it, is the question?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:54 P.M. EST)