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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:38 A.M. EST

NOVEMBER 5, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Just to anticipate your questions, the President is gratified that in local elections throughout the country yesterday Republican candidates made strong showings and in many cases won upset victories in previously-held Democratic offices. Where Republicans trail in incomplete returns, such as Mississippi's Governor's race, the Republican candidate, Gil Carmichael, won a remarkable total of votes in a State which has always been strongly Democratic.

There is also encouraging evidence of a return to the two-party system by voters in New Jersey, where Republican candidates made significant gains in the State Legislature.

Quotation. from the President: "Although most of yesterday's elections primarily involved local issues and the results in Republican versus Democratic contests were mixed, I think it is a fair conclusion from this sampling that the Republican Party is alive and well all across the country."

Q Does the President attribute the loss of the Republican candidate of the Governor of Kentucky to his own decision not to go out there and campaign for him?

MR. NESSEN: No, he does not.

Q Did he make any personal phone calls to any of the winners?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q Are there any other races other than the losing race in Mississippi that the President was particularly happy about?

MR. NESSEN: What? (Laughter)

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Well, he thought that it was interesting -- I mean among the things that he reviewed that led him to have this reaction were in Connecticut, for instances, the incumbent Mayor of Stamford was defeated by a Republican. Sixty-four towns in Connecticut elected Republican Governors which was a gain of four --

Q Republican Governors?

MR. NESSEN: Mayors, of 64 towns. Sixty-four towns elected Republican Governors (Mayors) which is a gain of four -- Mayors.

Q Where, in Connecticut?

Q A gain of what?

MR. NESSEN: Four.

Q Do you happen to know if 64 out of how many what that count is?

MR. NESSEN: I don't.

In Indiana, the President was especially impressed with the election of former Congressman Bill Hudnut to be Mayor of Indianapolis, a margin of 12,000 votes which the President was impressed with and also the Republican Mayor of Evansville, Indiana, named Russell Lloyd was re-elected.

The President felt that the election of five Republicans to be the Mayors in Ohio -- some of the largest cities in Ohio, namely Cleveland, Youngstown, Canton, Akron and Columbus -- all elected Republican Mayors which the President felt was impressive. He mentions in his statement the very big turn-over in the State Legislature of New Jersey, a pick-up of -- well, the results are not all final yet, but it should be a pick-up by Republicans, a gain of 15 to 17 seats in the State Assembly of New Jersey.

Q Do you happen to have that breakdown, what the total is?

MR. NESSEN: There are 80 seats in the Assembly of New Jersey.

Q I mean Republicans and how many Democrats were elected.

MR. NESSEN: Well, the Republicans will end up with somewhere around 30 to 31 seats, which is double what they had before, I might say.

Q Does the President believe this trend portends anything for his own election or Republican chances next year?

MR. NESSEN: Well, as he says, the Republican Party is alive and well.

Q Did he see anything in the busing issue in terms of the electorate?

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

Q In Boston and Louisville.

MR. NESSEN: He didn't mention that.

Q Ron, does he see the Republican candidate running third in a field of three behind an independent in Philadelphia as a reflection on the big city problem?

MR. NESSEN: He didn't mention that.

Among the other things that led him to express his gratitude for the strong showing of Republicans was the election of Bruce Chapman to be Secretary of State in Washington State. He had been expected to lose so this was an upset by a Republican there.

Those are about all the returns he has seen up to this point.

Q Does the President see any significance or any message in two other things -- one is the election of two women as Lieutenant Governors yesterday and the other is the rejection in a number of States and communities of big bond issues?

MR. NESSEN: Well, on the women question, I didn't talk to him about that but, obviously, he strongly supports --

Q Women.

MR. NESSEN: Women. (Laughter)

He has one as the Republican National Chairman, as you know.

Q And he married one.

MR. NESSEN: And he also married one and one is his daughter, too.

The question of the rejection of the bond issues -- all the results of those bond issue referenda are not in although it is pretty clear that more, in fact quite a lot more of the bond issues were rejected than were approved. It would seem from this that the voters simply indicated that they are looking carefully at the financial management of their community or their State, that they want to be careful about the kind of debt they run up with the New York example looming over them, that they don't want to have their taxes raised in future years to pay for these bonds.

It seems that they have decided that this is not the proper time to commit their State or municipality to new borrowing commitments and it would appear that the New York example has had an effect elsewhere in the country.

Q Ron, isn't that negating to some extent what you and the President have been saying about the New York City situation not having any effect on municipal bonds sales?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so.

Q Ron, our friends at CBS have been advertising around the country the last two hours that they polled certain number of people and they found it overwhelmingly in favor of giving aid to New York. Does the President have any comment on that?

MR. NESSEN: The only feeling here is some desire to see how the questions were worded and a more careful analysis of the results before commenting on that. I thought it was interesting--I am sure most of you have read the New York Times this morning and the New York Times, which is a very strong advocate of Federal aid to New York City, nevertheless said New York City has not yet done all it could and must to help itself and then it lists about five different points that it finds in which the budget of the City of New York has not been cut but as a matter of fact has been raised. The New York Times points out that the proposed expense budget for the coming fiscal year is actually higher than last year's budget, that revenue estimates, by the New York Times view, have once again been overstated, that a surplus shown is what the Times calls the kind of gimmickry that has helped reduce the city to its current condition.

The New York Times finds that the revenue estimates are overstated and that the spending estimates are understated and the New York Times concludes that the city's actions still fall far short of the demands imposed by its crisis. They call on the city to tailor a budget more realistic to meet the contingencies that could worsen the city's almost perilous condition so the White House is not alone in saying that New York can do a great deal more for itself.

Q Ron, does the White House similarly endorse the sentiments and the editorial adjacent to that one on the fortress --

MR. NESSEN: The what?

Q The one about the fortress mentality?

Q Question.

MR. NESSEN: The fortress mentality?

No, but I have another one here from the Washington Post.

Q What was the question?

Q Is the President happy that these new bonds have been turned down around the country for building schools and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: I would not say happy, Helen. I think the reaction is what I said to you, which is that clearly people all over the country have seen a lesson in New York City which is that they cannot continue to load themselves and their States and their municipalities up with borrowing which has to be paid for; that people clearly want to manage their cities and States in a more fiscally responsible manner.

Q Oh, so it does have a ripple effect?

Q That is a very broad brush that you are using to paint over all the rejection of the bonds -- you think that this was a demonstration all over the country that people have just lost faith in the cities to manage their fiscal affairs?

MR. NESSEN: No, I say that people are concerned about managing their affairs more responsibly.

Q Does he see this as a ratification of the New York policy that he has followed this rejection of these bond issues?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, the Mayor of New York is in town today. The Governor of New York will be in town tomorrow. Did either of them request to see the President about the fiscal crisis?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Ron, can we shift a minute?

MR. NESSEN: Do you want a little trivia on New York City?

Q Sure.

MR. NESSEN: Here is a front page of the -- no, it is not the bond buyer today, it is the Tallahassee Sun Democrat of December 11, 1932. It shows a picture of Governor Franklin Roosevelt saying New York City's finances temporarily were saved when President-elect Roosevelt rushed from a winter vacation at Warm Springs, Georgia into a conference at his New York residence with bankers and city officials.

An agreement to pare \$20 million from the city budget -- most of them salaries -- brought aid from the banking group and prevented the city from defaulting on \$40 million indebtedness. At the left is Winthrop Aldridge, banker, who conducted the negotiations for his group.

Q What happened to the employees?

Q And Jerry Ford?

Q Herbert Hoover?

MR. NESSEN: This is Governor Roosevelt as he arrived from Georgia and this is the comptroller as he arrived --

Q Ron, how did you get that? That is an intriguing thing. What is your source for that?

MR. NESSEN: I just keep up with every little thing. (Laughter)

Q I was just wondering, if I could ask this, what was the President's reaction to Senator Church's description of Dr. Kissinger as Prime Minister of the United States?

MR. NESSEN: On Senator Church's comments concerning the CIA and George Bush, I think I ought to let you know what the President's feelings about that were.

Q That was my next question.

MR. NESSEN: As I understand it, there were two aspects to Senator Church's charges and he appears to be more interested in headlines than in conducting an investigation.

Q Is that the President saying that?

MR. NESSEN: No, that is me. That is the political Press Secretary.

Q We need the President's.

MR. NESSEN: The President's view is that -- first on the subject of George Bush serving as head of the CIA after, at one point in his career, I believe, serving as Republican National Chairman -- George Bush has experience as a UN Ambassador for which he was confirmed unanimously by the Senate and he has experience as Representative in the People's Republic of China. In addition, he has service in the Congress and he has a distinguished military record. He is also a close friend of the President's. He is respected, liked and trusted by the President.

The President believes he will do an outstanding job at the CIA. The President also believes that the fact that he has run for public office before will tend to make him more sensitive to public interests and public desires and, as I have seen written a number of times, there has been a desire expressed publicly by some that someone from outside the intelligence community take this job and --

Q Is that your view or the President's?

MR. NESSEN: All this is the President's view.

Q You mean even the more interest in seeking headlines? That was yours.

MR. NESSEN: That was mine.

Q Then what was the President's reaction to the Prime Minister?

Q Continue.

MR. NESSEN: The second aspect, continuing, clearly service as an official of a political party does not and should not disqualify someone for higher public service. I suppose if it did Scoop Jackson would, I suppose, have to think about his service.

Q Is he running for the CIA?

MR. NESSEN: I thought he was a United States Senator.

Q Is he running for the CIA? That is what we are talking about.

MR. NESSEN: But it does not appear to disqualify a man for higher public service.

Q Would it not be less appropriate for a Director of the Central Intelligence Agency to have in mind a continuing political future while at the agency?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what George's views on his future are but the President certainly believes that he is the best man for this job.

On the other aspect of Church's remarks which are that the appointment of Bush and the retirement of Bill Colby will somehow hamper his investigation, is simply not true. I think some of you know that Bill Colby is in this morning talking to the President. The President wishes him to stay on at this CIA position until such time as George Bush is confirmed, and I believe that will happen but --

Q Is that what he asked him today?

MR. NESSEN: They are meeting now on that subject.

Q Had Colby planned to leave this week? Isn't that true?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that was ever really quite arranged as to when he would leave.

Q Ron, was this an afterthought?

MR. NESSEN: Was what an afterthought?

Q Asking him to stay on? Why didn't he take it up with him at the time he informed him of his decision?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't know Bill, but anyhow it is a matter that will be decided today, but however it comes out it is not going to affect the Church Committee investigation because Colby will be available to testify presumably continuing as CIA Director but, if not, certainly as a private citizen just as people like John McCone, private citizen, has testified. It certainly will not hamper the procedures for obtaining all the documents they need.

The President, as he said the other night, will give George Bush the exact instructions that he gave Bill Colby and everybody else in the Government, which is to fully cooperate with the Congressional investigations and fully cooperate with the Justice Department. So Frank Church is wrong. It will not in any way disrupt his investigation.

Q Ron, does the appointment of George Bush to the CIA mean that his political future for 1976 is at least out, that the President has removed him from all considerations for Vice Presidential possibilities?

MR. NESSEN: You know, the President the other night said that it is much too soon to think about 1976.

Q Does the President feel that it is much too soon to consider whether or not the next CIA Director should be removed from any consideration?

MR. NESSEN: Is he under consideration, Phil?

Q I said does he feel that he should not be?

Q The President won't say whether he is under consideration.

MR. NESSEN: For what?

Q Vice President.

MR. NESSEN: Nobody is under consideration at the moment, as the President said the other night.

Q There are people who are not under consideration. Which ones are those?

Q Does the President feel that Mr. Bush specifically should say that he is not interested and would not want the Vice Presidency himself?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, you know, whatever consideration these burning issues may get out there, they have not gotten any consideration here.

As the Washington Post said today --

Q Let's have a little more on Colby. What time did he come in? Was he requested to come in specifically by the President so the President could ask him if he would stay on? Is the meeting over?

MR. NESSEN: The meeting is just over at 11:45.

Q Did Colby say he would stay?

MR. NESSEN: Colby at the President's request has agreed to remain as Director of the CIA until a successor is confirmed and qualified. During that period he will have the full authority that he has always had at the agency.

The meeting lasted from 11:30 to 11:45.

I said yesterday I thought that was what was going to happen but I would have to check.

Q Would you request that?

MR. NESSEN: Colby at the President's request has agreed to remain as Director of the CIA until a successor is confirmed and qualified.

Q What does that mean, "and qualified"?

MR. NESSEN: It is a legal term that has to do with when they take their oath and so forth.

Q What was your next sentence?

MR. NESSEN: During that period he will have the full authority that he has always had at the agency.

Q Ron, you chose the word "retirement" in mentioning Colby earlier. He was not asked to resign? That is the word -- that he retired.

MR. NESSEN: No, I meant retire from his present job.

Q Who else attended that meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Just the two, as far as I know.

Q Does Church's statement about Bush which included, as I understand it, a statement that he was not going to support him for confirmation at this point -- does this concern the President that Bush may not be confirmed?

MR. NESSEN: No, the President thinks George will be overwhelmingly confirmed. He was confirmed unanimously for UN Ambassador, another important job.

Q What is the status of General Walters as Deputy? Is he going to be asked to remain or to leave?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard anything other than that he is remaining.

Q How about a deputy for Scowcroft? Will it be William Highland?

MR. NESSEN: I have nothing on a deputy for Brent at this time.

Q Ron, will General Scowcroft resign his commission?

MR. NESSEN: He has asked the Counsel's Office to look into whatever the legal requirements are and obviously will abide by them.

Q The President's decision to call Colby in this morning and ask him to stay on for the duration until Bush is confirmed, was that prompted by soundings from the Hill that the Bush nomination was in trouble?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Does the President have people in mind yet for Peking and St. James?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, why did you answer one question about Senator Church and not the other?

Q You were asked yesterday if he had public reaction to the President's announcement of a shake-up in his press conference. What about telegrams and telephone calls and reactions to the President's Monday night announcement?

MR. NESSEN: I have not checked them today, Phil.

Q Ron, the first time I think I can recall since before he became President there are headlines suggesting that he was not honest, that he did not tell the full story in his Monday night news conference. Now the President obviously saw some of those stories today when he read the papers. What is his reaction to the questioning of his credibility?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I am tempted to read the Washington Post editorial but nobody will like it if I do, so I won't.

Q We can read our own editorials.

MR. NESSEN: I know that.

Q Did he write any editorials?

MR. NESSEN: Unfortunately not.

Phil, I believe from everything I know that -- well, I am not going to get in the position of doing that. The President has stated precisely what he did and why he did it and he told you that he made those decisions and he told you why he made those decisions, he told you the timing of the decisions and I simply don't think it is useful to answer those kinds of stories.

Q Did he see the story?

MR. NESSEN: He reads the papers. You know he reads the paper.

Q Does he have any reaction to the fact that his credibility is being questioned?

MR. NESSEN: The President stated precisely what he meant and what he had done and why he had done it the other night.

Q Does he think those stories are unfair?

MR. NESSEN: He does not comment on that.

Q Does he have any reaction to the reaction of any or all of this? It seems to me that he is being criticized from the columnists on the left, the columnists on the right, the Washington Star, the Washington Post. There just seems to be in general a lot of criticism. No one seems to think he has helped himself at all. I will read the Post.

It says, "Already politicians" --

Q George Will or the editorial?

MR. NESSEN: The editorial.

Bob, the Preident made each of these changes for a specific reason which he stated the other night. As you know, he did them entirely himself, he worked out all the pieces himself and for his own reasons.

Q We know he did this.

MR. NESSEN: The President believes that they are all the right decisions. As he said, the pieces fit together excellently, I think, was his word.

After all, this has just happened and after a little time and after people see how this settles down, it will be perceived to be the proper thing to have done.

I must say to answer some of the things that I have read, I don't quite understand the view that somehow Don Rumsfeld is soft on Communism.

Q Where did you read that?

Q Who said that?

Q The Washington Post?

Q Where did that come from?

MR. NESSEN: I am taking sort of a broad, general thing but somehow the idea that --

Q Ron, you can't do that.

MR. NESSEN: Let me be more precise then. I was half-joking.

Q Ron, this is how the trouble results.

MR. NESSEN: What I am talking about is the idea that somehow Jim Schlesinger leaving removes a hard line voice in terms of dealing with the Soviet Union. That is really what I meant.

Q Well, isn't that true?

MR. NESSEN: I think anyone who knows Don Rumsfeld and knows his record on defense matters in Congress and knows his record at NATO and here at the White House cannot believe that Don is going to be any less forceful in expressing his views to the President than some of his predecessors have been.

I mean the President wants to hear and would expect his Cabinet members to tell him exactly how they feel on an issue.

I think the same is true of George Bush. Anybody who suggests that he does not have a distinguished record in the area of diplomacy and national security has not looked at his military record or his record at the UN or in China. I am sure that the President is confident that he will express his views strongly to the President, whether they agree or disagree.

Finally, I think you have to look at Dr. Kissinger's record and you have to look at the President's own record both in Congress and since he has become President. The President would never take a step which he believes would not be in the interests of America's own national security.

Q Ron, are you saying that Don Rumsfeld's views are parallel to Schlesinger's on the issues of detente, on the issues of nuclear arms reductions with the Russians and the issue of maintaining the present level of budget spending at the Pentagon?

MR. NESSEN: Don's record and views will be explored thoroughly at his confirmation hearings. As the President said the other night, a change of personnel does not represent a change of policy.

The fact of the matter is despite what may be the public view of some, Secretary Schlesinger was in total agreement with the agreement that was made at Vladivostok, the President's national security advisers were unanimous in their support of the Sinai Agreement and in the current stage of the SALT agreements.

I have to be just a little careful here but I think it would be fair to say that Jim Schlesinger not only is in agreement with the present American position but is, to a large degree, the author of the present American position.

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Q Why was he fired then?

Q Is he in agreement with Secretary Kissinger on the American position on the next round on the SALT talks?

Q Why was he fired then?

MR. NESSEN: The President stated the other night that he wanted to bring his own team in. The President's answer to the last question, which was from John Osborne, "Were personal or policy differences between Secretary Kissinger and Secretary Schlesinger a factor in this," the President's answer was no. And if he had been asked, the President would have gone on to say that -- "Were any policy differences between the President and Schlesinger a factor" -- the President would have said no.

Q Ron, that does not exclude there were policy differences.

Q If he liked his policy views, why did he get rid of him? It sounds like he had found the perfect man for the job.

MR. NESSEN: I think the same question was asked innumerable ways the other night, Bob, and the President answered innumerable ways.

Q Are you saying as well that there were no policy differences between the President and Schlesinger?

MR. NESSEN: I am saying that policy differences between the President and Schlesinger were not a factor in the change.

Q Were there policy differences?

Q Is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: I have given you a rundown on Schlesinger's position on a number of the major issues.

Q Do you want us to conclude from that that Schlesinger and the President were in concert on major policy decisions?

MR. NESSEN: I have given you Secretary Schlesinger's position on a number of major issues.

Q You have not given us his position on the major issue of budget cuts and how they affect the Pentagon.

MR. NESSEN: The President has said himself, Tom, that he disagrees with the House budget cut. Aside from the money that is eliminated due to the Indochina matter, all the rest he believes should be restored. He said that.

Q Ron, isn't the issue of budget cuts -- not this current budget but the one that is going to be submitted to the Congress in January, and if Schlesinger opposed the cuts that the President wants to make from the Defense budget then?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of that and I am not aware that the Defense budget has been completed for the coming fiscal year.

Q Any disagreement between Schlesinger and the President on that budget proposed?

MR. NESSEN: I am not, and as I say, the budget for next year has not been prepared yet.

Q Certainly they have discussed it.

MR. NESSEN: Well, not that I am aware of.

Q Is the President in agreement on the cruise missile vis-a-vis the SALT talks?

MR. NESSEN: Well, Dick, as I say, I have to be awfully careful in stating this but, as I said before, it is fair to say that Schlesinger is in agreement with the present American position at the SALT talks and, in fact, could be described accurately as at least one of the authors of that present position.

Q Ron, since Rockefeller has ruled himself out of the race for Vice President, why is it that the President could not obtain the same commitment from Mr. Bush and thus remove Senator Church's criticism?

MR. NESSEN: I think we dealt with that, Les.

Q Ron, the President gave one answer at that press conference which I think raised more eyebrows than any of these other questions and it was that there was no basic difference between Kissinger and Schlesinger.

MR. NESSEN: I have to read that. I don't recall that answer.

Q Why were your eyebrows raised?

Q After due reflection, does he think that was accurate?

MR. NESSEN: The President thinks that everything said at the news conference was accurate, and so do I.

Q Ron, the State Department has been pointing out to people today that Mr. Kissinger is going to be in the President's company at least three times today. Do you have any idea yet how the procedures in the national security area are going to work?

MR. NESSEN: Not yet, no.

Q Anything on the China trip?

Q Did the Vice President consult the President before he decided to hold a press conference tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

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Q Does the President think it is a good idea?

MR. NESSEN: He never tells the Vice President what to do.

In answer to Walt's question, is there anything new on the China trip, no, the President still expects to go and the planning continues.

Q Ron, does the President have any reaction to Secretary Connally's suggestion made in New York yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what it was.

Q That pension funds and other holders of Federal paper turn in their securities to put the squeeze on Washington.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he has thought about that.

Q Could I have a follow-up on that question? Has the China trip been cut down from six days to four days?

MR. NESSEN: There has never been any length of time settled on for the trip.

Q The reporters who were with Henry in Peking were talking initially about a six-day trip and it is now being reported that it is a four-day trip.

MR. NESSEN: Well, the plans are still going on and we don't have anything.

Q Are other stops contemplated?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to give you on that today.

Q Do you have any idea when the advance team is going? They have been told they could come pick up their luggage at Andrews today, that the advance trip at least is not leaving.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think some of you know that one of the problems with the advance team is that there has to be an advance trip made for Paris also and due to the mix-up the other day and delay, the whole schedule for advancing both Paris and China is being revised and that accounts for the fact that it has been put off for a while until they can figure out who goes where and on what timetable.

Q What are the changes in the national security area that you referred to?

MR. NESSEN: I think Jim was referring to what the President said the other night about the certain changes in NSC or national security procedures here in the White House in terms of arrangements and the President's schedules for dealing with this area and so forth.

Q Has the President seen Secretary Kissinger today?

MR. NESSEN: He has seen him for his regular daily meeting.

Q Will this continue until this other procedure is set up?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Will it continue until Rumsfeld is confirmed?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Lou.

Q When is the procedure going to take effect, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: As soon as the President decides on what he wants it to be.

Q Ron, is there any particular reason for cancelling this morning's bipartisan leadership meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think mostly because he saw them the other night and it has just been slipped to later in the week -- no special reason.

Q Ron, can you get us --

MR. NESSEN: Let me hear from Muriel.

Q When the President fired Colby on Sunday, did Colby expect to continue at the CIA or did he understand that he would be leaving; and if he did expect to be leaving, why did the President have this meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the matter was not really resolved on Sunday is why he came in today to get it resolved, and it is resolved.

Q Was the President just going to leave the agency sort of leaderless in the middle of an investigation?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think it was just one of the matters that had not been decided on Sunday.

Q Isn't it presumed because it is normal that the Director would stay on until the new man comes in?

MR. NESSEN: That is what I said yesterday, that I assumed it would be that way but I would check.

Q Is Schlesinger going to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: Jim Schlesinger has expressed a desire to leave some time this week.

Q At whose initiative was today's meeting?

MR. NESSEN: The President's.

Q Ron, is George Bush staying in Peking only for the visit reason?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the exact confirmation schedule for George has not been set up yet, but, you know, two possible ways to do it would be for him to come back and have his hearings and then go back with the President for the visit or to stay there and come back and have a confirmation hearing after the President's return, but that has not been arranged.

Q Ron, you said that Secretary Schlesinger had expressed a desire to leave this week. Isn't it really true that he had been ordered by the White House to clean his desk and be out of there by Friday?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of that.

Q One more question on this rapport between Schlesinger and Ford. When the President agreed with Schlesinger about the budget cuts that were made, did he agree with Schlesinger's assessment that they were arbitrary and savage?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think the President used those exact words.

Q But since their views coincide so closely as you --

MR. NESSEN: Well, I like to use my own words, Bob, and I said that the President agreed that all the cuts except those relating to Indochina should be restored.

Q That is right.

Q Well, Schlesinger called that arbitrary and savage. Did the President's feelings run that deeply?

MR. NESSEN: I said the President didn't use those words.

Sarah.

Q Ron, would you please get for us the record of Mr. Rumsfeld at NATO. What was his record of accomplishment there and what was his record for delay on matters, and give us a report on that?

Q If you give me a week, I will think about it.  
(Laughter)

Q What was the question up there?

MR. NESSEN: The comment from Helen was "give me a week and I will think about it."

Q Is that your answer, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: That was Helen's answer.

Q Ron, we need these things and the information on Bush and all before the hearings. The hearings might not come on confirmation, they could be left for months.

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it.

Q Ron, the New England Society of Newspaper Editors says that at the White House's request they are barring local reporters and those who are not members of the organization to the Press Conference this week. Is that correct, or why is that being done?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I would not say barred. It is one of those in a series of meetings he has had with different groups and, of course, he has had news conferences of various kinds and interviews and then he has also had these little meetings, some here in the White House, editorial board lunches and breakfasts and so forth, and this is in that category.

Q This is a large organization?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think it is 80 people, something like that.

Q So we are not going to be in for that speech?

MR. NESSEN: It is not a speech, it is a few brief remarks and then some Q and A.

Q Is that going to be closed to all reporters including White House reporters?

MR. NESSEN: I would not call it closed, I would just say it is another in a series of private meetings he has had.

Q Specifically I want to know, please, if a pool will be allowed in from the White House?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, Senator Bentsen this morning on the floor called for President Ford to now support his two hats bill and he also announced that he was sending a letter to the President to ask him to go along with it. Have you received a letter and is the President now prepared to support the two hats bill since Secretary Kissinger is out?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check on whether the letter has arrived and I will have to ask what his view of that bill is.

Ted.

Q Ron, there were at least two reports, one Scotty Reston and the other George Will, that despite what we all believe, that Secretary Kissinger actually opposed the firing of Secretary Schlesinger. Is that true?

MR. NESSEN: Nobody, including Secretary Kissinger, had any role in the decision. The President made it after a period of deliberation and then told the people involved what his decision was.

Q Did anybody have an opinion that they gave the President before he made the decision? Did Kissinger tell him how he felt before?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is, and the President stated it forcefully the other night, was that he made the decision and notified the people involved.

Q Excuse me, could I follow that? Are you saying that the President did not ask the Secretary of State for his views or for his opinion of this contemplated move?

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q Ron, in speeches that the President has made over and over again, there are several lines which have appeared, roughly "I will never allow the Congress to downgrade America's defense establishment" and the other line is "I will never stand by while America's intelligence community is dismantled." Does the President intend to keep on using those lines in speeches?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea, Walt. You know his record on defense and security matters; it is his belief and I expect him to stick to it.

Q Ron, why was Sunday morning picked as the time for this? The President chose Sunday morning as the time for pardoning Nixon. Does he like Sunday morning, or what is the reason?

MR. NESSEN: I think many of you know that the President had intended to announce this on Wednesday or Thursday and when parts of it were published and broadcast, he decided to move up his timetable and announce it on Monday night. He had decided in his own mind approximately a week before that.

Q Wait a minute, though, Ron. That timetable does not square because Newsweek Magazine comes out on Sunday afternoon and Schlesinger and Colby were called in on Sunday morning.

MR. NESSEN: Well, as Tommy DeFrank will tell you, he came around on Friday to tell us that he had a big story that he was going to come around and ask about on Saturday and he did come around and ask about it on Saturday and then called various people later in the afternoon and early in the evening to tell them that they had another part of the story and it was about the time of the second Newsweek call that the President decided that he needed to do it sooner rather than later.

Q In anticipation of leaks?

MR. NESSEN: There was a leak. Newsweek indicated on Friday they had the story and on Saturday notified the White House of two specific pieces of the story.

Q Did the White House decide who did the leaking?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think any effort has been made to find out.

Q Ron, if the President didn't consult anyone else on this, who leaked it? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I think you won the Deakin award of the day. (Laughter)

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Wait a second, Frank, if you don't mind. I would like to get the knife out and pull myself off the wall before you close off the briefing, if you don't mind.

Q Was it The Reverend John Harper over across the way?

MR. NESSEN: May I answer, Les?

Q Certainly.

MR. NESSEN: I think some of you know that the President notified some of the people involved the previous Saturday and then during last week an additional small group of people were told about the contemplated change.

Q You mean a week before last Saturday he told some of the people involved?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q When were you told?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think I will keep that to myself, Ann.

Q Just along that line, what about the report that the President initially sounded out Mr. Richardson for the CIA post?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, I have never heard that.

Q Ron, these were close associates that were notified?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, obviously.

Q So one of his close associates then leaked the story?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how you would make that assumption, Russ.

Q You mean the people being removed are annointed, is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Both, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Some of each.

Q One from Column A and one from Column B.

MR. NESSEN: Right.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 12:24 P.M. EST)