

This Copy For _____

NEWS CONFERENCE

#396

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 12:02 P.M. EST

DECEMBER 19, 1975

FRIDAY

MR. GREENER: As all of you know, the President is now meeting with Golda Meir. She is here on a private visit and will be meeting with a number of American Jewish leaders while she is in the country. She and the President have taken the opportunity of this meeting to exchange views on the Middle East situation in general and on U.S.-Israeli relations in particular.

The traditional question of who asked for the meeting--it was one that was mutually arranged.

That is about the only announcement I have except to point out that the President did chair the senior staff meeting this morning, as I have been saying in the past.

Q What were the subjects of the meeting?

MR. GREENER: That is not a subject I normally discuss, Helen.

Q What is the situation on the energy bill?

MR. GREENER: No decision as yet.

Q Do you expect one today, Bill?

Q Question?

Q Was there any indication when the President might act?

MR. GREENER: No, not as yet.

The question was, was there any decision on the energy bill, sir.

Q How about the situs picketing bill?

MR. GREENER: The same.

Q Will you rule out decisions today on either of those?

MORE

#396

MR. GREENER: I cannot rule them out or in.

Q Is situs picketing down here?

MR. GREENER: I can rule it out on situs picketing because at this point it is not down here.

Q But energy is?

MR. GREENER: Energy is.

Q You don't know if there will be action today?

MR. GREENER: No, I do not.

Q Bill, has a decision been made whether to pocket veto or has that been ruled out? If he vetoes, has it been ruled out that he would pocket veto?

MR. GREENER: No, nothing has been ruled out or in but there is no decision or any discussion -- I have heard no discussion of a pocket veto.

Q Bill, can you tell us anything about the meeting last night with Dunlop and Usery and the President here?

MR. GREENER: Nothing except, as you know, they were discussing the views on the common situs picketing bill.

Q Some of us don't know about that. Could you tell us about that?

MR. GREENER: That is all I have on it, that that was the subject.

Q When did they meet?

MR. GREENER: I will have to get the exact time.

Q Bill, is the President going to Vail next week for the Christmas vacation?

MR. GREENER: He still plans to, but as we have said all along, that is dependent upon what the Congress is doing.

Q Well, if Congress remains in a pro forma session, will the President then keep his pledge to stay in Washington as long as Congress is "in Washington?"

MR. GREENER: What do you mean by pro forma? You mean they are out of town doing nothing during that period?

Q That they meet; that there is, you know, one guy on the floor saying that we don't have a quorum, we will adjourn, meeting three days a week, not conducting any business.

MR. GREENER: I don't believe he has faced that at all, Walt. I will check on it for you.

Q But as far as you know, he is still leaving on Tuesday?

MR. GREENER: He still plans to, dependent upon the actions of Congress.

Q Did he have any choice comments to make about Albert's decision to keep Congress in session?

MR. GREENER: None.

Q Bill, is the President confident that Congress will uphold--sustain--his veto of the Labor-HEW?

MR. GREENER: Yes, he is.

Q Is he fully aware of the votes that were taken originally in passing the bill?

MR. GREENER: He is fully aware of all of it, yes.

Q Bill, there seems to be some maneuvering on the Hill right now to get another tax bill down here with a resolution of some kind, non-binding, with a spending ceiling or a spending limitation, in any case. Are people from the White House in contact with the leadership on that discussion.

MR. GREENER: Yes, they are and let me point out that, you know, the President's position all along has been for a dollar for dollar position, that if there is a dollar taken off on a tax cut bill that it should be coupled with a dollar reduction in the growth in Federal spending, and it is quite encouraging to see that what he has been asking for is at last being discussed up there.

Q In other words, if they should come up with some kind of a non-binding pledge to try to keep spending down by the same \$17 billion as the tax bill, he would sign that tax bill?

MR. GREENER: I can't say what would be signed or not signed until he sees it, Bob. I am simply saying that the language that we have heard discussed up there right now in the Senate is quite encouraging because it follows exactly the principle that the President has been asking for and that is coupling a dollar for dollar realization and a cut in the growth in Federal spending.

One thing. Somebody asked me about the pocket veto. Let me point out that if there are any vetoes, they will be real vetoes and not pocket vetoes.

Q When do you think the President will decide on the energy bill?

MR. GREENER: I have no timetable on it.

Q Do you think he will do it before he leaves Washington?

MR. GREENER: I don't know on that but I would think so, yes, Helen.

Q Have you discussed with the President our request for information on Angola? Is he aware that we are interested and that we are wondering if he is going to make any statements or have a news conference in which this will be discussed?

MR. GREENER: The President is well aware of it. As a matter of fact, he normally reads the briefings.

Q May I inquire as to whether he has any plans to give us any information about what role the United States is playing in Angola?

MR. GREENER: I have nothing on that beyond what I have told you in the last two days.

MORE

Q So the President does not intend to be "forthright" -- in his word, one of his favorite words -- on the subject, and discuss what role the United States is playing in Angola?

MR. GREENER: As I have stated before, when something is said I think the President will say it and if we have something on it you will be the first one to know it, Walt.

Q Mr. Secretary?

MR. GREENER: Yes? (Laughter)

Q You said that "He normally reads the briefings." Could you give us an estimate of what "normally" means because we were told, I think, that the President reads nine newspapers a day, which has been featured, and I just wonder how he can read nine newspapers a day and the briefings also, normally. Now, does "normally" mean once, twice, five times a week, or what? I mean, really, seriously, I am quite interested. How often does he read these, to your knowledge, Bill?

MR. GREENER: More often than he doesn't.

Q Well, what does that mean, Bill?

MR. GREENER: It means normally.

Q More often than not? In other words, he reads 50 percent of these briefings, or what?

MR. GREENER: I would say he reads more than that, Les. I just don't have the exact number.

Q All right. About two-thirds of the time, would you say?

MR. GREENER: About that, yes; something like that.

Q Thank you. That is what I wanted. (Laughter)

Q Bill, on the tax bill for a second, when you say that the President is encouraged that they are now discussing a dollar for dollar cut, is the President now prepared to accept a compromise which would contain that principle without the actual statement of a dollar figure?

MR. GREENER: Well, exactly what I said is that we are quite encouraged by that and we think that they are following exactly the principle that the President has asked them to look at from the very beginning, and that is to recognize the fact that there is a necessity to face up to the American public and say that if we are going to give you a dollar in tax cut that it has to come from somewhere and that has to come from the growth in Federal spending. That is what he has been saying, and that is it.

As for the exact action that he will take on any given item, I just don't have that, Phil.

Q Bill, if you have a dollar for dollar figure, if you accept that don't you have to have some figure with which to apply it, some fixed figure?

MR. GREENER: Well, I would have to see the -- I don't have all that on it. I just said the principle that he has been for all along is exactly that and you have heard us say it 55 times -- I am not sure that I need to rear back and give the standard lecture on that.

Q Bill, precisely, and to follow that up, yesterday when Jim Lynn was in he declined to say really whether or not the President would accept this approach without a precise ceiling figure, and you seem to be doing the same thing again.

Now, the concept was presented to the President in his meeting with Long and the other Senators and at that point we were told that --

MR. GREENER: They saw no way to do it.

Q We were also told that that was not acceptable to the President.

MR. GREENER: I am saying just exactly what I said, Dick, that we are quite encouraged by the language that we have seen on the bill that is in front of the Senate at this time.

Q You mean the one in the Finance Committee that was passed?

MR. GREENER: The amendment, yes. Excuse me.

Q This morning?

MR. GREENER: Yes. I should say amendment.

Q Did the White House send that language up?

MR. GREENER: They did not. That was developed by the Congress of the United States.

Q Did you say that White House officials were in contact with Members of Congress?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Any particular ones?

MR. GREENER: I don't know. I just know that people are up there.

Q In the House or Senate or both?

MR. GREENER: Both.

Q What does the President's weekend look like?

MR. GREENER: He has some meetings tomorrow and I have nothing beyond that, Helen. I will get it for you. I know everybody wants to know for themselves.

Q Bill, did the President meet with Secretary Kissinger this morning?

MR. GREENER: Yes, he did.

Q The usual hour?

MR. GREENER: The usual meeting. He met with Kissinger, Rumsfeld and Scowcroft, I believe is the way the schedule read.

Q Wait a minute. What is the usual meeting about that? How often have they been doing it in a troika?

MR. GREENER: Once or twice a week. I don't know the exact thing. It was just as we told you, that there were going to be some changes in it and we have announced it in the past, Tom.

Q Have those changes now gone regularly into effect?

MR. GREENER: Yes, they have been.

Q What about Kissinger's daily one-hour meeting?

MR. GREENER: Well, that was one of the changes we explained.

Q He does not have that any more?

MR. GREENER: Not every day, no.

Q Did they discuss Angola at the meeting this morning, can you tell us?

MR. GREENER: I have nothing on the meeting, Peter. I would be glad to try to find out for you.

Q What is the significance of it? You have told us several times that the President chaired the senior staff meeting. Is there any special significance in the President chairing it, and who chairs it when he does not chair it?

MR. GREENER: Dick Cheney.

Q How often does the President chair it, and under what circumstances?

MR. GREENER: Once or twice a week, and we announced that he would be doing that from time to time and so rather than -- you know, everybody always says "What did he do this morning," and so I just announce it as part of the regular announcement.

Q Tell us about the meeting. How long does it last?

MR. GREENER: It starts at 8 o'clock and normally is a half an hour long -- 8:00 to 8:30.

Q Bill, for those of us who may not be coming to the White House over the weekend, at what point are you going to give us the information on the travel schedule?

MR. GREENER: By travel schedule you mean --

Q To Vail.

Q You will get a call out on Tuesday morning at 5:30.

MR. GREENER: I don't know. I will see if I can get it for you this afternoon.

Q Even a tentative one would be very helpful.

MR. GREENER: I understand. I don't know.

Q Bill, who does the Christmas shopping for the President?

Q There is a tough one. (Laughter)

MR. GREENER: I don't know, Sarah. I would have to find out.

Q Find out, will you?

Q Bill, is the President aware that one of his legislative assistants contacted two Congressmen from Maine and threatened that an appointment for former Governor Reed might not be forthcoming if they did not vote with him on the tax override, and, if so, what was his reaction to that?

MR. GREENER: He is aware of the story. I have talked to Doug Bennett about the story, who I assume you are referring to.

Q Yes.

MR. GREENER: And referred to in the story. He would point out that the quotes in the story are accurate. He freely admits that he talked to the two Congressmen and that he also talked to them to seek their support for sustaining the President's veto. He denies that there was any linkage of the possible appointment in that conversation.

Q Was there in any other conversation?

MR. GREENER: Not according to Mr. Bennett, no.

Q Bill, has the White House been talking to this hierarchical man from Mississippi about taking a high post in the Treasury without conferring with Simon?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q What is the situation there?

MR. GREENER: He did meet with the President and they did discuss a possible joining of the Administration in some post but I can assure you that whatever department he goes to certainly the Cabinet Secretary would be consulted.

Q How did Bennett explain the fact that these two Republican Congressmen had exactly the same story which included linkage between their vote and the Reed appointment?

MR. GREENER: Nothing beyond what I just gave you, Tom. I am sure that if Bennett is in this morning he could answer the question better himself.

Q Has he talked to those Congressmen about their allegation?

MR. GREENER: I don't know that he has or has not.

Q Has he talked to the President about it?

MR. GREENER: No, he has not.

Q Bill, has there been a change in the President's speechwriting team?

MR. GREENER: Not that I know of, Dick.

Q Who is in charge of it?

MR. GREENER: Paul Theis.

Q And still is?

MR. GREENER: As far as I know. He was last night when I talked to him and signed off on some remarks that he was using at the Christmas tree lighting.

Q Bill, with relations in China in mind, when does the President plan to fill the Bush vacancy in Peking?

MR. GREENER: I just have no announcement on that, John.

Q Bill, about two months ago a task force came out with some recommendations about drug law changes, including marijuana and the President was supposed to be collecting comments for the next 60 days from members of the Cabinet and that would mean he would have had to have had all the comments compiled about a week ago. Has he made a decision as to whether he is going to go along with the recommendations in that report?

MR. GREENER: He has made no decision on it yet.

Q Bill, what was that question exactly, please? We could not hear it very well back here.

MR. GREENER: The question was that there was a report from the Domestic Council, I believe, on actions in the drug enforcement area, that he sent it out for comment for approximately 60 days. I don't have the exact timing but at any rate --

Q They are due in about a week.

MR. GREENER: Supposedly they would have been back about a week ago and had the President made any decision on that, and I said not at this time.

Q Bill, is the White House going to let this situation on the Mexican border continue here? Week after week we have been asking this question about if the White House is not going to take some more steps at the request of various people to ride herd on this heroin that is coming in and that is going to Detroit and New York and Chicago and all these cities.

MR. GREENER: I will have to check and see if that letter has been answered.

Q Bill, can you tell us what kind of mail and telegrams, phone calls the White House has been getting on the tax bill?

MR. GREENER: We will get it.

Let me give you one thing on Vail.

The press plane will leave on Tuesday at about 6:30 a.m. and that will be depending on the exact Presidential departure but, as it is now planned, that is it.

Q Bill, what time does the President leave?

Q Following up what you said yesterday, would the President welcome an opportunity to reappear before the House Judiciary Committee and set things straight?

MR. GREENER: The President feels that his testimony, as I stated yesterday, was complete, truthful, candid and is there on the record.

Q The question is, would he welcome an opportunity to reappear?

MR. GREENER: And my answer was that he feels that the testimony he gave is complete.

Q Is that a no, Bill? (Laughter)

MR. GREENER: Well, he has not been invited to appear so I don't believe I need to answer the question beyond that.

Q Bill, there is a story in the Post this morning by Tom O'Toole saying that the White House has so far received 10,000 letters urging the President to veto the energy bill and only 70 urging him to sign it. Do you have any figures on the volume of mail on that topic and whether that accounting is accurate?

MR. GREENER: We will check it for you.

Q Might as well get the common situs as well.

MR. GREENER: Might as well get common situs as well.

I know that one. Oh, man, it is monstrous.

Q It is?

Q For signing or not signing?

MR. GREENER: Most of them were a form letter and it was something like 597,000 -- don't use that because I will have to check the exact figures.

Q Who inspired these?

MR. GREENER: I have no idea.

Q No idea but you know that it is a form letter?

MR. GREENER: They may know. I said I don't know, Helen. I will check on it.

Q For or against?

MR. GREENER: That was against.

Q Bill, on the energy bill, has the President been discussing that matter with Frank Zarb?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q And with his economic advisers?

MR. GREENER: Yes. As a matter of fact, on an earlier question, that economic meeting last night was from 6:45 until 8:00 and it included energy and common situs and some other economic matters.

Q Could you tell us who participated?

MR. GREENER: Can you get any readout on who participated in the EPB meeting?

MR. CARLSON: Seidman, Greenspan, Dunlop -- just the normal economic advisers who normally participate in the Economic Policy Board.

Q Dunlop is not usually in on this?

Q Was Burns there?

MR. GREENER: Yes, Dunlop is a member.

MR. CARLSON: Sure, Dunlop is a member.

Q Was Burns there?

MR. CARLSON: I don't believe Burns was there.

Q Zarb?

MR. CARLSON: Zarb was there.

Q Usery?

MR. CARLSON: I think Usery was there.

Q Just tick them off.

Q Well, is this the President's attempt now to make up his mind -- he is trying to get his advisers --

MR. GREENER: He is listening to the views, yes.

Q Does mail have an impact on his decision?

MR. GREENER: I don't really know, Helen. I would have to ask that specific question.

Q Was that meeting then devoted to both the energy bill and the common situs bill?

MR. GREENER: It was, and some other matters also.

Q How long did it last?

MR. GREENER: From 6:45 until 8:00.

Q What were the other matters discussed?

MR. CARLSON: Other miscellaneous legislative matters.

MR. GREENER: Legislative.

Q How come you didn't announce it, Bill?

MR. GREENER: No excuse, Fran. I was not here. I don't know.

Q Bill, does the President --

MR. GREENER: Let me just answer Sarah's question on the drug thing that she asked.

The President has asked the members of his staff to look into the questions raised in Senator Bensten's letter -- and letters from others, I might add -- and he plans to meet with members of his staff on this matter and will as soon as possible reply, of course, to the Members of Congress who have inquired, Sarah, and I don't know when that meeting is scheduled for.

Q He has asked them to look into it and he will meet with the staff on it?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q And then what, did you say?

MR. GREENER: Then I said, of course he will reply to the Members of Congress who have inquired.

Q Well, will he reply to the American people, too? They don't often hear from Lloyd Bensten of Texas out in Detroit.

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Bill, what did the Secret Service report by way of security of the White House grounds?

MR. GREENER: Do the sentence again. I didn't hear the question.

Q What did the Secret Service report to Mr. Cheney regarding the security of the White House grounds?

MR. GREENER: The report, as you know, if completed -- is it in yet? Do you want to check with Cheney's office -- is designed to report on the activity.

Q I know. I just wondered what is in the report? I mean, presumably after all this period of time they must have reported.

MR. GREENER: Well, if they have -- I am not going to discuss security matters.

Q Bill, does the President feel that Secretary Dunlop will have a credible position with Labor if he vetoes the picketing bill?

MR. GREENER: I don't believe that has been a point of discussion at any point. The point is that the President has not decided what he is going to do yet so if he vetoes or if he signs has not been the point that they --

Q You don't really know, though, if Dunlop said to him, "Mr. President, my credibility is at stake" or "I would have to leave this post if you were to veto this bill"?

MR. GREENER: I believe Secretary Dunlop himself answered that the other morning at one of his meetings with the press.

Q So you don't expect him to resign if the bill is vetoed?

MR. GREENER: No, I don't.

Q Bill, it is a nice little thing to say that "security we don't discuss." That is just a blanket little thing. But I call your attention to the fact that readers, people who listen to radio and television or who come in and participate in programs are discussing this. People all over the country are wanting to know if the White House can effectively have security here to safeguard the President and his family, so I think you should give us some reply that is not "We don't discuss security." We could discuss security in this country and people are discussing it.

Q We pay \$85 million for the Secret Service, Bill. Now a guy jumps over the fence twice and gets away with this twice. Could you give us some guidance about that? We don't want that "No, just security." We don't want to know any secrets. We just want to know why this guy jumped over the fence twice?

Q That is the angle people are taking when they write in, Bill. They are trying to say, "We are paying all this money from the taxpayers for the protection. Aren't we getting it?"

Q Are you going to let them run the Pentagon like that?

MR. GREENER: I won't answer that one, Saul, but I will say that if we have something on the report I will make sure that it gets out here to you. I have nothing on it at this time.

Q Will you ask him when we can get it, please?

Q Did Larry go out and ask?

MR. GREENER: He asked if it had been received, and it has been received by Cheney.

Q It has been received?

MR. GREENER: And he is reviewing it at this time, and the next question is --

Q When was it received, Bill?

MR. GREENER: Yesterday, I believe. We will check to be sure.

Q Yesterday?

Q What time?

Q And he is reviewing it? How long is the report? How long does it take to review it, Bill?

MR. GREENER: I have no idea, Les, exactly what he is doing. You asked me a question -- had it been received. It has been received.

Q How long is the report?

MR. GREENER: I haven't any answers to that. I will be glad to check.

Q How long does it take to review? Is this an encyclopedic report or what, Bill?

MR. GREENER: Les, I am sure it comes as no surprise to you that Mr. Cheney has some other matters that he is working on besides this report.

Q Like what?

MR. GREENER: Like common situs picketing, energy, tax cuts.

Q Mr. Greener, would you please check on that and give us the answer on this before you go to Vail?

MR. GREENER: I am not going to Vail, but I will.

Q Well, before anybody goes to Vail.

Q Do you have any other figures you want to tell us on mail?

MR. GREENER: Have you got the mail counts?

She is typing them up now and I will give them to you.

Q And also, Bill, can you tell us if the President has decided yet whether he is going to call various people out to Vail as he did last year?

MR. GREENER: No decisions have been made.

Q Will you find out about that?

MR. GREENER: I said I would but there have been no decisions made.

On the meeting last night -- Seidman, Dunlop, Usery, Gardner, Greenspan, Cheney, Marsh, Connor, Cannon -- who's this?

Q Ford. (Laughter)

MR. GREENER: And Morton.

Q Bill, then Simon was not there?

Q And Zarb wasn't there?

MR. GREENER: And Zarb -- that you had earlier.

Q Was Simon also there?

MR. CARLSON: He is in the hospital.

Gardner was there.

Q And Usery was there?

Q In the hospital? What's wrong with him?

Q Talk about security -- you won't even tell us what's wrong with him.

Q Say, Bill, yesterday I asked if you could find out what information the Government has on American technical representatives in Angola.

MR. GREENER: I have nothing on that for you, but I will check again.

Q Is this your last White House briefing?

MR. GREENER: Let me just give you this mail and telegram tally on the tax bill.

Q Is this on the veto?

MR. GREENER: I am going to give you prior to the veto and after the veto.

Prior to the veto, urging the President to veto the tax bill, 2,480; urging the President to sign the tax bill, 35.

After vetoing, pro 89; con 36. Those are the only figures we have and we will get the rest of them for you.

Q Is that letters, telegrams or what?

MR. GREENER: Mail and telegram tally on the tax bill.

Q Can you give us the figures on situs picketing and energy, please?

MR. GREENER: They are getting them. I said I would have them for you and we will post them.

Q This is your last briefing, is it not?

MR. GREENER: Yes, it is.

Q We want to thank you for all those informative answers (Laughter) -- you've been very forthcoming. And on behalf of the White House Correspondents' Association, we are really delighted. (Applause)

MR. GREENER: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. Secretary.

MR. GREENER: Thank you.

Q Don't come back. (Laughter)

Q Without answers.

Q Wait a minute. He has a last minute bulletin.

MR. GREENER: Here are the last two mail counts.

On energy, pro 72 --

Q Pro meaning veto?

MR. GREENER: Sign.

Q 72?

MR. GREENER: Against, 7,804. (Laughter)

Q Which were the form letters?

MR. GREENER: I don't know which of those on energy.

In a moment you will receive the next one.
Common situs, in favor of signing, 6,400; against signing,
625,000. It is a little early to tell whether there is a trend
there or not.

Q 625,000 even?

MR. ROBERTS: Roughly.

Q Can you tell us about the form letters, please,
on both of these?

MR. GREENER: Can you find out about that?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:30 P.M. EST)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 9:09 P.M. EST

DECEMBER 19, 1975

FRIDAY

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry to take you all away from the party but I think most of you are interested in doing this.

Let me read you a three paragraph statement by the President and let me make two other points and then I think probably you will all want to go and file.

I have copies to pass out so let me just read this for the TV people.

"The President is very pleased by the actions taken in the Congress tonight on the tax bill.

"The bill which has been enacted not only continues cuts in taxes for the first half of 1976, but also represents a good faith commitment by the Congress to match future tax reductions with dollar for dollar reductions in projected spending. This has been the essential issue at stake throughout these debates, and the President is gratified that the Congress has now accepted this principle."

"The essence of the bill, then, is that taxpayers will continue to enjoy a measure of tax relief in 1976 and that, for the first time in history, future reductions in taxes will lead to similar reductions in spending."

Q That means he is going to sign it?

MR. NESSEN: The President will sign the bill.

Q When?

MR. NESSEN: Well, it is obviously not here yet; it is tax legislation which will have to be printed and sent up here and so forth. I don't have a date for you.

Q Does he feel it is a compromise in the terms of the two positions?

MR. NESSEN: No. I would call to your attention, Helen, a statement which was placed in the Record tonight by Congressman Ullman and also read into the Record and released on the Senate side by Senator Long, a two-page statement. I am sure this was released on the Hill, but just to give you an idea of what these two gentlemen committed themselves to, the key paragraph says: "An extension of the existing tax reduction beyond June 30, 1976, would give rise to the requirement of an equal reduction in spending to offset a tax reduction."

Also several times in this statement they use the word "commitment."

Q Who made that statement?

MR. NESSEN: It was put into the Record on the House side by Chairman Ullman of the Ways and Means Committee and also released and read on the Senate side by Chairman Long of the Finance Committee, and you have to take the language of the legislation as well as the language of the statement which they placed in the Record.

Q Well, then, does he consider it a victory?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he does.

Q Even though there is no mention of the \$395 billion ceiling he was insisting on?

MR. NESSEN: No. Congress has clearly committed itself to a dollar for dollar reduction in spending for any tax cuts beyond June 30 which is the principal and the essential issue at stake all along.

MORE

Q Since the tax cut is \$17 billion and since the President was speaking of a \$28 billion cut, does that mean that he is still committed to the \$395 billion budget?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the budget that the President will send to Congress in January will be a \$395 billion budget.

Q Can you give us some guidance on energy tonight -- tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: As you know, as usual at the end of a session there are a number of important pieces of legislation here, including energy, common situs picketing and the railroad bill.

Q Is situs here yet?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is not here yet but I mean it will be up for consideration shortly. I just simply don't have anything now and will not have anything tonight.

Q Do you expect we might have a decision on energy tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: Well, it is possible but I just don't have a timetable for those other pieces at this point.

Q Has the President made a decision?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q Ron, will the President continue to press for the deeper tax cut in the next session?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, coupled with the reduction in spending.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 9:15 P.M. EST)