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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 7:45 P.M. EST

DECEMBER 30, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: The meeting, as you see, lasted slightly more than an hour. It began with the FAA Administrator, Mr. McLucas, reporting on a meeting held earlier today among representatives of the Transportation Department, the FAA, Customs, the FBI, the Port Authority of New York and two private groups, the Air Transport Association representing the airlines and the Airport Operators Council representing the airports, obviously, at which a number of steps to reinforce airport and airplane security were discussed.

I am not going to be able to tell you what those steps were other than to say there will be additional meetings held to discuss and to decide which additional steps to reinforce airport and airplane security will be recommended to the President to put into force.

The next speaker at the meeting was the Deputy Attorney General, Judge Tyler, who gave a report to the President on the progress of the investigation. He reported to the President that 300 FBI agents are assisting, cooperating with and working closely with the New York City local authorities.

Judge Tyler said that these 300 FBI agents included bomb experts and that this number will expand as the investigation expands out through the country.

Judge Tyler reported to the President that he has found, in his cooperation with the New York City authorities, that it is a very close and cooperative effort and he praised the New York authorities for both their cooperation and their expertise.

Jim Adams of the FBI gave a very similar report and also mentioned the good cooperative relationship and the excellent skills of the New York City authorities.

The President -- well, it was also reported to the President that the investigation is in its initial stages and at this point the authorities don't know who planted the bomb or why.

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It was also reported to the President that the FAA, at 500 airports around the country, is strengthening security while at the same time trying not to interfere with the normal flow of airline commerce.

The President then directed Judge Tyler of the Justice Department and Secretary Coleman to bring him another up-to-date report on Friday but told them that he wanted to be kept current each day in the meanwhile.

The President expressed appreciation for the work that the various agencies have done as well as complimented the New York City authorities. He reiterated the fact that when he was first told this early last evening, he reiterated the shock he felt when he was told and he again expressed sympathy to the victims and to their families.

That was about the extent of the meeting.

Q Coleman spoke while we were in there?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I know.

Q Do you plan on saying anything?

MR. NESSEN: That concluded his initial presentation and following Secretary Coleman, then Administrator McLucas discussed the meeting today at which steps to reinforce security were considered.

Q Coleman told us three things they are considering. Was there any further discussions of those three?

MR. NESSEN: I just feel at this stage it is not proper to discuss specific security steps they are considering.

Q You also mentioned January 9, is that the date by which they hope to have something worked out?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, an up-to-date report on Friday, an interim report in the meanwhile. The question of when they will have specific recommendations on new security measures, they do need to study further the things they discussed today and the President said he wanted them as quickly as possible.

Q Coleman specifically mentioned January 9, that that was the day they hoped to have something pulled together.

MR. NESSEN: The President indicated he wanted it as quickly as possible.

Q You mean before the 9th?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, the three specific steps Coleman mentioned they were considering when we were in there, additional patrols of locker areas, keeping the keys for lockers in a central point and periodic inspection of lockers. Those are among the options they considered.

MR. NESSEN: You heard him say so.

Q There were a number of others.

Q Is there any estimate as to how much some kind of a plan might cost, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: No dollar figures were discussed at all.

Q Was the inspection of all checked airline baggage discussed?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, there were a number of steps to reinforce security discussed and I just don't feel that I -- obviously because of the nature of it -- should discuss it here until they have all been explored and recommended to the President.

Q Ron, was there any discussion of possible Federal action with regard to doing something that some States have done, that is, namely, have a law that all public buildings must be equipped with shatter-proof glass, that is not plate glass, but apparently did tremendous things to people in New York. Was there any discussion of that type of thing?

MR. NESSEN: No, it was not discussed but, again, Secretary Coleman's group is still considering increased security steps. It was not discussed.

Q This wouldn't have to do with security. This has to do with not killing people with pieces of glass, things like that.

MR. NESSEN: That was not a matter discussed today.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 7:55 P.M. EST)