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NEWS CONFERENCE

#410

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:43 A.M. EST

JANUARY 8, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let me give you a little bit of background on the two meetings that the President is having today -- one going on now with the Governors of States which are large producers of rice -- Governors Edwards of Louisiana, Pryor of Arkansas, Waller of Mississippi and Governor-Elect Finch of Mississippi, together with some members of the staff and two people from the Agriculture Department.

Just by way of background, the rice crop this year in the United States is quite large, as is the worldwide crop of rice, and since the American rice crop -- normally almost half of it is sold in export, the Governors of these States want to come in and talk about what are the prospects of export sales for rice in a year when the world crop is quite large, and they want to particularly talk to the President about the so-called P.L. 480 sales of rice, and it is the President's intention to assure them that he will do what he can to promote the P.L. 480 sale of as much rice as possible. So that is the purpose of the meeting.

This afternoon, I think you probably know, at 2:35 the President is going to speak to the President's Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations. Now, this will be in the Family Theatre. There are about 60 of these members of the board, along with other officials, and so we are going to have to have pool coverage, but we will pipe the President's remarks over here live so you can hear them, and also will come back here with a tape and play it through the mult so you can make recordings of it.

Just by way of background, the Trade Act of 1974 provided that this Advisory Committee be set up so that as the President progressed with trade negotiations, he would have the benefit of a wide range of advice from various people in the private sector, both industry and labor, agriculture, the university community, service community and so forth, and that is why these people were picked.

The Act calls for 45 members. Actually, 43 have been appointed. Because some people can't make it today, about 40 members of the Committee will be present today.

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I think we will post a list -- or we already have posted a list -- of those participating.

Now the President's speech will be part of an afternoon, really, of briefings and conversations with this Committee. First of all, Vice President Rockefeller will swear them in as members at about 1:30 and then following that there will be discussions with the Under Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Baker; the Agriculture Department Director of Agricultural Economics, Dr. Paarlberg; Congressman Ullman and Congressman Conable; as well as Fred Dent, who, as you know, is the President's Special Trade Representative; his deputy, Ambassador Yeutter, and others. So that is the background on that meeting.

Q Is that a welcoming speech or what?

MR. NESSEN: It is a welcoming speech, but also some substance concerning the negotiations which are now going on in Geneva, the so-called multilateral trade negotiations. I think you know the President's well-known view on the need to expand international trade because of its benefits to the United States in terms of balance of payments, jobs for people, the expansion of American industry and so forth. So there will be some substance in the speech in addition to welcoming them and explaining that he looks forward to receiving their advice.

Q Will an advance text be put out?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President will be speaking mostly from notes and will not have a prepared text.

Q What will the other Government spokesmen be doing? Will they be briefing the Committee on the progress of the negotiations?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think that will be part of it and also, since this is an Advisory Committee, we will be hearing their advice. Fred Dent will preside and he is the Special Trade Representative.

Q Ron, would this Committee have input into such policy matters as the President's decision not to impose another grain moratorium on the Soviet Union over the Angola dispute?

MR. NESSEN: No, really, first of all, this group is only today being sworn in so they were not in place at the time of the grain discussions, but, by law, they are to advise the negotiators in Geneva and that is their purpose.

Q They do not get into foreign policy matters, then?

MR. NESSEN: Not in that particular foreign policy matter that you mentioned.

Q Ron, do they have an elected Chairman or an appointed Chairman or a spokesman of some kind?

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

Q Are all 60 of them going to Geneva at Government expense?

MR. NESSEN: No, none of them are going to Geneva at Government expense that I know of. Actually, there are 43 of them and not 60. But there is not a plan for them to go to Geneva.

Q Since this is of substance, is he going to make a major announcement on some new policy concerning trade?

MR. NESSEN: No, but I think he will spell out his own views of the necessity for improving national trade, but there will not be a major announcement.

Q Are you finished with your announcements? If you are, I would like to ask you something on another matter.

MR. NESSEN: All right.

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Q On the letter disclosed by the official press of Nigeria, the letter from the President of the United States to their government, since they disclosed it, can we get copies of that letter, number one, and of course we would like to know the reaction of the President to their reaction?

MR. NESSEN: Well, let me say a couple of things. I have not seen the text that they published as a letter from the President but my understanding, based on what we have heard, is that it seems to be accurate.

I think the only thing I would want to say about the letter itself is that it was really simply a statement of American policy on Angola. Now my understanding is that the State Department is going to have more to say on this subject.

Q Well, I spoke to the State Department and as of earlier today they offered nothing else. They did say, which we know, that the President has written to other heads of government in Africa which leads me to ask you whether the other letters are the very same as the one that we see here disclosed that he wrote to Nigeria?

MR. NESSEN: Well, on your first point I understand the State Department will have something to say.

On the subject of other letters, I think we have said all along that the United States is pursuing its goals in Angola through diplomatic means and certainly letters to other leaders both in Africa and out of Africa is a part of that. I am just not going to be able to make public letters between heads of government but I think it would be fair to say that since this letter was really nothing more than a statement of American policy in Angola that other letters were similar.

Q And the letter that went to President Amin was the very same? I ask because he is the President of OAU.

MR. NESSEN: The letter that went to President Amin went to President Amin in his capacity as President of his country and not in his capacity as Chairman of the OAU.

Q Ron, do you know what it is that the State Department will have to say? Have they briefed you at all on what they are prepared to say?

MR. NESSEN: I have an idea of what they are going to say.

Q Can you tell us?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think it is going to come out of the State Department.

Q Could we get that letter if it is the same so we could have it from this side instead of having to get it from the Nigerians?

MR. NESSEN: Bob, I really don't think even though the Nigerians have published what they said was a letter from the President that we are going to break the policy of publishing letters between heads of government, we are just not.

Q Was there any reaction from the President, Ron, on the disclosure and the contents of the letter?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the State Department will have something to say about that, I understand. The President's reaction is that his letter was simply a statement of American policy.

Q Ron, I am puzzled. When you say the State Department, are you talking about a spokesman or are you talking about the Secretary?

MR. NESSEN: A spokesman at the State Department, I understand, will talk more about this if asked about it.

Q Why can't you talk more about it? After all, you are the President's spokesman and it was a letter to the President.

MR. NESSEN: Well, this is a matter that has come up in the course of diplomacy and that is the place where any further comment will be made.

Q Well, you have made comments on other Presidential diplomatic efforts.

MR. NESSEN: Well, this particular matter, if asked, I understand will be elaborated on at the State Department.

Q What is the situation now? Has there been any success in trying to persuade the Soviets from intervening in Angola?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything new to report today.

Q Can you tell us anything about the troika meeting this morning with Scowcroft, Kissinger and Rumsfeld, about the discussions that were held there on Angola?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is one of the routine morning staff meetings. It would be silly not to think that Angola was discussed.

Q Was Scowcroft there, too?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q How long was the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think about an hour.

Q You say this will come up at the State Department if asked?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q In other words, the Administration does not want to volunteer any information?

MR. NESSEN: That is right. The letter was a simple statement of American policy.

Q Would it also be silly not to presume that the issue will be discussed at the NSC meeting this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: I would not make that presumption, but we never talk about matters discussed at NSC meetings.

Q Can you say anything about any progress at all vis-a-vis the Soviet Union on achieving the President's goals in Angola? Has there been any progress? Yesterday you said there was none. Has there been any?

MR. NESSEN: As I said to Helen just a minute ago, I have nothing to report today on that.

Q When you say that you would not, you mean it is not going to come up?

MR. NESSEN: I am, as usual, not going to say what NSC meetings will discuss.

Q I don't know why you are advising us not to make that assumption because we do assume in the natural course of events that it would be, maybe mistakenly, but that is a wide assumption. Now you are steering us away from it.

MR. NESSEN: I just would not make that assumption.

Q Are you saying there will be another subject at the NSC, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I have really trapped myself, haven't I?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I am, as usual, not going to say what is discussed at NSC meetings.

Q Well, the point is why has there not been an NSC meeting if this is such an important foreign policy --

MR. NESSEN: The President is, believe me, daily being kept informed of all the developments in Angola and he had a meeting earlier, I guess yesterday, with Dr. Kissinger, today was a regular meeting with the two Secretaries and Scowcroft, and he is fully informed of the situation.

Q When and how was the President informed about the Nigerian press reaction to the letter in making it public in the headlines that said "Shut Up"? Or has he heard about that?

MR. NESSEN: He has his daily intelligence briefing which keeps him pretty well posted on what is going on around the world.

Dick?

Q Ron, could you give us the Administration's view, in the broad sweep of American foreign policy, on the troubles over Angola vis-a-vis Russia and, secondly, how does it connect with the resumption of SALT negotiations in Geneva later this month as has been announced?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't really think that I can or should go beyond what the President has said in terms of his views on detente and why it should be pursued, where possible, and when in our own national interest, and I don't think I can go beyond what he said about the potential effect on broader American-Soviet relations of continuation of the Soviet position in Angola, and the reason I say I can't or should not go beyond is because those statements stand today as the American view.

Q Well, is there any linkage between the resumption and also do you have anything on South African troops being pulled out?

MR. NESSEN: Well, as far as the linkage goes, the President made the linkage that his concern -- I have got to find his exact words but you know the statement I am talking about in which he talked about the potential effect on broader Soviet-American relations.

As for the South African question, we have received no official word that would confirm reports I have seen that the South Africans are pulling their troops out of Angola.

Q Who is this? The White House?

MR. NESSEN: The White House, the United States Government.

Q The Government?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Do our intelligence reports indicate that is going on?

MR. NESSEN: Well, we don't have any official confirmation that they are doing what the reports say they are doing.

Q Do you have some unofficial confirmation?

MR. NESSEN: You know, we just don't have official word that they are doing that.

Q Are the reports true?

MR. NESSEN: I don't really think, first of all, that this is the place to announce or confirm possible troop movements of foreign countries but if you are asking me whether the American Government has been notified or knows in any official way, the answer is no.

Q Is the President pleased that the South Africans are pulling their troops out?

MR. NESSEN: Since we don't have any official word that they are doing that, Tom, it is a difficult question to answer but I do think that it would be fair to restate the position that what we favor is the withdrawal of all foreign elements from Angola.

Q Is the situation better there today than it was yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I would only answer that, Phil, the way I answered Helen, which is that I have nothing to report on any change to date.

Q Specifically on the South Africans, did the President think that the chances of the American position -- the weekend summit -- will be improved in South Africa?

MR. NESSEN: At the OAU?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Would the American goals be more acceptable if the South African troops were pulled out?

I don't think that is something I want to talk about out here.

Q Do you have anything about the ships?

MR. NESSEN: Only that we continue to be aware of various Soviet movements in that area.

Q Do they seem to be moving any closer to Angola?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to report Soviet troop movements, Bob.

Q Sorry to have asked.

Q What is the meaning of the resumption of SALT?

MR. NESSEN: Has that been announced?

Q Are you still dismayed? Yesterday you were able to be dismayed.

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand the exact meaning of the question, Bob, but --

Q For example, are you dismayed by the position of the Soviet ships?

MR. NESSEN: As I said yesterday, the United States is dismayed by the entire Soviet involvement in an area where we don't believe they have an interest.

On the question of SALT, has that been announced from Moscow or where?

Q I think one line at the State Department but this must mean that the President has his position on SALT or they have reached some sort of a breakthrough.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I would not leap to that conclusion. You know the President's feelings on his efforts to reduce tensions and reduce the risk of war. We are in the process of negotiating; we are continuing the negotiations. There are two or three issues that have not been resolved, but I think since the negotiations are going to resume it would not be very profitable to discuss the issues publicly.

Q I would like to ask you about this question of linkage. A few minutes ago in talking about SALT you put SALT in the context or used SALT as an example of the danger to detente that would come from Russian activity in Angola.

MR. NESSEN: I really don't think I did that, Jim.

Q You said something to the effect that involved either stated or implied linkage.

MR. NESSEN: I said that I don't want to go beyond what the President said in his last public statement because that is the official American position on this date.

Q Right, and that was in response to a question on SALT. You pointed out the President's warning about the effect on detente of the Angolan intervention. Secretary Kissinger has always said that there was no linkage between SALT and any other foreign policy issue; he has always denied linkage.

Are you saying now that SALT is linked as part of detente with Russian activities in Angola?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I think we are playing with words but I will give you an answer that obviously detente, as the President has described it and believes in it, is a process by which it may be possible to reduce tensions and reduce the risk of war in those areas where it can be helpful and in those areas where it serves America's interests.

Now clearly SALT is an area where the President would like to reduce tensions, would like to reduce the risk of war if it can be done in America's own interest and that is the --

Q In the President's view, is the success or failure of that detente process linked to Russian activities in Angola?

MR. NESSEN: The President's own last statement on that, Jim, stands as America's position.

Q One would have to assume that the two have nothing to do with each other because we are going ahead and talking to the Russians on this at the same time we are blasting them for their intervention.

MR. NESSEN: There is no change, Helen, in what the President said when asked that same question.

Bob?

Q Ron, can we get around to the Gallup Polls?

MR. NESSEN: Probably not.

Q Trot on down to Gallup.

Q What is the White House reaction to the latest Gallup which shows the President down another seven points?

Q And do you want to explain it?

Q Is this the poll you were referring to in Vail that was coming? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: No, but I notice that everybody seems to have trouble with numbers on polls. The UPI, I guess, had the wrong numbers and NBC had the wrong numbers, but in any case I am not going to report Gallup Poll numbers and not comment on Gallup Polls.

Q You commented on one out in Vail.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't, Phil. I mentioned that the President had been told that there would be a poll coming when, in fact, it had already come.

Q Had he been told that this one was coming?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether there was any advance word of this or not.

Q Do you have anything to say about the reason for the drop in the President's acceptance?

MR. NESSEN: Well, look, as I understand it there will be a Gallup Poll or a Harris Poll every week for the next however many months it is and clearly I am not going to stand here every Thursday or whatever day and --

Q You don't intend to let it go by and have us miss it if by some chance the President's ratings in these polls should go up, do you?

MR. NESSEN: I know you would not miss it anyhow, Jim, if I didn't point it out.

Q Ron, has the Administration got an explanation or a comment on the behavior of the stock market? Does that reflect the economy or confidence in the Administration?

Q That is a poll, Ron. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I just don't see what can be gained by the White House talking about the stock market. It is not one of the things that --

Q Very happy about it?

Q President Hoover used to talk about it all the time.

Q Do you have anything you would like to say about Syria's threat that it will invade Lebanon if the situation does not stabilize there?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't have anything I want to say on that.

Q Ron, do you know if the nine members of the President's Labor-Management Committee resigned this morning?

Q Question, please.

MR. NESSEN: Tom is asking about some very sketchy things I heard just before I came out here about the labor members of the President's Labor-Management Committee, and frankly it happened just as I was coming out here. I heard some reports and I really didn't have time to check because I was just on my way down here, but I will look into it.

Q Will you look into that and get us a Presidential reaction today?

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it.

Q Do you know anything about Dunlop, whether he is going to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: There is no change in that, Bob.

Q Are we any closer to the naming of either Rog Morton or Bill Scranton or anybody else as a political liaison man in the White House to the President Ford Committee and the Republican National Committee?

MR. NESSEN: Only to say that the first decision of whether to bring anybody to the White House in any capacity that resembles that has not been made and, consequently, the question of who to bring, if he decides to bring anybody, has not been made.

Q Ron, have you told us yet about the President's schedule for the New Hampshire primary?

MR. NESSEN: No. There has been discussion, as a lot of you know, of a trip to New Hampshire, but the dates and length and so forth have not been decided upon.

Q Ron, the President's campaign manager has strongly recommended that kind of a liaison man in the White House, person in the White House. Why has there been no decision?

MR. NESSEN: Well, because the President is still considering it.

Q On the subject of the President's campaign manager, he said this morning that he had not had any answer from the President on his proposal, Mr. Callaway's proposal, that the President spend a total of at least seven days campaigning in four States which have primaries: New Hampshire, Florida, North Carolina and Illinois. When do you expect the President to make up his mind on that? Why hasn't Mr. Callaway had any answer from him, and does the President consider that about the scope of his campaigning that he will do?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there was a meeting here the other day -- as I say, a lot of you know about it -- and it discussed specifically some proposals for a trip to New Hampshire and the decision on that has not been made either as to dates or length, and beyond that there has not been obviously any decisions on any other trips down the line.

You know, I think in this area, Jim, the President has told you himself that he is quite busy, and he is quite busy especially during this period with getting ready for the budget and the State of the Union and then, after that, the economic report and the whole string of legislative proposals. You know that he is going to do very little campaigning in the primary season. He is going to be here doing the job that he thinks is his job.

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Q Could that change, Ron? You say we know that he is going to be doing very little campaigning, which is indeed what you told us in Vail. If all of a sudden the campaign should take a turn for the worse, that strategy might very well change, mightn't it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate either that his back will be to the wall, or that it will change.

Q Some further on Mr. Callaway. He rather indicated that he was not too happy with your performance as a Press Secretary. He specifically said he would like to get you up on the ski slopes in New Hampshire and push you down. (Laughter)

Q He took lessons in Vail. Now, don't laugh.

Q Do you have any comment on this, either seriously or otherwise?

Q Show him how good you are.

MR. NESSEN: Well, my understanding about Bo's comments are that they had nothing to do with my performance as Press Secretary, but they had to do with a very specific -- something that I said to a few people here on a late Saturday afternoon about skiing in New Hampshire.

Q Are you going to let him push you down a New Hampshire ski slope just to make everything all right?

Q Tell him you practiced, Ron. You practiced in Vail, I saw you.

MR. NESSEN: You know, this is a very busy time for the Press Secretary and I think -- (Laughter)

Q All those State of the Union Messages and so forth.

MR. NESSEN: The best way for me to campaign in New Hampshire is to stay here in the office and do my job as Press Secretary. (Laughter)

Q Ron, yesterday when you were discussing the CIA in Italy, you suggested these leaks had undermined our efforts and so forth. Were you meaning to suggest that even if we wanted to send money to the Italian Centrists, the leaks would make it impossible to do so?

MR. NESSEN: I was talking, really, in a broader context than that, Frank.

Q Would it, in effect, put the kibosh on any such plan if it did exist?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think Bill Colby talked about that on the Today Show this morning and I don't want to go beyond what he said.

Q He said we did not send any money over there.

MR. NESSEN: That is what I heard him say.

Q You said the decision had not been made in the White House as to whether to take on a political counsellor to the President, or whatever he is to be called.

MR. NESSEN: I said anybody --

Q The President said he had made such a decision.

MR. NESSEN: When did he say that?

Q On New Year's Eve in front of the fire in his office.

MR. NESSEN: He said he was considering a person of stature. I don't think he meant a specific person. He was considering bringing aboard a person of stature.

Q Right, but he has not yet made a decision on whether to bring aboard a person is what you are saying now?

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

Q Secondly, what ever happened to Les Kinsolving?
(Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I hope nothing has happened to him.

Q On the CIA thing, you indicated the President's anger yesterday. If what I heard Colby say on the Today Show is correct, he said that it had not happened. I mean, how can you be angry if you hadn't heard of it?

MR. NESSEN: Well, if you review the transcript, Phil, you will see that I talked all along about his anger at the publication of allegations and I think I was very clear in saying that his anger was at the publication of allegations which, whether true or not, can have an effect on American foreign policy and our relationship with friendly countries.

Q Why didn't you just say the stories were untrue?

MR. NESSEN: Well, because you know, we just never say from here what the CIA is or is not doing.

Q Yesterday, Ron, you seemed to be suggesting that the Congress' role in foreign policy conduct is under study in the White House.

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't.

Q What were you, then, saying?

MR. NESSEN: I thought I was very careful to say that this raised questions that would have to be thought about and are being thought about, but after all, it was only published yesterday morning and certainly an hour or two is not time to get what you thought I was suggesting underway.

Q You didn't mean to leave the impression, then, that there might be some attempt to limit Congress' --

MR. NESSEN: I was really talking about a broader question. As you know, there is legislation that went into effect a year ago that requires that certain Members of Congress be notified of covert operations and, obviously, the White House has followed that law. I think the thing that raises some questions here is -- and it is really questions and that is all -- how do you negotiate the line between following the law and keeping those designated Members of Congress legitimately informed of covert operations, having Congress fulfill its role in foreign policy and intelligence policy without running into a situation where you could have a single Member of Congress upset or, in effect, veto some element of agreed upon foreign policy through a leak? And I mean it is those kinds of fundamental questions I was talking about and not so much any specific limiting or cutting that guy off or cutting that guy off.

Q So there was no implied threat to cut somebody out of the process?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is really a much broader and deeper question than that.

Q Ron, you are not contending that the mere fact of informing these six Congressional committees of covert activities -- you are not implying that this gives Congress any power to stop a covert activity by just informally telling the Administration that the White House or the CIA, that they don't like it? You are not trying to leave the implication that this consultation process or this informing process gives Congress any kind of practical or effective veto over covert activities, are you?

MR. NESSEN: No, I am saying that the veto or disruption of agreed upon foreign policy by a single Member of Congress through a leak raises questions.

Q I understand that. Yesterday you made a big thing about this consultation and, to some extent, today you made a big thing about this consultation process, this process of informing Congressional committees. I am just trying to pin you down here. It is not your contention that in some way this consultation gives Congress any power to stop a -- I am not talking about leaks now, but to actually stop a proposed operation, are you?

MR. NESSEN: I think what you are asking is, isn't this just kind of an after-the-fact notification with no opportunity to have any input?

Well, my answer to that is that if there are objections by Members of Congress to agreed upon policies, the proper way to do that is to discuss it with the officials, up to and including the President, and not to destroy an element of foreign policy or undermine it by leaking a news story.

Q That is all very well, but I just would like to see if we can get one thing clear. There is no contention by you or the President that this consultation process sets up any mechanism whereby Congress can stop a policy other than just complaining about the process.

MR. NESSEN: Well, the mechanism was set up by Congress, Jim; it was an Act of Congress which the President signed and followed.

Q I understand that. Your description of it -- there is no implication here that they can stop something, is there?

MR. NESSEN: They can stop it or undermine it by leaking it if they disagree with it, but the proper way to go about raising an objection is with the appropriate officials, including the President.

Q I understand what you are saying about leaks. I am just saying their objections do not have any legal weight, do they? They are not binding on the White House or the CIA, are they?

MR. NESSEN: Well, certainly the President and the other officials listen to their views.

Q But they do not have to need them, correct?

Q Ron, the Washington Post is reporting today that the President and Mrs. Ford have sent a note of congratulations to Brenda Starr. Will they also be attending the wedding? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I guess that is Sheila Weidenfeld's project.

Q And what gift are they planning to send?

Q Seriously, what led President Ford to send a wreath to the Millard Fillmore ceremony up in New York? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: A what?

Q Question?

Q They had an anniversary on President Fillmore of whom some of us are rather fond. (Laughter)

Q Ron --

MR. NESSEN: Wait a minute. I want to hear the rest of this.

Q The President sent a wreath.

MR. NESSEN: Did he?

Q That is what the reports from there say.

Q What was the question?

Q Fillmore, I believe, was one of those who was denied re-nomination by his party. (Laughter)

Q Ron, when the President meets with the Vice President today, does he intend to ask Mr. Rockefeller to campaign for him, and, also, does he intend to ask the Vice President what Mr. Rockefeller intends to do with the New York State Republican Convention delegation which some members who were selected yesterday say they are bound to Rockefeller and not necessarily to Ford?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't know what they will talk about, but I think the Vice President has already said publicly and often that he will campaign for the President.

Q Ron, I want to correct you on that statement. The first time the Vice President came out he said he wouldn't because he was bound by law and then you came out and you amended it and the second time when you were not here, perhaps you were in Florida, and the Vice President came out, or, in any event -- yes, he came out and briefed us on something else and then answered political questions here. He again said, reaffirmed what he said the first time prior to your correction of the Vice President, that he would not campaign for the President in New Hampshire or the other primary States.

MR. CARLSON: He said in some States he would not be helpful.

Q The specific question has always been New Hampshire and he has never indicated -- as a matter of fact, he has indicated to the contrary, that he would not campaign for the President in New Hampshire. I think you will find that there are others here that can corroborate, you don't need to use my --

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there is any question in anybody's mind that the Vice President is supporting the President and he has said he will campaign for him where helpful.

Q There was never any question about the support but about the campaigning for him. I don't find anything on the record that says the Vice President will campaign for the President.

MR. NESSEN: Well, my memory is that he has said it, but if you have any doubts, I think you ought to call Hugh Morrow.

Q Ron, will you or the President be doing anything tomorrow to mark the 200th Anniversary of the publication of Common Sense?

MR. NESSEN: I thought you were going to say Millard Fillmore's birth. (Laughter)

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 12:20 P.M. EST)

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 5:30 P.M. EST

JANUARY 8, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: This is a Statement by the President on the death of Premier Chou En-lai.

"Premier Chou En-lai will be long remembered as a remarkable leader who has left his imprint not only on the history of modern China, but also on the world scene. We Americans will remember him especially for the role he played in building a new relationship between the People's Republic of China and the United States. We are confident that this relationship will continue to develop on the foundation of understanding and cooperation which he helped to establish.

"The United States offers its condolences to the Government and the people of the People's Republic of China."

Q Do you know whether or not there will be a funeral delegation?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what kind of funerals they have there, what the arrangements are. I think we will have to wait and see how that works out before we know whether it is appropriate or not.

Q Is the President sending any personal messages to Mao?

MR. NESSEN: He will send personal letters of condolence to the leaders of China.

Q Mao?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check who they will be addressed to, but he will send personal letters.

Q Will that be done this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: The personal letters will go out, I guess, as soon as they are drafted.

Q Do you know who they are going to in China?

Q Probably Teng and the widow.

MR. NESSEN: Well, presumably to Mrs. Chou.

To Hsiao-ping and Madame Chou.

Q That is not the way her name is known.

MR. NESSEN: No, she has another name.

Q A separate name.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, I asked you this morning if you could get some reaction from the President on the labor people quitting. Did you get that?

MR. NESSEN: Well, you know by now that the labor members of the construction industry group did resign but I don't have any comment on it.

Q Have you heard anything from Dunlop yet?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Are all those Republican labor people or are they all Democrats?

Q Has he talked to Fitzsimmons today on anything?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he did not. In fact, I know he wouldn't.

Q Why did he look so distracted today?

MR. NESSEN: Who, Fitzsimmons?

Q No, the President.

MR. NESSEN: He didn't look distracted to me.

Jim.

Q Let me double-check one point. The President didn't meet Chou.

MR. NESSEN: Not on this trip but when he was a Congressman.

You ought to know that when the President went to China in 1972 as a Member of Congress that he did meet Premier Chou En-lai. On this past trip, obviously, he did not.

Q Ron, did the President get the word through normal channels or any special message sent through somebody?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will just pass on that. I knew about it through the New China News Agency that did announce it.

END

(AT 5:35 P.M. EST)