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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:40 P.M. EST

JANUARY 12, 1976

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry for this delay but what happened was that some of your colleagues from Time Magazine have an annual junket to Washington and it is kind of an off-the-record opportunity to go around town and meet different people and today was their day to meet the President. It ran a little longer than I anticipated, and that is what kept me.

Q Was it off the record or kind of off the record?

MR. NESSEN: No, it was totally off the record.

Q What good does that do them to be totally off the record?

MR. NESSEN: They wanted to come in and explore some areas and get some broad ideas on which to base their election coverage. They do it every four years.

Q How long were they with the President?

MR. NESSEN: A total of about an hour and five or ten minutes.

Q Are any of these off-the-record ideas going to appear in print at all?

MR. NESSEN: They are not supposed to.

Q Did the President give them an idea how it should be covered?

MR. NESSEN: No, they didn't ask him how it should be covered.

Yesterday the President worked in the office from approximately 1:30 until about ten minutes to 5:00. He worked alone part of that time and then he saw General Scowcroft and then had a meeting with Jim Lynn and Paul O'Neill.

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#413

I think you probably remember that the President has previously directed the White House Office of Public Liaison -- that is, Bill Baroody's office -- the OMB, and the Office of Consumer Affairs to hold public meetings around the country in nine cities to explain how the President wants the Government's existing departments and agencies to do more for the consumers and to ask for suggestions and ideas of how to make the departments and agencies more responsive to consumer concerns.

Tomorrow is the first of these conferences, in Chicago. There will be eight others during the month of January.

What I want to tell you today is that there has been quite a response to these announcements and, consequently, there will be three additional ones added to the nine already announced. Those three additional hearings will be here in Washington on the 17th, 18th and 19th of February with Jim Lynn opening the meeting on the 17th. I don't have a lot of detailed information on these but to get the full schedule and additional details you should call John Shlaes at 456-7090. We also have some details in writing that you can pick up in the Press Office, prepared by the Office of Public Liaison.

Q They will be open for coverage?

MR. NESSEN: I think they all will be, yes. They open tomorrow.

Q For those of us that missed this announcement originally, do you have the names of the nine cities?

MR. NESSEN: They are in the release. Why don't you pick it up after the briefing.

Q What happens after all the hearings are over?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, one of the things to do is collect ideas and suggestions on how the departments and agencies can be more responsive in their consumer activities and I am sure Virginia Knauer and the others involved can tell you what the process is for putting them into effect.

Q Will the State Department be involved in this?

MR. NESSEN: That is one of the areas -- all the departments and agencies have been told to do more for consumers.

Q They will be participating in these conferences?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to look at the news release.

Q When you put this out first you said the President will not attend any of these. Does that still hold?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it does.

Q What do you think the State Department can do for the consumers?

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, let's not get into that.

Q I am asking very sincerely. I have had inquiries on this.

MR. NESSEN: I am sure if you call the State Department and ask what their new Consular Affairs Department is doing they will be happy to tell you.

Over the weekend you may have seen a Commerce Department report projecting various economic figures ahead and by way of anticipating your questions I looked into this a little bit and found this is an annual projection made at this time of year by the Commerce Department. Their forecasts and assumptions, I am told, are based on the mid-year budget review and where the economy stood at that time.

As you know, when the President's budget comes out a week from Wednesday it will have, as required, a set of economic assumptions on which his budget is based. That assessment will be based on more recent information and an analysis of economic developments since the mid-year budget review and also based on various proposals that he will make in the budget and the State of the Union.

It is not really proper for me to say whether the assumptions that the President will reach in his budget are close to or widely different from the forecasts and assumptions made by the Commerce Department. But I wanted to try to clear that up a little bit.

Q You are not saying they are widely different, are you?

MR. NESSEN: I am not able to say beyond this point, Jim, except to say they were based on later information and proposals the information will make.

Q Does the Government make two different sets of estimates each year?

MR. NESSEN: This is something the Commerce Department does each year based on its studies of leading industries.

Q Why do it?

MR. NESSEN: It is helpful, I assume, to the people who subscribe -- it is really a compilation, I think, more than anything.

Q If I can repeat my question, does the later information that you are talking about make substantial changes in the Commerce Department's projections?

MR. NESSEN: I think we will have to wait until a week from Wednesday to see that, Jim.

The FAA and Transportation Department study of ways to improve airport and airplane safety is coming over here some time today for the President's information. It is something that, as I understand it, doesn't require Presidential action but it is being sent over here for his information.

I don't have any personnel -- or announcements of that sort to make today but it is quite possible we will have some to make over the next few days.

Q Ron, back to the airport thing for just a moment, the FBI is assisting the New York City Police in their investigation. Is that information being funnelled to the President?

MR. NESSEN: He has been kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Q How frequently, and what developments that you know of?

MR. NESSEN: I won't be able to talk about developments because the New York City authorities have been handling that part of it, but I will check how frequently he has been receiving information.

Q What is holding up the Anne Armstrong appointment?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing is really holding it up but the necessary paperwork that needs to be completed officially before the announcement.

Q Last Tuesday you told us the paperwork and consultation with the British Embassy or with Great Britain should be accomplished in a couple of days. It has been a week now.

MR. NESSEN: Let me assure you there is no problem except -- and this is no problem, it is just a bureaucratic process of getting a couple of papers signed.

Q Is she in town?

MR. NESSEN: She is not now but was last week and has now gone back to Texas.

Q Has the President seen her at all?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think the President saw her the day she was here but he will before her appointment.

Q Did he call her personally to ask her to be Ambassador to Great Britain?

MR. NESSEN: Of course.

Q He called her personally?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Will your announcement include the resignation of the Secretary of Labor?

MR. NESSEN: I have no knowledge that anything like that is coming.

Q When will the safety report be made public, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: If it is, you will have to talk to the Transportation Department about it. It is a report to the Secretary, is my understanding.

Q It will not be released through the White House?

MR. NESSEN: No, it will not.

Q On Secretary Dunlop, you say you have no information anything like that is coming. He has been twisting slowly in the wind for quite a while now.

MR. NESSEN: I don't agree with your characterization.

Q That is all right with me but, does the President have any indication he is going to stay?

MR. NESSEN: That is silly because, you know, you have hundreds of Government employees and we don't go out every day and give a disclaimer he is not leaving, he is not leaving. The President has no indication he is leaving. He doesn't want John Dunlop to leave and that is the way it stands.

Q Has anything occurred on the telephone since last week or New Year's, for that matter?

MR. NESSEN: He has not talked to him since the Cabinet meeting.

Q . Wouldn't he like to clear the air?

MR. NESSEN: The air is clear, Helen, because John Dunlop is a member of the Cabinet and has not indicated he is resigning and that is the way it stands.

Q Has the President called him and asked him to clarify his position?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, the President doesn't need to call everybody in his Administration daily and ask them to stay. John Dunlop has not indicated he is leaving.

Q Would the President be surprised if he left?

MR. NESSEN: Look, this is not going anywhere.

Q Is there anything on the President's schedule about seeing Dr. Dunlop?

MR. NESSEN: There is no appointment with Dr. Dunlop.

Q A few minutes ago you mentioned personnel changes in your statement. Are you speaking of changes in addition to Armstrong?

MR. NESSEN: I am speaking of some personnel appointments, I should say.

Q More than Anne Armstrong?

Q Is the President aware John Dunlop has indicated to the press he is thinking of leaving?

MR. NESSEN: He does read the paper, Phil.

Q So then he has some indication he may leave?

MR. NESSEN: He has indicated that the newspapers say he may leave.

Q He has never spoken to him about it?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Does the President believe that Mr. Helms appears to be getting off with a misdemeanor?

MR. NESSEN: What a dumb question.

What is your question?

Q My question is -- I will ask a different one.

MR. NESSEN: I hope so.

Q If Ambassador Helms is indicted, will his service to the United States Government cease?

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand why you want to speculate on what might or might not happen.

Q What about this report that a White House employee may be indicted with Mr. Helms? Has the President ordered any investigation on that?

MR. NESSEN: You know, Phil, it is not proper under our judicial system to speculate on what the Grand Juries might or might not do.

Q Ron, 300 of the Nation's top Protestant --

MR. NESSEN: Why don't I finish my announcements before we get to questions.

On the 7th of February, the President has accepted an invitation to speak at the annual dinner of the Nashua, New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce in Nashua, and I don't have any other details about that particular trip. By way of guidance or background I could tell you it looks to me like somewhere between a day and a half to two days. In other words, Saturday the 7th and Sunday the 8th, and certainly home by the evening of the 8th, either late afternoon or evening.

Q New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: I am talking of New Hampshire, yes.

Q Is it a political trip?

MR. NESSEN: It is a political trip.

Q Will he ski?

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans for him to do so. He would certainly like to, though. (Laughter)

Q Every time Reagan picked up a snowball last week he mentioned your name. I am wondering, have you had any revised opinions of New Hampshire's uneven snow conditions?

MR. NESSEN: I did that about a month ago, Les.

Q I missed it. Could you repeat it?

MR. NESSEN: I can dig out the transcript.

Q Is the only campaign trip that you know of the one to New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: It is the only one planned, that is right.

Q Will there be other towns involved, and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to give you precisely, but I would certainly look for that.

Q Do you have anything on the subject matter of the speech?

MR. NESSEN: Not at this point, I don't.

I might tell you just by way of background, the reason for announcing it at this point is that the Nashua Chamber of Commerce does need some lead time to get their announcements out and their programs printed and so forth, so they asked that it be announced. It is being announced in New Hampshire about this same time.

Q To bring up now a subject that will undoubtedly be brought up later, the President's name, of course, will be on the ballot in the New Hampshire primary. Is this a political trip the President Ford Committee will pay for?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. See, I told you you would know when he is making one.

Q Is this the first time you have actually answered yes to that question?

MR. NESSEN: I think so.

Let me elaborate now a little bit and say that -- you know, I will get the formula worked out for you but you know under the FEC formula there are certain people who are taken along not at President Ford Committee expense but at White House expense, like Secret Service and the Doctor, and communications and so forth. So by saying simply yes, I mean yes, the formula for the President Ford Committee to pay its share of this trip will be --

Q They will pay the President's part, for instance?

MR. NESSEN: Of course.

Q And those who are considered by the White House and the FEC to be political, like yourself --

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Has it been decided whether Air Force One will fly the President up to Nashua?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it has been decided.

Q It will be a 200-man pool?

MR. NESSEN: Right, we are getting a 747.

Q Are you saying there is nothing in the FAA report that would require Presidential action?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding, yes.

Q On this trip, what standards do you apply to decide one trip is political and another is not?

MR. NESSEN: The same standards that I have mentioned over the past six months or so, that he is clearly going to New Hampshire to campaign for himself.

Q On that same subject of New Hampshire, either on the record or by way of background, is a television appearance in Boston under consideration, as was recommended by Mr. Callaway; that is, fly to Boston for a television appearance that was recommended as his only appearance for the Massachusetts primary?

MR. NESSEN: I was not aware of such a recommendation from Bo and, while we haven't announced all the elements of this trip, I am not really aware of such a proposal.

Q Ron, next Monday there are 300 of the top leaders of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish denominations that are meeting right here in Washington for a convention called Religion and the Presidency, and they have invited all candidates and seven have accepted.

I am wondering if you can explain why on December 31 the President said he certainly intends to meet with religious leaders, when on November 26 a letter was sent saying the President's schedule -- he has to regret because of the President's schedule demands.

Why, a month after he said he couldn't meet with all these leaders, does he say he intends to?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to look into it, Les.

Q Could you also, while you are looking, see why it is he could fit in an address to the National Prayer Breakfast on January 29 but he doesn't have to answer the questions of these leaders?

MR. NESSEN: I will check.

Q Ron, will the President be going to Iowa in advance of the caucus there? Is there thinking along these lines?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Can you tell us what the thinking is by other political candidates in the kind of travel by the President in the early primaries?

MR. NESSEN: I think it hasn't changed any, Ted, from what I said out in Vail, and that is that he does hope to go once, or at the maximum a couple of times to the early primary States as a candidate.

Q Does that include Massachusetts?

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans at the moment to go to Massachusetts.

Q Ron, Jack Anderson announced on Friday --

MR. NESSEN: Does that conclude all the questions you had, Ted?

Q Why is he skipping Massachusetts? Do you know why, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: He said from the beginning that he would enter all the primaries and I know Vermont, for instance, has added one the same day as Massachusetts -- that he would enter all of them but that the requirements of his time down here, especially during this period, the early period, would not permit him to campaign in all the primaries so that really has been the policy from the beginning.

Q When you say early primaries, do you mean New Hampshire, Florida, Illinois -- is that the group you are talking about, not Massachusetts?

MR. NESSEN: You mean in terms of his overall plans?

Q You said he would go once or a maximum of a couple of times?

MR. NESSEN: I can't look forward down the road because he doesn't have any firm trips other than the one to New Hampshire, but you know the overall plan for the primaries is what I mentioned to Helen -- to enter all but not be able to campaign in all.

Q As long as you are being asked about this, you say you can't look down the road very far because no decision has been made but, as you know and as we asked you last week, there is a recommendation before him from Callaway for a total seven days and four States -- New Hampshire, Florida, North Carolina and Illinois.

At the time we asked you about that last week, you didn't have anything on it. Can you move it any further? Is that recommendation going to be adopted?

MR. NESSEN: It hasn't really gone any further, Jim, other than to commit to New Hampshire. But, there is not even any firm schedule in here, and I know that for a fact, for specific dates and lengths of stay in other States.

Q Ron, what about Jack Anderson's prediction that you are going to resign? Is there any truth to that?

MR. NESSEN: No. I didn't even see that.

Q It was on the air.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear it.

Q Hasn't the President already campaigned in Massachusetts technically? He picked up some of the money for that last trip.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he got a little carried away there at the airport and it cost the PFC a little money, I think.

Q That is the only one?

MR. NESSEN: So far as I know. You know, like when the State Chairmen came in here the other night, and I guess there were some State Finance Chairmen in here a couple of weeks before that and, of course, they pay the expenses for those meetings and receptions, whatever they may be.

You know this is not the cheapest hall to hire. It costs, I think, just for cookies and punch \$2 or \$3 a person, and more if you have hors d'oeuvres.

Q Here?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the White House. So, they have had expenses to pay.

Q Is that what they served the other night?

MR. NESSEN: No, they did have hors d'oeuvres the other night.

Q And what else? (Laughter)

Q That is \$2 or \$3 for cookies and punch. How much for hors d'oeuvres?

MR. NESSEN: \$2 or \$3 for cookies and punch. If you serve hors d'oeuvres, it runs up to \$9 or \$12 a person.

Q The committee picks that up?

Q And the PFC pays for that?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the PFC pays for that.

Q What about booze?

MR. NESSEN: I was counting that.

Q You mean it is spiked punch?

MR. NESSEN: Not with the cookies, no. (Laughter)

Q Ron, Dick Cheney talked with the State Chairmen on Friday. That was originally scheduled to be part of the open session, but because it was said he was detained at the White House, he came in the afternoon and, despite repeated and urgent press inquiries, it was held in closed session. I am wondering if this is entirely consonant with an open Administration?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know anything about that meeting. I didn't know he had done it in closed session. I will have to look into it.

Q Is Rogers Morton joining the White House staff and, if so, when and who is going to be paying his salary?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, I don't have any personnel announcements today. I wouldn't be surprised if we had some later in the week. We will explain people's duties and who pays them when we announce the appointments.

Q Do you know if he will be joining the White House staff?

MR. NESSEN: I think we will just wait until an official announcement.

Q Ron, do you have anything more to say than you did on Friday when I asked you about Bo Callaway's call concerning the Gurney trial? Callaway later said he definitely talked to Cheney.

MR. NESSEN: I talked to Bo the other night and I think Bo explained it. So, you have his words, and I think what he told reporters previously was that he talked to Cheney some time ago and said something like would it be appropriate for -- the question was --

Q For us to have an impact on delaying the trial.

MR. NESSEN: An input and Dick said, "No," and Bo said, "Okay, thanks."

Q The President is not concerned that Callaway called up even to suggest --

MR. NESSEN: He said would it be appropriate and he was told no.

Q Ron, don't you think Mr. Callaway should have figured that out for himself, that it would be inappropriate to in any way tamper with the trial? (Laughter)

Q You implied that the Morton operation, would be twofold. Is that several?

MR. NESSEN: I mean people in terms of those we may announce later in the week.

Q Ron, as you may know, the President is one of many candidates who has agreed to this course of conduct that Common Cause suggested. One of those items is personal financial disclosures. What will the format of that be? Will he write a letter to Common Cause?

MR. NESSEN: I told Fran last week we are pretty much on track to put out the medical report later this month after his next physical, which I think is in the last week in the month.

Q You don't have a date on the physical, do you?

MR. NESSEN: I think I know what it is, but I am not absolutely sure. The last week of this month would be right.

Q The physical report, will that be in detail or will it be just Dr. Lukash?

MR. NESSEN: It will be in more detail than in the past.

The other part of your question, which is financial, is yes, he is publicly committed to update the very full financial report he made public to the committees at his confirmation hearings, but when and what format, other than to say -- let me give you a little background.

We have had a number of requests from certain magazines and newspapers to let them have the financial report, and the decision was made to give it out to everybody at one time. So, that decision has been made, but when, that has not been made.

Q Does the President have any comment on the fact Governor Reagan did not agree, or one of the candidates did not agree to that Common Cause --

MR. NESSEN: No, he had no comment on it.

Q Do you?

MR. NESSEN: I am nonpolitical.

Q Ron, part of that Common Cause code, as I recall, says he will appear in forums along with other candidates, if you recall that. When does he plan to do that, and which candidates?

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

Q He will? If he says he will subscribe to it, in other words, you are not denying he may appear with some other candidates?

MR. NESSEN: I don't frankly recall the exact language of the Common Cause document.

Q On another matter, is the President concerned about the financial condition of the First National City Bank and the Chase Manhattan Bank?

MR. NESSEN: The President saw what the Comptroller of the Currency had to say in response to that particular story, and I think that is the proper place for it to be addressed and not here at the White House.

Q Has the President received any information from the Comptroller of the Currency about these two banks or other banks?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q Does he or anyone at the White House receive a copy of this list the Comptroller maintains?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q Is there any procedure by which the Comptroller alerts the White House or the President when he has reason to be concerned about any particular bank?

MR. NESSEN: I know Bill Simon is the overseer of the Treasury, and its operations, and if there was something he felt should be brought to the attention of the President, I know he would.

Q Has he brought either of these banks to the President's attention?

MR. NESSEN: He has not.

Q Is the President pleased or displeased by developments at the Addis Ababa meetings? Does he feel progress is being made there on Angola?

MR. NESSEN: Since they are in the midst there, John, I am not sure we should comment on each day's developments, but I will say we hope the summit in Addis Ababa would facilitate an early end to the fighting and would reach a conclusion that leaves this African problem to the Africans to solve.

But, to get into any sort of detailed analysis of where they are and where they are going, I think it is too early.

Q Has the President sent any new messages to them, formally to the group?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think the United States has made its presentation to the African countries and others through diplomatic means, and I think we will have to await the outcome now.

Q What is the President's reaction to Congressman Digg's remarks?

MR. NESSEN: I think, Sarah, you just have to say that the President has made clear his policy toward Angola and his reasons for pursuing that policy, and I don't really think that I would respond directly to Congressman Digg's remarks.

Q There is a little newspaper in Paris called "Liberation" put out by John Paul Sartre, and today it published the names of 32 alleged CIA agents, plus the picture of the man who is said to be the Station Chief in Paris, and they promised to publish the names of 28 more agents. Does the White House have any comment about that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know about that specific episode other than what you have just told me. But, the President's feelings on this are clear and strong, and he does not believe in publishing the names of agents or alleged agents and putting them in a position where they could come to some harm because of the publication.

Q Ron, has the President reached any decisions on changes in the intelligence community yet?

MR. NESSEN: I think about the only thing I can say about the Saturday meeting is the President's own characterization of it as having made good progress. By way of background, I would say that some decisions were made following that meeting, but I can't right now still give you the timetable for the presentation of his full review of the intelligence situation and recommendations for changes.

Q Could we get back to this thing of the fellow at the Washington Star saying someone here at the White House might be implicated? Does the President know or is he trying to find out who that is, or has he been brought up to date on that?

MR. NESSEN: Bob, I don't see how I can talk about an alleged prospective indictment. I don't think our justice system works that way.

Q I wonder if when the President picked up the paper this morning and saw where one of his people may be indicted. I would think, if I were President and picked up the paper and it said someone might even be indicted for car theft, I would want to find out who the person was, find out what the deal was.

Does he know, or has he looked into it?

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into it and see what can be said, if anything.

Q Is the President concerned or is the President trying to find out whether any member of the staff was involved in a breaking and entering in a photo studio in Fairfax, Virginia? As opposed to whether there will be any indictments, doesn't the President want to know if a member of the White House staff was involved in such an episode?

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it.

Q Also, hasn't the Justice Department kept him informed of any possible charges against Helms? On the whole Agnew thing, all you had was back and forth between the White House.

MR. NESSEN: I think in this area, Helen, I want to be very sure what can be said, and still protect the sanctity of the grand jury system and also to protect the reputations of people who are innocent.

Q Can you say if the President still has full confidence in Ambassador Helms?

MR. NESSEN: He does have confidence in Ambassador Helms in his post in Iran.

Q To get back to the physical examination, will this be a full-scale physical in Bethesda?

MR. NESSEN: It is his annual physical. I am not sure whether it will be there or here.

Q Wasn't there some reluctance on the part of Dr. Lukash to make this public?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q This was overcome by the President?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is this just going to be a physical? As I understand from the Common Cause agreement, it is his medical records, which takes us back through his life.

MR. NESSEN: His medical records, Jim, up through October of 1974, are spread upon the record and are in the records of the two committees, so this would more or less bring you from October 1974 to the present time.

Q You said that he has confidence in Helms in his post in Iran. Does he have any confidence in his past activities with the CIA?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, the man has a job as Ambassador to Iran, and that is his post in this Administration.

Q I am asking you a question.

MR. NESSEN: I don't see how I can go back, or how the President can go back to a period --

Q He is going back. For one year he has been studying the CIA.

MR. NESSEN: My answer is he does have confidence in Ambassador Helms in his post in Iran.

Q Isn't our embassy post in Iran tied to the CIA?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of. (Laughter)

Q Is the President aware there is an article in this morning's newspaper report in the Washington Post that says Ambassador Helms may be indicted?

MR. NESSEN: Tom, we are really getting awfully close or over the line, maybe, into a person's rights and the sanctity of the grand jury system and so forth.

Q Nonsense.

MR. NESSEN: Tom just did.

Q If the story is inaccurate and you checked into it, you can say it is inaccurate. If you haven't, you can say you have not. There are ways to answer the question.

MR. NESSEN: Tom, you know better.

Q There are ways to answer the question.

MR. NESSEN: The way I am answering is it is improper to talk about any investigations that may or may not be going on.

Q Ron, what you are giving has familiar echoes of answers that go back about two years.

MR. NESSEN: I hope not.

Q Ron, Congressman Digg's allegations today imply that there is bad faith and bad actions, that they haven't been true to their words to the caucus of Congressmen, the Black Caucus Members and if Mr. Ford is not going to come out and defend Secretary Kissinger, somebody seems to imply that the President went along with what was done in Angola and that the President didn't keep faith with the Congress on this.

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, I am just not going to get into Congressman Digg's remarks other than to say --

Q You may not get into it, but by not getting into it sort of leaves the implications the President approves of what Secretary Kissinger allegedly did.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by "Secretary Kissinger allegedly did." The President has stated American policy in Angola and explained his reasons for that policy, and Secretary Kissinger is the one who carries out the President's foreign policy.

If you are suggesting there is any difference between the Secretary and the President on the Angolan policy, you are wrong.

Q I think you have not read the story and are not familiar with it.

MR. NESSEN: I am familiar with it.

Q The story alleges that the action taken by this Government there was in total violation of promises and assurances given the Black Caucus in Congress. The story alleges these actions were taken by Kissinger. If the President is not going to say anything about--

MR. NESSEN: I say it is the President's foreign policy, Sarah.

Q Is this the President's foreign policy, to go against the assurances given the Black Caucus in Congress?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the assurances were and I am not sure you are, either.

Q I don't think you are familiar with the story.

MR. NESSEN: I am familiar with it.

Q The new Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Fraser, has made a statement. He suggests that the United States will do well to build up its military strength in the Indian Ocean to counter the Soviets. Is this under consideration by the President and the Administration?

MR. NESSEN: I think for details of the Indian Ocean military deployment you need to check at the Pentagon.

Q That was to build up as a matter of State policy.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can get into that.

Q Ron, if you did resign, would you get into politics?

MR. NESSEN: With my poll ratings? (Laughter)

Q To get to the schedule, will the other campaigning in the other primaries --

MR. NESSEN: Have I been mentioned?

Q Yes, by Jack Anderson.

MR. NESSEN: The well-known Washington mentioner. (Laughter)

Q Will the other campaigning in other primary States also be on weekends? Is that the present picture?

MR. NESSEN: Ted, the fact is nobody came into the White House and said, "Look, let's go down to Florida on such and such a date for so many days." It hasn't reached that stage yet.

Q How about two weeks vacation in sunny Florida?

MR. NESSEN: That sounds good to me.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 1:18 P.M. EST)