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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:35 A.M. EST

MARCH 24, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I have to leave here at 12:10 today, so let's get started.

First, let's welcome back one of our former colleagues who has gone on to stardom, Steve Bell, who is here with us.

The President is meeting this afternoon at 5:00 with the Turkish Foreign Minister. I don't have an agenda entirely for the meeting, but the likely topics include U.S.-Turkish bilateral relations, including American aid to Turkey, the status of the base negotiations that are going on between the United States and Turkey and the Cyprus situation.

In addition to the President and the Foreign Minister, General Scowcroft will be there, and following the meeting we will have at least a written report on the meeting.

Q     Ron, will they not be talking about drugs, narcotics and that sort of thing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a full agenda, but the three items I mentioned -- bilateral relations could cover a number of the areas that you mentioned, but I don't have the full agenda.

I leaped ahead a little bit.

At 3:00 there is going to be a signing ceremony by the President in the East Room for the Congressional resolution that establishes a Commonwealth for the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific.

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Just to give you a little background on this, on July 1 of last year the President transmitted the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Covenant to Congress for consideration. The people of the Northern Marianas had approved this Covenant in a plebiscite that was supervised or was observed, rather, by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. That plebiscite was held on June 17, 1975.

Ninety-five percent of the registered voters participated and 78.8 percent voted in favor of this Covenant. The House of Representatives then approved the Covenant unanimously July 21, 1975, and the Senate approved it 66 to 23 this past February 24.

About 200 people will attend the ceremony, including the President's personal representative to the Micronesia status negotiations, Ambassador F. Hayden Williams.

Q Isn't the Vice President going?

MR. NESSEN: I think the Vice President is away.

I think you know that this afternoon at 3:30 the President will have another meeting with Secretary Mathews and Dr. Cooper and others on the flu problem, and I expect that after that meeting we are very likely to have some information to give you here on the outlook of the problem and the steps the President will decide at this meeting to take.

Q About what time would that be?

MR. NESSEN: My guess would be that the meeting would last about an hour, so I would think that whatever information we have to give out would be around 4:30.

Q Do you expect the President of the United States to appear here before us.

MR. NESSEN: It is hard to tell at this point, Phil, but I would not rule it out.

Q 4:30, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: In the 4:30 area, yes.

Q Would that be a general press conference, if it does happen, or just specifically on this?

MR. NESSEN: I think it would be on this subject.

Q Only?

MR. NESSEN: The information we pass out after the meeting will be on the subject of flu, yes.

Q In other words, he would just read a statement if he came down?

MR. NESSEN: If he comes down and, as I say, that is a possibility I would not rule out.

Q Can we get pictures of Lukash giving him the shot?

MR. NESSEN: We just have to wait and see what happens after that meeting, but I would expect some information to come after that meeting.

Q Are you announcing the C-130 sales today?

MR. NESSEN: No, we are not.

You heard the President and his own assessment of the voting yesterday in North Carolina -- many of you heard it, anyhow -- in the Rose Garden this morning, so I don't have anything I can add to that.

That really is basically what I have to offer today.

Q Senator Helms said out in front of the West Wing that the President's forces down in North Carolina used what he called dirty tricks by cancelling telephones and so on. Can you comment on that?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, is there any kind of political reassessment underway about how the President figures to reverse the trend of North Carolina and do better?

MR. NESSEN: Actually, the President's plans are pretty much to continue the game plan he has had from the very beginning, and that game plan has not changed, and there are no plans to change it. The plan is to go into all the primaries and to have enough delegates by the time the convention opens in Kansas City to win the nomination.

The President said from the very day that he announced his candidacy that his first responsibility was to stay in the White House and be the President. There is no way to get away from that, if he wanted to -- he does not -- but that is his first responsibility and that has affected the amount of time he has for campaigning, and it will continue to.

So, there really is no basic change in his plans. I am not sure if he pointed it out or not this morning but, of course, the object of primaries is to get delegates toward winning the nomination in Kansas City, and the delegate count yesterday I guess was quite close. It was, I think, 28 to 25, so it was not a bad showing at all in the delegate race.

Q In North Carolina?

MR. NESSEN: In North Carolina, yes.

Q Ron, you say "continue the game plan," but you have not announced a game plan much beyond this coming weekend's trip to California, so what I am wondering is, what is the game plan in terms of campaigning beyond California this weekend?

MR. NESSEN: The game plan is unchanged. Now, the specific trips that might come up -- we have not got any trips planned at the moment beyond the trip to California and stopping at Wisconsin on the way back, and then I think the following weekend there will probably be another trip to Wisconsin.

Q So, my question is, would you expect the President to continue his rigorous schedule of weekend campaigning right up through California?

MR. NESSEN: I don't accept the rigorous weekend of campaigning business. There is no change in the campaign plans.

Q Do you have any announcement to make today about the management of the campaign at the top?

MR. NESSEN: I do not.

Q Do you anticipate you will have any later today?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate that I will have any later today.

Q Ron, does the President feel there is any effect on this unexpected loss of either the Callaway episode or the Nixon letter cover-up? (Laughter)

Q Answer yes or no.

Q Have you discussed it or do you rule it out, Ron? You ruled out the effect of the Callaway thing. You said there was no effect in previous campaigns, previous primaries.

MR. NESSEN: After all, to do an analysis of why the people of North Carolina voted the way they did is going to take some time. It will be made, but it will take time to find out what issues persuaded them to vote the way they did. I just don't have the answers today.

Q To follow that, some of the polls indicate that Reagan's attacks on the Ford-Kissinger foreign policy had an impact. If your own research supports that, will the President address himself to that? Will he himself, and not just the Secretary of State, respond to Reagan's attacks on his foreign policy?

MR. NESSEN: I just think that we are going to want to wait and analyze the motivations of the voters in North Carolina, Ted, before making any further comment.

Q Has there been any contact with Callaway, either by the President or any of his aides, in the past few days?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly not by the President.

Q How about Cheney?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check around and find out about that. In the President's case, the answer is no. I don't know about all the staff people.

Q Who is doing the analysis, Ron? What is the process they are going through?

MR. NESSEN: There is a kind of post-electoral polling that is done, actually.

Q Who does that?

MR. NESSEN: It is being done at the PFC or by the PFC, whoever does the PFC polling.

Q Ron, it is a little hard to understand why -- you all have just come through a campaign down there -- that you don't know what the issues were.

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think that is quite what I said.

Q I know that may not be what you said but that is actually the case because last night they said they did not know what the issues were and would not know until they surveyed this week and that is what you said, too.

MR. NESSEN: No, I said it would not be possible to tell what persuaded people to vote one way or the other until there has been a chance to do a survey of -- I don't know what they call it -- basically voter motivation or whatever.

Q Then I will put it this way. Would you tell us what were the main issues in the race in Carolina? They must know. They just came through it.

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, I think what you are asking is why did the President lose in North Carolina and at this point --

Q No, I am just asking what were the issues.

Q He lost because of the anti-homemaker speech.

MR. NESSEN: It is clear he lost the anti-homemaker vote with that speech.

Q Those little girls can't even vote, but what were the issues, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, I think, last night to people who asked what were the issues in North Carolina, if you look at the President's speeches there last weekend you will see the issues that he felt were important to talk about and that is the economic recovery, the need for a strong national defense, and the need for a strong foreign policy. Those are the issues he talked about.

Q The President did not say in talking to the Texas delegation, did not make any reference to whether he would win or what in Texas. What does he believe he will do in Texas?

MR. NESSEN: I have not talked to him specifically about the State of Texas. He is firmly confident he will win the nomination in Kansas City.

Q Governor Holshouser said the overriding issue in North Carolina was who would win in November. Does the President take exception to that?

MR. NESSEN: The President believes he will win the nomination and win the election in November, so obviously he has his own views about that.

Q Ron, the Texas primary that Dick asked about, of course, is weeks away, but two that are around the corner are New York and Wisconsin. Has the President said to you that he expects to win those?

MR. NESSEN: He told the people in the Rose Garden today that he thought Wisconsin would be close but he thought he would win. The New York situation, I am not clear in my own mind how that works, there are delegates pledged, and I need to check on how that works.

Q Is the President trying to line up John Connally's support in Texas? Has he heard anything that might indicate that he will have his support and confidence?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I tell you beyond a certain point my political knowledge runs out and these are the kinds of things that ought to go to the PFC on strategy and contacts and so on.

Q Ron, do you know what options the President is considering with respect to Cuba?

MR. NESSEN: As Dr. Kissinger has said and as the President has said, I just think that the President's position is clear that the United States cannot and will not accept any further Cuban military adventures, but in terms of specifically what the United States would or would not do in response to any specific Cuban move, I am just not able to say today.

Q I did not ask you to lay out the options. I am asking you do you know what options the President is considering? I am inquiring as to the state of your knowledge.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't think that is a very interesting question.

Q He will seek Congressional approval?

Q It is interesting to me.

Q Could I get an answer, please?

MR. NESSEN: Dave, I don't really see the pertinence of the question.

Q That does not have anything to do with it. There are a lot of questions that are raised in here that are impertinent every day.

MR. NESSEN: I think it is "unpertinent," irrelevant.

Q Will the President seek Congressional approval for any military act he would take or anything else regarding Cuba?

MR. NESSEN: I just think we are into a hypothetical area there.

Q You were not hypothetical in your statement here that you were not going to let them make another move.

MR. NESSEN: All I am doing is reiterating what the President and Dr. Kissinger have said. I am not saying anything new here today.

Q You can't leave it up in the air for the American people not to get in on the dialogue at all. You are just making a threat here against another country.

MR. NESSEN: I am only reiterating what the President and Dr. Kissinger said and I am not raising any threats.

Q Correct me if I am wrong, but I believe at one time the President and the Administration's position was that you would not tolerate any Cuban expansion or adventurism in this hemisphere. You are now saying anywhere in the world. Can you say if that is a broadening of the early position?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the position is as stated by the President and Dr. Kissinger.

Q Is it anywhere in the world or is it only in this hemisphere?



MR. NESSEN: What Dr. Kissinger said most recently -- and it reflects the President's policy -- is that we cannot accept any further Cuban military adventures.

Q Could I ask, please, is that a political threat intended to counter the Reagan thing or is the Administration drawing the line here vis-a-vis Soviet and Cuban military expansion in the world?

MR. NESSEN: The point here, I think, is that the President is on record and Henry Kissinger is on record, and I am not going to take the matter any further today because there is no place to take it, so we can ask a lot of questions but there are no answers that are going to advance the story in any way.

Q Could you answer my question? I asked the question were Secretary Kissinger's remarks aimed at a political audience here in the United States or was the Secretary enunciating the President's policy that the United States is drawing the line on any further Soviet or Cuban military expansion anywhere in the world.

MR. NESSEN: This was certainly not done for any domestic political purpose. It was a statement of foreign policy.

Q Why was the statement made?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean, why was the statement made.

Q What prompted the Secretary and the President to make statements on Cuban military adventures? Was it just Angola or anything more?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean "anything more?"

Q Well, was there other reasons besides the happenstances in Angola which prompted the President and the Secretary to make this statement.

MR. NESSEN: This is the American foreign policy as it relates to Cuban military adventurism and the President and the Secretary have stated it quite clearly.

Q Ron, the Secretary of State's statement, refusing to rule out a possible invasion of Cuba, is that reflective of the President's thinking too?

MR. NESSEN: Saul, I am not going to take this one centimeter beyond what the President and Kissinger have said in public, so I think everybody is wasting time.

Q I don't want to go further. I want to know if it is the reflection of the President's views since the President does make foreign policy.

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kissinger enunciates the President's foreign policy.

Q You said Cuban and Soviet adventurism.

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kissinger and the President have said we cannot accept any further Cuban military adventurism.

Q It doesn't matter what the Soviets do in Africa? Really, why do you draw the line on Cuba?

Q There is a follow up question to my original question. When you denied there was any domestic political motivation in the Secretary's remarks, then the only conclusion we can draw is indeed the President and the Secretary of State are drawing the line vis-a-vis Soviet and Cuban military expansion and then the American people, according to Mr. Reston in the Times this morning, have a right to ask how does the President intend to draw the line and by what means, because in drawing the line you are potentially committing American forces into battle.

MR. NESSEN: Well, Walt, as I said before, there is nothing to be added to the public statements of the President and Secretary on this matter.

Q Can you tell us whether or not the President and Kissinger consulted with leading Members of Congress before these policy declarations were made?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that Dr. Kissinger spoke in general terms during a recent appearance in Congress, a committee, on this subject.

Q But on the statement that you keep quoting on not accepting any further Cuban military adventurism, do you know whether that statement of policy was discussed privately with any Member of Congress?

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

Q Ron, is the purpose of this bipartisan meeting on defense today -- how long ago was it planned -- and is the purpose of this meeting to clarify the Cuban position or is it to meet the question of the defense issues in the North Carolina primary?

MR. NESSEN: No, it has nothing to do with the North Carolina primary because it was originally supposed to be held a couple of weeks ago and for one reason or another not everybody could make it to that meeting, so that meeting was postponed until today. But it was scheduled some time ago and it was at the request of a number of Members who asked to come in and discuss some defense and foreign policy issues that concerned them.

Q Does it involve Cuba?

MR. NESSEN: Well, since the Members are going to lead the discussion and bring up the subjects that interest them, it is not entirely possible with certainty to say what will be discussed or what is being discussed, but Cuba is one of the matters that the Members indicated they wanted to discuss.

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Q Ron, will you find out for me if there are any geographic limits on stopping Cuban adventurism? I am still not clear on what you said.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I will.

Q Ron, on another matter, the President, in Hickory on Saturday, said of the North Vietnamese leaders that they were a bunch of international pirates. Does that mean the Administration has now given up the idea of trying to normalize relations with the Vietnamese Government?

MR. NESSEN: I think you cannot take two words out of what the President said on Saturday. You have to look at the rest of the statement. Have you looked at the rest of the statement?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Did you see the part where he says, "We will continue to work and do everything we can to get out MIAs back"?

Q Usually when you accuse another Government of being a bunch of international pirates --

MR. NESSEN: The President used the precise words he intended to use, which included "We will work and do all we can to get our MIAs back."

Q But the question was not dealing specifically with MIAs. The question was dealing with whether or not the United States intended to continue efforts to normalize relations, which would go across a broad spectrum.

MR. NESSEN: I think the President said in another setting fairly recently there was no chance to normalize relations until the North Vietnamese lived up to their commitments at Paris to account for our MIAs, and that has not changed.

Q Ron, was the President tired when he said that, and does he regret having called them international pirates or is that a purposeful remark which he would make again?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, if you read the entire statement you will see that he pledges to continue doing everything he can and working where he can, and when he can, to get the MIAs back.

Q But in the Hawaii speech and in press conferences since then he has been very careful to point out that relations were improving, that they depended on the information on the MIAs. He has been very moderate in his language.

Now, in North Carolina, he was rather immoderate. International pirates is not something you call somebody when you want to be moderate. I wonder whether he believes he misspoke himself or did he really mean they are a bunch of international pirates?

MR. NESSEN: I have heard nothing that would indicate to me he wanted to take anything back that he said.

Q Ron, since Dr. Kissinger, as you say, speaks for the President in enunciating foreign policy and in regard to Rhodesia, Dr. Kissinger said, "We have no stake in and will give no encouragement to illegal regimes," I am wondering how the President regards as legal regimes those 19 African Governments that came into power as a result of military coup and the 20 more who presently only allow one party?

Q Yes, or no?

Q Could we get an explanation of what he means by legal regimes? What does the President regard as a legal regime in Africa?

Q Les, why don't you also ask about Rhodesia?

Q I did. I cited Rhodesia, Dick.

Q No, you didn't.

Q I did mention Rhodesia, Dick. I have it right here, I read it, and I said Rhodesia. Check the transcript. Ron, if we can get to the question.

MR. NESSEN: Obviously, each case is a separate case and there is no overall answer I can give you on our policy of recognizing foreign Governments, Les, but I think the State Department can help you.

Q They already have. They said this list is accurate and the man said, "Well, you will have to ask Dr. Kissinger for his definition of the term 'illegal regimes'."

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a very simple answer for you today.

Q Ron, Dr. Kissinger says that while we will not or cannot any longer be the policemen of the world, neither will we or can we allow the Soviets or Cuba to be the policemen of the world. I have two or three questions on that. Is that the President's policy?

MR. NESSEN: Secretary Kissinger always enunciates the President's foreign policy.

Q Then two other questions. Is that a change in our policy, and what does it mean, that we cannot or will not allow some other countries to be the policemen of the world?

MR. NESSEN: I will take the question and attempt to get an answer for you.

Q Ron, last night Ambassador Scranton made a statement at the United Nations which has aroused some discussion. Can you tell us first whether or not the President cleared that speech in advance and, two, does this represent a change in policy?

MR. NESSEN: I think, Joe, since you follow the subject quite closely, you know that Ambassador Scranton's remarks on the Israeli settlements were a restatement of the policy that was stated by Ambassador Goldberg in 1968, by Ambassador Yost in 1969 and by Ambassador Burke in 1971, among others. Our position then and now is that the settlements are not helpful to a Middle East peace settlement. Certainly there is no change represented by the Ambassador's speech, and I suggest you read the whole thing and I think you will come to that conclusion yourself.

Q Was there a recent NSC meeting on Cuba?

MR. NESSEN: There has not been, to my knowledge, an NSC meeting on Cuba.

Q I am intrigued with the Senators. Did they request a meeting to come in and see the President basically on Cuba?

MR. NESSEN: No. They asked for this meeting at least a month ago, to my knowledge, and there was one scheduled and then postponed, and it was scheduled, I guess, two or three weeks ago.

Q Are they concerned about some foreign policy or defense matters?

MR. NESSEN: They wanted to come in and talk about a number of defense and foreign policy issues that interest them.

Q I have not looked at the list. They are not all Republicans, are they?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think so. They are not all Republicans.

Q Who led in getting up the meeting, Ron? What Senator made the contact?

MR. NESSEN: I believe Senator McClure was the primary person who asked for the meeting.

Q Ron, on the Scranton statement, has it always been American policy that the settlements are illegal?

MR. NESSEN: I think, as a matter of fact, I would like to check the record on this, but I think actually the language used by Ambassador Scranton was more restrained than has been used on previous public occasions, so there is no change of policy.

Q By whom?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, Ambassadors Goldberg, Yost and Burke on specific occasions, and others also.

Q You mentioned the last one was made by Burke in 1971. That is five years ago. Since then, apparently, nobody of stature has said the same thing in any such terms except possibly Secretary of State Rogers in enunciating the Rogers policy.

The question then arises, why is the statement being made now by Ambassador Scranton and (b) is the Rogers policy really in effect, the Rogers plan?

MR. NESSEN: Joe, I don't see the need to get into a very long discussion of this matter. There is no change of policy, as you see. Your question was, why did Ambassador Scranton enunciate this again. The reason here is he is taking part in a U.N. debate on the subject.

Q Ron, it is my understanding that the issue at the United Nations now basically deals with the West Bank. I don't know that there are any settlements on the West Bank. There are many settlements in the Golan area, and Scranton yesterday referred to occupied areas.

So, I think the clarification at this point is -- to follow up Joe -- this repeat of our policy, does this deal with settlements in all the occupied areas; in other words, in theory, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan?

MR. NESSEN: I think you need to ask the State Department for that detail.

Q I did. I spoke with them, and that is why I am asking you.

Q Ron, they play ping pong down there. They send us here and you send us back there and we go back and forth.

Q I pointed out, of course, we would be talking here, but perhaps they could resolve it earlier, but there was no help in that.

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you that much detail, but I am sure the State Department can and will.

Q Ron, yesterday Brock Adams, Chairman of the House Budget Committee, proposed spending about \$19 billion in excess of what the President proposed. I am just wondering if the President still expects his budget to be approved and whether you have any general comments on Adams' comments?

MR. NESSEN: If you look at Brock Adams, not only does he call for this increase in spending, which would lower the amount or reduce or eliminate the amount of money available to give people the extra tax cut that the President is talking about, but if you delve into the specifics, you see that he is cutting obligational authority for the Defense Department by \$7 billion and transferring that over to the other programs.

So, the President not only disagrees with the increased spending that Adams calls for, but specifically disagrees with removing \$7 billion from the Defense Department budget. My understanding is that that is Brock Adams' proposal alone, and that the Budget Committee has not voted on that as a ceiling or as a specific allocation of the money.

Q But he is the Chairman, so he has some influence over the committee. To get back to the second part of my question, does the President still expect his budget amount will be approved?

MR. NESSEN: He certainly does. He certainly does expect that amount should be approved.

Q Ron, is there a change in figures for the April 10 reporting?

MR. NESSEN: The economists are looking at the economic statistics and seeing what, if any, revision needs to be made for the April budget update. They have not made any changes yet.



Q Ron, may I take you back to the Scranton thing? Did the President know about what Scranton was saying? Did he clear the speech in advance?

MR. NESSEN: The Ambassador to the United Nations also articulates the President's foreign policy.

Q Sometimes he does it off the cuff.

Q Ron, is the President the slightest bit concerned that his subsidy proposals for AMTRAK will cut the rail passenger service of the nation in half just as we are getting ready to have a flood of visitors from overseas?

MR. NESSEN: I have to look into that one, Sarah.

Q This was brought out in testimony yesterday in the House. It was stated before by the President of AMTRAK.

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into that. I don't know.

Q Ron, last April, Ralph Nader, Margaret Mead and others asked to come in and see the President about nuclear power. They have gotten letters saying, "Yes, we will try to arrange something," but nothing has been done. Can you say why or can you find out why?

MR. NESSEN: I have to find out. I haven't heard that they wanted to come in.

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Q Can we expect at any point in the near future you will be able to say more than you are able to say this morning on that?

MR. NESSEN: On the Cuba situation?

Q In terms of the specifics of that policy and what it means.

MR. NESSEN: I think what it means is very clear now. What the United States would or would not do in response to specific Cuban actions, I don't expect ever to be able to say.

Q I was not asking for the options. I was again repeating that question. Is the United State drawing the line on no further Cuban or Soviet military expansion?

MR. NESSEN: In other words, you don't feel that the statements are sufficiently clear at this point?

Q Yes, that's correct. And the reason being, Ron, there is the question of the domestic politics. There is the question of the bluff. In other words, if there was a guerilla war in Rhodesia -- we already ruled out military intervention there, so what else could it be besides bluff?

In Rhodesia specifically if you say the U.S. will not intervene militarily and Kissinger says "we are drawing the line, no more Soviet or Cuban military expansion" -- if there is Cuban guerilla activity in Rhodesia, what are you doing? You are either bluffing or you are going to intervene.

MR. NESSEN: I think you may have misread some of the previous statements on Rhodesia, Walt, and I think you should go back and look at them.

Q Are you including the Soviet Union in this statement on the policy?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to expand or retract previous statements one centimeter today.

Q I am not asking you to, but I want to be clear. Are you saying also Soviet expansion because every question you have responded to here has involved the Soviets too. Is it just Cuba?

MR. NESSEN: I think all the questions have had to do with Cuba. I certainly hope they have.

Q Mine have not. I said specifically every time Soviet and/or Cuban.

Q When we put this statement out, what are we referring to?

MR. NESSEN: What statement out? All I am doing is reading you transcripts of what the President and Kissinger have said over the past couple of days, so I hope nobody gets the idea I said anything new here today because I didn't intend to.

Q These are legitimate questions, very important.

MR. NESSEN: I agree with you, Les.

Q They have given you some material for Walt's question. These are very important questions.

MR. NESSEN: I agree they are very important questions. I simply don't intend today to move the matter beyond where it is.

Q Did the President tell you you could not talk about this, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, you know again as in Dave's question, I think how and where I get my information and so forth -- I don't see it as a matter of relevance here.

Q You don't think it is relevant for us to know whether the President's Press Secretary is informed on matters of national concern?

MR. NESSEN: You can be sure that I am, Dave.

Q How, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Because I am assuring you.

Q Ron, did the President tell all his senior staff this morning that they better start cooperating a little more?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, this is not of any interest outside of this room, I don't think.

Q No, Ron, wrong, wrong, wrong.

Q Ron, any additions to the California schedule?

MR. NESSEN: No additions to the California schedule. It is still San Francisco for lunch and Los Angeles for dinner on Friday. Fresno the middle of Saturday and then LaCrosse, Wisconsin, Saturday night and then back Saturday night. I don't have any fresh details.

Q Ron, will the White House withdraw the name of Mr. Stone, the nominee to be on the Federal Home Loan Bank Board? This is a matter of controversy in the Senate Banking Committee. They are holding up his confirmation.

MR. NESSEN: I know there is, but there is certainly no plans to withdraw his name.

Q Ron, may I ask you a question about a Presidential statement? He said in Chicago -- this was some days ago -- that the efforts through the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Bill -- although he did not mention JV as such -- but he did say the limitation in the Trade Bill passed by the Congress constituted a bad mistake. That is the President's words. He said he had assurances that the Soviet emigration would be increased with the implication that the bill has not been adopted.

Now the questions are where did these assurances come from to the President? Did he pass them out to anybody? When did he get these assurances, and if the bill was a bad mistake, why did the President sign it, and if it were a bad mistake, why did all the 82 Senators presently voting accept the bill -- or the amendment, I should say -- after the Secretary had testified before the Senate Finance Committee in approval of it, and the President apparently, since the Secretary, as you say, enunciates the President's policy, obviously he was speaking for the President as well. The questions are on these assurances, and also in the light of these assurances can you tell us why he signed the bill?

MR. NESSEN: If you go back and you look at the letter Dr. Kissinger wrote at the time which we distributed here in the press room, I think that will answer your questions, Joe.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:10 P.M. EST)