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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:45 A.M. EST

APRIL 5, 1976

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: We have quite a few events today, including some that didn't appear on the original schedule. Let me run through them quickly.

At 1:30 there will be a ceremony at which Ambassador Strausz-Hupe takes his oath as the new Ambassador to NATO. That will be in the Rose Garden, with the President attending and speaking.

As you see, at 2:15 there is a ceremony in the Rose Garden at which the President will sign one of the parts of his energy program approved by Congress; that is, approving the production of oil from the Naval Petroleum Reserve at Elk Hills, California.

At 3:00 the President will sign a proclamation on a month devoted to old Americans.

At 3:30 the President will sign a Rural Development Act coincidental with a visit by the Kansas Farm Bureau.

All of those events will be in the Rose Garden and all are open for coverage, if you desire it.

Q Even the Older Americans Proclamation?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q So, he is not going over to see Buendorf?

MR. NESSEN: That Treasury Department award to Buendorf?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: At the moment he is not.

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Q Ron, is he going to make a speech tonight to a dinner of Greek Americans?

MR. NESSEN: The AHEPA dinner?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: There hasn't been any decision I can announce on that yet.

Q Will you know by this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, by this afternoon I will know.

Q Is it likely?

MR. NESSEN: I can't tell one way or another.

Q What is the dinner?

MR. NESSEN: The AHEPA Greek-American organization dinner. He has been invited, and I don't know whether he will go or not.

There is one event tomorrow I can tell you about; that is, the opening ceremonies of the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac, across the river, tomorrow morning. The President will leave the White House about 10:55, with open coverage over there and a travel pool going with the President. The President will speak briefly and be back at the White House about 11:55, which will delay my briefing I guess until probably about 12:30.

Q Will Lady Bird, Lucy Bird and Linda Bird be there?

MR. NESSEN: Mrs. Johnson and other members of the Johnson family will be there. I don't have a complete breakdown. The National Park Service announcement of the event just says Mrs. Johnson and other members will be there.

Q Will Mrs. Ford be there?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure Mrs. Ford will be back from Wisconsin by then.

Q She will be back tonight.

MR. NESSEN: Let me check on Mrs. Ford then.

I don't know if you recall, but in September of 1974 the President and Mrs. Ford attended the ground-breaking ceremonies for the grove. It is across the river between, say, the Memorial Bridge and the 14th Street Bridge. It is somewhere in there. That is tomorrow.

Q There was something about a monument that was going to be sculpted there that was stopped over a dispute on design.

MR. NESSEN: I thought the grove itself was the memorial.

Q There was to be a big pink granite monument there.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I remember that. It says the 15-acre site is dominated by a 45-ton granite rock from the Texas hill country. The rough hewn rock carved by sculptor Harold Vogel is surrounded by four quotations of the late President -- one on education, civil rights, the environment and the Presidency.

Do you want us to have this National Park Service press release Xeroxed so you can write overnighters on it?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anymore announcements.

Q Ron, Senator Tower has challenged Ronald Reagan to a debate, and I was wondering, does the President feel this would be useless because the positions of Tower and Reagan are well known, or does he feel Senator Tower has been wise in asking Reagan to debate the issues face to face?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how he feels about that particular debate, Les. I will have to check.

Q Will you check so we can find out tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q When will we find out about the Texas trip?

MR. NESSEN: I think you can look forward to a Texas trip on Friday and Saturday, but I don't have the details. I will probably have them by tomorrow, at least a rough outline.

Q Is he going to El Paso on Saturday?

MR. NESSEN: That is probably a real possibility.

Q Gold Star mothers and cattlemen dinner?

MR. NESSEN: The fact is, the pre-advance team is still down there, so the precise events have not been decided on yet.

Q What do you have to say about Rogers Morton's remarks that Secretary Kissinger will not be in the next Ford Cabinet?

MR. NESSEN: I don't really have much to say, Walt. The President was asked almost precisely the same question at Green Bay on Saturday, and gave his answer, and I would refer you to that answer. It is fairly lengthy, and it really is the President's --

Q I know the President's answer, but it seems to be somewhat at odds with the quotes attributed to both Morton and Mel Laird. The President said Kissinger can stay as long as he wants. The Morton quote seems to suggest that perhaps Henry might have worn out his welcome by then.

MR. NESSEN: I can only tell you what the President's position is, and he stated it I thought quite clearly in Green Bay.

Q Ron, Morton's comment, it seemed to me, went more along the lines that Secretary Kissinger himself may not want to stay beyond November. The President has always said, as you say, that he is welcome to stay as long as he wants. Morton seems to be saying Henry Kissinger probably won't want to stay on in the Administration beyond January. That is one way to read it, anyway.

Do you know what the basis for saying that was? Has Kissinger communicated to the President, for example, or anyone here, that he probably will decide to do something else come next year?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Does Rog just imagine it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. All I know is what the President's position stated less than 48 hours ago is.

Q I assume this was brought up in your meeting with the President this morning, and I would like to know what the President's reaction to Rog Morton's statement was.

MR. NESSEN: Phil, the President has stated his position on Doctor Kissinger on Saturday, which was the latest in the long series of statements, and he has not obviously changed his mind since Saturday.

Q Would I be wrong in interpreting the President to mean when he says Henry can stay on as long as he wants that Henry is indeed welcome to stay on as Secretary of State for a full four-year term should the President win in November?

MR. NESSEN: You should look up what the President said on Saturday, or we have transcripts almost finished. It is on the bottom of page 6, and the top of page 7, and that is the President's view.

Q Does the President believe the Secretary should not be a campaign issue?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean, a campaign issue?

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Q Reagan is making the Secretary a campaign issue itself. Does the President welcome this? Does he think it is wrong? Does he mind?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I haven't heard him answer that specific question.

Q Rogers Morton was not speaking for the President, is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: The President spoke for himself Saturday, Helen.

Q Who is Morton speaking for? He is his campaign manager.

MR. NESSEN: Yes. I am not precisely sure what Rog said. I have seen a number of versions of it.

Q I can give you an exact quote. I can go get it for you right now.

MR. NESSEN: It is immaterial because the President has spoken for himself.

Q Ron, I don't think you answered my question. My question was, directly, what did the President say this morning when you asked him to respond to Rogers Morton's statement? Did he say, "See my Green Bay speech"? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: The President's views on Secretary Kissinger are as stated on Saturday, Phil.

Q Was he aware that Morton would be saying this?

MR. NESSEN: That Morton would be saying --

Q That Kissinger would probably be leaving?

MR. NESSEN: -- what he is reported to have said? I would like to simply stick to what the President's views on Secretary Kissinger are.

Q Ron, is it true the President expressed no irritation over what Morton said?

MR. NESSEN: Is it true?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Has that been printed?

Q You have been asked twice what the President said, and you haven't answered it. My question is, did the President indicate any displeasure over what Rogers Morton was quoted as saying?

MR. NESSEN: The President believes everyone in his Administration or connected with his campaign should understand his views on Secretary Kissinger as stated on Saturday and should follow that same line because that is the President's view.

Q Does he plan to talk to Rogers Morton about this, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think Rog will understand that is the President's position.

Q Who is going to relay the word, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether the President will have a chance to do it himself or --

Q Mr. Cheney?

MR. NESSEN: No. Probably Roy Hughes.

Q Who is that?

Q Ron, is this possibly the same kind of thing we saw with Nelson Rockefeller some time ago when Howard Bo Callaway started bad-mouthing Rockefeller and the President saying Rockefeller is still my guy? It went back and forth until Rockefeller handed in his letter asking not to be considered. Isn't this the same sort of thing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to make any connection between the two things. Really, you know what the President's views on Kissinger are. I have said today that the President feels that everyone in the campaign and in the Administration should know his view and should take the same position, and I don't see any analogy with the other situation.

Q Are you saying he is going to be reprimanded?

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't say that.

Q You are saying he is going to get the word from the President that he shouldn't have said what he said?

MR. NESSEN: And each person in the Administration and the campaign will get the same word.

Q How? By a general memo?

MR. NESSEN: No, by my saying it here publicly.

Q That the Secretary can stay on as long as he wants?

MR. NESSEN: Look it up in the Green Bay Q & A.

Q Ron, who is going to go back to California and tell the audience in California that Rog Morton is wrong? Who is going to do that?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure what Rog said to the group because I guess it was in private.

Q You are pretty sure. My question is, who is going to correct this error with the audience in California?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that it was an error and I don't know who, if anyone, will get back to that group.

Q In other words, the impression will be left that there are two positions in the President's Administration; is that right?

MR. NESSEN: There is only one position and that is the President's.

Q Obviously, there are two, because you are not going to correct that statement made out there that was absolutely the opposite. If you are not going to make an effort to correct that, then there must be two positions.

MR. NESSEN: There is only one position.

Q Will Rogers Morton retract that statement if there is only one position? This is exactly the opposite. We are puzzled, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is exactly the opposite --

Q It is not the same.

MR. NESSEN: Each person in the Administration and in the campaign will now know, I think, what the President's position is and that they should follow it.

Q Ron, do you know whether the Secretary of State has discussed this Morton statement with the President?

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

Q Did they see each other or talk together today?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, they did.

Q When?

MR. NESSEN: For about an hour, from 9:15 to 10:15. That is the regular -- I don't want you to say Henry came rushing in here to talk about this. It is his regular couple of times a week meeting with the President on foreign policy.

Q Was he alone or were Rumsfeld and Scowcroft there, too?

MR. NESSEN: General Scowcroft was there, as normal.

Q Ron, the funny thing about it is the President has made this statement about Kissinger not just at Green Bay, but the President made his statement before about his confidence in Kissinger so it is rather peculiar --

MR. NESSEN: I tried to say that last week, Sarah, when a somewhat similar issue came up regarding the President's opinion and views of Dr. Kissinger. I said then that it comes up almost everywhere he has a question and answer session so there should be no --

Q Why do you think Rogers Morton, who is supposed to know everything the President feels politically, did not know it?

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

Q Ron, for the sake of updating our stories, would you mind stating what the President's position is today?

MR. NESSEN: No, but I will provide you with a transcript of his remarks in Green Bay.

Q That leaves us at an awful disadvantage. If you could read it, then we would know that you are really not trying to ease Henry out.

MR. NESSEN: The Xeroxes are on their way.

Q Isn't there some way to express the President's position --

MR. NESSEN: You mean, isn't there some way I can give you a fresh story saying the President rushed to Henry Kissinger's defense today against Rogers Morton?

Q I am not trying to get that at all, but Morton made --

MR. NESSEN: I will give you a Xerox of what he said in Green Bay.

Q But Rogers Morton made his statement, I understand, after the President made his.

MR. NESSEN: Did he? I don't know. This was Saturday in Green Bay, wasn't it?

Q But Morton spoke later. It would be helpful if you could say what the President's position is today.

MR. NESSEN: I think it would be best to give you a Xerox of what he said so you will have it accurate. It is on the machine now.

Q Which stop was that in Green Bay?

MR. NESSEN: It was the one there in the big arena where the people asked questions.

Q Ron, since you are using us to pass the President's word to all the people on the Administration and in the campaign, did the President tell Kissinger personally this morning that he still has his full confidence and wants him to stay aboard as long as he likes?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I didn't attend that meeting. It is one of his regular meetings several times a week to discuss foreign policy matters.

Q Did they discuss this at all?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Didn't you ask the President?

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't.

Q Ron, can I pursue the matter of how many times a week Kissinger meets with the President? It was my understanding when they had the Sunday shuffle that Kissinger still would meet with the President an hour a day. Was I incorrect and would it have slipped to a couple or three times a week and who else advises the President on foreign policy?

MR. NESSEN: I think this is old stuff, Dick.

Q I have been away for a while and want to check these points. Can I get an answer?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want a story rehashing Henry losing all his power at the White House.

Q So my editor can decide which story we do.

MR. NESSEN: I think everybody here knows Dr. Kissinger has a meeting two or three times a week with the President, or more, if needed, to carry out his job.

Again, we have said here before many times that Don Rumsfeld also meets a couple of times a week with the President, George Bush does, and there are other meetings in which all three of them, as well as General Scowcroft, attend. This is old stuff. It is not anything I am saying today in relation to the Morton story.

Q Will you deny that Henry is being eased out?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

You have it. Now you have a lead.

Q Ron, did you get a call from Dr. Kissinger or somebody in his office right before this meeting?

Q Will you deny there is an element in the President's political campaign among the strategists that Kissinger should go, particularly in view of the new possible areas of conservative antagonism to him?

MR. NESSEN: I missed the first part.

Q Is there an element in the political campaign structure that would like Kissinger to go? A lot of this has come out in different ways and Morton seems to be speaking --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Helen. You will have to ask the campaign people. I know what the President's position is and I know he wants everyone to understand his position and to reflect his position.

Q Ron, quite apart from Kissinger's ability as Secretary of State, does the President agree with Morton's statement that it would be bad politics to get rid of him now?

MR. NESSEN: All I can give you is the President said what he wanted to say on Saturday.

Q Did Henry threaten to resign this morning?

Q Did he call or somebody from his office call you just a minute before you came out?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Brent Scowcroft?

MR. NESSEN: Brent Scowcroft was talking to me about another matter.

Q Why is it that you can't give us any indication whether or not he plans to stay beyond this year if the President is elected?

MR. NESSEN: You need to ask Henry that question.

Q You have told us before the President has discussed this with him. You have never answered that question at all.

MR. NESSEN: I have told you what the President's position on Kissinger is.

Q That doesn't really respond to the question as to whether or not he expects Kissinger to stay on in a Cabinet of his if he is elected to another term.

MR. NESSEN: All I can do is refer you to what he said publicly.

Q Does he want all his Cabinet members to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: Now, Helen, stop fishing. There is nothing there to fish for.

Q Really, I think that is a valid question.

Q He said he is welcome to stay. Does he expect Henry to stay?

MR. NESSEN: I think, as the President said himself, as you will see in the transcript -- he said, "I would like Kissinger to be Secretary of State as long as I am President, and I can't expand on that."

Well, if the President can't expand on that, I can't expand on that. That is a quote from the Saturday thing. It is nothing fresh.

Q If Henry resigns at the end of the year -- let's assume the President is elected, Henry will have to resign like all other members of the Cabinet. The question there becomes, will the President accept Henry's resignation?

MR. NESSEN: We are trying to read the future. I can't read the future. Nobody can.

Q Every Cabinet member has to turn in a resignation at the end of the term. Henry will then send in a perfunctory letter or a real letter. If it is a perfunctory letter, will the President accept it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can go quite that far.

Q Ron, is the President concerned that Dr. Kissinger wrote to Senator Buckley charging that Evans and Novak "severely distorted what actually happened in the Sonnenfeldt conversations"? Sulzberger, of the New York Times, said he talked to a number of people who were there for the Sonnenfeldt conversations and he claims Evans and Novak are accurate. Kissinger says it was severely distorted by Evans and Novak and then he tells Derwinski it was due to some junior clerk and transmission difficulties.

Does the President see any slight conflict in all of this and why doesn't the President ask the Secretary to give out the copy of the Sonnenfeldt cable and end all of the mystery on this?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is the question you asked Funseth on Friday and I think I would give you the same answer he gave you.

Q I hope you will give me a better answer than that. I am used to getting better information here than at the State Department, much better.

MR. NESSEN: It is the answer, Les, that, if you formed a pattern of every time somebody leaked in full or in part a classified document, that the response was to make public the entire document, you can see where that would lead and that is the reason, I understand, the State Department has decided against releasing the summary of Sonnenfeldt's remarks to the Ambassadors.

Q How about the inconsistency of telling Senator Buckley one thing and Derwinski the other?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see and don't know what difference there was, if any, between what Henry wrote to Buckley and what was told to Derwinski. I think the President talked about this issue in Milwaukee and I have here, and I tried to tell you what the American policy -- the President's policy is toward Eastern Europe, which is really the issue.

Q Ron, the fact that the President gets this question constantly on the campaign trail --

MR. NESSEN: Which question?

Q The question on Kissinger's survival. Whether he likes it or not, he has to admit Kissinger has become a campaign issue.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what makes a campaign issue.

Q I mean, the fact it crops up at every Q & A --

MR. NESSEN: And the President gives the same answer.

Q So it has become a problem in that he doesn't seem to be able to convince people.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Just because the question is asked, it doesn't mean it is a problem.

Q Ron, this morning Zumwalt held a news conference and said he had talked to some diplomats during his just-completed European tour and they told him a message was sent out from Kissinger, or the State Department, on February 1 of this year which outlined the U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe, and it was, in effect, the same thing that we had heard about in the so-called Sonnenfeldt document.

My question is, does the President know of a February 1 message sent to our diplomats regarding Eastern Europe?

MR. NESSEN: This is getting to be a more and more tangled tale. Let me see if I can untangle it. I don't know precisely what Zumwalt was talking about, but I assume what he was talking about was the five- or six-page document that we talked about here last week, or maybe it was the week before last we talked about it.

This is a summary of Hal's remarks to the Ambassadors which took place in December and, as the State Department said last week or the week before, the five- or six-page summary was prepared about eight weeks later and was sent out to the American diplomatic posts throughout the world and, as is traditional or as is the procedure at the State Department, any cable that goes out to the embassies is signed with Kissinger's name, whether he personally writes the cable or not.

My guess is that is what Zumwalt is talking about and it is the five- or six-page document, I guess, that the Economist was reported to have published and that Evans and Novak say they have seen and Bernie Nossiter has written about, Steve Rosenfelt and so forth. So I don't think it is a new document that Zumwalt was talking about. I think it must be the five- or six-page document we talked about last week.

Q He also said that this so-called message that went out February 1 was much different than the message that went to Congress last week. The Buckley letter, he said that had been doctored -- it was a different policy than had been outlined in February.

MR. NESSEN: No, it is not a different policy. Obviously, they were in two different forms. One was a summary prepared about eight weeks later by someone down the line at the State Department, summarizing what he thought was the thrust of Hal's remarks to the Ambassadors. The other was a letter from the Secretary to Senator Buckley setting straight what the President's policy toward Eastern Europe is.

Q Not to belabor this, but Zumwalt seemed to be saying the Buckley letter put a little different spin on all of this.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Does that mean -- is that right or indeed was the first cable somewhat garbled and did not correctly state U.S. policy?

MR. NESSEN: The first cable -- if it is the same one we are talking about -- was a summary of Hal's remarks and, as I think I said here and the State Department has said for the last two weeks, taken in its entirety Sonnenfeldt's remarks did accurately state American foreign policy toward Eastern Europe.

The letter to Senator Buckley was something entirely different. It was a very brief summation of American foreign policy.

Q I can't remember. I heard you say most of it, but I can't recall. Did you leave the impression that perhaps some parts of that cable could be taken to mean -- could be incorrectly, or could state -- I have my own troubles here this morning.

In other words, could parts of that cable have incorrectly stated foreign policy? Could there have been parts that could have been misinterpreted by the diplomats that got it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it could have been misinterpreted by the diplomats that got it because they would have read the entire thing. I think if somebody leaked a sentence here or there without the entire cable being read, it obviously led to misinterpretation because Evans and Novak misinterpreted it, whatever portions they were shown. But, taken in its entirety, you could not mistake --

Q Have you read the summary, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I have read the summary and I have read the Buckley letter from Kissinger. I think I have read all the pertinent documents.

Q Did Sonnenfeldt say in his summary that the United States should support and encourage a policy of peaceful so-called "organic union" between the Eastern European nations and the Soviet Union?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I don't have the document in front of me. As I say, I think part of the original mistake here was being shown a sentence or two -- a sentence or two being shown to some people did get everybody pointed in the wrong direction. Since I don't have it in front of me, I am not going to say, yes, that is in there --

Q Why are you more entitled to receive this than Congressman Derwinski, who asked for it and was turned down? Why is a Press Secretary or a News Secretary more entitled to this document that is denied to a Member of Congress of the United States?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that it has been denied.

Q It has. Derwinski said he asked for it and was denied. Why?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know myself that he was denied. I know a lot of people have talked to Congressman Derwinski to set his mind at ease as to what American policy is.

Q He is not at ease because he said he has been denied the thing.

Q Ron, is this right? This confusion occurred because of a classified action taken, classifying Sonnenfeldt's remarks after they were made, and the refusal then of the Administration to declassify those, when they could easily have, and then a restatement of policy about two months later in a cable out to Ambassadors that is not made public, and then a brief summary to one Senator, right?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so, Sarah. I don't know where the confusion came in and I don't really think I should try to sort it out. But I have tried and the President, more to the point, laid out in a very carefully prepared statement to the luncheon in Milwaukee the other day his policy in Eastern Europe, and that is the pertinent question.

What this reporter heard or saw, whether he might have misinterpreted -- I mean, the State Department reporter writing a summary eight weeks later did violence to what Hal said and so forth, these are somewhat periphery issues. What the President said in Milwaukee the other day is the American policy toward Eastern Europe and that is the important thing.

Q Morton, on Friday, said he would ask the President to do more campaign traveling. Has Morton done so, and will the President do more traveling?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether he has told that to the President or the President's advisers. At the moment, the pace of the campaign will be about as it has been in the past.

Q Ron, no increase in the traveling?

MR. NESSEN: So far there has been no decision made like that.

Q Ron, on another matter, last Thursday, I believe it was, a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee passed an oil divestiture bill. Appropriate to that, I am wondering, has the President taken a position on this matter in any of his Q & A sessions out on the road? I don't remember him saying anything.

MR. NESSEN: That did come up briefly at the senior staff meeting this morning and he was told the Energy Resources Council was examining the bill, which I believe was approved by one vote by the committee, and will have its view to express to the President, at which time, I assume, he will take a public position on it.

Q Ford hasn't taken a public position on the general idea of doing that?

MR. CARLSON: He has said a few words here and there in press conferences around the country. We can probably pull something out of that.

Q I am interested in the answer, and I didn't quite get it.

MR. NESSEN: John thinks maybe here and there the President has had a few words to say on it. We don't recall precisely what they were but we will try to get them out of the Research Office, to find out what he said.

Q What about a press conference here? I understand from what you said last week there would not be -- at least I inferred there wouldn't be one before tomorrow's vote in Wisconsin. That leaves the rest of the week.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't mean to leave the impression that it had anything to do with the voting in Wisconsin.

Q I said I inferred that.

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate one this week in Washington. I think there is a good chance he will probably meet some Texas reporters.

Q What has happened to the Presidential press conferences?

Q You mean here?

MR. NESSEN: No, down there.

Q I am aware this is an election year. Nevertheless, both you and the President have been, over the months, firmly behind the idea of frequent press conferences. If I am not mistaken, he has not had one in Washington since February.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q We are getting on about two months. One more month and you will equal Nixon's record here -- three months, or 19 weeks, I believe it was.

MR. NESSEN: You have had all of these out-of-town news conferences and interviews, East Room Q & A's and citizens forums --

Q How do you like being President, Mr. President?
(Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Walt, you know that the questions are better than that.

Q They are softballs, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Wheaton College was no softball.

Q They weren't asked by experienced people who knew how to ask follow-up questions.

Q Ron, what is the problem with the White House Press Corps having a news conference?

MR. NESSEN: There will obviously be White House news conferences.

Q When?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a date to give you, Helen.

Q The point is, we are being by-passed and with your everyday manning of the barricade in asking questions we can't --

MR. NESSEN: The President is holding a lot of news conferences.

Q But why is he by-passing the White House Press?

Q This sounds like the Reagan citizens press conference routine.

Q Will he appear when we ask questions before the ASNE next week?

MR. NESSEN: If it is possible to figure out a way -- there is going to be 900 people here and nobody can figure out how to get an orderly Q & A with 900 people.

Q Why have it orderly, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: So we are trying to arrange a disorderly Q & A session, which shouldn't be too hard.
(Laughter)

Q There, again, we are being by-passed.

Q He has done Q & A's with 4,000 people in some of these setups.

Q The answer is, you are trying to arrange it?

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q Ron, could I try to get a yes or no answer on Kissinger?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. (Laughter)

Q Does the President expect him to serve in a new Administration if he is elected?

MR. NESSEN: The President's position on Dr. Kissinger was stated on Saturday and I will give you copies of it so you are completely familiar with it.

Q The question is, does the President expect Henry Kissinger to serve as Secretary of State in a new Administration if he is elected?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to give you what he said less than 48 hours ago about Dr. Kissinger and you can be sure that that is his view.

Q That is not the question he was responding to.

MR. NESSEN: It is his statement.

Q Ron, 117 Members of Congress have written the President of the United States asking him to take a position on the regime in South Korea, the Government of South Korea. May we have his reaction?

MR. NESSEN: Dick is asking about a report that a letter was sent up here by 116 or 117 Members of Congress. I guess you would have to say it was on the political situation in South Korea. I checked this morning and couldn't find that the letter had arrived yet.

Q Was it sent by mail or delivered here?

MR. NESSEN: If it hasn't arrived yet, it isn't likely it was sent by mail.

Q The Supreme Court this morning refused Lieutenant Calley's case and you recall the great uproar in this country at that time when President Nixon said he would review it and give a final determination. I would like to know whether President Ford intends to get involved in the Calley case?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't know about that decision. I will have to check for you.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.