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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

#487

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:35 P.M. EDT

MAY 4, 1976

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I guess tonight we will do pretty much the same thing we have done on other primary nights. The President will be in the Residence and I will be around the office and probably will say something later in the evening when we have something definitive in the way of returns.

I understand Rog Morton will be over at the PFC and they will have their usual open door policy and so forth. I may slip over there for a little while and then come back over here.

Q Do you have a rough idea when you would be having something to say?

MR. NESSEN: No, but certainly there is not going to be anything before 9 or 10 o'clock that will be definitive enough to say anything about.

Q As in the past, the action is over there. Could you give us some kind of warning if the action is going to shift?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I will be in touch with Rog and I may be over there myself.

Q Will the President be alone?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, because Mrs. Ford is going out of town.

The outlook I think the President gave you himself yesterday. In his view, he feels he is behind in Alabama and Georgia. He thinks he will do well in Indiana.

Q Does that mean win?

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MR. NESSEN: I don't think he has predicted that. He said he would do well.

Q He does not perceive a second place finish in doing well, does he?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I mean he just thinks he will do well. It is a delegate race. to see how many delegates you can get.

Q He did at one point think he would win.

MR. NESSEN: I am telling you what the outlook is in his view this morning.

Q In other words, he is stopping short of predicting a victory.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q What if he loses all three, does he have any feelings on this?

MR. NESSEN: There is a fourth today also which I did not mention yet and that is the District of Columbia, and the President will win all 14 delegates there, as far as we know.

Q He has already, hasn't he?

MR. NESSEN: I think today is the final process in winning those 14.

Q They were certain about it because there was no opposition.

MR. NESSEN: Well, that may well be, but as we have said from the beginning, Reagan clearly has ducked out of those primaries where he did not think he would do well, which does not negate the fact that the President picks up 14 delegates, and the object of the game is to pick up enough delegates to win the nomination. So whether he has chosen to duck out or not doesn't take away the fact that the President wins 14 delegates.

Q Those delegates are already counted in the total given to the President by the RNC, is that right, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: The RNC is not counting delegates.

Q Unofficially they are counting delegates.
I think those are in the total of their --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether they are or not.
But there are four primaries today and the President expects
to win the one in the District.

Q Can't we just tidy up the semantic exercise
that we go through every Tuesday here? If he is going to
do well in Indiana, he expects to win in Indiana.

MR. NESSEN: Why are you putting words in my
mouth, Tom. Dick asked me whether I was stopping short
of predicting victory and I said yes, I am.

Q Then tell me what doing well means.

MR. NESSEN: It means he will win a respectable
number of delegates in Indiana.

Q Well, Ron, there are 21 at large delegates
in Indiana which will go to the winner of the State and if
he loses those and gets half of the rest--he gets 16 or
17 if he lost--that is not doing well.

MR. NESSEN: I am just telling you how the
President views the Indiana primary.

Q Ron, to help us out you will tell us tonight
if he does well, won't you?

MR. NESSEN: I think you will tell me, won't you,
Marty?

Looking ahead just a bit to tomorrow, there are
two things here that may be of interest to you. There will
be a little ceremony in which the President will have a
reunion with the Outstanding Young Men of 1949, of which
he was one. That is the Junior Chamber of Commerce
Outstanding Young Man of 1949, of which the President was
one and Justice Byron White was another, and I don't have
the complete list, but we will by tomorrow. So that is
one event here tomorrow.

Q What time is that?

MR. NESSEN: 12:30. He is having lunch with them.

The other event tomorrow that may be of some interest is in the Rose Garden at 2:30 when the President will sign the Highway Construction and Safety Amendments Act.

Q Did you say 2:30?

MR. NESSEN: 2:30 in the Rose Garden, that is correct. Margaret Earl has full details of what that Act consists of and what its significance is, and you can get in touch with her after the briefing.

I think also the President will be meeting with Republican Congressional leaders early in the morning tomorrow.

Q Do you foresee any evening activities that would be coverable?

MR. NESSEN: Tomorrow night? It's possible.

Q What is on the agenda for the meeting with the Congressional leaders tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: There was -- revenue sharing was one and the child care veto override.

Q Is there going to be a news conference tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: Tomorrow?

Q Tomorrow night.

MR. NESSEN: It is not planned.

Q Then what is coverable tomorrow night, can you tell us?

MR. NESSEN: I think it may be a drop-in at a social event in town.

Looking ahead toward the end of the week, the President is going to be going to Nebraska and Missouri on Friday and Saturday. The President will be leaving sort of early to mid-afternoon on Friday and the first stop will be Omaha.

The event there is the dedication of a hospital wing at the Archbishop Bergen Mercy Hospital Wing. That wing of the hospital was destroyed in a tornado last year.

That will be 5 o'clock Omaha time for the dedication.

Then later that evening, at about 8 o'clock at the Holiday Inn in Omaha, there will be a farm forum. That is where the President will speak briefly and then answer questions.

Q Ron, is that dedication of the hospital wing going to be billed as an official duty?

MR. NESSEN: It is paid for by the PFC. As all of you know, since January the rule has been if any stop on a trip is a political stop, the whole trip is paid for by the PFC. I think all of you know that and I think probably Governor Reagan knows that, too.

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Q Ron, I think what Reagan was talking about, if I can figure him out, was that --

MR. NESSEN: What the Governor really meant to say?

Q Yes. -- that bills are not sent to the President until sometime several weeks after, and I am just wondering if that is correct?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea. That is not my understanding, but you can check with the PFC, which pays all the bills, and I understand they just paid -- every month the bills, the outlays and the income are published and there has never been any secret about it and, of course, they pay their bills regularly, as I understand it.

Q But if he takes a series of flights one month and is billed for them the next, that gives him a slight advantage over those who have to pay either in advance or on the spot, as some of the candidates have to now. That is why I raised the question.

MR. NESSEN: The PFC can help you with that, Bob.

On Friday evening we have the Farm Forum at the Holiday Inn in Omaha, and there will be the overnight there in Omaha. On Saturday the President will drive from Omaha to Lincoln, where he will deliver the commencement address at the University of Nebraska. That is at 10:00 the next morning in the University Sports Center.

At 12:30 local time the President will leave for Independence, Missouri to participate in the dedication of a statue of President Truman at 2:00 p.m. I don't have all the background on that yet -- I will, on the statue.

Then there will be the return to Washington later on Saturday, and I don't have an exact time, but I don't think it is going to be one of your real late night or early morning returns.

Q Nothing after the statue?

MR. NESSEN: At the moment, there is not. It is possible there could be some event added after that.

Q Ron, does he plan to go to Michigan next Monday?

MR. NESSEN: I know of no trip next Monday to Michigan, not on Monday.

Q What about Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is Tuesday, either.

Q Then it has to be Wednesday.

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything officially to announce.

Q Is there the possibility of a trip to Michigan next week during the week?

MR. NESSEN: There is that possibility.

Q But no travel Monday or Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: Not planned, no.

Q Ron, what are the chances of having the text of the commencement address Friday evening?

MR. NESSEN: I think we really ought to try to do that. We ought to try to make that maybe for Saturday p.m. papers, 10 o'clock. I will try to do that.

Just to backtrack a little today, the President is meeting this morning with the Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary. The Deputy Prime Minister was invited to the United States last fall by then Commerce Secretary Morton at the time that Morton was in Hungary. Then the new Commerce Secretary Richardson reaffirmed that invitation and is the host for the visit. The Deputy Prime Minister will be meeting with various U.S. officials and businessmen during the trip. The meeting with the President is in the nature of a courtesy call.

Q Now what happened to his predecessor?

MR. NESSEN: Tell us, Dick.

Q He fell into a vat of molten steel. (Laughter)

Q What is his name?

MR. NESSEN: His name is Gyula Szfeker.

Q What time is that meeting?

MR. NESSEN: 11:45.

This afternoon the President is also meeting with Dr. Helmut Kohl, the Minister of the West German State of Rhineland Platinate. He is in the United States in his capacity as leader of the Christian Democratic Union, Christian Socialist Union coalition, and will be meeting with senior U.S. officials and Congressional committees during the visit. This is mostly a get-acquainted visit and also to talk about social issues.

Q Is this visit through the President's invitation or Kohl's initiative?

Q Will we be able to talk to Mr. Kohl?

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kohl came to the United States at his own initiative. What was the other question?

Q Will there be a photo deal or will there be coverage later, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: It is really sort of an informal meeting. It is not an official meeting.

I guess that is it.

Q Is the President going to veto the Federal election bill if the Congress sends it up here today?

MR. NESSEN: He has not seen what is in the final bill, Bob, and so it isn't possible to say yet.

Q If it comes up here, do you expect he will make the decision today?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how long it is going to take him to analyze the bill and decide whether to sign it or to veto it.

Q You can't give us any guidance on whether we can expect that today if they send it up here today?

MR. NESSEN: I am not even sure if it is going to come here today, but I would not expect, whenever it comes, to have a decision made the very first day. It takes some time to read it and analyze it.

Q Has he ever made any comment on the provision of the bill which restricts the political action committees --

MR. NESSEN: I think we are going to wait and see what is in the bill that Congress sends up here.

Q Will he veto the foreign assistance bill today?

MR. NESSEN: Possibly today or tomorrow. It is not really nailed down yet.

Q If he vetoed it today, would he veto it late?

MR. NESSEN: He wants to write a statement of explanation and that may take a little time.

Q So, there is no question he is going to veto it?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q We will have a little ceremony, is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think it would be handing out a statement.

Q Ron, this question is by request.

MR. NESSEN: Whose request?

Q One of my papers.

MR. NESSEN: You are like one of those people at the Q and A sessions. Are you disowning the question?

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: Do you stand behind the question?

Q Sure.

In view of the fact Otto Kerner is dying of cancer and that the Illinois legislature has passed a resolution asking that he be pardoned--the President has received letters from bipartisan Congressional delegations from Illinois and both Senators Percy and Stevenson--would he be disposed to granting such a pardon were it recommended by General Tyler?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know where that stands, Saul, but I will look it up.

Q It is in the hands of Mr. Tyler.

MR. NESSEN: It has moved up from the Pardon Attorney?

Q The Attorney General has disqualified himself because of his friendship with Judge Kerner.

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into that and find out where it stands. I know about the case, but I have not had time to check it since we got back.

Q Ron, there was a Jack Anderson column last week that said some things about Zarb. I am wondering, does Zarb have the President's full support?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, when King Hussein of Jordan met with President Ford in the Oval Office, was he wearing a gun, as he was in photographs made of him subsequently in other appearances?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Has any investigation been made of that as a result of the photographs which were published later?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q He was photographed with his coat open and the revolver.

MR. NESSEN: I saw the picture. I don't know whether he had it on here or not.

Q Ron, Mr. Simon said yesterday when he was interviewed that he is going to Chile and he is going to try to get some of the political prisoners there released and apparently try to improve the -- he is concerned about the repression there. It seems to me this is the first time any high-level U.S. official has done something like this. Is this a new policy, and is this cleared with the President?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't agree with you. This was gone into at quite some length, I think, two or three days ago at the State Department briefing, and John Trattnor explained that this was some kind of parolee program that has been under discussion or arrangement for quite some time, so it was not any new and startling announcement from Bill Simon.

Q Ron, what support is the President giving to John Connally's anti-Communist organization that was announced yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, former Governor Connally intends this as a private organization, and I am not aware of any Government support.

Q Is the President in favor of it?

MR. NESSEN: I have not asked him one way or the other.

Q He is not honorary chairman?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Is the President reassessing his style or anything in terms of the Texas defeat?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Campaigning?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Has he had any strategy meetings to find out --

MR. NESSEN: He had a meeting last Sunday, which you all know about, but there was no decision to change the strategy. The strategy, as you saw -- well, you didn't go on the trip yesterday -- but the strategy has been and is, first of all, to -- it is not a strategy, it is a requirement -- that he spend most of his time working at his job as President and when he has a chance to go out to campaign he will emphasize his accomplishments and his record: turning the economy around, bringing inflation down, bringing unemployment down, bringing peace to the world, restoring honesty and integrity to the White House.

O Forget that, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Helen, you asked me about the strategy, and I would like to tell you what the strategy is.

Q Then say it more slowly so we can take it down. You are saying it in the way of a charade.

MR. NESSEN: I am not saying it in the way of a charade because this is the President's strategy.

Q Then let's hear it.

MR. NESSEN: It is to spend most of his time, as he has to, being the President. When he is able to get out to campaign, he is running on his record as President, his experience, his record in restoring the economy from the very deep recession, bringing it back to the point, through his economic policies, where the number of people employed is at an all-time high, more people working than ever before in history in the United States, the inflation rate cut way, way down and Gross National Product rising at a very healthy pace.

On the foreign side, his record is one of peace. The world is at peace, which is something that an American President running for election has not been able to say for a very long time. The other part of it is that when you look back at what the national mood was and the attitude of people toward their Government, toward their President and toward the White House in August of 1974, the President believes that his own qualities have helped to restore the confidence and faith and trust of Americans in their White House and their President.

That is his record, and that is what he is going to run on, and there is no need to change that.

Q He is projected to travel every week from now maybe through June 8.

MR. NESSEN: I think he will be getting out and presenting himself and his record to the American people. That is what the political system is all about.

Q He will be on the road every week, won't he?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we have made a schedule beyond -- none of these travel schedules in the primary States have been made up more than a couple of weeks ahead of time.

Q Ron, there is every indication he will be out of town 14 days in May. How can you stand up there and say he is going to spend his time being President when in fact he is campaigning about half the time this month?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check your figures and find out whether he is going to be out of the White House 14 days or part of 14 days. If he is, he certainly never gets away from being President, as I can tell you from watching him do his work on the road and on Sundays and at night and so forth.

Q What I am asking, is there any retrenchment on the projected campaign dates?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the travel schedule during the primary season has never been made up more than two to three weeks ahead of time, if that much, so all I know at the moment is the trip to Nebraska and Missouri and this possible trip to Michigan next week, and I think there will be other travel to other primary States.

Q California?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure there will be a trip back to California.

Q Can you give us any kind of feeling, since you outlined the President's reasons why he thinks he ought to be nominated, can you give us any reasons why he thinks he may be in trouble now?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he does think he is in trouble. As he said over and over again, he expects to be nominated, to have enough delegate votes to win on the first ballot in Kansas City and to win in November.

Q He clearly seems to be concerned, more now than perhaps he was a few weeks ago. It is obviously too soon to say what is going to happen, but you have said what he said -- that he considers himself the underdog in these two races in Alabama and Georgia. You stopped short of saying that he expects to win in Indiana. Is there something --

MR. NESSEN: He expects to win in the District of Columbia.

Q I am just wondering why does he think he is running into difficulties now after winning --

MR. NESSEN: We said at the very beginning, Dick, if you recall, that the President did not expect to win every primary. He has now lost two primaries.

Q By tomorrow, if his expectations come true, he will have lost perhaps four and he would have lost five, and he could have lost four in a row or four out of five, one of which was not contested.

MR. NESSEN: We are a third of the way through the primaries, to say nothing of the conventions in caucus States. Reagan has won exactly two States, both of them in the South. He never won a Northern State, never won a Midwestern State.

Q Can you tell me to what does the President attribute Ronald Reagan's evident current popular appeal?

MR. NESSEN: Popular appeal measured by victory in two primaries. In Texas it is clear there was apathy on the part of some Republicans who would vote for the President plus an enormously large crossover by Democrats who would have supported Wallace.

I think the President had said that about Texas, and in the North Carolina primary I believe he said that there, again, was some slackening off of the efforts, and as far as I know, those are the only two States Reagan has won so I don't see what the --

Q Let's take Indiana, for example.

MR. NESSEN: Why don't we wait and find out how Indiana came out and then talk about it tomorrow.

Q The President was back there ten days ago. Everybody seemed to say the President was clearly likely to win the race. When we were back there on Sunday and yesterday, the same people were hedging their bets. Is there something that you can tell us which would indicate why the White House thinks Reagan has become stronger there?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, Reagan has won two States and I have given you the explanation --

Q You don't want to answer the question?

MR. NESSEN: I don't accept your premise, basically. The facts are Reagan has won two States, both in the South. I told you what interpretation we put on those two. And the President expects to be nominated on the first ballot in Kansas City.

Q You don't think he has lost the momentum?

Q You were wording it a little different, Ron. The President no longer thinks he will have enough delegates prior to California for a first ballot nomination.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. You have to talk to the delegate counters over at the PFC. I don't keep up that closely with it.

Q You were asked a specific question--why did you lose ground in Indiana? You did not answer it. I am interested in it, too.

Q If you don't want to answer that question, okay.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that we have lost ground in Indiana.

Q If we find the quote from the President while he was campaigning in Indiana where he said he thinks he will win in Indiana, is that still a viable quote?

MR. NESSEN: I think I gave you, as far as I know, the latest assessment of the President this morning.

Q Ron, I may be mistaken, but didn't you say earlier in this briefing that the PFC does not count delegates?

MR. NESSEN: No, they have a man who keeps track of delegates. That is what the whole thing is about now, winning enough delegates.

Q Ron, in light of your expressed dubious reaction to the interest of the 14 year old in Panama, does he intend to drop these Q and A sessions?

MR. NESSEN: No, he does not intend to drop them because he feels that it is worthwhile for a President to respond to the questions of voters.

Q Does he have any reaction to the large number of people who seem to be walking out during these sessions?

MR. NESSEN: No, I have noticed that ever since the beginning. I don't know what the explanation is. Obviously, a lot of people like to come and see the President and hear his remarks and maybe it is like -- I don't know. Maybe they like to get their car out of the parking lot before the jam.

Sarah agrees. Can I put you down as agreeing?

Q I understand that is why they do it, they are trying to get their cars out of the parking lot. They even walked out on Elvis Presley last -- (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I feel much better.

Q Anyway, I want to ask you, we have a real problem here with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which, besides being so behind in its settling cases of discrimination on sex and race and religion and everything, it has a lot of malfunctions in the department and I wonder if the White House -- I know they have been studying the Agency -- I wonder if they decided on a new Chairman or decided if they are going to give some redirection to his Agency or what?

MR. NESSEN: I have not looked into that EEOC situation for a while, Sarah. Let me do that and see if I can get back to you.

Q Ron, could I ask a question -- and reshape it a little -- that was asked earlier? The President has

more or less, said he is running on an underdog strategy in a number of cases. Could I ask you why the President feels he is the underdog in a number of these instances? Why does he feel that is the case?

MR. NESSEN: A lot of places Reagan is spending much more time campaigning than the President is able to. Reagan and those who are slipping through the loophole in the law and spending enormous amounts of money on Reagan's behalf without reporting it are helping him, obviously, with a lot of newspaper ads and television ads. Perhaps some places 80 percent of the advertising for former Governor Reagan is paid for by groups which say they are unauthorized or unofficial and, therefore, they don't have to report their spending.

So he is doing considerable more personal campaigning and this advertising by him and on his behalf, obviously, has an impact.

And, secondly, as the President has said, in many areas former Governor Reagan is presenting a simplistic view of issues and events whereas the President who has to be responsible for everything he says and does, first of all, would not and can't.

Q Did the White House monitor "Today" or do they have any comment on the remarks about Ronald Reagan by former Governor Brown of California on the Today Show today?

MR. NESSEN: I did not see it, Sarah.

Q Ron, where did you get that 80 percent figure?

MR. NESSEN: You ought to get in touch with the PFC who has more information on that subject.

Q Ron, you all requested an FEC investigation --

MR. NESSEN: The FEC is out of business. I think many of you know Bob Visser, Chief Counsel for the PFC, wrote a lengthy letter to counsel for the Reagan Committee and, as far as I know, up to this point has not received the courtesy of an answer, but it certainly is an issue that ought to be looked into.

Given the new morality and the higher expectations in the wake of Watergate what appears to be going on in the way of unreported spending is something that we think ought to be looked into.

Q Ron, if the President were concerned enough, would he file some kind of complaint, be it through a court or with the FEC?

MR. NESSEN: I think you ought to talk to Rog Morton and Bob Visser at the Committee. I only brought it up in the context of a question--why does the President feel he is the underdog in places?

Q Ron, you say in the wake of Watergate. What does that have to do with it?

MR. NESSEN: I think the voters expect those seeking public office to maintain very high standards of accountability.

Q Reagan has not done that?

Q Somebody ought to look into it, and for more details you ought to talk to the PFC

Q Are you saying that Reagan has been playing dirty tricks in this campaign?

MR. NESSEN: Well, in the context of the question of why does the President feel he is the underdog in places, I mentioned this spending question.

Q You mentioned morality and high ethical conduct.

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

Q Are you just leaving an innuendo hanging here?

MR. NESSEN: No, I am just replying to a question and I know that good reporters will want to go out and fill in the blank spaces.

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Q Ron, is the President satisfied with Ronald Reagan's report on his income tax?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, certainly not. As the President said when he put out his own tax returns, not only for 1975 but for the last ten years, that he felt he was setting a standard that the other candidates should meet and obviously the figures that he put out don't meet that standard.

He put out adjusted gross income, which means that he did not report all of his gross income and that was the figure for 1975, but as far as I know, he has never provided a breakdown on what taxes he paid during his years of public service in California.

Q Ron, regarding the speech that Kissinger made last week in Africa where he said that the Administration would be pushing for an end to the Byrd amendment, which allows Rhodesian chrome to come into this country, both the Nixon and the Ford Administration have been on record previously as favoring repeal but they really have not pushed particularly hard for it.

I am wondering, is it the Administration's intention to actually submit a bill to the Hill on this and push hard for it?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure I agree with your assessment there. I will have to find the date for you, but there have been several occasions when the Administration has urged Congress to repeal the amendment and offered to work with the Congress in order to repeal the amendment.

Q But no bill has been sent up by either the Nixon or Ford Administration that I know of.

MR. NESSEN: I think the position is very clearly in favor of repealing the Byrd amendment.

Q Ron, did you become aware of the Coors' ad in Texas?

MR. NESSEN: Sure, and the Friends of Reagan in Wisconsin headed up by the chairman of his Florida campaign which then somehow mysteriously overnight becomes an unofficial or unauthorized group.

Q Did you see the content of the Coors' ad? Are you aware of that?

MR. NESSEN: You mean, did I watch it personally on television?

Q Are you familiar with what it dealt with?

MR. NESSEN: I am familiar secondhand with the general content of it.

Q What is your general reaction to that?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to react to the content of the ad. What I am talking about is the financing of some of the campaign ads.

Q Ron, in that connection it seems to me I recall the references on the recent trips to Friends of Ford, I believe, in Indiana or Alabama. Are they raising dollars and not reporting it?

MR. NESSEN: That was one group I guess that came to a reception in Fort Wayne and it was Democrats and Independents who supported the President, but as far as I know, they are not involved in fund-raising but you will have to check with the PFC.

Q Ron, isn't the law that anybody can go out on his own or her own and spend money for a candidate as long as it is not directly connected to the candidate?

MR. NESSEN: That is certainly a loophole in the law, Bob, and whether having a State chairman of Reagan's campaign in one State go into another State and then pretend to be just a casual citizen unaffiliated with his campaign I think at least it raises a question about whether that is in keeping with the spirit of the law.

Q Would he like to have that loophole closed?

MR. NESSEN: It was, as I understand it, a ruling by the Supreme Court which created that aspect.

Q Do you think Reagan is unethical?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is something that I know good reporters will want to look into, Dick.

Q Is he not maintaining, in your words, "a very high standard of accountability"?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is something you want to look into. It is a legal question. I am just reporting to you what we observed from here. I am sure the PFC can give you a lot more details, and I do know that one letter has been written to his campaign by the President Ford Committee.

Q Is the President no longer confident that he will go to Kansas City with enough delegates for 1977?

MR. NESSEN: I thought I said he is. If I did not, he is.

Q Prior to the convention?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, you are suggesting that Reagan is taking advantage of a loophole in the law.

MR. NESSEN: I am just saying it is a subject that ought to be looked into.

Q You can assure us of course that everything here is being done within the letter and the spirit?

MR. NESSEN: At the PFC?

Q In connection with the President.

MR. NESSEN: The PFC is running his campaign and as far as I know, it is. He has certainly given orders that it should be.

Q Has he given orders, Ron, specifically that the PFC not take advantage of this loophole in the way you say Reagan is?

MR. NESSEN: You know --

Q As far as you know, they have not?

MR. NESSEN: I know the President has indicated he expects his campaign to be run --

Q As far as you know, there are no similar groups for President Ford?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, that is correct.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

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

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