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NEWS CONFERENCE

#531

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:39 A.M. EDT

JULY 12, 1976

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: You have seen the Airport and Airway Development Act signing, and I think you have the background on that, fact sheets and so forth. If not, Margaret Earl will help you with it.

In about a half hour or so the President is going to be meeting with the leaders of six Jewish congregations which have been in existence since colonial times. This is a Bicentennial event, and the Rabbis of these six colonial congregations are going to present a letter to the President in which, as a Bicentennial commemoration, they reaffirm the loyalty of the American-Jewish community to the American dream and the American territory. I have a copy of the letter here. This is sort of recalling that these same six congregations had written to President Washington on the occasion of his inauguration expressing their dedication to America and so forth.

Q Can we get a copy of that?

MR. NESSEN: I can get you a copy of the letter.

There is one addition to the President's schedule. Tonight the President is going to be going over to the Convention of the National Exchange Clubs. It is a service club like the Lions and so forth. They are having their convention over at the Sheraton Park and the President will speak briefly after dinner, at about 8:30. There will be a travel pool here. I don't expect to have a copy of the remarks ahead of time.

Q Is he going to the dinner, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: No, he is not going to the dinner.

Q Did he just make up his mind on this?

MR. NESSEN: No, this was accepted about ten days ago.

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Q Why wasn't it on the schedule then?

MR. NESSEN: We don't often put the evening sort of drop-in events on the schedule. We announce them.

Q This is not a substantive speech, then?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the text of the speech, Rudy, and I don't know what the subject is.

Q Is this to be a rebuttal of the Democratic keynote address?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is thought of that way.

Q Will it be political?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the text yet, Phil. I don't know.

Q I am sure you have some idea of what the theme of this thing will be. You may not have seen the text, but what is the subject?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure it won't be a political speech.

Q No chance at all of a text, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate one, Ralph. If there is one, I will make sure it gets out in advance.

Q Is the President going to try to have events each evening this week?

MR. NESSEN: If you are suggesting that he is organizing his schedule in some way to counter or top or something the Democratic Convention, he is not.

Q I am asking you a flat statement. Is he going to try to have events every night this week?

MR. NESSEN: The answer is no.--

Q He is not going to the All-Star Game?

MR. NESSEN: -- but tomorrow night he is going to the All-Star Game. (Laughter) But, that is not every night this week.

The President will attend the All-Star Game in Philadelphia's Veteran's Stadium tomorrow night, leaving the South Lawn at about 6:00 p.m. to go to Andrews Air Force Base and then fly to Philadelphia. Press check-in is about 5:00. The press departure will be about 5:30 or 5:45. There will be seats for an expanded pool on the third base side and the remainder of the press will have seats in left field.

Q Is the President going to be on the left field side or the third base side?

MR. NESSEN: The President will be on the first base side.

Q That is what I figured. (Laughter)

Q Is that why the pool is on the third base side? (Laughter)

Q Is there a pool near him?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q The pool is where?

Q The third base is not close to the first base, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: There will be four members of the pool very close to the President, hopefully to deflect foul balls and so forth. Another 25 members of the pool will be on the third base side within easy visual range of him, and then all the other reporters who wish to go will have a section in the left field stands reserved for them.

Q These four, will there be camera crews allowed in that area?

MR. NESSEN: Isn't the game covered widely by television?

Q So the answer is no?

MR. NESSEN: We have not gotten all the details of the pool worked out.

Q Is the President going by helicopter?

MR. NESSEN: No, the President will go by airplane.

Q Will the President throw out the ball?

MR. NESSEN: The President will throw out the first ball about 8:30.

First of all, he will go to a short reception in the stadium and then at 8:00 he will go down to the field and meet the players -- that is at 8:00 -- and then at 8:30 he will throw out the first ball and the game will begin.

The President was invited to the game last April, Phil.

Q When did he accept?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know when exactly he accepted.

Q Ron, will he greet the players on the field or is he going down to the dressing room?

MR. NESSEN: No, he will greet the players right there beside his box on the field.

Q Is he going to center the ball? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: He is, but we are keeping the cameras about 80 feet away so they can't see it.

Q Moving ahead to Thursday, does the President plan a Thursday night event?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any Thursday night event.

Q You know of none?

Q You haven't heard anything about going to Baltimore?

Q What about the dinner for Schmidt?

MR. NESSEN: Is Thursday night the dinner for Schmidt?

Q I don't know, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Thursday night is the dinner for Schmidt.

Q Here?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Does he plan to go to Baltimore at any time?

MR. NESSEN: He has been invited, as a lot of people have been invited from the Government to go over and attend a reception on the ship Friday night, the German ship that is part of the tall ship fleet. To my knowledge he has not accepted yet.

I described, I think, incorrectly the other day the situation concerning the hotel rooms in Kansas City. I indicated that the White House would not obtain any hotel rooms for anybody in Kansas City. What I should have made clear was that it probably was not going to be possible to get hotel rooms for the people who travel to Kansas City with the President at the President's hotel, the Crown Center, but Ray Zook is making an effort to get rooms elsewhere in Kansas City or the surrounding area for those reporters who go to Kansas City on the White House charter.

Q Not even for the pool at the President's hotel?

MR. NESSEN: It is possible, barely possible, Helen, but we have not worked it all out yet.

Q Will there be a press room for the White House press?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. The White House Press Office and press briefing room and so forth will be at the Crown Center.

Q We might be in Topeka?

MR. NESSEN: If you are lucky.

Q We would like to try to get as many reporters in there as possible.

MR. NESSEN: I understand that. Ray is working very hard to do it.

The President today is announcing that he is nominating Mrs. Margita White to become a member of the Federal Communications Commission. Margita, as you know, now serves as Director of the White House Office of Communications, and Assistant Press Secretary to the President.

The President is naming as the new Director of the White House Office of Communications David R. Gergen, who currently is a Special Counsel to the President.

The President also is announcing that William F. Rhatican, who is now a Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury for Public Affairs, will be the Deputy Director of the White House Office of Communications and a Special Assistant to the President.

As part of the changes in personnel, the Office of Communications is being reorganized and strengthened. The Office of Communications is being assigned several new duties, and its Director and Deputy Director will have a substantial degree of independence in their daily activities. The office remains an integral part of the White House Press Office, and I will continue to exercise the oversight responsibility of the operations.

Among the activities for which the Office of Communications will be responsible are liaison with editors and publishers of newspapers and magazines; assistance in coordinating the news events at the White House; coordination of public affairs officers within the Administration; liaison with Administration spokesmen; research and preparation of materials on major public issues; preparation of the President's news summary; preparation of briefing materials for the President, and supervision of the President's television advisor.

We have biographical material on Margita and on Dave Gergen and Bill Rhatican, which we can pass out after the briefing.

Q Who is the President's television advisor?

MR. NESSEN: Bob Mead is.

Q Is he staying on?

MR. NESSEN: He has submitted a letter of resignation and will be leaving at a date to be determined.

Q Why has he resigned?

MR. NESSEN: He resigned in a personal letter to the President, and I think probably it would be better to get his reasons from Bob.

Q Are the quotes attributed to you by UPI correct? You have criticized him and he is leaving partly --

MR. NESSEN: I think the internal personnel workings of the White House, Ralph, probably should remain private.

Q Yes, but you are quoted on the record.

MR. NESSEN: I will look into the story and see what I was quoted as saying.

Q Bob Mead says it is up to the President to release the letter.

MR. NESSEN: There is no intention at the White House to release the letter. It is quite a warm and personal letter, and there is no plan here to release it.

Q And the President has accepted his resignation?

MR. NESSEN: It is not really a question of the President accepting it. Bob's supervisor will accept it, which is me.

Q Ron, say that again.

Q You say the President has no role in this?

Q Do you mean the President cannot say no? If he wanted him to stay on, you would overrule him?

MR. NESSEN: He knew about the letter.

Q He saw the letter, I presume?

MR. NESSEN: He saw the letter, that is correct.

Q And he accepted his resignation?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is not his function to accept the resignation.

Q But he didn't reject it?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Ron, was he asked to resign?

MR. NESSEN: He was not, no.

Q Has he talked with Bob.

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he has not.

Q Has he any plans to?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of a plan to, no.

Q Ron, I think it is a fair question to ask you if you can confirm the quotes in the story I have called to your attention.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, Ralph, I think the inner workings here that have to do with personnel and so forth --

Q I am not asking about "and so forth," I am asking about quotes attributed to you.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the quotes were.

Q You are quoted as criticizing his assistance of PBS in covering the Queen's dinner the other night.

MR. NESSEN: I think that really should be between Bob and myself.

Q That is not between you and Bob, it is on the UPI wire.

Q . We are only asking whether that is accurate or not.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what it said.

Q Who has a New York Times?

Q Ron, did the President have no feelings one way or the other whether Bob should go or stay?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, he saw the letter and as I told you --

Q I beg to disagree with you on this inner workings. You just announced a series of personnel changes. These people are on the public payroll and it very much is of interest to the public and I don't think it is an inner -- that is not the problem. You have just announced several changes here yourself.

MR. NESSEN: I am perfectly happy to talk about them, Helen, but questions concerning the happiness or unhappiness of people in the White House about the performance of other people in the White House I don't think --

Q -- very, very valid in terms of resignation.

Q Ron, do you want to hear the quotes?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

I don't really, Ed, because I --

Q "It is no secret that Mead has been under fire in the White House for the past six months. I have saved him several times, but I decided now just to keep hands off."

Is that accurate?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to go through that exercise. As Bob says himself on the UPI, he was not fired. That is absolutely correct, he was not.

He says on the UPI wire, "I was not forced to resign." That is true, "I was not forced to resign." He said, "I resigned for reasons I gave to the President," and he says, "I tendered my resignation to the President in a quiet and personal manner to avoid any public discussion of it."

"I think I ought to" --

Q In the absence of you saying anything --

MR. NESSEN: I will abide by Bob's wishes in that matter.

Q I just assume that you are quoted accurately and will continue to use it?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't think I ought to --

Q Are you going to accept his resignation as of the date he suggested to the President?

MR. NESSEN: I forget what exactly the date was.

Q August 31.

Q Any time up to August 31.

MR. NESSEN: I think I ought to have a chance to talk to Bob first, which I have not done, but I am going to do later today, and I think it would be fair to him and fair to us that he and I talk before we discuss it out here.

Q Ron, the President has indicated since he has been in the White House -- and certainly since I have known him -- there is one thing that he will not tolerate, and that is a bunch of bickering going on within his staff.

I am wondering if he expressed any unhappiness today with what is obvious, obviously some internal feuding and bickering?

MR. NESSEN: I have to disagree with you, Phil, that there is any obvious internal bickering here. I think you have to --

Q Well, you and I both know that.

MR. NESSEN: I think you have to make a distinction between a lot of source stories in the press and internal bickering.

Q This is not a source story. You are quoted by name.

MR. NESSEN: You are talking about this story?

Q Yes.

Q You are standing up there and you dare denying a quote.

MR. NESSEN: I haven't denied anything, Phil.

Q Then you admit that you said it, for goodness sakes.

MR. NESSEN: I think that Bob Mead has submitted his resignation, and he has indicated on the UPI that he wants to do it quietly and in a dignified manner. I think that I ought to abide by his wishes.

Secondly, I feel it would be only right that I talk to Bob before I talk at a public briefing.

Q Apparently you talked to UPI first. Apparently you talked to him already.

Q Do you deny you said these things?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to talk to Bob Mead first and I am going to abide by Bob's own wishes that this be done in a dignified and quiet manner.

Q He has no objection to the White House releasing his letter?

MR. NESSEN: I need to talk to Bob first, Helen.

Q Also, this expanded Communications Office, is that in tune with the campaign and is it going to take on a political role at all?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by a political role. I read you what the duties will be. Some of them are duties that are already there and some are new and expanded duties.

Q That is what I mean.

Q Ron, will some of the new and expanded duties include the preparation and the writing of the President's statements that my understanding is have been done up until now by the speech writing operation?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no change in that authority.

Q So, UPI is inaccurate when it reports that that function has been transferred from the Hartmann operation to --

MR. NESSEN: The UPI is inaccurate if it says that Bob Hartmann is being stripped of any power or any authority at all.

Q I deliberately didn't use the word "strip."

MR. NESSEN: He is not losing any power whatever.

Q Who is going to write the President's statements from now on?

MR. NESSEN: That will remain exactly where it has been.

Q Which is where?

MR. NESSEN: Bob Hartmann has the oversight over all Presidential speeches and statements.

Q Will Dave be writing any Presidential speeches or editing or massaging or doing anything in the Presidential speeches?

MR. NESSEN: He will not.

Q In the post-Watergate era when the office was taken over by President Ford, he said that there would be no political connotations at all.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Now what?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think you have to take the President at his word.

Q I mean, these new and expanded duties have no political or campaign --

MR. NESSEN: I read you what they were and I didn't hear anything in there that sounded political to me.

Q I didn't hear you deny that politics has a role in this.

MR. NESSEN: Well, what would it be?

Q Well, promotion of the President in the campaign.

MR. NESSEN: That is not a part of this.

Q Communicating with the editors and so forth, expanding the whole --

MR. NESSEN: This office is an office that is designed, and always has been since I have been here and I think Dave intends to keep it that way, as a service to the press in helping the press both in Washington and out of Washington to cover the White House. That is some aspects of the job. Other aspects such as preparation of the President's news summary are help for the President, briefing material for the President and so forth. There is nothing overtly political about this office.

Q Can we assume, then, that the office was not doing a good enough job because you talk about expanding it?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't agree with that.

Q Reaching everybody you wanted reached?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why is it being expanded?

MR. NESSEN: Well, for several reasons. First of all, Margita White was doing a superb job in there and we are going to miss Margita, but with her departure there was the need to replace her, obviously. Now, Dave is the replacement and I am delighted that he has agreed to do it, and the President is, too.

Why don't you come up, Dave, and give your views on this. Dave has certain people who work for him now, and he is going to bring them with him.

Q I am just curious on why you are now taking more tax dollars to expand this office at this time?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is more tax dollars, because whatever --

Q You are expanding it.

MR. NESSEN: Pardon?

Q You are going to have more people, aren't you?

MR. NESSEN: Well, whatever extra people are coming along, they already work in the White House for Dave.

Q Will they be replaced?

MR. NESSEN: No, that office will not be there.

Q Ron, what are the new duties, expanded duties?

MR. NESSEN: I think if you look down that list you can see which ones are the new ones.

Liaison with editors and publishers of newspapers and magazines is an existing duty of that office.

Assisting and coordination of news events at the White House, I think you could consider that to be a new duty.

Coordinating public affairs officers within the Administration is an existing duty although Margita frankly has not had enough people on her staff to do that fully.

Liaison with Administration spokesmen is a new function.

Research and preparation of materials on major public issues is something that Dave does now and so he will bring that function with him, but that will be a new function under the Office of Communications.

The preparation of the President's news summary is an existing duty.

Preparation of briefing materials for the President is already done.

And supervision of the TV advisor is something that is already done.

So, three or four new functions have been added to the existing ones.

Q Ron, in your statement you use the words "a substantial degree of independence."

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q In what field, and independence from whom or what?

MR. NESSEN: Well, why don't you explain it, Dave.

MR. GERGEN: I think the point that we are trying to establish is this, that Ron and I will have a close working relationship. I will report to the President through Ron. My understanding of the office and its daily operations is that Ron and I will sit down together and establish some broad guidelines of what the activities of the office will be and it will be my responsibility with my staff to carry those out.

Ron and I have a close working personal relationship, a close professional relationship, and I think within that context, as questions arise of whether the office ought to be doing X, Y or Z, clearly I am going to be talking to Ron about that.

Q Do you have anyone specializing in television with background in the field?

MR. GERGEN: Well, as Ron has said, Bob Mead has resigned and I think that we are going to want to look around for a replacement.

Q Would field experience in the industry influence you?

MR. GERGEN: I think we ought to look at some candidates first and we can establish that. I don't think it helps particularly.

Q You have no direct contact with the President?

MR. GERGEN: No, that would be incorrect. I have some direct contact in various meetings at this time, and that is going to continue.

Q But it will be outside of Ron's office?

MR. GERGEN: No, it would be in coordination and conjunction with Ron.

Q What about these things -- in the Nixon Administration they were called cocktails with Clawson, small briefings between the Administration officials and --

Q Cocktails with Gergen.

Q Gin with Gergen. (Laughter.)

Q Peanuts with Gergen.

MR. GERGEN: What I would very much like to do is to establish a close enough working relationship with a number of you here and determine what would be helpful and if that is the kind of thing that will be helpful in your work, then we ought to consider it. I have no pre-conceived notion of what we ought to do in every respect. We are here partly, as Ron says, to help you and I think I would like to talk to you and ask you --

Q Do you see any politics in your job in the coming campaign?

MR. GERGEN: I think to the extent that the White House and the President is a political organism operating within a political framework, I think you have to say that there is some politics, everything we do here. I don't see it as a political organization; I see it as an effort to explain and to communicate to the press and to the American public what this President is about, what he hopes to do in the future.

Q Can you take us through the channels through which a Presidential written statement will be now formulated, approved and issued?

MR. NESSEN: It will be done exactly the way it is done now. There has been no change in that system.

Q What is that system?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the origination of the statement or the initial drafting of it sort of comes from various offices within the White House and then the final oversight, of course, is in Mr. Hartmann's office.

Q Where does Mr. Gergen's office play a part in this?

MR. NESSEN: In this particular area right now there is no particular role other than the one that we all have, which is that the NSC or the Domestic Council or the Legal Office, Congressional Office, my office, Dave's office will on occasion originate statements in their area of competence.

Q You mean he will have no coordination in these messages or anything?

MR. NESSEN: At this time, that is not contemplated.

Q Ron, what are Margita's qualifications for the FCC job?

MR. NESSEN: Well, she has been dealing in the field of communications for quite a long time certainly -- five years, I guess.

MRS. WHITE: '59.

MR. NESSEN: Fifty-nine years?

MRS. WHITE: No, since 1959.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, since 1959.

And she, I think, knows this field about as well as anybody, in addition to which she has proved herself to be an extremely competent and effective administrator.

Q Who will she replace?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that Charlotte Reid has --

MRS. WHITE: I am to replace Glen Robinson.

MR. NESSEN: Glen Robinson. I am sorry.

Q Ron, I was going to ask that question. Does the White House expect Margita to be confirmed for Glen Robinson's seat?

MR. NESSEN: Absolutely.

Q Absolutely.

Q That is a two-year term?

Q No, a seven-year term.

MR. NESSEN: A seven-year term.

Q What about the other vacancy?

MR. NESSEN: We have not announced anybody for that other seat, have we?

MRS. WHITE: No.

MR. NESSEN: We have not.

Q Is that a full term -- seven years?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is that a partisan seat? Are there Republicans?

MRS. WHITE: Four Republicans and three Democrats.

Q Ron, the expectation then was that Mrs. White would get the two-year term of Charlotte Reid and Joe Fogarty, Counsel to the Senate Communications Subcommittee, who is a close aide and personal friend of Senator Pastore, and would get the seven-year term. Now, it is being announced that Margita is getting the seven-year term -- a Democratic seat, I might add. Glen Robinson is a Democrat. There is no appointment at all for a Democrat. And you expect her to be confirmed absolutely?

MR. NESSEN: Well, you are more of an expert obviously than I am, but I know the President chose her because he thought she was the best qualified and he nominated her today with the full expectation that Congress will hold the hearings and confirm Margita quickly.

Q Do you have any idea when there will be another appointment made?

MR. NESSEN: I don't.

Q Is she nominated specifically for the seven-year term? Are those nominations separate and divorced? If you were to go up for the two-year term, it would have to be re-submitted, is that correct?

MRS. WHITE: I don't know.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know all the details on that, but I will get it from Doug Bennett for you.

Q Ron, did the President sound out anyone on the Hill before appointing Margita?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what steps go into --

Q There seem to be some rumblings about the possibility of her confirmation.

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of any rumblings and, as I said, the President chose Margita because he considers her to be superbly qualified for the job and expects Congress to hold the hearings and confirm her so that the Commission can operate with its full complement of Commissioners.

Q Has the President discussed the appointment with Senator Pastore, Ron?

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

I want to mention to you the note that was handed to me was that the President this morning phoned Phillip Krumm, who is the President of the U.S. Olympic Committee. They talked for about seven or eight minutes and the President made a couple of points.

First of all, he considers the latest decision of the International Olympic Committee's Executive Committee to be a bad decision and thinks it sets a very bad precedent if it is upheld.

Q What is that decision?

MR. NESSEN: Well, my understanding of the decision, John, is that they went along more or less with the current Canadian Government position on the participation of Taiwan, but I would not like to have me paraphrased as the expert on that. You ought to look it up.

The President told Krumm that he deplored the injection of politics into Olympic athletic competition. The President pointed out that whereas the Olympics originally were conceived of as a game in competition among individual athletes that they are becoming more and more what is seen as a competition among nations.

The primary purpose of the call was to ask Mr. Krumm to keep him fully posted on developments relating to this controversy as they unfold. He called, as I say, to get a first-hand report and to encourage Mr. Krumm to use his influence in the IOC to have this decision reversed.

Q Did the President recommend the withdrawal of the United States team from the competition if it does not reverse the decision?

MR. NESSEN: At this point, John, there are about five or six days remaining and the President hopes and really expects that this controversy will be resolved in a way that lets the athletes compete without relation to the politics among their countries.

Q Would this be an option, though? Was he seriously considering this as an option?

MR. NESSEN: I just think, Phil, as I said the other day when I was asked about that, that it is too soon to progress to questions like that when the President hopes and expects the controversy to be resolved.

Q Where was Mr. Krumm when he was called?

MR. NESSEN: He was in Montreal.

Q When you say "hopes and expects that the athletes compete," he means including the athletes from Taiwan?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Is it his position that they should be allowed to compete as the Republic of China?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think the President ought to take a position in the controversy other than to say that he thinks that athletes should be allowed to compete freely without reference to the political differences among their countries.

Q Does the President have the power to withdraw the American athletes from participating?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to get drawn into that. I mean, the background on the matter is that --

Q Statutorily, does he or doesn't he?

MR. NESSEN: No. The U.S. Olympic Committee is a private organization. Again, I don't want to get drawn into what his position would be down the line.

Q Obviously, he is for Taiwan --

MR. NESSEN: Competing.

Q -- competing under the flag of the Republic of China.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't know that he has spelled out specifically how or under what terms he thinks they should compete.

Q Has he changed his view since Saturday? That speech in Plattsburgh certainly was not to send off individual athletes to win for themselves; it was to go out and bring home the gold for the U.S. of A. Now you are saying he believes the Olympics are for individual athletes.

MR. NESSEN: As I said, the foundation of Olympics competition is that it is competition among individuals.

Q Ron, has he expressed his views indirectly or directly to Trudeau in any way?

MR. NESSEN: He has not, Phil.

Q Has he done this for a special reason, not communicated with Trudeau for a special reason? I mean, does the President want to keep the pressure off Trudeau until the decision has been resolved one way or another?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I would say that the President expects it to be resolved before the Games open.

Q Well, does that mean that the decision they made -- he expects a reversal on that?

MR. NESSEN: I said I think that he asked Krumm to use his influence to have the decision reversed.

Q Quite clearly, the President has not ruled out his moving against American participation in the Games under certain conditions?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I just think that there, Dick, you are assuming that it won't be resolved. The President is assuming that it will be resolved in a way that all the athletes can compete without letting politics interfere.

Q Ron, the indications from Montreal have been that it has been resolved -- the Taiwanese are out, the situation is the IOC and the Canadian Government are now in agreement, the International Olympic Committee --

MR. NESSEN: Well, it was the Executive Committee. You know, there are a number of other steps. I guess negotiations are still going on and they are still continuing to try to resolve the matter.

Q If the President feels so adamant about this, why does he not come down harder? Why all this diplomatic stuff? Why not come down and give his own proposal?

MR. NESSEN: The President has, I thought, made clear his proposal, Phil, which is that athletes ought to be allowed to compete without having their competition prevented or interfered with by political considerations.

Q He is talking to the already converted. The IOC agreed with this policy before. The guy he should be talking with is Trudeau.

MR. NESSEN: The negotiations are between the International Olympic Committee, which is a private organization, and the Government of Canada, and at the moment the President is putting his faith in that set of negotiations to resolve the matter.

Q Does the President believe that American athletes can participate without competition from the Taiwanese athletes?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, I am not going to go that far down the road because the President expects it to be resolved in a way that will let the athletes --

Q Let's go this far. Did the President ask Phillip Krumm that we, in any way--any kind of a threat to withdraw if it was not resolved?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that matter came up in the conversation, Helen.

Q What steps is he talking about where Krumm can intervene, steps still to be resolved between the IOC and --

MR. NESSEN: Well, the decision so far is a decision of the Executive Committee. The full IOC has not voted on it.

Q Ron, has the President had any contact with the Canadian Government at any level?

MR. NESSEN: We better check.

Q Ron, you said he asked Krumm to use his influence to --

MR. NESSEN: To get the decision reversed.

Q What specifically did he ask him to do?

MR. NESSEN: To use his influence to get the decision reversed.

Q In what way?

MR. NESSEN: That is up to Krumm.

Q We bought that Olympics and we paid for them.
(Laughter)

Q Ron, has the President indicated he would look with favor to moving the Games to Mexico City?

MR. NESSEN: Russ, as I say, the negotiations are going on and the President expects them to be resolved in a way that will allow the Games to go on with all the athletes competing.

Q In asking Krumm to use his influence, did the President indicate to him that Krumm, in negotiating with the IOC, could indicate to them that if this thing were not resolved satisfactorily they might expect one type of statement or another from the President?

MR. NESSEN: No. As I told Helen, that matter didn't come up in the conversation.

Those of you who want to take photos with the Colonial Congregations' Rabbis should go around to the outside of the Briefing Room and Thym will take you in for the photo in the Oval Office.

Q Can you respell that name -- Phillip Krumm? You say two L's?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. P-h-i-l-l-i-p K-r-u-m-m.

Q Middle initial?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a middle initial.

We will check on the middle initial.

Q Do you know if Mrs. Anna Chennault, one of the influencing members of the Republican National Committee, has conveyed her opinions on this issue to the White House?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, she has not.

Q Ron, if that line of questioning is over, I would like to get back to the Gergen matter, one question. Shortly after the President came into office -- I don't quite remember if you were Press Secretary yet -- there was some emphasis that was announced that that was not going to be an independent shop any longer. At that time, the Ken Clawson shop was perhaps in some disfavor in the eyes of the public. I wonder what has happened to make you change your mind and go back to an operation that was similar to the operation at that time?

MR. NESSEN: There is nothing about this operation that is going to resemble some of the aspects that you point out, and if you say go back to some independent operation, as the statement made clear, the Office of Communications stays where it is, which is in the Press Office.

Q But, it has not been before, as I understand it. It is re-created; there is no question about that, is there?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean by re-created?

Q There was no Director of Communications yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q She was an Assistant Press Secretary.

MR. NESSEN: Director of Communications and Assistant Press Secretary to the President.

Q She carried that title?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, can you give us any guidance on when the President is going to announce this reduction in Federal paperwork?

MR. NESSEN: How is that coming along?

MR. CARLSON: Soon.

MR. NESSEN: He intends to announce it, though. I don't have the exact timing on it.

Q One other thing. There is a report that American war ships were heading toward Mombasa, Kenya, because of tension in Kenya.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I understand that the Defense Department has talked about that and why the ships are in that area.

Q Ron, what are the President's plans regarding the public works appropriations bill?

MR. NESSEN: The public works appropriations bill -- didn't he veto that last week?

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: There are a number of bills here that are pending a decision, Russ, with various deadlines.

Q He is running out of time on this public works bill.

MR. NESSEN: We are going to announce the decisions just as soon as they are made, but he will make the deadline in each case.

Q Do you anticipate an announcement this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: We may have some word on some of the legislation this afternoon.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:17 P.M. EDT)

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