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NEWS CONFERENCE

#535

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 9:32 A.M. EDT

JULY 15, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: The President telephoned Jimmy Carter this morning. The call was put through at 8:53 and Carter was in his rooms at the Americana Hotel in New York. The President was in the Oval Office.

The call lasted about two minutes. The President said, "Congratulations, Jimmy." He said, "I watched a bit of the program last night." He congratulated him again. He said, "I look forward to a good contest this fall." And then there was a fairly long pause and I didn't listen to the -- (Laughter)

Q Were you listening?

MR. NESSEN: I was listening to one end of the conversation, Helen, but not both ends.

Q Where was the pause?

MR. NESSEN: Right there. He said, "I look forward to a good contest this fall," said the President, and then there was a long pause.

Q During that pause, Carter was talking?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, yes, that is right.

Q The President paused.

MR. NESSEN: The President paused, that is right, and obviously listened to something that Carter said.

Q And what was that?

Q What did Carter say?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what Carter said, Phil. (Laughter)

Q You heard only one end of the conversation.

Q Did he tell the President who the Vice Presidential nominee will be?

MR. NESSEN: He did not.

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Q Didn't the President tell you what Carter said?

MR. NESSEN: No, he didn't.

Q He didn't tell him who the VP was going to be, the candidate?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I am sorry, he didn't.

Q Well, can you ask him? I mean, what is wrong with telling us what his reaction was?

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Q He thanked him, maybe?

MR. NESSEN: Thanked him for what?

Q For the congratulations.

Q You have got the message. I mean, why can't you tell us all?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to finish, if I may.

After a long pause, the President said, "I think we can keep it" -- meaning the campaign -- "at a high level. We will give the American people a choice."

Q Then he was assured of his own nomination?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously.

Then there was again some conversation from Carter, which I didn't hear, and the President said, "Okay, have a good day, Jimmy," and that was the end of the call.

Q You did not ask the President what Jimmy said?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, Phil, I didn't.

Q What did he mean by that? No Watergate?

MR. NESSEN: He didn't spell out what he meant, but you know I think from what he said, "I think we will give the American people a choice," he is talking about conducting the campaign on the issues.

Q Did the President call anybody else on the Democratic side in New York City?

MR. NESSEN: Not this morning, no.

Q Last night?

MR. NESSEN: No, he didn't make any calls last night.

Q Did the President Ford Committee pay for this telephone call?

MR. NESSEN: They will, Phil, if it is determined to be a political call. As you know, they pay for all --

Q Was that a political call, did the President find?

MR. NESSEN: I have not really explored that with him today, Phil. I will, though.

Q How much did he watch last night, and where did he watch it? After dinner?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, after dinner. It was the same thing as I mentioned the other night. His normal pattern in the evenings, every evening, you know, whether the convention is on or not, is to turn the TV on with the sound down low.

He and Mrs. Ford and the children were in the study or in the living room portion of the Residence with the TV on.

Q Is the PFC going to pay for that TV electrical use?

MR. NESSEN: We are going to try to calculate the number of kilowatts used in the broadcast, Dick, and then when the Pepco bill comes in, it will be prorated with the PFC paying for those kilowatt hours used in the watching of the convention.

Q Will you ask the President what Jimmy Carter said?

MR. NESSEN: I will, Phil.

Q Did he watch the actual vote?

MR. NESSEN: He didn't spell out to me what precise portions he watched.

Q Did the President ask who the Vice Presidential nominee was going to be?

MR. NESSEN: There was some banter about it, but he didn't really ask him who it was.

Q What did the President say in the banter?

MR. NESSEN: I think that part of it was just kind of a hodgepodge.

Q Did he tell him anything about beginning his intelligence briefings?

MR. NESSEN: No, they didn't get into that.

Q What will be the situation now today, Ron, do you know? Will he get briefings?

MR. NESSEN: I will check with George Bush and find out.

Q Where did the banter about the Vice President come in the sequence of the phone call?

MR. NESSEN: Right before the President said, "Have a good day, Jimmy."

Q What form did the banter take?

MR. NESSEN: Just kidding about, you know, "I am going to be watching to see who it is," and that kind of thing.

Q Anything on the Olympics?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing new at this point that I am aware of.

Q Did he get any reports or anything?

MR. NESSEN: He got a report last night from Jim Cannon, yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 9:38 A.M. EDT)

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NEWS CONFERENCE

#536

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:35 A.M. EDT

JULY 15, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: Right now, the President is having his meeting with Chancellor Schmidt, as you know. We will have a read-out on the meeting afterward, a brief one. I would not anticipate too much in this read-out because, as you know, the two leaders have another meeting scheduled for tomorrow. There also is a dinner this evening here at the White House, given by the President and Mrs. Ford, for Chancellor Schmidt and Mrs. Schmidt. Sheila is taking care of the details of that. We will have the normal coverage that we do for the evening social events at the White House.

Tomorrow, at 10 o'clock, in Room 450 at the EOB, there is going to be a briefing by Jim Lynn, the Director of OMB; Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers; Bill Seidman, who is the President's Assistant for economic matters and Deputy Treasury Secretary George Dickson.

The purpose of this will be to outline the budget revisions that are required to be made this week and sent up to Congress. The briefing begins at 10 o'clock, as I said, in Room 450. There will be announcements and written material available at 9:30 in the briefing room. Both the briefing and the written material will be embargoed for 11:00 a.m.

Q Ron, this is the thing we have been asking you about -- revising the assumptions?

MR. NESSEN: It is a number of things. Yes, it is a revision of the assumptions; that is, the projections, I guess, is what you mean, for unemployment, inflation, GNP and so forth, not only this year, but the projections out on into two or three years ahead. But it is also a required revision in anticipated receipts and expenditures, so that that is why you have a variety of people who are doing the briefing.

Q Will we have a revision also of the final figures for the 1976 fiscal year budget in that?

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MR. NESSEN: That is also required by law, but it is later in the month, Bob, and it won't be ready yet.

Let me give you a couple of numbers and names for later information today. At the OMB are Alan Wade and Whit Shoemaker at 395-4747; and at the Treasury, Charles Arnold at 964-2041.

Q Is that for film?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, it is full coverage, yes.

Q When is it for release?

Q 11:00 a.m.?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, Helen.

Q Is it embargoed for 11:00?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, embargoed for 11:00 a.m.

Also, tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. the President is going to be meeting with a group of about 200 of the elected leaders of the American Indian tribes and also leaders of various Indian regional and other organizations. This will take place in the East Room at 3:00. After the President speaks to the group, he will invite them to attend a reception so that he can talk to them individually.

Before the President's meeting, the Indian leaders will be having meetings with Interior Secretary Kleppe and with high officials of other Government agencies and departments that deal with Indians and, of course, the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Morris Thompson.

This is part of the meetings that are arranged by Bill Baroody, in which representatives of various important groups in American society are brought in periodically and receive briefings from experts in the area of their interest and then sometime hear from the President or meet the President at a reception. As far as I know, it is the first time that any President has had a meeting with such a broad range of Indian leaders.

The coverage, if you would like to, is complete coverage of the East Room activities. I don't know whether we will have an advance text on the speech or not. I would think that the speech -- at least from the drafts I have seen -- will deal in a substantive way with the Government's relationship with the Indians.

Q Ron, will this group include any of the members of AIM?

MR. NESSEN: Margaret?

MRS. EARL: Not in an official capacity, but they will probably be there unofficially.

MR. NESSEN: AIM, as an organization, I guess, will not be invited, but some of the people who are active in AIM will be at the meeting, we believe, because of their role either with their tribe or with other Indian organizations.

Q But I mean people like -- is Russell Means going to be there?

MRS. EARL: I don't know, specifically.

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the full schedule.

Q Any big name participants?

Q Will we get an advance copy on this?

MR. NESSEN: On the speech? If the President approves it in time, I will try and get it out to you.

Q Ron, can you tell us at this point, are the militant Indians in any way represented in tomorrow's meeting, so-called militants?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to characterize the Indians as militant or otherwise, but it is the principal elected leaders of various tribes and the leaders of regional Indian organizations and other Indian organizations. I, myself, would not know how to characterize a militant --

Q Are there any outstanding militant organizations --

MR. NESSEN: Can we get a name and phone number of someone who can provide more information on that?

Q Are there any uncommitted delegates among them?

MR. NESSEN: Uncommitted Indian delegates? I don't know.

Let me check on who can provide further information.

While we are waiting for that, here are the plans for Friday and Saturday.

For tomorrow night, the trip to the German tall ship in Baltimore, as I mentioned before, it will be a bus trip over there. The bus leaves the Southwest Gate at 4:00. I think I mentioned that there will be an expanded pool coverage aboard the ship, full coverage at dockside and the President is expected to have some remarks at the reception on the German ship.

Q When does the President go, and is there a pool that goes?

MR. NESSEN: The President is going by helicopter and the pool situation will be similar to the trip to Charlottesville. There will probably be three seats for a pool on the chopper.

Q On the President's chopper?

MR. NESSEN: On one of the other choppers flying with the President's chopper.

Q From where will it take off?

MR. NESSEN: Either the Ellipse or Anacostia, one or the other.

Q The Ellipse would be a little simpler.

MR. NESSEN: The times for the Saturday trip are still tentative, but the press check-in time tentatively at Andrews is 6:00 a.m., and then a 6:30 departure from Andrews. The President's departure tentatively from the South Lawn is 6:40, with a 7:00 takeoff from Andrews and the rest of the tentative plans for Saturday remain as I told you yesterday, with the breakfast reception, some time to talk to individual delegates and then the speech to the full convention.

It is possible that we can get an advance text out of that speech because it is pretty well along and the President is going to work on it this afternoon.

Q Will there be remarks at the reception that might provide --

MR. NESSEN: The breakfast reception? In Connecticut? The major speech will be to the full convention itself and that is the speech I was talking about.

Q Are you planning an as-delivered speech on the convention?

MR. NESSEN: As-delivered? Do you mean an embargo?

Q Will there be a 6:00 a.m. release?

MR. NESSEN: We might be able to put it out for 6:00 a.m., yes.

Q What, the speech to the convention, itself?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, because it is early in the day.

Q Refresh my memory. What time is the President due back in Washington?

MR. NESSEN: About 2:00 in the afternoon.

Q What time is the speech to the convention?

MR. NESSEN: The President tentatively is due back at 2:05 and the speech is tentatively 11:40 in the morning on Saturday.

Q Does he have anything afterwards?

MR. NESSEN: For the rest of Saturday? I don't know what his plans are at this point for the rest of the day on Saturday.

Q Is golf possible?

MR. NESSEN: It is possible, I think.

For specifics on the Indian meeting and details of a better identification of which Indians are coming and so forth, Ted Marrs, who works for Bill Baroody, is arranging this and his phone number is 456-2735.

One other scheduled item of an upcoming event and that is next Tuesday, July 20th, the President and Mrs. Ford are going to be the hosts at a special Bicentennial celebration at the White House for members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassadors to the Organization of American States, Congressional Leaders and Members of the Cabinet. Those are the guests.

The celebration will take the form of a concert and reception. The dress will be white tie. It is the major White House social event in honor of the Bicentennial.

Q What time is that, Ron, please?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the precise details of it. Obviously, in the evening. It will consist of a concert in the Rose Garden. The tent will stay up for that. The concert will consist of the whole range of American music, including jazz, broadway music, country and western music, and that will be followed by dancing on the State Floor at the White House. So, that is next Tuesday evening.

It is not a dinner?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is just a reception-concert of American music and dancing.

Q Ron, on Monday, has he invited some delegates to the White House?

MR. NESSEN: I think tentatively there are going to be some delegates coming in next week, but I don't have the precise list for you at this time.

Q Did the President watch the selection of Mondale?

MR. NESSEN: He was in a meeting at the time, but he was told about it promptly.

Q What did he say?

MR. NESSEN: I just sent a card in to him, so I don't know what his reaction was. He was having a meeting.

Q Ron, will it be at all possible for us to ask the President about his reaction?

MR. NESSEN: To Mondale?

Q Mondale and Carter.

MR. NESSEN: I mentioned this morning, Phil -- perhaps you had not quite arrived yet -- that the President phoned Carter this morning.

Q What time was that, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: That was 8:53.

Q Could you go through that again. Could I prevail on you.

MR. NESSEN: Yes. At 8:53 the President called Carter from the Oval Office and reached Carter at his hotel in New York and said, "Congratulations, Jimmy. I watched a bit of the program last night." He said, "I look forward to a good contest this fall."

Q Is that a direct quote, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. Then there was a pause, during which Carter obviously spoke, and the President then said, "I think we can keep it" -- meaning the campaign -- "at a high level." He said, "We will give the American people a choice." Then there was a little joking about Carter's Vice Presidential recommendation, which had not been announced at that time. Carter did not tell him who the choice was. Then the President said, "Have a good day, Jimmy." It was about a two-minute call, and then he hung up.

Q Ron, had the two men ever met? He sounds awful familiar calling him Jimmy. Had they ever met before?

MR. NESSEN: I think they must have met at a Governors Conference, and at the Gridiron dinner, among other places. I had forgot about that. Carter introduced him at a Southern Baptist event a couple of years ago in Dallas, I guess, when the President was the Vice President.

Q Ron, can we find out somewhere what the President thinks of Jimmy Carter as an opponent?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And how he thinks he might go about beating him?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that we are prepared to go into very much detail along those lines today, Phil.

Q Is the President going to finish his news conference so we can --

MR. NESSEN: What?

Q You know, like the other day. That was a nice little arrangement. We should do that more often.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, I see.

Q You don't think there would be any possibility of putting just a few questions?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so, but I will make the effort.

Q How about the Taiwan situation? Can you tell us how often the President has been in touch with Mr. Krumm?

MR. NESSEN: He has not directly talked to Krumm since that other time I reported the phone call. The procedure has been that Jim Cannon is the staff member assigned to follow this and Jim talks, I know, several times a day to Krumm, Colonel Miller, who is also a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee and to other members.

Jim Cannon reports to the President not on a regular schedule, but whenever he has anything to report. He called Philadelphia the other night, for instance, and gave an updated report then, and last night he called the President and gave him an updated report.

The latest report seems to be that there is a possibility of a compromise. I really should not be reporting it here, but the International Olympic Committee seemingly has reversed itself and instead of agreeing to the terms set by the Canadian Government, which seem to be what it had done previously, it now has proposed a compromise in which the members of the Taiwan team and delegation which are in Canada would be allowed to march in the opening ceremonies with their flag and so forth on Saturday.

Q Is that a compromise?

MR. NESSEN: What?

Q Is that a compromise?

MR. NESSEN: The reason I think you would have to call it a compromise is that it involves those members of the team which are in Canada now and not the full team.

Q In other words, only three athletes?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the exact number, but it establishes the principle, which is the important thing. The principle here is that the host country does not have the right to set political conditions on the participation of athletes and it keeps politics out of the eligibility for competing, and that is the principle that was involved here all along.

So, I think the step now is to wait and see if the Canadian Government accepts this compromise.

Q Ron, does this have the President's support?

MR. NESSEN: The President, at least based on what he knows now, feels that this does uphold the principle, which is what he has been most interested in all along, that the host country does not have a right to set political or any other rules for who may participate.

Q This does mean the team can later come in to participate?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know from here what all the details of the compromise are.

Q You know, you leave us hanging. What does happen to them, that they don't come in in the same positions?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I cannot tell you that from here because we are not involved in that, the White House is not.

Q This is by Cannon to the President?

MR. NESSEN: The latest report on what is happening up there was given last night by Jim Cannon, which is an outline of this compromise, and the President's reaction to it being that it does seem to preserve the principle of the host country having no right to dictate terms of participation, political terms, and of keeping politics out of that determination.

Q But after the opening ceremony the Canadian restrictions are in full force so politics --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Ralph. I mean, I don't know from here what the final --

Q I am only going on what you say about the compromise. It seems to me that after the opening ceremony we are back to square one.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the full details.

Q Ron, it is puzzling how the President can feel this upholds the principle if you don't know whether the Taiwanese will be allowed to participate in the games?

MR. NESSEN: The reason that I say that it upholds the principle is that it is the International Olympic Committee setting the rules for Taiwan's participation and they are not political considerations and the Canadian Government not having the right to set political or any other terms for participation. That is what this dispute has been all about all along, and this would seem to return the decision to the IOC, where it belongs, and not to the Canadian Government.

Q You don't know then whether the Taiwanese athletes will compete in the games?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly the ones who are there now at the minimum would compete, and I don't know the other terms.

Q Then what you are saying is a compromise that would uphold this principle would not be a compromise if the other members aren't allowed to play?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, this is not the place to get the terms of the compromise. Your reporters in Montreal will have to get that, but at this point what has happened is that the IOC has reversed itself.

Its earlier decision was to allow Canada-- to go along with Canada's setting political terms for competition. The IOC has now reasserted its right to determine who competes and --

Q So as the White House understands it, the IOC would make sure that all the Taiwan athletes would be able to participate in the Olympics? Is that your understanding?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry. From here I am not able to give the full details of the compromise.

Q I don't see how you can say that it is a compromise then if you don't know what is going on.

MR. NESSEN: It is a compromise in that the International Olympic Committee has reasserted its authority to determine who competes and not the host Government setting political terms on who may compete.

Q Do you understand our question on what we are saying?

MR. NESSEN: I do, and the only thing I can say is that from here, on this podium, I cannot report to you what all the details are of the negotiations in Canada.

Q It would appear as we stand out here looking at the podium that you don't have enough details to make any kind of response.

MR. NESSEN: I am telling you what Jim Cannon reported to the President, which is that the IOC has reasserted its authority to determine who participates in the Olympic Games.

Q Can you have Mr. Cannon come out and brief us?

MR. NESSEN: I think at the moment what we are doing is we are awaiting for the details and awaiting a decision by the Canadian Government.

Q Ron, you just said a minute ago that this re-establishes the principle that the IOC can determine who participates.

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q But that is not saying which athletes would participate, I mean, because you are now leaving the impression that an acceptable compromise is simply the Taiwanese flag.

MR. NESSEN: No, no. I thought I made clear in answer, I think, to somebody's question that the Taiwanese athletes who are there would march in the opening ceremonies on Saturday with their flag and would compete in the games.

Q Yes, but there are only three of them there.

Q Not anywhere near the size of the team.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how many are there, and what would be the provisions following the opening of the ceremony other than --

Q If they were barred, the Canadians would have conceded in determining --

MR. NESSEN: You know, all I am reporting to you is what I know and what the President has been told. For the details of the compromise, I think you need to get in touch with your correspondents in Montreal. I can't give them to you from here.

Q I cannot understand how the President says that his principle has been upheld.

MR. NESSEN: Because the determination of who competes -- because the IOC has reasserted its authority to determine who competes and has reasserted its feeling that the host country does not have the right to determine on political grounds who competes.

Q Ron, what time did the President get the information from Cannon?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the exact time, but I can check it for you.

Q Several meetings happened all night.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, may I come back to the Schmidt visit?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q Recently about 60,000 Americans were thrown out of the West German Soldier of Security System. The policy has been unilaterally cancelled.

MR. NESSEN: You mentioned that to me one day before, and I told you that I didn't have any information on it and I referred you to someone who had the information on it and that is still the case today, so I really can't help you any more than I have.

Q I was in contact with General Scowcroft on this, and Mr. Kissinger commented on it. Nobody is taking any step to restore these insured to their original contractual rights. I think it is now the time to get Mr. Schmidt and discuss this problem. These are aged Americans who expected to have a pension and now they are finding out that two years ago they were cancelled. By the way, Israeli citizens also.

Q Ron, could I go back to the phone call?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, are you going to respond to it?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear any question, so I cannot very well respond.

Q Have you looked into this at all?

MR. NESSEN: I told the gentleman when he mentioned to me the other day the same situation that I knew nothing about it and I referred him to the people who did know.

Q It is not in the President's bailiwick at all? If something is unilaterally --

MR. NESSEN: It is not a subject that is on the agenda to be talked about, and I simply don't know anything about it, but I referred him to those who do.

Q Ron, what is on the agenda?

MR. NESSEN: Basically, the President and the Chancellor, I think, have had something like eight meetings over the last two years or so. They have established a very good personal relationship, and they also feel that the two countries have as good or better relationships now than they have ever had.

Part of the reason for Chancellor Schmidt coming here is to present Germany's Bicentennial gift to the United States, including the Einstein Spacearium at the Air and Space Museum, and that will be dedicated this afternoon and presented by Chancellor Schmidt, and the President will thank him for it. In the substantive area, I would say that matters involving a Western alliance will be a leading topic of conversation.

Q Can you be more specific?

MR. NESSEN: I think I would rather wait until after the read-out -- I mean wait for the read-cut or after the conclusion of both meetings.

Q By Western alliance, you mean NATO?

MR. NESSEN: NATO, yes.

There will be some talk about economic matters following up on the Puerto Rican summit.

Q Will they talk about terrorism?

MR. NESSEN: I would think that that could be one of the subjects discussed.

Q Ron, if they discuss NATO, are they expected to discuss the GAO report, which shows or indicates that many NATO units are ill-equipped for combat at the present time.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether that is a specific item on the agenda or not.

I would say matters involving the Atlantic alliance, economic matters, the terrorism issue could very well come up. I think in a general way those are the areas that will be discussed.

Q When will you have this brief read-out, before lunch or after?

MR. NESSEN: The meeting began at 11:00 and lasts 90 minutes, so it will be over at 12:30.

Q I just want to know for filing purposes.

MR. NESSEN: It might be 1:00 or 1:30. It will be a brief one though because there is another meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

Q Do you anticipate a joint communique tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't.

Q To go back to that phone call between the President and Mr. Carter, have you said that he didn't reveal to the President his choice of the Vice President? Did the President ask him about it?

MR. NESSEN: Not really. He kidded him a little bit about it, about keeping it a secret and so forth, but did not ask him about it.

Q What did the President mean when he said that there would be a real choice this fall?

MR. NESSEN: A real choice of his record and his policies against Carter's.

Q Do we know what Carter said to the President during that long pause you mentioned?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't.

Q Ron, how did he kid him about it? Did he kid him about milking it for publicity?

MR. NESSEN: No, just about keeping the secret so well.

Q Did Carter ask him who he is going to nominate?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear the Carter end of the conversation.

Q Have you since heard?

MR. NESSEN: No, I have not.

Q You didn't try?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't ask.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: Well, the President has been busy with some other things. I thought it was a private phone conversation anyhow and it was not proper for me to report the Carter end of it.

Q Did Ronald Reagan and John Connally telephone or send a message of happy birthday to the President?

MR. NESSEN: He has had some calls.

What are those two names, Connally and --

Q And Reagan.

Q And Nixon.

MR. NESSEN: I will check. I have not heard of any of those three calling, but I will check.

Q Has the President called Mrs. Nixon?

MR. NESSEN: Since the initial call to the former President?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware, but I will check that also.

Q Ron, do you know if the President still holds the view that he doesn't know where Jimmy Carter stands on the issues because Carter hasn't been specific? That was his last statement, I believe, that we don't really know about Jimmy Carter.

I am paraphrasing now. Down in Waco, he said that. Is that pretty much still his view, that he does not really know Carter's stand on the issues?

MR. NESSEN: I think, as we go into the campaign, John, you will get to know the President's views firsthand.

Q I am asking you, does that statement still stand?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know. I have not -- you know, I think you probably, as I say, will hear the President's views firsthand as we go on.

Q There is no reason why we couldn't still refer back to that previous remark, and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any reason why you could not. I also don't know of any reason why you would not want to wait and hear the President's remarks firsthand instead of --

Q How long do you think we will have to wait? A news conference maybe?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't have any -- you know, there is none planned.

Q You will make an effort to try.

MR. NESSEN: As Phil asked earlier, Phil would like something fresh rather than going back, and I said I would do that.

Q Are you saying it is possible to have one? Do you plan on having one this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: I am going to check and see what I can find out and report back.

Q Does the President think the tranquility that has prevailed in New York has given the Democrats a leg up inasmuch as the Republican Convention seems to be very close and probably discouraged by it?

MR. NESSEN: I have not asked him that precise question.

Q Ron, there is a newspaper story today quoting Peter Kaye saying that he will probably leave after the convention. One of the reasons, he says, that indicates he is sort of being forced out is because some people here in the White House feel that he has been too open and too candid. Do you feel that he has been too open and too candid?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't.

Q You have not criticized him at any point?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly have not.

Q Ron, is there any regret that he may be leaving and is there any attempt to keep him on.

MR. NESSEN: I think you have to check with either Rog Morton or Roy Hughes on Peter's status there. I don't know it myself.

Q Do you think that the spokesmen here in the White House have been too open and too candid?

MR. NESSEN: I find myself being too open sometimes.

Q Do you mean the President does not have anything to say about who speaks for him in his political campaign?

MR. NESSEN: That is why I say you ought to check over there first and make sure that that newspaper account is correct.

Q Are you suggesting it is not correct?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, myself, Phil. I think you have to check at the Committee.

Q You haven't checked, in view of the account?

MR. NESSEN: I have not had time this morning.

Q What is his interest in his Committee?

MR. NESSEN: It is his Committee and it is the people that he has assigned to run his campaign for him. But what Peter Kaye's status is today, I don't know, and I really have not had the time to check it.

Q Ron, can you tell us what the President's rationalization for keeping the Ford Committee after the Convention -- as I understand that it will -- and as he said in Chicago when he was Vice President, that he would not use the Committee outside the Party?

MR. NESSEN: I think what the organization of the campaign is after the Convention, John -- I don't know what it is going to be, actually, and I don't know whether all the determinations have been made. I think when they are then the organizational set-up will be announced and we can look at it and see how it looks then. I don't know what it is going to be.

Q He did say, though, that he would work through the Committee --

MR. NESSEN: Through the Republican National Committee.

Q -- through the regular, traditional Committee. He has said that.

MR. NESSEN: I remember him saying that, yes.

Q What has changed his mind?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he has changed his mind. That is why I say you will have to wait and see what the campaign organization is going to look like after the Convention.

Q You are not suggesting that the PFC or a separate committee is not going to be the vehicle for Mr. Ford?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I don't know, and as I told John, I don't think all the decisions have been made yet on what the fall campaign will look like.

Q Why would he have to have a separate committee if he has a Republican National Committee?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I don't know what the set-up is going to be, I don't think the decisions have been made yet and when we can see what it looks like --

Q But you are saying he is reassessing.

Q He said the other day, in an answer to Rog Morton leaving, he said no, Rog would be there as long as the PFC is there and he would assume that the PFC will remain until the President is elected.

MR. NESSEN: What role it will play in the campaign and what role the RNC will play in the campaign, I don't know, because I don't think all the decisions have been made.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 12:09 P.M. EDT)