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

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:32 A.M. EDT

JULY 22, 1976

THURSDAY

The only announcement I really have today is I understand that Rogers Morton this morning will be announcing that Bill Greener is coming on board there as Deputy Chairman of the PFC for Communications.

He will be dealing in the areas of press, research and advertising. I want you to know that the President is very pleased that Bill has taken this assignment.

Q Ron, is the President going to ask Peter Kaye to stay on?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think the President will be involved there. I know, from talking to Bill, that he would very much like Peter Kaye to stay on.

Q Is Dick Luksta going to join that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that.

Q What was the question?

MR. NESSEN: Whether Dick Lukstadt will be going to work at the PFC. I don't know that.

Q You say this is an addition to the PFC, not a replacement for somebody?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct. A new position is being created over there.

Q What will it pay?

MR. NESSEN: It will pay whatever Bill is making right now over at the Pentagon.

Q Will he get a limousine?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Why is Kaye leaving?

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MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he is, Helen. I know, from talking to Bill about the matter, that he would very much like Peter to stay.

Q Does this reflect an unhappiness on the President's part with the communications system up to now at the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: No. I think it is an addition to rather than a replacement for, Aldo.

Q Does it reflect an unhappiness?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of, no.

Q Will Greener resign the job he had at the Pentagon?

MR. NESSEN: He will resign effective August 1st and take this new job August 1st.

In answer to this question, Bill came in to talk to the President the other day. He has been happy at the Pentagon, as I understand it. He wanted to come in and talk to the President and make sure he was doing what the President felt would be the best way to serve the President and this was the conclusion they reached.

Q Ron, will he be working closely with you?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly hope so. It was my idea, and I am pleased that it worked out.

Q Your idea that Greener go?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And your idea that Peter leave?

MR. NESSEN: No. As I say, Greener wants Peter Kaye to stay.

Q Ron, I have two questions. Number one, did you sit in on the meeting between Mr. Greener and the President of the United States?

MR. NESSEN: I did not.

Q Number two, will Mr. Greener be attending staff meetings and other sessions going on here at the White House if he takes the PFC job?

MR. NESSEN: I hope so.

Q Every day? Will he be here on a daily basis?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what his schedule will be on a daily basis.

Q Have you met with Greener and discussed his new position over there?

MR. NESSEN: I talked with him a lot about his new position. As I say, I initiated the idea and was happy to see it work out.

Q Can I follow up on that please? When I say meet, did you talk, as opposed to the telephone, did you have a sit-down meeting with Greener on anything about this job?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by a "sit-down meeting."

Q Face-to-face?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, as well as phone calls.

Q Second, did Greener put any stipulation in his meeting with the President about his taking that job over at the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of. His only stipulation was he wanted to do what he felt would be of best service to the President.

Q Also, I imagine salary, too?

MR. NESSEN: That was worked out by Rog Morton. Bill had many meetings with Rog Morton and other people at the PFC before he came over and had his meeting with the President.

Q Since this was your idea, would you tell us why you felt it was necessary to add this additional --

MR. NESSEN: It is not my idea to have a Deputy Director or Deputy Chairman, but Rog Morton indicated it was time to begin to increase the staff over there, as they have done in several other areas, and when he said, "Do you have any ideas," I said the best guy I know of in Washington for that job is Bill Greener.

Q Did he ask you if you would be interested in it?

MR. NESSEN: No, he didn't.

Q Ron, you said you would be working closely with him. Does that mean you won't have to tell us you don't know some answers that we could only get from the Ford Committee?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think it means exactly that.

Q Is the President aware that the White House aides have said that Kaye is too honest and, therefore, Morton didn't like that, and so forth? What is the image of a man being replaced because he is too honest in the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: First of all, Peter is not being replaced because Bill Greener wants him to stay. Secondly, I have never heard anybody complain about any official of this Administration dealing with the press in a manner that would be considered too candid or too honest. That is just ludicrous on the face of it.

Q Excuse me, that story appeared in print. I read it.

MR. NESSEN: It may well have. I read it, too. As I say, it is ludicrous.

Q There was another question raised about there was allegedly dissatisfaction with Peter because he tended not to put a sugar-coating on the primary defeats and to indicate that he had a tiger for a candidate was less than ideal and this caused, allegedly, some unhappiness with Rog Morton, with you. Would you care to comment on that?

MR. NESSEN: I can only speak for myself. My feelings about Peter are not at all in line with what you have just quoted.

Q Will Bill have an office here as well as at the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: No, his office will be at the PFC.

Q You said, no member of the Administration had ever complained about him being too candid or too honest. Neither Morton nor Kaye are members of the Administration in the jobs they hold now.

MR. NESSEN: I have never heard anybody, either in the White House or in the PFC, complain about Peter or anybody being too honest or candid with reporters. I think the President has set the pattern, himself.

Q He just wasn't up to the job of being Communications Director?

MR. NESSEN: He, hopefully, will stay.

Q But not as the number one man where he has been, Ron. The indication is that --

MR. NESSEN: You know we said sometime ago, Tom, that the PFC staff was going to be increased and added to and this is part of it.

Q Have you ever commented on the record or privately to reporters to the effect Mr. Kaye has made some stupid statements about various political matters?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I recall.

Q You think that he has never made any bad statements that have hurt the President's image?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly not that I know of.

Q Ron, why is the President not meeting with Peter Kaye to ask him to stay on, personally?

MR. NESSEN: As I understand it, Bill and others have, and will, ask Peter to stay.

Q What about the President?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any plans for the President to meet with Peter.

Q Is Peter being considered for the Television Adviser's job?

MR. NESSEN: Here at the White House?

Q ..Yes.

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is it correct, then, that Peter will stay beyond the Convention?

MR. NESSEN: Hopefully.

Q You said Peter is not being replaced because Bill wants him to stay?

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

Q That suggests it has already been agreed. In fact, I gather it hasn't?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how it will be resolved except for the fact Bill and others would like Peter to stay.

Q Has any consideration been given to ask Lyn Nofziger to join the staff after the Convention?

Q Was Morton anxious to stay?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Helen, I have not heard otherwise.

Q Ron, are there any plans, once the President gets the nomination in August, on all the campaign trips for Bill Greener to go on those trips?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we have worked all that out, yet.

Q Ron, will Bill Funseth remain with the Committee after the Convention?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know. I haven't heard of any plans for him not to.

Q Ron, are we going to get that special message to Congress today?

MR. NESSEN: Possibly.

Q Question?

MR. NESSEN: The question is, will the President's message to Congress, outlining the priority legislation he thinks should be passed, go to Congress today? I said "possibly."

Q What time?

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you a time on it or definite word that it will be today.

Q Ron, how many New York delegates will be here today?

MR. NESSEN: All have been invited. I don't know how many have accepted.

Q How does the President feel about Mr. Reagan's suggestion that they debate the issues at the Convention?

Q Ron, have you talked to the President about this?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q This morning?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. Why?

Q I just wondered because I checked with you earlier and you hadn't yet talked to him.

MR. NESSEN: It seems to me that in Kansas City, both of the candidates should be concentrating on how to unify the Republican Party to prepare for the fall election campaign and should not be considering things that could possibly be divisive or divide the Republican Party. I do think that we have had eight months now where the issues have been debated fully in the primary States and convention States.

Q Ron, they have never been debated, face-to-face. Now, you know months ago, the radio station in Laconia, New Hampshire issued that invitation. They kept saying, is he a candidate, and that kind of thing. I believe the PFC turned it down. I believe Mr. Reagan was more than willing to debate face-to-face.

Now, there is a difference between distant and so forth, and I just wondered why you say it has been debated when it really hasn't, Ron, not face-to-face.

MR. NESSEN: I think the issues have been fully debated over eight months.

Q Why would it be divisive?

MR. NESSEN: I think, if you read -- in fact, if I read correctly the quotations in which the suggestion for the debate was made, it was made for the very purpose -- if I read the quotes correctly -- of dividing or showing a division or difference between the candidates.

It seems to me that is, in so many words, what was on the TV this morning.

Q Ron, is any part of the debate decision the fact that the President is probably not as good on the platform as Ronald Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think the reason for the response is what I have given, Dick.

Q Do you think Reagan seriously thought the President would accept this challenge or do you think it was just something thrown out to make a headline?

MR. NESSEN: I won't judge his motives, Bob.

Q You have a chance to make a very nice self-serving remark.

MR. NESSEN: We never do that from here. Why should I start now, after all this time?

Q What about debating Carter this fall? Has that been ruled out?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't think it has been really considered, or decided.

Q Reagan also suggested today that there was a great deal of difference between Mr. Ford and Mr. Reagan. Does the President agree with that view?

MR. NESSEN: As you know, the President has been asked that a lot, including the other day in the news conference. I think the better way to respond to that is as the President has, which is that his stand on issues and his policies are clear because he has to make decisions day in and day out here in the office. For Reagan's position on issues, I am not the right one to spell it out, I don't think.

Q Ron, are any pictures planned for the New York delegation as requested yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is there any format of that New York delegation of the press being allowed in?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is there any chance we could get to them after the reception, and where could that be done?

MR. NESSEN: It is all right with me. There is no chance to do it here at the White House.

Q Where are they coming in, back there at the back gate?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I saw pictures of buses coming in the Southwest Gate on earlier occasions and one time a van, even.

Q That was not the Southeast or Southwest Gate.

MR. NESSEN: Wasn't it?

Q Why won't you make some of these people available to us?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is the proper function.

Q Why did you make Longley available?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't make Longley available. Somebody, Fran, I guess, stopped him out front and said, "Will you talk to us afterwards." He said, "Sure," and Fran said, "Can we do it inside where it is air conditioned so we don't have to stand out here in the heat." He said, "It is all right with me." Then, John Carlson came around and said, "Guess what, Longley said he would meet the reporters in the briefing room."

Q Would you object if we got one or two ahead of time and asked them to come in here after the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think we will do that, Bob. (Laughter)

Q Ron, in view of the fact the President is openly meeting with delegates, this is a political act. He is talking to them for the purpose of his election, so, he is being a candidate right now. This is not a Presidential role. Why should we be deprived of knowing precisely what he is doing?

MR. NESSEN: Do the other candidates have open coverage of their meetings with delegates?

Q That is not the answer.

MR. NESSEN: It is a fair point, I think.

Q Does the President say things to them different than he says publicly?

MR. NESSEN: No, he doesn't.

Q Since we have to find this out in bits and pieces, could you give us a little rundown on what the format of these things is?

MR. NESSEN: I think I said before, Bob, each time I am asked that question, I have explained that the format is the President thanks the delegates for their support, outlines why he feels he is the best candidate, which adds up to the accomplishments of his Administration, and after briefly doing that, asks if they have any questions and spends the rest of the time answering their questions.

Q Does he stand up at the mike and do this or do they sit around in little buzz groups, or how does it work?

MR. NESSEN: It depends on how many people are attending.

Q I don't think I got an answer to my question.

Q Do they beat them?

MR. NESSEN: They do if they need it.

Q May I have an answer to my question?

Q What was the question Dick asked that you said, "They do if they need it?"

MR. NESSEN: The question was, "Do they beat them?"

Q Where will they meet today, what room?

MR. NESSEN: Somewhere over on the State Floor, probably the East Room.

Q When the New York delegation comes today, Dr. Gloria Toot, a Black woman, will not be among them. The reason, according to her, is she wrote the President a mailgram back around May 24th, asking him to make a statement regarding busing. She said she got no response from him. My question is, is the President aware of this? Why didn't she get a response and what is his reaction?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check why she didn't get a response, because all people who communicate with the White House get responses.

Q Ron, why is the open, candid Ford Administration trying to make it as difficult as possible and trying to frustrate our efforts to meet with the New York delegation?

MR. NESSEN: Why do we get the same questions every day?

Q If you would answer it, we wouldn't have to ask the question. My question is, why are you trying to frustrate us and make it impossible for us to talk with the New York delegation?

MR. NESSEN: I am not trying to frustrate you, Walter, and not trying to make it difficult for you.

Q Ron, you may have answered this on another occasion. Who picks up the tab on all these occasions?

MR. NESSEN: The PFC.

Q Question?

MR. NESSEN: Who pays the bills for the receptions and, as I have said all the other times when the question has been raised, the PFC.

Q Ron, when you hold a state dinner, such as you did for Ambassador Schmidt, and uncommitted delegates come and leave the dinner, having said they came to the White House and dined and had a chance to chat with the President and they now are now committed to his political effort, who pays for those dinners?

MR. NESSEN: Dinners for foreign visitors, I believe at least a portion, is paid by the State Department and I forget the precise breakdown on those.

Q Do you know why the Press Secretaries and Press Aides on the social side refuse to tell us who the uncommitted delegates were or to identify the guest list that would include uncommitted delegates?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, the guest list is being issued for each dinner as it normally is.

Q The names were but they refused to identify the uncommitted delegates. Can you tell us why?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Ron, does the White House intend to maintain a secretive and manipulative policy on all future functions having to do with campaigning and politics?

MR. NESSEN: I disagree with your characterization, Bill.

Q I am still waiting for an explanation of why you are doing it. I have asked that question.

MR. NESSEN: I think it is still the same explanation we have offered every time the question came up, Marilyn.

Q I am sorry, I wasn't here, so could you answer my question?

MR. NESSEN: It is just that. As far as I know, all the candidates follow the same practice in their private meetings with potential delegates.

Q Ron, some of the Reagan people are challenging your delegate count, saying that in your count are a lot of hidden Reagan delegates. What do you think about that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Ask Jim Baker. He counts delegates.

Q When the President is photographed with all these delegates, each individually, who pays for that, the time for the photographer, the equipment, the materials used and the mailing to each of those delegates when they go home?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is done in a proper way. I think you know the President has given orders that all these things be done in a proper way, and they are.

Q What is that?

Q Ron, can you explain why the press can cover the President when he visits delegates around the country and not at the White House?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know exactly what you mean by that.

Q We go with him if he goes to Springfield, Missouri or Hartford, Connecticut, but we can't cover him here at the White House.

MR. NESSEN: You don't sit with Ronald Reagan or Jimmy Carter at his meetings with the delegates.

Q Ronald Reagan isn't the President and doesn't live in the White House.

Q The whole point is, if we didn't get to sit in with the delegates, we don't on some of the trips except at the open receptions, but you have produced Arch Moore and have produced Longley, made it possible --

MR. NESSEN: Longley was produced by Fran Lewine.

Q We heard that story. It is a very hit and miss policy. It is not consistent and that is not the way real news is conducted from the White House, or should be.

Q Ron, do they serve food at these things, cocktails, et cetera, hors d'oeuvres?

MR. NESSEN: Depending on the time of the day, sometimes they serve hors d'oeuvres?

Q They serve cocktails, too, don't they, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I frankly have never been to any of these, Ann.

Q Some delegate was talking about coming and trying some of the President's Scotch. I read that in the paper today. Is that true?

MR. NESSEN: I have never been to one of them, Phil, so I don't know what goes on at those things. But they sound so fascinating I better go over and try one.

The answer to Sol's question about who pays for the photos and envelopes and so forth --

Q And the licking of the stamps.

MR. NESSEN: As I said, Phil, all of the President's campaign activities are done in the proper way, under the President's direction and the photographic part is, also.

Q What about the people who serve this? Who pays for that?

MR. NESSEN: The people who are called in especially or have to work overtime to do it are paid by the PFC. I think we went through this whole rundown on pay a couple of weeks ago on each event and we talked about how much the hors d'oeuvres' cost and how much the bar costs and I think we gave figures.

Q I don't think you gave it for the people who serve it.

MR. NESSEN: I think I did. I was asked who pays for the people who serve, and the answer was, those who have to come in or work overtime are paid for by the PFC.

Q Ron, this morning, with the President, the Associated Press Wire Service survey that showed John Connally to be the overwhelming favorite of the overall Republican delegates, or maybe the Reagan delegates, I am not sure, but it showed Connally in a strong position among a large block of Republican delegates as the choice for Vice President.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't discuss that poll with the President today.

Q Can you tell us the President's reaction when Governor Longley told him he was not sure he could support Connally on the ticket?

MR. NESSEN: It was a private meeting and I did not attend.

Q Ron, almost two weeks ago, I believe, U.S. District Court Judge William Jones ordered the Secret Service to write a set of standards to be used in the issuance or denial of White House press credentials in connection with the court action of Thomas Forcade, I believe it is, and Robert Sherrill. The Secret Service, this morning, refused any comment other than to say they are evaluating this decision.

I was wondering, does the President believe the Secret Service should delay in obeying the Judge's order?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding of that case is that the Judge directed that standards be submitted within 180 days after the ruling.

Q Does the President agree with the Judge on this? Or you, as Press Secretary, because this relates directly to you. Do you feel that this is a good decision on the Judge's part?

MR. NESSEN: I won't comment on a court decision or court matter that is still in process.

Q Do you automatically, as the Press Secretary, accept the -- in other words, the Secret Service says that because we hear one of these guys hit somebody with a pie and because Sherrill allegedly slugged a Press Secretary, and his wife last night tells me the Press Secretary called him a liar --

MR. NESSEN: That is turning the tables.
(Laughter)

Q Do you automatically, as Press Secretary, follow the Secret Service's judgment on this or is that up to you?

MR. NESSEN: Well, we have had a procedure for issuing credentials here and, as I understand the court case, which I have not been involved in myself, the court case goes to the very matter of the procedures now in place and whether there ought to be another set of standards substituted for those standards.

So, while the matter is in litigation, I don't think I can comment on it, Les.

Q Ron, some months ago, you described the incumbency has a burden on a candidate for national office. Do you still feel it is a terrible burden for the President to carry?

MR. NESSEN: I don't believe I described it precisely like that. I said, there are liabilities to the incumbency, and there certainly are.

Q Is that still the case?

MR. NESSEN: It certainly is.

Q Speaking of the incumbency, Governor Reagan, this morning on the Today Show, said the Presidency has a lot more to offer than he has in terms of wooing delegates and sometimes "I do believe some of his campaigners have been a little heavy-handed with some of the powers that are attendant on the incumbency." This was brought up yesterday and I did not get the impression, then, that the President had gone to the question of possibly illegal acts. I did not get the impression the President had said to Rog Morton, you are going to knock that stuff off now if it is going on. Is that so?

MR. NESSEN: Let me set your mind at ease on that matter as soon as I get some papers off my desk.

Q Is the President going to Hawaii to meet with some delegates?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly hope so.

Q When?

MR. NESSEN: There is no plan to go to Hawaii, unfortunately, and no decision on whether to go -- there is a decision not to go to Mississippi this weekend. There is no decision on whether to go or not to go on any future dates.

Q Ron, Dave Mathews was supposed to meet with the President earlier this week on this whole swine flu matter. Has that meeting been rescheduled?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check.

Q I gather, then, you have nothing new to report on that.

MR. NESSEN: No.

Partly as a result of your question and some left over from yesterday, I said I think, then, that the President had given firm orders concerning dealings with delegates and potential delegates and indeed he has. In fact, there was a memo sent around to the Cabinet on the President's behalf as long ago as January 7th, outlining a very strict set of prohibitions on what would not be done in an election year and then only on Monday, as recently as Monday, at the President's direction, a further memo was sent to the Cabinet, specifically focusing on dealings with delegates and the memo was addressed to "The Cabinet" but also the members of the staff and agencies and the PFC are certainly aware of its contents and know of the President's desires in this area.

Q May we have copies of that?

MR. NESSEN: Let me see.

Q Who wrote it?

MR. NESSEN: It is from the Secretary to the Cabinet, James E. Connor, at the President's direction.

Q Do you have any key quotes?

MR. NESSEN: "No official action or position on any matter by anyone in the Administration shall be, directly or indirectly, offered, promised, or provided as consideration, favor, or reward for the support of any delegate to benefit the President's candidacy."

Q Is that from the Monday memo?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Something like that was said in the January 1st?

MR. NESSEN: The January 1st is considerably longer and deals with a much broader --

Q Who was it from?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, it was addressed to the Cabinet.

Q Whose signature?

MR. NESSEN: James E. Connor, Secretary for the Cabinet, is his title.

Q What prompted that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think anything prompted it, Phil. As the lead paragraph says that Jim recalls the January memo and he said, "The President has asked me to reaffirm the guidance provided by that memorandum," and so forth.

Q Did it go to the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: They are aware of its contents, yes.

Q Isn't that in fact a restatement of the Criminal Section?

Q Did it give any little examples of things they better not do in that memo?

MR. NESSEN: No. It is couched in the kind of language I read to you.

Q Can they kiss the sewer project good-bye up in Long Island?

Q May I ask a question on that? If, for example, a delegate came up to Mr. Baker and offered his vote or even hinted that he would be willing to give his vote to the President in exchange for a Federal position, isn't that considered a felony?

MR. NESSEN: You have me. I am not a lawyer. You will have to ask a lawyer that question.

Q Is it not just a crime to even discuss a job as a reward for a vote at the Convention and hasn't that been done already, according to what Mr. Baker said at his news conference on Monday?

MR. NESSEN: On the legal question, I don't know, Walt. First of all, I don't know what people have said to Jim Baker. You ought to talk to him. Secondly, I don't know what the legalities are.

Q You have some legal language there in the Connor memorandum which is pretty clearly patterned after the Federal Criminal Statutes, as Dave points out.

On this question of misprision, does he then say in there, "If anybody asks you for such an inducement, If any delegates asks you for such an inducement, you ought to report it to the Justice Department."

You were asked that yesterday and we didn't get a clear answer as to whether there were any instructions to the President's political strategists, and so forth, like Baker and Morton, that if they are asked anything like this, they are to report it to the Justice Department. That goes to the question of misprision here.

MR. NESSEN: The memo does direct those who may receive from a delegate an expression of interest in some Federal action that the person who the delegate talks to is not to relay that interest on to anyone in a position of authority.

Q All right. But is he also to report it to a law enforcement authority?

Q Which is what the Federal Statute requires.

MR. NESSEN: I am just not enough of a lawyer to deal with the legalities of the issue.

Q Will you undertake to find out whether that instruction has also been issued by Connor or anyone else?

MR. NESSEN: I think the first thing to find out would be if any delegate had raised a question that was in any way --

Q You put out something last January on this thing. Do you have to wait for an offense before you have a policy or do you have a policy?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President's views on this are very clearly set forward in both of the memos.

Q I am asking whether there is one further aspect to this policy, and that is a reporting aspect?

Q Have you got the memo in front of you and can you read that and answer that, because that is a very important question. If you have the memo, perhaps you can read it and we will wait a couple of seconds and you can answer Jim's question.

Q Perhaps you can give us the memo.

MR. NESSEN: I would like to find out the status of the memo. It is a private communication of the President to his Cabinet.

Q I thought it was the Secretary of the Cabinet.

MR. NESSEN: On the President's behalf.

Q It is not clear to me and maybe others, why it was necessary to send another memorandum to this effect when he had already done so in January. Were there instances raising a suspicion at the White House that this reminder was necessary, or what?

MR. NESSEN: I think we are moving into a slightly different zone in the political year. The memo also deals with proper conduct at Kansas City, for instance.

Q What does it say about Kansas City?

MR. NESSEN: Let me find out whether I can just simply give these out. That would make it a lot simpler.

Q Why don't you go find out and we will wait.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can find out while you wait.

Q Does that apply to delegate wooing in terms of proper conduct or does it apply to something else?

MR. NESSEN: It applies to making sure no Government money is spent by members of the Cabinet who go to Kansas City while they are performing any kind of political or candidate duties.

Q Ron, why on earth would such a very important standard of decent conduct be confidential? Certainly, the President doesn't hide his views that we need to avoid such things. Why would this thing, issues by a subordinate, be confidential? Why is it being withheld? It is terribly important. Baker suggests there are a lot of people bargaining, in fact selling, their votes. Why would you conceal this?

MR. NESSEN: First, I don't know who Jim Baker is indicating that to, because he certainly has not indicated it to me, that a lot of people are selling their votes.

Q It has been in the press that he stated this.

MR. NESSEN: I talked to Jim Baker, though, and that is not his view.

Q My question is, why the concealment of such an important document at this time?

MR. NESSEN: Les, there is no concealment. I said, if you would give me a brief time to check and make sure that a document which is, after all, a private communication on the President's behalf to his Cabinet.

Q I think everybody said they would be more than happy to wait. You have able people right there who could check.

MR. NESSEN: Would you point out the able one?

Q Yes, Larry Speakes.

MR. NESSEN: Larry, you have been pointed out as able. Would you check on that?

That is the lead out of this briefing. Larry Speakes declared able by Les Kinsolving.

Q I have never denied that the Kingfish is extremely able. (Laughter)

Q Is there any accuracy to the allegation in the Anderson column this morning about conversations between the President and Senator Domenici, of New Mexico --

MR. NESSEN: I didn't read that column.

Q About a \$500,000 pest eradication program --

MR. NESSEN: Where are the pests to be eradicated?

Q Please answer the question.

Q It suggested the President approved this program, which is a half million dollars, or something like that.

MR. NESSEN: I am not familiar with the program or the allegation.

Q Will you take that question and get an answer?

MR. NESSEN: If you can wait for Larry to get off the phone, you will get an answer.

MORE

Q A couple of Republican Senators went on television yesterday and said -- it was Baker and Weicker -- and said they thought it would be a very good thing if Congress went home awfully early because of doing naughty things. Does the President agree with them? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Because they are doing what?

Q Naughty things.

MR. NESSEN: I think when we get this message to Congress outlining the President's priorities, it will deal with that issue.

Q When will you know whether that is coming out today?

MR. NESSEN: By 4:00.

Q Along the same lines of Dick's question on Congress and so forth, Baker indicated yesterday that it is going to be extremely difficult for the President to have any of his vetoes sustained at this point, at all. Is the President worried about this?

MR. NESSEN: Jim Connor, the Secretary for the Cabinet, says it is not normal to distribute private communications from the President but that, due to your interest, he will continue to check on it and let me know the answer later in the afternoon.

Q Boy, that Speakes is able.

Q You mean you won't know about the legislative list until 4:00 and then it will be sent to Congress today?

MR. NESSEN: I think the question was, when will I know if it is going today. I said by 4:00.

Q In other words, if it won't go before 4:00, it won't?

MR. NESSEN: No, if you haven't heard by 4:00.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:11 P.M. EDT)