

The original documents are located in Box 12, folder “Hot Line” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Hotline file

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMO FOR JERRY WARREN

November 23, 1973

FROM LES JANKA *for*

GUIDANCE ON USE OF HOTLINE

In response to the UPI query from Helen Thomas; Has the President ever used the Hotline?, I have obtained the following NSC guidance for handling questions on this matter;

--As a general rule, Administration spokesmen will not discuss Hot Line usage in relation to a current, specific crisis situation, consistent with our policy of not discussing the substance or details of Presidential exchanges or channels of communication with other heads of state. However, on a case by case basis and with prior NSC approval, its use can be denied when necessary to deflate speculation on the seriousness of a crisis-related exchange of messages.

--As a general rule, Administration spokesmen may, after the fact and as a matter of historical record unrelated to any ongoing crisis situation, confirm previous Hotline use but provide no details on dates or circumstances.

Therefore, consistent with the above guidelines, you can tell Helen Thomas that the Hot Line has been used by President Nixon on two occasions in the past, but you are not prepared to provide further details.

FYI: As can best be determined by a review of the transcripts from crisis periods, the above guidance is consistent with previous White House denials of Hotline use, in view of the context, timing or specificity of the question asked.

February 4, 1970

-3-

HOT LINE - LOS ANGELES COPY, fac.

#164

Q Was it two pages or ten pages?

MR. ZIEGLER: Nothing would be served by indicating that.

Q Was it similar to the notes that were sent to Wilson and Pompidou?

MR. ZIEGLER: Again, I am in a position where I cannot discuss an exchange of communication between the Soviet Union and other governments. I have stated to you this morning that the United States has received a note from the Soviet Union on the Middle East. We are studying it and will reply in due course.

Q Was this an initiative on their part or a response to a letter from President Nixon?

MR. ZIEGLER: No, the Ambassador, as I said, called Dr. Kissinger regarding this, and we received the note after that call.

Q There is a report out of somewhere in the Middle East, I believe it was Beirut, saying the Hot Line had been used on this subject. Can you reply to that?

MR. ZIEGLER: The Hot Line has not been used, no, sir.

Q Has the Hot Line been used by the President at all, since he has been in?

MR. ZIEGLER: The Hot Line has not been used.

Q Can you tell us something about the President's response to the note? You won't comment on the contents of the note, but what about a response to the note?

MR. ZIEGLER: I think, as I said in my initial comments, it is under study and we will reply in due course.

Q How soon do you think that reply will come?

MR. ZIEGLER: Well, in due course.

Q In the early part of February? (Laughter)

MR. ZIEGLER: In due course.

We will brief after the memorial service.

THE PRESS: Thank you, sir.

END

(AT 10:10 A.M. EST.)

Q Has there been a use made of the Moscow-U.S. "hot line" in the last day or two?

MR. ZIEGLER: No.

Q Has the United States received any indication from the Soviet Government as to whether the invitation to Mr. Nixon still stands?

MR. ZIEGLER: Henry, I think, mentioned that this morning.

Q That was hours ago. That is why I was asking.

MR. ZIEGLER: There is no change since he responded.

Q What kind of response does the White House have in the wake of the President's speech in terms of phone calls and telegrams?

MR. ZIEGLER: I haven't been given numbers and I really haven't checked for numbers, but the switchboards here at the White House were jammed, to a greater degree than I recall, until well after midnight last night. The phone calls that we have been receiving here in the press office today have been, as I think some of the gals would describe it, overwhelming. The telegrams, I am told, are backlogged across the country.

I was talking to Ray Zook earlier, who, as you know, as part of his responsibility, has the responsibility of receiving telegrams. He has received all that their equipment will permit and he tells me that the Western Union system is backlogged across the country, as I said, with well over 12,000 backlogged telegrams. We have received, I think, close to 5,000 here already, and that is as much as our equipment here can receive and there are some 5,000 or so being delivered by truck to the White House. That is only the initial amount that is being delivered. In addition to that, there is the backlog that I referred to.

So, I would imagine that the response in terms of phone calls and telegrams is as extensive as we have received here in some time.

Q What is the trend?

MR. ZIEGLER: The telephone calls we have logged here today and last night, and I understand the telegrams that have been logged, are anywhere from five to one to six to one in support of the President's action that he announced last night.

May 10, 1972
#1440

Q We have two positions of the Government, Ron.

Q Any message from the Soviet Union?

MR. ZIEGLER: No, we have had no contact at this time from the Soviet Union.

Q Does that mean that the Hot Line has not yet been used?

MR. ZIEGLER: The Hot Line has not been used, Pete.

Q Has the advance team been in touch with the Soviets in the last day or so? Can you give us some of the atmospherics of those meetings? Did things proceed as if nothing had happened?

MR. ZIEGLER: We are proceeding with our planning and the advance team is proceeding with the work in the Soviet Union.

Q Are they receiving cooperation in the Soviet Union?

MR. ZIEGLER: I do not have a detailed report as to how they are proceeding. Members of my staff have talked with Tim there, and he is proceeding with his work.

Q You are not discouraged? I am serious.

MR. ZIEGLER: I understand, and the answer I can give you is that they are proceeding with their work.

Q Do you have any information that the Russians are proceeding with their work and planning?

MR. ZIEGLER: You will have to ask the Soviet Union that question. The answer I gave you is that we are proceeding with our planning, and the advance team that is in the Soviet Union is proceeding with its work.

Q When do you expect to be able to talk to us about the President's plans for travel to the Soviet Union and the details that concern us?

MR. ZIEGLER: I would say as soon as possible.

Q Jerry said "very, very soon" this morning.

MR. ZIEGLER: Jerry said the second "very" slipped out.

(Laughter)
Q Will it be within the next couple of weeks?

May 11, 1972

#1442

- 4 -

MR. ZIEGLER: I was asked a question relating to other diplomatic communications before. As you well know, our formal procedure is not to be responsive to those types of questions, so I will not be.

Q Has the President had to make any decisions about interdicting any vessels or planes today, since the mines were activated?

MR. ZIEGLER: The procedures are well stated in terms of his objectives. Therefore, that question really does not apply.

Q He will not have to make any personal decision about this?

MR. ZIEGLER: The operation is proceeding as it was announced.

Q The statement, then, is something which has not been officially handed to the U.S. Government; it merely exists as reported, and you are studying it, the Soviet statement?

MR. ZIEGLER: The statement that you are referring to has moved on the wire. I was addressing myself to that. Any other contact which may or may not have taken place, and I don't mean to lead you to the conclusion that any has, is something that we do not comment on as a normal course of events, and I will not in this case.

Q Let's say that you have been commenting for three days that we have not had any such comment. Now you say you will not have comment on it. We asked Dr. Kissinger and yourself.

MR. ZIEGLER: We are getting involved in semantics here. I have given you all I am going to give you on this subject. I think you are mixing up questions that relate to intentions relating to the summit and diplomatic contacts. I think you are confusing semantical things.

Q Is the President more confident that the Moscow trip is on at this moment than he was, perhaps, 24 hours ago?

MR. ZIEGLER: I just have nothing to provide you on that beyond what we have said before. I think that is all I really have to say on this subject.

Q Does this Government consider the Tass statement to be the official Soviet reaction to the President's mining of the harbor in Vietnam?

MR. ZIEGLER: That is difficult for this Government to say. That remains to be seen, I suppose. We have responded to you in terms of this particular statement.

Q Has the Hot Line been used?

MR. ZIEGLER: No, it has not been.

October 8, 1973

Q When?

MR. ZIEGLER: Saturday evening.

The objectives of the United States in terms of the Security Council meeting were spelled out yesterday in the briefing by Bob McCloskey. We are taking every step to mobilize all nations who have an interest to bring the fighting to an end. Our objective, of course, is to see the hostilities brought to an end, and also it is our objective to find a means to restore an atmosphere conducive to a settlement of the differences in the Middle East. So these are the objectives that we are working toward in our diplomatic efforts and initiatives relating to the Middle East.

The President intends to spend the day in his office here at the White House. The remainder of the week: The President on Tuesday will meet with the President of the Ivory Coast, Houphouet-Boigny; and then on Wednesday, the 10th, the President will meet with President Mobutu of Zaire.

Q Will that be a State visit?

MR. ZIEGLER: No, it is not a State visit. He is here and will meet with the President.

Q Neither one is a State visit?

MR. ZIEGLER: The Ivory Coast visit is a State visit. The Mobutu visit is not a State visit.

We had scheduled for this Saturday, October 13th, a trip to Carthage, Tennessee, where the President planned to dedicate the Cordell Hull Dam in Carthage, Tennessee. The President will now not make that trip to Tennessee. He wants to remain in Washington and decided today to cancel that particular appearance because of the developments in the Middle East. So I wanted to give you that information to fill in your stories for today.

Q You spoke of an exchange of messages with Chairman Brezhnev. Later you said the President has sent the Chairman a written message. But first you said an exchange of messages. Has he had a message of some sort from Brezhnev?

MR. ZIEGLER: Yes. There has been an exchange of messages, two ways.

Q Which was first, do you know?

Q Was the "hot line" used, Ron?

MR. ZIEGLER: No, the "hot line" was not used. The exchange of messages occurred through the Embassies, the diplomatic channels.

October 24, 1973

Oct 24

- 3 -

#1843

Q ~~What was the channel of communication in these new contacts with the President and Mr. Brezhnev? Was it the Hot Line, or the ordinary channels?~~

MR. WARREN: ~~No, Jim, the established means of direct communication between the President and Chairman Brezhnev!~~

Q When did they take place?

MR. WARREN: They have taken place in the last few days. There has been communication between the two leaders.

Q Jerry, you made a point of saying that the President has been preoccupied with the Mideast cease-fire.

MR. WARREN: I didn't say preoccupied. I said that the President has been concentrating on foreign policy matters, and primarily matters involving the establishment of the cease-fire, which has already been announced.

Q All right. Accepting that, has there been no discussion of the negotiations that reportedly will take place after the establishment of the cease-fire; that is, have no ground rules been laid down by the Soviet Union and the United States on negotiations that are upcoming or outlined?

MR. WARREN: I can tell you that this Government is undertaking intensive diplomatic activity to bring about full implementation of the cease-fire and of the United Nations resolutions, Bob, but that is as far as I can go on that.

Q Jerry, why did the President cancel his speech tonight?

MR. WARREN: For the reasons I gave you, John.

Q You mean because he was so busy on the Mideast that he didn't get a chance to write it, or what?

MR. WARREN: He has spent his time concentrating on matters of the establishment of the cease-fire which was created by the U.N. resolution.

Q Has he been spending so much time on that that he couldn't write his speech, or what?

MR. WARREN: He made the decision that during this work with Dr. Kissinger and others on foreign policy matters, and primarily the matter I have related to you, that he would hold a press conference tomorrow evening in lieu of the speech that had been planned today.

Q In that connection, is he likely to have any kind of opening extensive statement on this subject?

MR. WARREN: I cannot give you any guidance on that this morning.

MORE

#1843

October 25, 1975

MR. WARREN: I will check on that.

Q Jerry, was there a National Security Council meeting last night?

MR. WARREN: There was not a National Security meeting last night.

Out

Q Was the Washington-Moscow hotline used in connection with this?

22

MR. WARREN: No, it was not.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

(AT 10:42 A.M. EDT)

* * * * *

(AT 11:15 A.M. EDT)

MR. WARREN: Based on what I told you earlier, the President has been concentrating on the Middle East situation throughout the morning. He will be concentrating on the Middle East situation throughout the afternoon, and, based on that, he has decided to hold his press conference tomorrow.

Q At the same time?

MR. WARREN: We will let you know the time. The time will be announced.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 11:16 A.M. EDT)