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APRIL 4, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Francisco, California)

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE
OF

CALVIN L. RAMPTON

GOVERNOR FROM THE STATE OF UTAH

MIKE O'CALLAGHAN

GOVERNOR FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA

DANIEL J. EVANS

GOVERNOR FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

AND

RON NESSEN

PRESS SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT

ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

5:20 P.M. PDT

MR. NESSEN: As we have done after previous Governors meetings with the President, we have brought some of the Governors to talk to you and to give you an idea of how the meeting went. I think you have a list of the attendees.

Let me say, before I introduce the Governors, that the format of this was the President I guess listened 90 percent of the time as the various Governors expressed the problems that were bothering them in their states.

These problems included the economy, energy, the environment, farm problems, highways, food stamps and housing. As you know -- those of you who are in the pool -- former Governor Hathaway was there and attended the lunch.

At one point during the lunch, Governor Andrus of Idaho expressed support for the nomination, and said he thought most of the other Western Governors support it and, in fact, would come and testify on behalf of former Governor Hathaway.

With that, I will let the Governors tell you themselves what they discussed with the President.

We have Governor Rampton of Utah, who is the Chairman of the National Governors Conference. We also have Governor Evans of Washington state, and Governor O'Callaghan of Nevada.

I will turn you over to their tender mercies.

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GOVERNOR RAMPTON: Most of the conversation with the President today dealt with specific programs, generally state and Federal cooperative programs to attempt to let him know our viewpoint toward difficulties that we are having.

We discussed the highway program. The general welfare program was discussed, including the food stamp program, the new extension of unemployment insurance and others.

The Western Governors, the Midwestern Governors and the Rocky Mountain Governors discussed in some detail the deposits of energy fuels within our state and the prospective development of them and the problems that we are faced with as a result of this development, particularly the concentration of populations in what are now sparsely populated areas.

That is a general review. I might say in regard to the nomination of Governor Hathaway that I think this will meet with the general approval of all of the Governors who have served with Governor Hathaway.

He served for eight years as Governor of Wyoming, leaving office last December. During the last two years of that time, he has been Chairman of the National Governors Committee on Natural Resources, and from his committee has come forth many of the most advanced position statements on ecological preservation.

I believe that Governor Hathaway has as good a balance between the need for economic development and the need for ecological preservation of any man I know. I think his nomination is certainly in the interest of the country, and I am sure most of my associates are willing, if necessary, to appear before the Senate in support of his confirmation.

Q Governor, why are the environmentalists so opposed to Governor Hathaway, if what you say is correct?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: I think you cannot generalize and say the environmentalists, period, are opposed to Governor Hathaway. I think you might find that some of the more militant groups are opposed.

I think there are some groups of environmentalists that would not be happy with anyone; that is, with them 95 percent of the time, but would require 100 percent agreement, and I don't think you are going to get that from anyone that would be a responsible administrator.

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Q Did not Governor Hathaway encourage strip mining when he was the Governor of Wyoming?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: The legislature of the State of Wyoming, under his leadership, passed one of the first reclamation, mine reclamation laws in this state. Governor Hathaway has deposits of coal which are subject only to strip mining, but he has taken a responsible attitude toward restoration.

Q Did you discuss foreign policy at all?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: Very little.

Q Not at all?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: No, except the President remarked generally on foreign policy, but that was not the general subject matter.

Q Did he say anything about whether South Vietnam could survive?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: He did not.

Q Did the crash involving the orphans come up?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: Yes, he mentioned that with great sorrow.

Q Yesterday the President asked for national unity in the wake of the Vietnam situation. Did he ask for unity from you gentlemen?

GOVERNOR RAMPTON: Foreign policy was not the primary subject here. I am certain the President wants unity from us. One good thing in behalf of unity -- this was not a snow job by the White House. This was an exchange of views.

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GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: I would like to finish the question asked about the orphans. One of the first things the President mentioned when talking about foreign affairs was the concern and sorrow about the orphans that were killed this morning.

Q Can you tell us what he did say concerning Indochina?

MR. NESSEN: Let me say this, Marty. Why don't you get the views of the Governors that they expressed to the President and then, as always, I will come back and give you the President's views.

Q That is fine. Did you gentlemen say anything to the President concerning Indochina and Vietnam?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: No, we did not. Governors are more interested in domestic problems, and most of us are wise enough to leave foreign affairs to the President with advice and consent of the Senate.

Q Governor, can you remember exactly what the President said about the crash, the orphans, and so on?

MR. NESSEN: I will give you that, Walt. Why don't you ask the Governors what they said.

Q What did you say to the President?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: There are several things we did point out -- again, our support for Governor Hathaway. I would use a different word than Governor Rampton did about the militants being against Governor Hathaway. I would say the word should be uninformed.

I have had the opportunity to go to Snake River with him in the wilderness area. I have been in the wilderness with him and his knowledge of what is in the wilderness, how to cope with it, and how to protect it, is certainly far and above any other individual I have ever been in the wilderness with.

Q How can you defend his desire in 1970 or 1971 to seek blanket permits to shoot golden eagles, a bird which is Federally protected. How can you defend that for a man who is concerned about the environment? It seemed to me he was interested in the sheep ranchers.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: I imagine some people in this Nation are interested in the price of mutton, also.

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Q In view of the fact he did try to pressure the White House into getting blanket permits to shoot golden eagles, how can you defend his record as an environmentalist?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: At that point in time, he was Governor of a state that was having problems with them, and it is his job to represent his state.

Q How many of the Governors in there expressed support to the President for Mr. Hathaway, if you know?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: Anybody that spoke on it at all -- and the majority of them did -- spoke in support of Stan Hathaway.

Q Who were those besides yourself and Mr. Rampton -

MR. EVANS: Let me speak for a minute. I represent the other caucus, the one survivor on the Republican side in the West, but I think I also represent something else. From 11 years as Governor -- and all during those years a very, very strong representative of the environmental side of things, I think, as represented by our own record in Washington -- something typical of an environmental Northwest, Tom McCall in Oregon, people who have a very strong environmentalist attitude, and I have not only no hesitancy, but the strongest of support as an environmentalist for Governor Hathaway as Secretary of Interior.

I think there is a little irony in what is going on right now because I suspect most are forgetting their own recent history. As I remember, when Governor Hickel was suggested as Secretary of the Interior, there were the same sort of objections and concerns expressed about him.

When he left office, the ones who objected most at the beginning were the ones wringing their hands most over his dismissal. I say give a guy a chance. In this case, I think you have a very, very fine administrator, environmentalist, a man concerned with the various problems that the Department of Interior has to face. Frankly, those willing to kick someone before they have a chance, I think, are pretty premature.

Q Can we get that question answered? What Governors in there expressed their support for Governor Hathaway?

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GOVERNOR EVANS: I cannot name them, but I guess during the course of the afternoon every Governor who has ever served with him. Some of them are new and don't know him. But that would include, I suspect, at least three-quarters, or 80 percent of all those there, and no one expressed opposition.

I suspect the others just may not have known Governor Hathaway or probably had not met him.

Q Governor, your statement a minute ago -- to give a man a chance and not to kick him beforehand -- don't you think the Senate of the United States has a right and a responsibility to examine his qualifications and receive the views of environmentalists like everyone else?

GOVERNOR EVANS: Surely. I don't think there is any inconsistency at all.

Q Then, what is the business of saying somebody is kicking him before he is down? Isn't that just a normal process that is going on?

GOVERNOR EVANS: That is just a personal view. I don't think you ought to kick a guy before he is down. Sure, investigate his qualifications, which I think the Senate will do, but there are some who are simply rejecting his ability to conduct the affairs of the office without knowing very much about either his abilities, his background, or even his policies as Secretary of Interior.

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Q Did he speak at all on --

GOVERNOR EVANS: In the course of the conversation, as it affected affairs that he had some input on, sure.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: He spoke on energy, primarily.

Q Governor, you have been a leader of the National Conference of Governors. Do you think their meetings are worthwhile?

GOVERNOR EVANS: Sure, I do, and I think one thing we have been attempting to do during the course of the last couple of years is build a much stronger ability, through our own dues structure, and as a result, through our own financial capacity and staff capacity, to provide more than just reaction to what goes on at the national level, but rather to begin to initiate ideas and concepts from the state levels.

Q Given that, do you think the Governor of California, the largest state in the Union, should have attended your last meeting in Washington?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I have never been to a Governors conference yet when all fifty Governors were able to attend.

Q That was not my question.

GOVERNOR EVANS: I don't know what his personal problems were. I have missed Governors conferences. Sure, if he had an opportunity to come and could, but I don't know what his problems were. He had only been in office a month. I think it would be hard for me to say, impossible for me to say.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: Let me add this. I think it is significant he was here today. He had been in office less than a month of the largest state in the Nation, a small nation within itself, and we are looking forward to his full participation in the future.

Whether or not he was able to attend the Washington meeting is something we cannot judge. We would like to have him there. We know he will be with us from now on.

Q Governor Brown said before this meeting when he came in to make a command appearance here (Laughter) that he really had come to listen and not to comment to the President, and I just wonder if this is what happened in the meeting today? Did you people have any solutions that you put forth?

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GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: You want an answer?

Q Yes.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: Fine. Governor Brown did do a great deal of listening today. He did comment at the end in broad terms in regard to the economy. There were specifics that were brought up. Among them is the highway program, and as Vice Chairman of the National Governors Conference Transportation Committee, I was asked by the President for our committee's input into the new program they are suggesting.

Some of the important parts of that would be a 1 cent reduction in the Federal gas tax that would have to be picked up by the states. In other words, the states would get that 1 cent rather than the Federal Government.

We went into revenue sharing, fully supported it, and the President expressed his support of its extension. As Governors, we realize two out of three dollars go to local government, not state government, but the National Governors Conference, along with the Conference of Mayors, helped bring this into being.

Then, as a Governor, I brought up the problems that we are having with Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Unilateral Federal action was discussed, and we are working on it now with the Federal Government.

Q What is your problem? Are the machines falling on the croupiers or something?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: No, we happen to be one of the leading mining states in the Nation, for your information, and one of the problems that you do have in mines are safety hazards. We were able to reduce our accidents in mining and construction last year by 19 percent through our state program.

GOVERNOR EVANS: Let me react to the question about whether the President and his staff were listening or whether it was really a dialogue. Let me only speak from ten years or 11 years of experience in meeting with three Presidents, a number of times with Lyndon Johnson and his staff, a number of times with President Nixon and his staff, and this time and several previous times with President Ford.

In terms of speaking to Governors and listening to Governors, there was a lot more listening and a lot more exchange and a lot more input from the states to this President than either of the two previous Presidents, by several light years.

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Q When two or three other regional meetings were held, the President agreed to release highway funds. Was anything decided on today in any ramifications of the areas where he said he would do something?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: In regard to this, we did get into the manner in which this money can be expended. There are some states that do not have matching funds. This was brought up by our National Governor's Conference Chairman, Calvin Rampton.

This is going to be put in the highway package that the Administration will be presenting that we will have input to.

Q Governor, you asked the Federal Government for more money. Yet, you also came down hard on more Federal spending. Do you just want a shift in funds? How do you reconcile this? You want more money back from the Federal Government, yet you don't want the President's deficit to go any higher.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: Who said that?

Q Isn't that what you said inside the room, that you wanted the cap kept on Federal spending?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: First, I did not say that, but what I did say here is the 1. cent that is already turned in by the state to the Federal Government would be kept by the state.

The Federal Government produces very little revenue per se. It is produced in the states. The only point I touched on -- we did not ask for more Federal funds in any area I know of. We talked about housing and in regard to housing, several of our states, including my state and California, have bills before the legislature to have our own funding to increase our housing production.

We asked for more controls. We told about the controls we are putting on, but I don't believe that at any time anybody asked for more money today, do you?

GOVERNOR EVANS: No. In fact, to the contrary. I suggested, as I have a couple of times before, that if Congress, particularly, but Congress in conjunction with Executive departments, would merge and cut back on the insane number of categorical programs we have in this country domestically, that we could get by with five, ten or 15 percent less money than is being spent now in some of those programs -- do a better job, get more money to the ultimate beneficiaries of those programs -- but the insistence of Congress on the little tiny categorical programs is killing us all in terms of the cost of management, the cost of auditing, and too little of that money going into the ultimate program, itself.

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Q Governor -- either one of you gentlemen -- what did the Governors tell the President about their feelings as to the economy? You probably noticed today unemployment went up to 8.7 percent, the highest rate in 35 years. Did you tell him you were satisfied with what he was doing, with his approach to the recession and to inflation, or did you tell him you were dissatisfied and make some suggestions of your own? What did you say to him about it?

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: One of the things we did talk about was in the area that we are concerned, the highest unemployment rate in the construction area.

Then, we have three states represented today in which the housing construction going down also affects them very strongly -- Oregon, Washington and Idaho -- in the lumber industry where some counties have as high as 27 percent unemployment.

But along that line, we told him what we were doing in setting up housing agencies and bonding, and so on, to help take care of some of our own problems.

Q Did you tell him anything about what you thought about what he was doing, whether you thought he was on the right track or the wrong track, or give him any input as to what you thought about his approach?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I personally believe -- and I think this is generally shared by those who spoke today -- that the President is on the right track in attempting to keep Federal deficits within some kind of limitation. \$50 billion sounds like an awful lot, but it is a whale of a lot better than \$100 billion.

We are all affected directly by that. Insofar as the Federal Government has to go in for additional borrowing, then it both ups the cost and makes it less possible for the borrowing in the private sector, as well as from states and municipalities.

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Q You are a Republican. What did the Democrats say to it?

GOVERNOR EVANS: Let me finish and just say, we have been through it in our own state. We had a 12.5 or 13 percent unemployment rate about four or five years ago. It was not shared by the rest of the Nation, but we did go through and we survived and we came back out and 8 percent unemployment sounds tough, but it depends on which side of 8 percent you are coming from.

We have been at 12 percent. We are coming down to 8 percent. Our own economy at 8 percent is not the best in the world, but it looks pretty good to us right now. It is reasonably stable, and we think -- at least in our own state, our own part of the country -- in spite of the problems of the housing industry and the limitations that result in the timber industry, that there is a lot more optimism, in my own view, than many have shown.

Sure, the present statistics are not the best in the world. I personally believe that we are not very far away from a recovery in our economy.

Q Could I ask you, Governor, to clear up a point? You mentioned controls. What were you talking about? You mentioned controls earlier.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: I know where you are going.

Q I am not going anywhere.

GOVERNOR O'CALLAGHAN: I know where you are going back to. What we are talking about is, for instance, controls that the states have put on certain programs. One of them that was brought up today was food stamps. There were varying opinions from different Governors in regard to guidelines for the use of food stamps whether or not the food stamps were being abused in some areas or not.

As a result of this, the Human Resources Committee of the National Governors Conference, whose Chairman is here today, Cecil Andrus, who has a five-member committee, made from five different rural states, Rhode Island, and so on of people who are directly involved in the program to help work on adequate controls, suggestions and so on, with the White House and with the Congress in regard to handling food stamps. That was one of the things I mentioned.

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MR. NESSEN: Thank you very much, Governors.

Some of you have expressed an interest in former Governor Hathaway's qualifications to be Interior Secretary, and I thought I would pass along to you some of the President's views on this, if you care to hear them.

The President believes Governor Hathaway compiled an extensive and distinguished record in balancing the objectives of the people of Wyoming. In his State of Wyoming he had to face from early on many of the environmental problems that the Nation itself is now facing -- balancing the environmental needs against the energy needs.

As a result of his Governorship, Wyoming is recognized as one of the more progressive states in both energy and environment. He developed the Wyoming Environmental Quality Act of 1973, which he wrote a good deal of himself. It was the first fully comprehensive state environmental agency.

Q You said Environmental Quality Act of 1973?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And it is an agency?

MR. NESSEN: It is set up, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality.

Q What was the name of the act again?

MR. NESSEN: Environmental Quality Act of 1973, establishing the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, one of the first comprehensive state environmental agencies.

Q Does that agency have any teeth to it? That is the point.

MR. NESSEN: I think you really, if you are interested in it, you will need to get in touch with people from Wyoming to give you an idea of how it operates.

Q You don't know anything about it, then?

MR. NESSEN: I thought I would give you a few of the reasons why the President selected Governor Hathaway.

During Governor Hathaway's term, Wyoming became one of the first states in the West to enact the Surface Mining Reclamation Act. It was passed in 1969.

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It was strengthened in 1971 and 1973 during his term. It is now one of the toughest in the Nation. Under Governor Hathaway, Wyoming established its own air quality standards in 1967, before the Federal Government established national standards.

They are also among the most stringent in the Nation. He served for two and one-half years as Chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources and the environmental management of the National Governors Conference, so his fellow Governors felt he was qualified to head their environmental committee.

Like many Western states, Wyoming is owned in large part by the Federal Government. Forty-eight percent of the total land area of Wyoming is owned by the Federal Government in the form of national forests, national parks and other public lands. So, Governor Hathaway has experience in dealing with the Interior Department, which he will now head, if he is confirmed.

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Q Who is going to second the nomination?

Q You usually start these things out, "a man who," Ron. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: One of the important parts of Governor Hathaway's job as head of the Interior Department will be to work with Governors, and he, as a long-time Governor and official of the National Governor's Conference, the President feels, is especially qualified for that.

The President believes that because of his experience in a state that has both environmental problems and great energy resources that Governor Hathaway will be able to achieve the best possible balance between environmental concerns and energy needs. Does that answer your question?

Q Ron, did you take a count in there? Do you know how many Governors spoke up for Governor Hathaway?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, the Governors who spoke for Governor Hathaway, I think, were Rampton, Evans, Herscher, Andrus, Judge and O'Callaghan.

Q Is that two guys that did not say anything?

MR. NESSEN: Governor Brown has only been Governor a month, as he pointed out, and does not know him. Governor **Amiyoshi** and Governor Straub have not been Governors long enough to become acquainted with Governor Hathaway's work.

Q Ron, when you announced that Rogers Morton was leaving, is this the man the President was actively considering at that time?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And can we assume that Hathaway, for all intents and purposes, is the only man the President considered as a replacement for Morton?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he was the only man. He was the man that was the tentative choice the day Rog Morton's transfer was announced.

Q Ron, what did Governor Brown express opinions on? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Governor Brown spoke at the very end of the meeting. He said he had been a Governor too short a time to have opinions on some of the specific matters that were discussed. He said, however, he did know enough about the economic problems, and so forth, to agree with the President's concern about ever-growing government programs, that he shared that, but that he also had some concerns in his own mind about the private economy and how it was growing and operating.

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Q Can you give us a fill-in on what the President said? You said you would.

MR. NESSEN: I was about to.

The President spent about 90 percent of the time listening, but he did speak briefly at the beginning on the economy. He said, "We believe there are a growing number of significant signs that are encouraging." That is on the economy. "But I cannot honestly say we are out of the recession. As soon as we get finished with inventory liquidation and get some stimulation from the tax cut, the signs will get better."

Then, he switched to the energy program. He said that America's vulnerability to foreign oil is greater now than it was at the time of the 1973 embargo. He said, "Domestic production is going down and dependence on foreign oil inevitably is going up. I think we need an energy program. I think my plan is a good one." He said when this first started being discussed in January, Congress had 535 separate energy plans. He said now it is down to five or six. He said Frank Zarb is working with Congressman Ullman and others, and he said, "We are getting reasonably close to an agreement."

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On foreign affairs, the President said -- talking about Southeast Asia -- "I thought things were bad yesterday, and then I woke up this morning and found the C-5A had crashed." He expressed sorrow and concern about it.

On the Middle East, he said, "We made a maximum effort" -- referring to Dr. Kissinger's last trip out there. "We were disappointed. It looks like the talks will go to Geneva. It is going to be a hard negotiation." That is the Middle East comment.

He said, "I see no serious deterioration of detente. I expect a SALT agreement to be signed this summer." All that took about five minutes, and then he threw the meeting open to the Governors to express their views, which they did, taking up the remainder of the time.

The President did, on a couple of occasions, reply to the Governors. For instance, when Governor Rampton talked about problems with highway construction, the President referred to the bill that I have mentioned to you before, a new Federal highway bill which will go to Congress in about a month and a half.

He went through the provisions of it, which I have also mentioned before. That is he will call for completion of the interstate highway system by 1982. The final details are not settled yet, but it will in some way permit the states to take over at least a portion of the present 4 cent-a-gallon Federal highway tax to use to build their own highways.

This money would go then to the states instead of to the Federal Government. The mechanism and the amount has not been settled yet.

Q Ron, was there direct discussion of the President's request to extend unemployment insurance benefits?

MR. NESSEN: Let me go through this and I will get to that.

The other provisions of this highway bill going up soon are to take the various categorical grants for various road and highway projects and combine them into lump sum grants to give to the states to spend as they wish, and a way of allowing some highway funds to be used for mass transit.

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Then there was discussion of revenue sharing, at which point the President said, "I will recommend in about two weeks an extension of revenue sharing. Although there are those lobbying against it, Governors Mayors, and the Administration should be prepared for a tough fight."

Q When does it expire?

MR. NESSEN: December, 1976.

Q Why is he recommending an extension in two weeks' time?

MR. NESSEN: Does everyone know Jim Falk of the Domestic Council?

MR. FALK: (Associate Director, Domestic Council): The major reason for seeking re-enactment of general revenue sharing this year is that many states and many local governments budget on a biannual basis. There is a need for certainty in planning future budgets. That is the principal reason for seeking extension ahead of time.

MR. NESSEN: Then the conversation turned to food stamps, and the President talked about the food stamp program being one of the fastest growing in the government, and asked the governors if they had any ideas on how to improve the Administration of the food stamp program, to let him know.

Q Was there discussion on the abuses of the food stamp program?

MR. NESSEN: There was. Some of the Governors mentioned abuses they had seen, and the President talked especially about college students from well-to-do families getting food stamps and said that Congress had denied the Administration the right to cut off well-to-do students getting food stamps.

Then there was the round of endorsements of Governor Hathaway. There was then a discussion of the Federal budget deficit, and the Governors mostly agreed that \$100 billion was too large.

Alan Greenspan -- the President invited him to talk at that point -- said he feels very uncomfortable with the possibility of \$100 billion deficit, that "Unless we can control these programs coming down the line in Congress, we will have difficulty sustaining the recovery. Potentially it is a very dangerous situation."

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Q Is that a direct quote?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. The President then talked about transfer payments, the payments to various groups and individuals who qualify under laws and how this has been growing at a great rate, and if it continues to grow at the present rate without any expansion, by the year 2000, half the Americans will be supporting the other half of the Americans.

Q It is actually 45 percent by that Social Security projection, isn't it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I am quoting the President, Jim. He said, "this would have a profound effect on the kind of society we have. That is scary." He said the way we paid for this in the past is to either keep defense spending at the same level or reduce it in terms of constant dollars. He said if we have to borrow \$100 billion the government gets its money first out of the borrowing market. There won't be any left for states or cities or homebuilding or industry.

The President called it a very serious problem.

Q Ron, one minor housekeeping question. Is this the third or fourth such meeting that the President has had with regional Governors?

MR. NESSEN: If you count the New England Governors at the White House, you have New England, Atlanta, Topeka, Houston, Miami, South Bend and here. Seven.

Q Has he now met with every Governor?

MR. NESSEN: He has met with the Governors of every region. There have been one or two -- Governor Mandel, I believe, was not able to attend (Laughter) and the Governor of Alaska has not been able to attend.

Q Do you ever consider why it is you always get a laugh when you mention Governor Mandel?

MR. NESSEN: He is my Governor. Maybe that is why.

The President closed by saying that -- actually, he followed on Governor Brown who, as I say, spoke of his concern for both the growth of the Federal Government and for problems he sees in the private economy, and the President then closed by saying that "the problems that were discussed today are not just my problems. They are our problems."

He said, "That is why we are having these meetings, so that I can hear your thoughts so that we can have a meeting of the minds and work together. He said he was available to talk to the Governors and his staff was available to talk to the Governors in the future.

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Q Was there direct discussion of the unemployment situation?

MR. NESSEN: Some of the Governors mentioned unemployment in specific industries that affect their states. Some of the Western Governors, as you know, have a lot of timber and have been affected by the construction slowdown.

They talked about the housing industry, but overall, there was no discussion of unemployment compensation.

Q No discussion of the President's recommendation?

MR. NESSEN: No, there was not. I am sure the Governors have seen an advance copy of the speech.

Q The President told the Governors, according to you, he expected the SALT agreement to be signed this summer. What kind of SALT agreement with MIRV's, for instance?

MR. NESSEN: The SALT agreement that was negotiated at Vladivostok, Jim, the details of which are being worked out in Geneva.

Q Ron, have you broken the MIRV barrier?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by the MIRV barrier.

Q Are you going to include it? Have you worked on an agreement to include it?

MR. NESSEN: The SALT agreement at Vladivostok, as you know, set a ceiling on MIRV's as well as on overall delivery systems.

Aldo?

Q Ron, the context of this suggests a serious deterioration or degeneration of detente. Remember?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. It was in a brief opening statement by the President in which he went through three areas, economic, energy and a very quick summary of foreign affairs.

He just simply volunteered it in that way.

Helen?

Q Ron, President Thieu today said, "The United States must honor its pledges of aid to South Vietnam or Americans will earn the label of traitors." The American people and the American Congress must see they now have got to do something for the people in South Vietnam to keep from earning the label of traitor. Do you have any comments on that?

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MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is the President aware of this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

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Q Ron, can I ask you about the expression "serious deterioration to the economy"? That gives a false impression. Does that mean to suggest there has been some deterioration, but it is not serious?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q That is what it sounds like.

MR. NESSEN: It was not meant to sound like that.

Let me mention one thing about tomorrow for the Palm Springs bunch. The President is meeting with Secretary Kissinger and General Weyand at 7:15, the first meeting. We will have a pool to go out to the house for pictures at the beginning of the meeting. Jack and Larry are working on that now.

The meeting is expected to last until about 9 o'clock -- perhaps it will be over just a little earlier than 9 o'clock -- at which point Dr. Kissinger will come to the press center at the International Hotel for briefing, which will be open for filming and taping, if you wish.

There will be a second meeting of the President with Secretary Kissinger and General Weyand at about 2:00 or 2:30 tomorrow afternoon. I would not expect we would need to go back for a picture of that, and I don't expect there would be a briefing after that, either.

For the remainder of Sunday and Monday, I don't have anything to add to the existing schedule.

Q Ron, if General Weyand is not going to come down, why not?

MR. NESSEN: General Weyand went out there as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to do a military survey for the President, and he is reporting to the President, and it is felt that it would be best for him to give his report to the President and leave it at that.

Q Ron, did he talk to reporters in Saigon?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea.

Q He did.

Q Ron, there is a question that General Weyand has talked to reporters in Saigon, and he has made comments which -- I know what you said on the plane this morning -- some people feel are in conflict with what the President said.

MORE

Wouldn't it be best if we would also get an opportunity, in this country, to talk to General Weyand and find out what he is saying? You are not being consistent if you are saying he can talk to reporters over there, but he should be precluded over here.

MR. NESSEN: Do you think it is fair to a man who has just faced the horrors of Saigon to come out and face the press corps in Palm Springs?

MORE

Q No, but what does that have to do with it?

MR. NESSEN: But seriously, as I say, it is not looking good, but it is not a total no. Let me continue to pursue it.

Q Ron, is it going to be open and possibly we are going to have a briefing? I mean, is it conceivably possible, after the second briefing?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't anticipate that.

Q Why two meetings? Why don't they just get it all done at once?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Ron, is the President going to play golf between the meetings?

MR. NESSEN: He has some other activities tomorrow which I think may involve that.

Q Playing golf?

MR. NESSEN: Possibly. (Laughter)

Q Between meetings, he is going to play golf?

MR. NESSEN: He may.

Q Will David Kennerly sit in on the report to the President?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate that he will, Phil.

Q Is there any hope the President will extend his vacation in Palm Springs another couple of days?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't think so, Walt.

Q On the other two meetings, is there one topic that is going to be discussed in the first, and another sort of topic in the second, or are they broken up into any particular subject matter?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of at this point.

Q Ron, will there be a text of the President's interpolations tonight?

MR. NESSEN: I beg your pardon?

MORE

Q All we got was an excerpt.

MR. NESSEN: There will always be an as delivered put out.

Q But we mean will there be an advance?

MR. NESSEN: Of anything he adds in addition to the excerpt that you have already gotten?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Not in advance, no. I don't expect any major additions to the speech.

Q But he is going to talk about Vietnam, isn't he?

MR. NESSEN: Is there anything about Vietnam in his speech?

Q No.

Q Not one word.

Q All we got was the excerpts.

Q Is he going to have something?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Ron, is he still hoping to see some Vietnamese orphans?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is it looking any better?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know when the planes are coming.

Q Would that be Monday, though?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know when the planes are coming. Ray Zook has the travel announcements.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 6:05 P.M. PDT)