

PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 18

of the
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

11:40 A.M. EDT
September 16, 1975
Tuesday

In the Oval Office
At the White House
Washington, D.C.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you are beginning to get some flack now from people who think you haven't been minding the store, and in the last two days I noticed you had one announced business session yesterday and you have, I believe, only one today.

I assume you are doing something besides playing with the puppies, so what are you doing? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: We have some big decisions coming up that involve, for example, the course of action that we will take on any SALT II agreement, and we have some very important decisions concerning the energy matter. We have some decisions to make that involve the delivery of material to the House and Senate committees, the Church committee and the Pike committee. So, I would say the day has been full, even though there haven't been any announced public meetings of any kind.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Helen?

QUESTION: I think you probably read the Post today, and also Jack Anderson, concerning secret accords with Israel for supplying the newest technology, including missiles that could be armed with nuclear warheads and so forth. Is this true?

THE PRESIDENT: That material has all been submitted to the responsible committees in the Congress. The announcement concerning the F-16 and the Pershing missile those are not firm commitments.

They do involve negotiations between the United States and Israel. They are on the shopping list, and they will be discussed with representatives of the Israeli Government.

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(OVER)

QUESTION: Do you really think you should arm one power in the Middle East at a time when you are moving toward peace with the potential of offensive weapons in that--

THE PRESIDENT: We have for a long, long time supplied Israel with very substantial amounts of military hardware. This was a policy established a good many years ago and we have always felt that the survival of Israel in the Middle East was very important, and the military hardware that we have in the past and will in the future provide for that survival.

As I indicated at the outset, these items were on a list open for discussion between the United States and the Israeli Government.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is the United States moving towards a security treaty with Israel? This document which we read in the Post suggests quite a close, more formalized defense relationship with Israel.

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't say a security treaty. I would simply reiterate what I have said before, that historically the United States has supplied Israel with very substantial military weaponry and it is our plan to do so in the future.

But there is no firm commitment on any of the weapons that I think got in the headlines this morning. They are merely open for discussion.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in one of your early press conferences you expressed approval of the CIA activities in Chile as something they have done historically. Now you are quoted as saying you may be open-minded on whether the covert activities of the CIA ought to be kept in the CIA or separated from it.

What has caused you to change your mind, if you have?

THE PRESIDENT: Since that comment in either the first or second press conference, we have had the Rockefeller Commission report, we have had the benefit of the Murphy Commission recommendations. I have had the various departments and agencies of the Federal Government that have any jurisdiction analyze those recommendations and we are now in the White House itself taking into account all of the proposals and will make legislative recommendations to the Congress, and will propose some administrative changes.

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I think you have to certainly benefit from these exhaustive investigations, but I don't want to make any commitment one way or another until we actually submit the legislative proposals to the Congress and decide to do whatever we want to do administratively.

QUESTION: Though this morning, are you ruling out political activity by American agencies or is it just a question of whether the CIA would do it or some other agency would do it?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't rule out necessary political activities by the United States if it involves our security.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: Sir, part of this agreement with Israel involves our providing them with oil either through foreign credits or giving oil to them from our own supply. We don't have enough for ourselves and can't afford to pay for what we are getting.

How can we supply Israel over several years?

THE PRESIDENT: We believe there are sources available to Israel to keep Israel secure after they have given up the oil fields in the Middle East. We are not concerned that these supplies will be turned off and, therefore, it will have no adverse impact, as we see it, on our own supplies.

QUESTION: But we will pay for this oil, will we not? We will pay for this through foreign credits?

THE PRESIDENT: This is a part of the overall military economic agreement with Israel and it is a step, I believe, in maintaining the peace. I think it is fair to point out that several months ago 76 Senators sent me a letter actually urging that I recommend to the Congress more money for Israel and no guarantee of peace, whereas at the present time we have made this agreement -- or Israel and Egypt have made this agreement -- and the prospective cost to the United States is less than what the 76 Senators recommended that we propose to the Congress for Israel.

So we not only have peace and a step toward a broader peace, but it is also at a lesser cost than what the 76 Senators promoted.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, you mentioned the Pike committee. They have subpoenaed CIA materials from you, returnable tomorrow. Will you honor that subpoena?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me give some background, first, on what the situation is.

Various agencies of the Federal Government -- with my approval -- have given to the Pike committee everything they have asked for, including some very highly classified material.

Now, I was disappointed in the manner in which that committee handled some of this most highly classified material. I think it is fair to point out -- I don't want you to misconstrue what I am saying -- but it is fair to point out that some of that material is specifically protected by law, and if a private citizen were to release that information involving communications intelligence, it would be a criminal -- a serious criminal offense.

I am not saying that the Congress has violated a criminal law, or this committee has done so. I only use that as an illustration to show how serious the Congress felt the release of that information would be because they passed a law saying if you or any one of you released it, it would be a serious criminal offense.

Now, the committee has all of the information that it asked for, some highly classified. They have all of the information they need to make a legislative determination as to whether the intelligence community was properly organized, properly managed, did its job well.

I am very concerned as to the damage to our intelligence sources if the procedure used by the committee in this last instance is to be the procedure used by the committee in the future. Until I find from the committee what their procedure is going to be, I will not give them the information.

I have to have from them what their procedure is under this very important classified or secret material that we have given them and that they want.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes?

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QUESTION: Mr. President, some Members of Congress are talking like an extension of the tax cut is already an accomplished fact next year. In fact, they are saying that an even larger cut needs to come. What is your thinking right now on the tax cut next year?

THE PRESIDENT: We have made no firm decision on that. We will, in a reasonably short period of time, make a recommendation. If the economy needs any additional stimulant, we will, of course, recommend a continuation of the present tax cut.

If we find that the economy is continuing to come out of the recession, as it is, and there is no danger of added inflationary problems, we would probably not recommend a continuation of the tax cut.

But, we do feel that we have some additional time before making a specific request of the Congress for action in this area.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have been saying that there is a better way than busing to achieve quality education and suggested some better ways, such as improving facilities and the teacher-pupil ratio. Are you prepared to approve of more money to do things like that?

THE PRESIDENT: We, of course, do have in the emergency school aid legislation and appropriations a substantial amount of money that is available, and we have made money available to Boston and we have -- if my memory is correct -- done the same in Louisville, although I will have to check that.

The thing that bothers me about actions of some of the courts, where they are involved in the school busing controversy, is that they apparently have not taken into consideration the law that was passed and signed by me on August 12 of 1974, three days after I was sworn in.

That law included what was known then, and still is, as the Esch amendment. I just happen to have a copy of the Esch amendment here (Laughter) that sets forth seven specific proposals that the court should follow before they actually use the busing remedy.

It is in Title 2 of the Education Amendments of 1974, Section 214. This section establishes a priority of remedies and it says, in effect, that the courts and other Government agencies shall require the first of the following remedies, or the first combination of the remedies, which would correct a denial of rights.

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It says, for example, assigning students to schools closest to their homes, taking into account both school capacities and natural physical barriers; two, assigning students to the closest school, taking into account only school capacities; three, permitting students to transfer from a school in which a majority of the students are of their race to one in which a minority are of their race; four creating or revising attendant zones or grade structures without requiring transportation, construction of new schools or closing of inferior schools, establishment of magna schools.

Then it goes on to say that students should not be transferred to a school other than the school closest or the next closest to his place of residence.

Now, those recommendations included in law in many instances apparently have not been followed by the courts. I think the courts ought to take into cognizance the legislative recommendations that are as a matter of law at the present.

Now, in addition, there are other things that I have mentioned before -- improved facilities, upgrading the teachers, if necessary, including the better pupil-teacher ratios.

QUESTION: Mr. President, that requires a lot more money than just the emergency funds you talk about. Are you going to propose increases?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it is going to require a great deal more money, Bonnie. Really, that is a very substantial sum, and it has been used up in Boston, and I believe it is being used in Louisville.

It is not nearly as much money if you focus it in on the places where the tension is the highest, and the problem is the greatest, particularly if the courts follow the law, as was enacted by the Congress in 1974.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, on two occasions over the weekend in discussing busing you mentioned a 1954 Supreme Court decision as the basis for busing. It is my recollection that that Supreme Court decision in *Brown versus the Board of Education* related to striking separate but equal. Could you elaborate a little bit on that?

THE PRESIDENT: You are correct and I don't think I said that decision in any way ordered court busing. It was the decision in 1954 that declared unconstitutional the long accepted practice in many States of having separate but equal schools. But as an outgrowth of that court decision there have been the subsequent decisions that have involved busing.

QUESTION: Mr. President, as you know, a good many Congressional offices are receiving mail which runs contrary to your proposal for the Middle East peace settlement, particularly objecting to the use of American technicians in the Sinai.

I was wondering, sir, if as you say that is worth the risk? How long are those Americans going to be there, and is that not an open-ended commitment?

THE PRESIDENT: They will be there during the term of the agreement unless I, or another President, withdraw them because of any danger to their lives. It is a case of not more than 200 Americans performing a highly technical warning station responsibility in a UN buffer zone. I think it is a good contribution by the United States to the establishment and permanency of peace in the Middle East.

QUESTION: May I follow up, please? I would like to ask what you would do if in the course of their term in the Sinai, the PLO moves in and kidnapped some of them, captured them, or if perhaps they were killed? Would you then use American intervention; the question being then, can you flatly rule out there would be no American intervention to protect those people?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to speculate on something I do not anticipate will happen. I think I or any other President would use utmost caution in the protection of the lives of any Americans.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, to follow that up, if you are committed to the use of Americans on the Egyptian front, would you also, later perhaps, be committed to the principle of using Americans on the Jordanian or the Syrian front?

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THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I should speculate about any negotiations or agreements that have not yet begun. It is a very valuable contribution to peace in the present agreement, but I would not want to make any commitment concerning any other.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I believe when you were talking about security out in Sacramento and when you were talking about going out and meeting crowds, I believe one reason that you have given for that is that you wanted to go out and get the ideas from the American people.

I wonder in talking and going into crowds, and working the crowds, as we call it, and shaking hands, you don't really exchange ideas with people, and that seems to be one of the most dangerous parts of these trips of yours.

THE PRESIDENT: I am very much amazed how often people in the course of shaking hands or greeting them, they will make specific recommendations or comments. It is rather amazing and very encouraging that they will do precisely as you indicate they might not do. And it is very helpful in that regard.

QUESTION: Mr. President, was President Sadat aware before he initiated this agreement, signed the agreement, that the U.S. would be discussing with Israel the missiles and the other shopping list of things you have mentioned, those specifics?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they were familiar with the fact we anticipated a commitment to Israel for sizeable military hardware. I can't indicate to you whether they knew the precise weapons or not but they knew, of course, we were going to make a substantial commitment in weapons to Israel.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, in recent weeks you have been saying some especially nice things about Vice President Rockefeller. You said you don't dump a good teammate, and you have endorsed his performance as Vice President, yet you have always backed away from giving a flat endorsement of him as your running mate in 1976.

Why won't you do that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that is the tradition at this early stage of a potential -- not a potential, but a Presidential convention and Presidential race. There is no need of my reiterating the many nice things I have said about him because he knows how I feel about him.

Everybody, I think, who has read or heard knows precisely how I feel about the fine job he has done, and he and I are in no disagreement on the comments I have made or the attitude that I have taken, so I think the record should just stand where it is.

QUESTION: Mr. President, regarding the early stage of the campaign, there has been some suggestion that you are probably deriving an unfair advantage by not having your political travel expenses charged against your Presidential campaign amount.

Do you feel comfortable with this?

THE PRESIDENT: We have been very, very scrupulous in our bookkeeping to make certain that we cannot be legitimately criticized. A President has really three functions; one, being President and attending public affairs or civic affairs; he has another responsibility as head of a political party -- and in those cases, of course, the National Committee, the Republican National Committee, assumes the cost -- and where I am involved as a candidate, the President Ford Committee will pick up the tab.

We are keeping very scrupulous books. We are, of course, going to abide by any decision of the Federal Elections Commission, and I hope they will clarify in the very near future any of the problems that might arise but our books are being kept very, very carefully.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you expect that decision imminently?

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THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't want to forecast when they are going to make the decision, but the sooner the better, so we have a clarification.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Vice President Rockefeller has been going around saying that he is not a candidate for the Vice Presidency and he is not seeking support. This seems to be contrary to what you have specifically recommended, that he go and line up delegate support. How do you account for this difference if you and Vice President Rockefeller see eye to eye?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is a difference of degree, not of any real substance. Obviously, if he makes appearances before Republican groups, I am sure he is going to have a favorable impact on them, and my impression is that he has made a favorable impact on the various Republican groups where he has spoken or met with the individuals.

Now, whether that can be translated into getting delegates or not, only time will tell. But, the difference alluded to, I think, is one of not great substance.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in this agreement published in the Post today, it refers to the United States viewing with particularly gravity threats made against Israel by a world power and goes on to say that the United States would promptly consult with Israel on supports or assistance that it could lend.

Now, does this go forward toward a security treaty, or does it not, and, if so, doesn't it have to be taken to the Congress first to be approved?

THE PRESIDENT: That language does not constitute a treaty. The words speak for themselves.

QUESTION: Mr. President, as an old Navy man --

THE PRESIDENT: Old? (Laughter)

QUESTION: -- do you think the discipline given the Commander of the submarine on which the go-go ~~canoe~~ performed was perhaps not in the tradition of the Navy that you knew? (Laughter)

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THE PRESIDENT: I think I ought to refer that to the Navy where the matter is being, I am sure, thoroughly and properly handled under the procedures in the Navy code of conduct, or whatever they --

QUESTION: Mr. President, the cost of living keeps going up and up and Chairman Burns is now saying once again, as he has before, that monetary policy -- that is the Fed -- just can't carry the burden of trying to curb inflation. Once again, it is talking again about an income policy, starting perhaps with jawboning, voluntary jawboning, and holding down wage and prices and perhaps the dressing up of the wage price controls.

I know you are against wage and price controls but do you think it is fair for Mr. Burns to have to carry this load by himself?

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to reiterate my firm opposition to wage and price controls. I don't think it is fair to put all of the burden in the battle against inflation on the shoulders of the Federal Reserve Board. I have repeatedly indicated that Federal fiscal policy was as important as monetary policy in the battle against inflation and that is why I have consistently said we had to hold the line on Federal spending, and that is precisely why I drew that \$60 billion deficit line in the Oval Office three or four months ago.

Unfortunately, the Congress hasn't gotten the message because they have not only approved a higher deficit -- \$68.5 billion -- but they have already breached their own \$68.5 billion deficit by roughly \$5 billion. So although I feel that Federal fiscal policy is a useful tool in combatting inflation, I see very, very little cooperation from the Congress in a responsible Federal fiscal policy.

QUESTION: If I might follow up, Mr. President, this very thing of the Congress not getting your message or not agreeing with it, is the thing that the Nation's bankers are concerned about and are talking about at the IMF, and a great many are saying, "It is all very well for the President to go around saying he will never put on wage and price controls and calling for fiscal responsibility," but the facts are, the reality is there is not going to be any fiscal responsibility, there isn't going to be any hold down sufficient to curb inflation, and that sooner or later you are going to have to put in wage and price controls or at least some approximation of an incomes policy.

Now, what is your response to the bankers when they say the rhetoric is all very well, but what are we going to do?

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THE PRESIDENT: I haven't had any pleas from bankers to impose wage and price controls.--

QUESTION: An incomespolicy?

THE PRESIDENT: -- and I haven't had any recommendations from any organization, such as bankers, for an incomespolicy. We do have a wage-price council that has on some occasions investigated price increases and, on several occasions, have been helpful in trying to get a moderation of a price increase, but I do not believe on the basis of past history of wage and price controls during peacetime that they worked.

I think it is a quick fix that has long-range detrimental repercussions and, therefore, under the current circumstances, I think it would be unwise to even intimate that I would favor wage and price controls.

I am still opposed to them, and I think there are better remedies.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has the potential agreement between Israel and Egypt with the United States' participation made your job easier on the Turkish aid matter in Congress? Is there a parallel that you can draw, that your legislative people can draw for the Congressmen?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe there is any neat analogy between the two, but the fact that we have made headway in the Middle East and achieved it through negotiation ought to be helpful in convincing the Congress that negotiation in the Turkish aid embargo is the way to solve the problem.

But, there is no direct connection between the two problems as such.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Just one more, and then we will end.

QUESTION: Do you favor the decriminalization of the private use of marijuana?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe we have sufficient evidence at the present time to warrant any recommendation in that regard.

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QUESTION: Have you read the Schaeffer Commission report? Your predecessor did not. I am wondering if you would --

THE PRESIDENT: I have read summaries of a number of studies in this area, and there is no consensus and, therefore, until more information is available, I would not make any such recommendation.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

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