

This Copy For _____

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

#505

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:35 A.M. EDT

JUNE 9, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let me give you one or two things on the schedule. You probably know the President of Botswana is visiting with the President now and at the end of that meeting I expect to have a brief written report on it. That will probably come before it is time to take the lunch break.

The other thing is that, as always on the day after a primary, the President will meet this afternoon with those folks who work on his campaign, namely, Rog Morton and Stu Spencer, and Dick Cheney also will sit in on the meeting. That will be at 3 o'clock.

Some time after that meeting I would think there would be an opportunity for you to ask the President whatever questions you might have on the campaign. I can't give you the specific time and place right now but sometime after that 3 o'clock meeting this afternoon you will have a chance.

Q It will be a news conference? In the Rose Garden?

MR. NESSEN: There will be a chance to ask him questions yes.

Q Here in this room?

MR. NESSEN: It is not arranged yet.

Q Confined to the campaign or generally?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously not confined but I thought that was the matter of major interest based on some interest people expressed this morning.

Q We need to do some planning logistically here, the crews and so forth. Why can't we have a little more detail on what you plan?

MORE

#505

MR. NESSEN: It is not precisely arranged yet, Phil, but if you are back after that 3 o'clock meeting, I think there will be a chance to talk to the President.

Q Will there be a pool?

MR. NESSEN: No. Everybody will be in on it.

You know about the President's meeting and reception for members of the National Broadcast Editorial Association -- about 100 members -- and they are having their annual meeting here in Washington. It is a three-day meeting they have each year, so they are going to come in and meet briefly with the President in the East Room during which I think he will take some questions from them and then there will be a reception.

Q Is that open coverage?

MR. NESSEN: That is open coverage.

Q What time is that?

MR. NESSEN: That begins at 5:15.

The President is pleased to announce today his intention to nominate General George S. Brown of the Air Force for reappointment to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This would be for a two-year term which begins on July 3rd and he will, on July 3rd, complete his first two-year term as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

By way of background, General Brown was -- let me say we have a printed announcement with General Brown's biography. We can hand this out after the briefing.

Just prior to his appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1974 General Brown was the Commander of the Air Force Systems Command which has its headquarters at Andrews Air Force Base. His hometown is Montclair, New Jersey, and he is a graduate of the West Point Military Academy.

As I say, we have a printed biography of General Brown which we can pass out right after this meeting.

Just to review one aspect of yesterday, I don't know if all of you were aware that the President had a meeting yesterday with a number of officials who are involved in helping with the Idaho Dam situation. Secretary Kleppe was in and also Federal Disaster Assistance Administrator Thomas Dunn.

Just to go back to the beginning, I think you know that the actions the President has taken in this disaster include, one, declaring the area to be eligible for Federal disaster assistance. The President did that on Sunday and then he also dispatched four high officials of the Government to Idaho to direct the relief efforts and to examine ways of preventing additional damage and to begin to look into the cause of the collapse of the dam.

At yesterday's meeting with Secretary Kleppe and Administrator Dunn the President asked to be kept closely informed of developments in the Idaho case and he also directed the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration to examine the need for additional Federal assistance to those areas affected by the flood.

Q Wasn't Earl Butz at the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Earl Butz was not in Washington yesterday and so was not able to attend the meeting.

Q I was told by somebody in your office --

MR. NESSEN: It was intended that he come but he was not in town. The Under Secretary of Agriculture is one of those who has been dispatched to Idaho. That is a round-up on the Idaho situation.

I believe we have given you a rough idea of the trip to Missouri on Friday, haven't we?

Q Not really. More by word of mouth than anything else.

MR. NESSEN: Tentatively, the President plans to leave toward mid-afternoon, in, say, the 2 o'clock area. The President would fly to the Springfield Municipal Airport in Springfield, Missouri. So you figure the press would leave a little bit ahead of those times, and the President will meet with some of the delegates to the Missouri Convention in small groups.

Q Will they be open for coverage?

MR. NESSEN: No, they won't. And then there will be a reception, a larger reception in early evening at which the President will speak. Governor Bond is the host for that.

Then the President will depart and go back to the airport and fly back to Washington, arriving on the White House South Lawn roughly at 11:30.

Q Did you say he would speak at the reception?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, that is the tentative plan right now.

Q Ron, are all the delegates supposed to go to that reception?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the -- it is a Republican reception hosted by the Governor. I don't know precisely who the delegates are.

Q There is something over 1100, close to 1200 delegates chosen at the State and local levels attending this convention. Are you talking about a mass reception for all 1100 or 1200 people?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is a smaller reception than that. I don't know exactly who it is that will be attending but I will get that for you.

Q Just two events? First he meets with small groups of these delegates and then he has the reception and that is it?

MR. NESSEN: Right, at the moment.

Q Ron, could you tell us when was the last time the President talked personally with Governor Reagan or had contact through the respective second in command?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, I have not heard of any contacts since former Governor Reagan called just before he began his campaign to notify the President that he was doing so. I have not heard of any direct contacts since then.

Q Do you anticipate any direct contact on Friday when former Governor Reagan also will be in the convention hotel?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I have not heard of anything, any plans like that.

Q What is the President's reaction -- I know we are going to get it later -- but do you have any idea of how he feels about California, off the top of your head?

MR. NESSEN: I think you have to look at the whole day and it was clearly a good day for the President, Helen. The President maintained his lead in delegates, a pretty sizable lead in delegates. It was pretty much of a break even on delegates. The President now is -- from the reports I read on the wire service accounts and the networks' accounts this morning -- the President needs fewer than 200 delegates to clinch the nomination which he believes he will acquire before Kansas City. So all in all, yesterday was a good day for the President.

Q Was there any telephone call from former President Nixon to the President in any way informing him of how he is going to vote?

MR. NESSEN: You asked me that last night.

Q You were not even aware he voted at that time?

MR. NESSEN: No, I saw it on television. No, there was no contact.

Q Is that all you have to tell us on Missouri? I don't know if you finished.

MR. NESSEN: That is all there is to Missouri, actually.

Q Can you tell us where the events will be, what hotel they will be in?

MR. NESSEN: The Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge.

Q All of the meetings will be in Howard Johnson's as far as you know?

MR. NESSEN: The smaller meetings with the small groups of delegates will be at the motor lodge and the larger reception will be at the Howard Johnson's Convention Center.

Q How much time does he have set aside for the private meetings?

MR. NESSEN: I think this schedule may be a little out of date, but roughly two hours.

Q Ron, two hours for what? The small meetings?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Now, before we get off the subject of Missouri, if I might, please, parochial as it is, there are only 19 delegates going to be selected at this convention and the President expects to get only 9 or 10 of them, with Reagan getting 9 or 10. Does the President feel that the expense to the PFC for a total pickup of 9 or 10 delegates is worth it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know all that much about the delegate activities.

Q That is the case. There are only 19 altogether.

MR. NESSEN: Rog or Stu can probably help you with the details of that.

Q Do you think the loss of the President's time to the Nation is justified by a pickup of 9 or 10 delegates?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he puts in a pretty long work week and he is going to be gone a couple of hours on Friday evening.

Q A couple of hours?

MR. NESSEN: From 2:00 to 11:00. That is nine hours.

Q That is a couple?

MR. NESSEN: But I don't think anyone has ever seriously suggested that the President doesn't put in a pretty heavy work week or work day.

Q How many hours has he worked this week?

MR. NESSEN: Actually, Phil, if you go back to January 1 and bring it up to -- I am glad you asked me that -- if you take a look at, let's say, from January 1 to June 1, which is really about the latest that we have taken a look at in anticipating your questions, you will see that the President in that period of 150 days traveled for parts of 37 days.

Q All or part?

MR. NESSEN: All or part of 37 days.

Q About one-third of the time.

Q You mean 37 separate days, or are you adding up the total time?

MR. NESSEN: I am saying he was traveling all or part of 37 days. However, more than half of those -- 19, to be exact -- were Saturdays or Sundays.

Q Do you have dates on these?

MR. NESSEN: From January 1 to June 1.

Q How many days is from January 1 to June 1?

MR. NESSEN: Roughly 150 days. So that means that out of the first 150 days of the year, the President was in the office for 110 days. So that means that if you subtract the travel out of the 150 days the President averaged better than a five-day work week and his work day was basically from -- his getting up time is usually 5:15 or 5:20 and he gets into the office at 7:50 and usually goes home between 7:30 and 8:00 in the evening, and takes work home with him.

Q He gets up at 5:30. Is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: 5:15 or 5:20, usually.

Q Ron, how late did the President stay up, and did he know what the California results were when he went to bed, and did he call anybody out there?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he did not call anybody last night in California, no.

Q Did he today?

MR. NESSEN: In California, he did not call last night.

Q Today?

MR. NESSEN: I have not checked the phone call.

Q Did he know what the results were when he went to bed?

MR. NESSEN: He went to bed before there were very extensive results in.

Q Ron, to your knowledge, has the President placed any restrictions or limits on his political aides regarding the lengths to which they can go in recruiting delegates?

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

Q Well, are they going to be out peddling judgeships, for example? Has he laid down some rules about ethics and things like that?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think, as you know, peddling judgeships is a violation of Federal law and the President indicated on his first days as President that he expected everyone involved in his Administration, and later in his campaign, to maintain the same high standard of ethics that he follows, so that would certainly rule that out. It is also a violation of the law.

Q Ron, has he given any words of caution to his political supporters to hew to the straight and narrow in the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: I would not think he would need that. I would think that is assumed by anybody that works for this President.

Q Would you have a guess as to how many other State conventions that are remaining he might be visiting between now and Convention time?

MR. NESSEN: It is under consideration that he might visit an additional small number.

Q What does that mean?

MR. NESSEN: He is thinking about going to a couple more.

Q A couple is two or a couple is nine, like it was a few minutes ago? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Closer to two than nine. Closer to one than two.

Q Ron, I am wondering when Mr. Kauper informed the President -- I assume he did inform him -- that he is leaving the Justice Department, did he indicate dissatisfaction with the degree of backing he had gotten?

MR. NESSEN: I think he has indicated repeatedly to reporters what his reasons for leaving were. He certainly did in his letter to the President.

Q Do you have anything to say about the subject this morning?

MR. NESSEN: I think Mr. Kauper has given his reasons.

Q The question is, the President has made anti-trust one of his prime policies. Now Mr. Kauper is saying that the Administration is not doing enough.

MR. NESSEN: Did you read his letter?

Q I have not seen it.

MR. NESSEN: Let me get it for you.

Q Did you put that out yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: I think we did.

Q I didn't see it.

MR. NESSEN: Mr. Kauper talks about serving four years in his present position. He has concluded that for purely personal reasons the time to leave is the end of the summer. I believe somebody told me he had placed his house on the market some time ago in anticipation of leaving. He wants to resume his teaching duties at the University of Michigan.

"I would sure be remiss if I did not express my deep personal appreciation to you for the privilege of serving as part of this Administration. It has been an Administration characterized by an open exchange of views, a policy of which I have surely been a direct beneficiary. Your support of the program of the Antitrust Division has bolstered not only me, but all the men and women of the Division, and needless to say, I most heartily applaud your regulatory reform initiatives which have been more than dear to my heart from the time I took this position.

"I leave with a real sense of regret, not only because this job has provided me with an exciting and rewarding personal experience, but because much of what I have worked on, particularly in the regulatory area, is yet undone" -- and so forth.

Q What about the New York Times report which says that Mr. Kauper was leaving the Government solely because he felt he was not given sufficient support by Mr. Levi?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure that you will see a correction in the New York Times tomorrow. A word was dropped out of that sentence in Eileen Shanahan's story and there will be a correction tomorrow. The word is "denied." (Laughter)

Q You are developing a paughty sense of humor there.

MR. NESSEN: I just happen to know what the facts are in this case. He indicated, I think probably a year ago, that he wanted to leave and he is about to leave and it has nothing to do with what you think it has something to do with.

Q Will the President name a replacement?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously.

Q Will there be a replacement, or will he just name --

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, there will be. We have not named one yet but there will be one.

Q Ron, since I understand that there has been an announcement in Norfolk that the President will address the Southern Baptist Convention there next week, I was wondering if the President feels that many of the 12 million members in this denomination will agree with what ABC news in New York has on film, the statement that Wayne Hays is a fine gentleman; another statement, that the disturbing thing about this is not the sexual conduct but the use of taxpayers' money?

MR. NESSEN: I missed the question part of that.

Q Does the President think that the Southern Baptists -- 12 million of them including one Jimmy Carter -- will agree with the statement that Wayne Hays is a fine gentleman, that they have on film in New York and his own statement that the disturbing thing about this is not the sexual conduct of Mr. Hays but the use of the taxpayers' money?

MR. NESSEN: If you are asking me what do the Southern Baptists think of those statements --

Q No, I want to know what does the President think? Does the President think that the Southern Baptists will agree with these two statements or not?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I think you would probably have to poll the Southern Baptists to get their views on that.

Q Ron, could you give us any more about the President's plans to solicit the views of civil rights leaders and Congressional supporters of busing in advance of the legislation that he plans to announce?

MR. NESSEN: I expect to be able to tell you some details of that in the next day or so, probably in the next day.

Q Ron, has the President had anything recent to say about the Syrian incursion into Lebanon?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Does the President believe it is constitutional to put a time limit on decisions by Federal Judges?

MR. NESSEN: I think he indicated his position on that the other day, Jim.

Q Ron, are you saying that the legislation on busing is going to come out in the next day or so?

MR. NESSEN: No. David asked me what did I have to say about the plans for soliciting views of people outside the Government, and I said that I expected to be able to announce some of the plans for receiving those views in the next day or so.

Q Ron, if I could follow up, are you aware of what the President's views are of the Syrian effort in Lebanon?

MR. NESSEN: I think we have said before -- and it has not changed, Phil -- that the Syrian efforts to find a political settlement or to mediate a peaceful settlement have been constructive. In terms of outside military intervention by anyone, on the other hand, the United States has always felt that outside military intervention increased the risk that this conflict would grow and spread.

Q Ron, does the President feel now, though, that the extent of Syrian military activity in Lebanon has reached a point where its overall role no longer needs discussion?

MR. NESSEN: I just really spelled out the position.

Q That position goes back some weeks. They have a full-blown war going over there now. Is that the same position?

MR. NESSEN: The United States opposes outside military intervention because it does run the risk of having this civil war escalate and spread.

Q The President, in his Face the Nation interview, was asked basically the same question, and said basically the same thing, but did not indicate what, if anything, he was going to do about it. Are you prepared to tell us now anything of what he is going to do about it in light of the spread?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing more than the fact that Ambassador Brown (Malloy) is there and the United States is in contact with those involved, and offering whatever help we can to arrange a peaceful political settlement.

Q In other words, the United States is not going to do anything of a substantive nature?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is of a substantive nature, Jim.

Q Would the President like to see the Syrians withdraw their forces from Lebanon immediately?

MR. NESSEN: The President would like to see the matter settled, a peaceful political settlement arranged.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:01 P.M. EDT)

#505