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

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:52 A.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 14, 1976

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let me give you sort of an update on the trip tomorrow. Some of the times are changed a little.

The press plane check-in at Andrews is 12:45. I think yesterday we gave you 1:15. The correct time is 12:45. The press plane leaves Andrews at 1:15. The President leaves the South Lawn at 1:30 and leaves Andrews at 1:50. The press plane arrives in Michigan -- and the airport there is the Ypsilanti -- at 2:15. The President arrives there at 3:00.

Q Is there an airport rally?

MR. NESSEN: There is no plan for one.

Q Is this the Ypsilanti or Willow Run?

MR. NESSEN: It used to be called Willow Run. It is now Ypsilanti.

The President's first event when he gets to the University will be a meeting with a group of students. There will be a group of students, about two dozen students roughly, and these students were selected by the president of the student body of the University in discussion with various campus groups and leaders. It is supposed to be a representative group, and the basic purpose is for the President to hear whatever they really have to say, any gripes or views, comments of any kind. It is really just a discussion with students at 3:30.

Q Open?

MR. NESSEN: I think we will probably have a pool at the beginning, if there is any interest in it, but basically, it is for the President's benefit. It will not be open for coverage, but if you want a picture at the beginning, we can do that.

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Q That is no sound?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Is it going to be Q and A?

MR. NESSEN: They could ask the President some questions. They could make comments to the President. It is sort of unstructured.

Q Could a reporter sit in and listen for pool purposes?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there was a plan to do that, Andy.

Q Could you see if we could do that? Could you see if we could get a writing pool in there.

MR. NESSEN: Then, we will get a story saying the White House staged this event for reporters.

Q By closing the doors, you are guaranteeing it is staged now.

MR. NESSEN: If it is done with the students for the President's benefit and not news stories?

Q When you get 24 kids listening to the President, do you want 24 different stories coming out or do you want a pool of reporters in trying to keep it straight?

Q Are some things done for news stories, is that the purpose for some events?

Q This is a campaign trip, isn't it?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Having one reporter in will not change the event.

MR. NESSEN: I will check, but I think the feeling now is the main purpose of this is for the President to talk to the students.

Q Ron, the President had a similar occasion with students at Stanford University last year, as I recall, and then you gave us a transcript after that.

MR. NESSEN: Was there?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall that.

Q Ron, somewhere in the Middle West, we sat in there while he talked to the students. It was in North Carolina we sat in there.

MR. NESSEN: I take it there is a great interest in this, in attending, or having somebody attend.

Q Let me ask you about these students. Are these members of the Students for President Ford?

MR. NESSEN: No, this is something different. This is a group put together by the president of the student body, I think, designed to be representative of a cross-section of the campus, to tell the President what they think and to maybe ask him questions and so forth.

Q Ron, does it come as a surprise to you that we are interested in covering this?

MR. NESSEN: Not at all, Jim.

Q Then, if it doesn't come as a surprise to you, if you had anticipated we would be interested, do you bring this kind of thing up in the senior staff meeting in the morning as the Press Secretary and tell those who are planning trips the press undoubtedly will want to cover these things?

MR. NESSEN: That is not the meeting where it was brought up but it was certainly discussed at other meetings which deal with scheduling problems.

Q Do you bring these things up at these scheduling meetings?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, the purpose of it is for the President to hear the students' views and not to get news coverage.

Q We don't care what the purpose is. We want to cover the President of the United States. You have your purposes, we have ours.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, and I said I would see again whether or not we could have a pool.

Q Let me make a point. Is the purpose on everything the President does, do you analyze it with a view as we would like a news story on this, the purpose of this is something else? We don't analyze it that way. We want to cover the President.

MR. NESSEN: I will take your point back and see if we want the change.

Q Could I be permitted an observation? I think we go through this every day and it sounds very much to me -- and I don't know if others will agree with me -- that what you are asking for is for you to be asked that we get in so you are then not accused that you are staging for us. This is getting to be a charade that is just a big waste of time.

MR. NESSEN: It does not help, anyhow.

Q Why don't you assume we are interested and assume we want to be in on whatever the President is doing?

MR. NESSEN: I get the point and I think you understand my view, too.

Q Ron, I wonder who you would check it with?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean? Check what with?

Q When you say you are going to check it, this involves the press, you are the Press Secretary, who would you have to check it with?

MR. NESSEN: It is not a decision I can make alone.

Q Who makes the decision?

MR. NESSEN: Various people combine to make the decision.

Q Is the session with the students going to be filmed by the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Let me finish the schedule. He is going to meet with the students. There is a very strong request here, as I take it, for at least a pool to sit in on that and listen. After that, there is what is listed as staff time. That is time for the President to do whatever business he needs to do, to go over his speech, and I also expect that some old friends will drop in and visit him at that time.

Q Where will this be?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the exact location. It will be on campus from about 4:00 until about 6:15.

Q Before you go too far, my assumption is you are going to make a request for a writing pool, but the possibility of radio and television coverage is strictly out?

MR. NESSEN: I can take that request in, also.

Q Would you please? I would like to make the request for both radio and television coverage via a pool.

MR. NESSEN: Full coverage of the meeting with the students? Do you mean a pool coverage by radio and --

Q I would prefer full coverage, but I would settle for a pool.

Q We nominate you, Walt. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: At 6:15, the President will join the varsity football team for dinner.

Q Is that going to be closed, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how that is going to work out. Then, at 7:00, the President --

Q Where will this be?

MR. NESSEN: On campus, but I don't have the exact building. That is one of the dining halls. There is pool coverage at the beginning of dinner with the football team.

Then, the President leaves at 7:00 to make his speech. The speech is in the Crisler Auditorium. He speaks at 7:30. After the speech, which will be about 8:15, the President will go to a reception, which will be attended by officers of the University, the Board of Regents and their wives and an honor society, the Michi Gamma Honor Society, of which the President was a member when he was a student.

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Q What kind of honors? Academic? Activities?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is academic honors. The President is expected to be back in the White House at about 11:00.

Q When does he get to Andrews, about 20 minutes to 11:00?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. He arrives on the South Lawn at 11:00 and Andrews at 10:40, something like that.

Q What about the text?

MR. NESSEN: The President is still working on it, but I am still shooting for a text say early to midmorning tomorrow at the latest.

Q Ron, the President was so mysterious about the surprises in the text. Is it likely to be released in full in the morning or will he have some goodies he is holding out, like at B'nai B'rith.

MR. NESSEN: No, I anticipate that the text as he plans to deliver it will be released.

Q We will have the text on the press plane?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, at the minimum.

Q Is there an embargo on delivery?

MR. NESSEN: I think we will release it at 6:00 p.m.

Q Ron, I was absent a couple of days and probably missed the explanation for another thing that was raised by you at the time you said it would become obvious why this date was chosen. In other words, there was some specific reason for it.

MR. NESSEN: No, I think that what I explained was--everybody said, "Why can't you tell us exactly when he is going to make it," and I said I would explain to you afterwards. The explanation was the PFC at one point was thinking about buying TV time to show the speech live on TV, and purchase time, and there was a certain amount of negotiating with the networks about whether they had any time available Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday of this week. Part of the decision hung on, first, whether they were going to buy time and, if they did, what night was available. They made the decision not to put it on television so the whole thing resolved itself.

Q There will be no coverage, statewide or nationwide?

MR. NESSEN: Not purchased time. I don't know what the various stations plan to do on their own.

Q Was the decision not to buy the time or there was no time available?

MR. NESSEN: The decision was made not to buy time.

Q Could you give a reason, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: The PFC in its wisdom decided -- I think partly it was the high expenses of doing it.

Q Was that going to be national or statewide?

MR. NESSEN: What they were considering doing?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I think they were considering national TV but dropped the idea.

Q Ron, how much has the President practiced for the speech?

MR. NESSEN: He is still writing the speech, so he has not really practiced at all.

Q He has not worked with radio or videotape?

MR. NESSEN: No, he hasn't.

Q At all?

MR. NESSEN: At all.

Q Ron, this is the President's maiden speech of the campaign and they decided not to broadcast it nationally, televise it nationally, partly because of the expense and this is his first formal address of the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: It is certainly the first strip out of town since Labor Day to make a campaign speech.

Q Doesn't that somehow defy some logic?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. A lot of things defy logic.

Q Ron, was his acceptance speech rerun last week --

MR. NESSEN: Last Tuesday.

Q -- instead of buying the TV time for this? In other words, was there a choice between the two?

MR. NESSEN: That was locked in fairly early on, last Tuesday night's TV time, to rerun the edited acceptance speech, so at one time there was a plan to do that last week and this week buy time to run this speech but they decided not to.

Q Is the White House disappointed or concerned that this is not going to be televised nationally?

MR. NESSEN: No. If we wanted to put it on, we would have bought the time and put it on or PFC would have.

Q If it goes well, is well received, and his points go across well, would you then buy time and put it on, a recorded speech?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Tom. That is something that folks over at the PFC are worrying with, but there is no plan now to do that.

Q What did the President do this morning?

MR. NESSEN: He had staff meetings. He appeared on the Today Show, the usual business. He signed this bill removing the emergency --

Q Will you explain that?

Q On that bill signing, why was that not on the schedule?

MR. NESSEN: It was a private bill signing and Mac Mathias, who was the cochairman of the Special Committee on the Termination of the National Emergency, requested the opportunity to bring his sons in and to witness the private signing since he had played a large part in the bill, and so the President invited him to do that.

Q Ron, this is a major bill.

MR. NESSEN: The 1933 national emergency, various others, but going all the way back to 1933.

Q We have 1933, Roosevelt and economic depression; 1950, Truman's state of emergency on the invasion of North Korea; and the third one is Nixon's state of emergency 1970 national postal strike, and the fourth is 1971, Nixon's state of emergency on the international monetary crisis.

Q He removed all of them?

MR. NESSEN: The legislation did, H.R. 3884.

Q Does this take away powers from the President that he has had because of these emergencies?

MR. NESSEN: 470 laws with power attendant to the President accordingly: martial law, his right to seize property and his right to cease all means of transportation, right to restrict travel and right to control industrial production.

Q And you did not think that was a major bill signing?

MR. NESSEN: It was decided to sign the bill privately.

Q Is there any reason why the Press Secretary couldn't have brought out this information instead of a member of the press corps?

MR. NESSEN: Margaret Earl, who is the Assistant Press Secretary, is going to have some paper for you.

Q I got this information from Mathias' office.

Q Ron, is it the President has a public bill signing for an amendment to the stockyards bill and some other rather minor bills -- at least nationally minor bills -- and we have an important piece of legislation like this -- for instance, I happened to run into Senator Church on his way out and Senator Church said it is the most important piece of legislation he participated in while in the Congress.

Why was this bill signed in privacy and not on the schedule, and why wasn't there a little bit of fanfare as usual?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what considerations went into that frankly, Jim.

Q Ron, don't they ask your advice on these things?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, yes, but I don't always prevail, Sarah.

Q What was your advice on this bill?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will keep my advice within the White House.

Q This wipes out a lot of power the President has had since 1933 and it seems to me it is one of the most important bills ever, pieces of legislation, that this country has ever had. For it to be just cast out --

Q Why did he decide to sign it?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously he felt that it ought to be signed into law, Walt.

Q Did he say anything at the signing ceremony?

MR. NESSEN: I did not attend the signing ceremony.

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Q Ron, do we have amateurs down here making decisions on public relations now, or what? (Laughter)

Q Do we?

MR. NESSEN: No, we don't. We have pros.

Q Well, who are the people who are making decisions on public relations?

MR. NESSEN: We have our crack professional public relations staff here making those decisions.

Q How many people would you say that was?

MR. NESSEN: I would say thousands.

Q Ron, listen, how many people on the staff are involved in a decision of this magnitude?

MR. NESSEN: This is not a public relations decision.

Q Say it is a communications decision.

MR. NESSEN: It is not a communications decision.

Q Let's don't quibble over that. How many people were involved in making this decision? That is a direct question, Ron. I would like an answer.

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the answer, Sarah.

Q Don't you know your staff?

MR. NESSEN: I told you I don't make those decisions. I participate in them but I don't make them.

Q I said, how many people at the White House are involved in making those decisions, and who are they, and you won't answer that, right, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I am not exactly sure of the question you are asking, Sarah.

Q Let me make you sure of it. I am going to make you sure of it this time. I want to know how many people are involved in making that decision that that bill would be signed privately and who are these people.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the exact number of people who are involved in making that decision, Sarah.

Q Ron, surely they tell you things like that.

Q Can we get the answer to Miss Thomas' question?

MR. NESSEN: What was the question?

Q The question was, it might not be public relations, but is it political, that you want to show the President is not losing his powers? This is what this new law does. It takes a hell of a lot of power away from the President. Not to spotlight legislation like that is incredible, especially after the kind of exposure we have had on bill signings of much lesser impact on the Nation.

Q What is the answer to her question?

MR. NESSEN: What Helen said was not a question. It is a statement.

Q Her question was, is it because it focuses, then, the President's diminishing powers?

MR. NESSEN: I would like to analyze the legislation and see what it really does before I accept that premise.

Q Ron, the other day the President signed with considerable fanfare -- at least publicly -- a bill affecting one relatively small river in North Carolina, the New River, with a good deal of fanfare, publicity, ceremony, and so forth. This bill today, by any common sense definition, is a great deal more important to the Nation than that. Will you tell us what the factors were in the decision, what the pros and cons were, in the decision to have this thing signed privately with no attention?

MR. NESSEN: I can't, Jim. I really can't.

Q Do you know?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I think I know.

Q Why can't you tell us?

MR. NESSEN: The bill was signed. It was announced. Margaret is going to provide you with the information.

Q It was not announced. You were asked a question.

MR. NESSEN: You asked me what the President did today and I said he signed a bill.

Q You said he signed some emergency legislation.

MR. NESSEN: He signed H.R. 3884.

Q Ron, could I request we get a transcript of whatever statement the President made while signing the bill?

MR. NESSEN: There is no transcript of an occasion in his office where he signs a piece of legislation with Mac Mathias and his family there and one or two other people from the legislative office.

Q Ron, how does the President feel about this bill?

MR. NESSEN: I will see what additional information I can find.

Q Ron, yesterday when we were asking whether you had checked with your superiors on a decision --

MR. NESSEN: Superior, as I mentioned yesterday.

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Q If I may finish, you said, "I have only one superior." In other words, you said you make decisions.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q We are trying to find out who makes these decisions. Yesterday it was you. Today it is a lot of other people.

MR. NESSEN: I certainly do make decisions, Marilyn. The decision of whether to make a bill signing public or private is not a Press Office decision.

Q Ron, did Senator Church ask to be there or was he invited?

MR. NESSEN: I was not aware that Senator Church was here until somebody mentioned he had come out, and I will check and find out and find out whether he was here for the same event.

Q He said he was.

MR. NESSEN: Then he was.

Q Ron, isn't there a meeting that takes place every day between you and/or a representative of your staff with various other persons around here to decide what is going to be done in public and what is not going to be done in public?

MR. NESSEN: That is not the purpose of the meeting. There are various meetings.

Q Would the PFC sometimes be in attendance to determine what can be used politically and what cannot be used politically? Here you have a schedule -- you know the President is going to sign this bill. There must have been some consideration involved, someone must have done something about whether to have this in public or not in public.

What we would like to know is what were the considerations that led to this bill being signed on a private basis?

MR. NESSEN: I think this is an internal White House matter, Mort, that probably ought to stay an internal White House matter.

Q Yesterday the President signed the Government and Sunshine bill and he talked about open Government and he made a great long speech about open Government and he has always gone on the record as running an open Government.

Now, this is a rather important piece of legislation. Why is the White House acting inconsistent with the President's alleged policy?

MR. NESSEN: First of all, the President and the Administration has supported this bill. If there is any suggestion that somehow this was crammed down the President's throat and therefore we wanted to hideout -- that is just wrong.

The Administration has supported the bill. We will make available to you a digest of the bill so you will understand what it was that was signed.

Q That was not my question. You don't seem to understand my question. My question was, yesterday the President viewed that Government and Sunshine and open Government is best for the people and today his actions are completely inconsistent with that.

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has a pretty good record of two years of open Government, Walt.

Q Ron, when you called this a private bill signing, did you mean to imply this was a private bill?

MR. NESSEN: No, private as an adjective modifying something.

Q Private signing of a public bill?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Ron, why hasn't the President replied to the Russians on the latest SALT offer? It goes back six months. Why the holdup? Why is the United States delaying action on that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't accept those characterizations of it, Dick. The matter is under study and the Geneva talks, of course, have continued. I think they are in recess now. They should be reconvening later this month or very shortly, as a matter of fact.

Q Will the United States make its counter-proposal to the Soviets when it reconvenes later this month?

MR. NESSEN: It will be made in due course, after the matter has been studied and a reply has been decided upon.

Q Isn't it taking an unseemingly long time for the United States to reply, Ron? This is the longest break in the negotiations in the history of the negotiations.

MR. NESSEN: The talks have gone on in Geneva on the larger policy matters. It is something that is under study and the reply will be sent.

Q Ron, is the reception this afternoon going to be open for coverage?

MR. NESSEN: It is not.

Q Not at all?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q What reception is that?

MR. NESSEN: Some volunteers for the President are coming around 4:00 to meet the President.

Q Ron, this morning when Brokaw asked the President about the pending auto strike he did not seem to want to say very much about it. He said, "Negotiations are still going on," but my question is, has the President asked his economic advisers to come up with any study of the type of economic impact a strike could have?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check with the EPB and see if they have done any work on that.

Q Is the President concerned that it could hurt the recovery?

MR. NESSEN: I think since the negotiations are still going on, there is no strike and the negotiations are continuing, I don't think it is proper to talk about what would happen if there were a strike since there is not a strike yet or now.

Q Do you know what the White House view of the strike is and its impact? You say you don't want to talk about it, but do you know how the White House views this strike and what it thinks the impact will be?

MR. NESSEN: I said I would check to see if the EPB has done any work on the possible economic impact of any strike.

Q In other words, you don't know what the White House position, the White House view, the White House preparation, the White House finding, the White House study, the White House conclusion is on the possibility of a nationwide automobile strike?

MR. NESSEN: I said I did not know whether the EPB had done any work in this area.

Q Do you know anything on this subject that you want to tell us, that you can tell us on this subject?

MR. NESSEN: On a possible strike at Ford?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Nothing beyond what the President said this morning.

Q Ron, why was the EPB meeting cancelled yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: It was postponed because all the material they needed to review the tax bill wasn't available.

Q Ron, Alan Greenspan said recently the economy was entering a pause but in a speech yesterday I think he said he has seen some new numbers that were very promising and the economy was now reaccelerating. Is it the Administration's position that the pause is now over?

MR. NESSEN: I will check with Alan and see what his view on that is.

Q What about tomorrow morning? Is there going to be anything going on around here before we leave?

MR. NESSEN: The NATO Council is coming in.

Q Is Luns coming out?

MR. NESSEN: I did not plan to brief tomorrow. During a previous visit here, Luns did come out and give a little report on the meeting. It is possible he will do that tomorrow. That would be the only thing I would anticipate here in the morning.

Q What time is the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: It was scheduled for 11:00, the last time I checked. I will double-check.

Q When will the President return tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: He will be back at the White House about 11:00.

Q Ron, when the President said this morning Congress might go off the deep end, can you elaborate what he meant? What did he mean when he said Congress might go off the deep end?

MR. NESSEN: I think he was talking about the kind of spending bills and Humphrey-Hawkins and those kinds of pieces of legislation.

Q Ron, what is the President's position on this whole controversy about bone being ground up in meat these days? Is he looking into this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he is involved in that particular item.

Q It is a continuing issue. As a candidate, where does he stand?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have his position on the bone and meat controversy, Phil.

Q Can we get it because Mrs. Knauer urged Butz not to go along with this and Butz completely ignored it and now the Federal court is restraining them and I think this is a question he should take a position on.

Q Two other matters. Could we get the President's position on the aerosol spray can controversy and on the tax bill?

MR. NESSEN: On the tax bill, it is a bill of 1,000 or more pages and he is in the process of going over it with his economic advisers to make his decision. On the aerosol spray can, I don't know what you mean by the President's position. The EPA several weeks ago, or recently, earmarked \$4 million of its budget for research in this precise area, which is exactly what the scientists recommended yesterday.

The scientists recommended yesterday that there be some kind of standby legislation to deal with this problem, if it turns out to be a problem, some way to control aerosol spray cans. The Administration has urged an acceptable version of the toxic substances bill which would give the very kind of standby authority that the scientists called for yesterday so both of the major recommendations, the Administration has been there really ahead of the recommendations.

Q Except what about the recommendation that aerosols not be banned for up to two years?

MR. NESSEN: I say, the Administration, in the form of the EPA, has set aside \$4 million for the kind of research project that the scientists called for yesterday leading up to a decision on what to do with aerosol spray cans.

Q So the President does not object to a two-year delay in the ban or curtailment?

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MR. NESSEN: The Administration has taken two steps, really, in this direction. One, \$4 million for the kind of research the scientists asked for and support for the kind of toxic substances bill, giving the kind of standards by authority that the scientists asked for.

On your question about the Economic Policy Board meeting from yesterday, it will probably be on Thursday morning.

Q Ron, may I just clear up the meat issue. Are you saying that the President has not been involved in this or are you saying you don't know?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard that particular issue come up before him for a personal position on it and I will check and see what it is.

Q Ron, does the President use aerosol devices?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I don't stand around and watch him shave.

Q Ron, there is an amendment up on the Hill on whether or not to cut off Federal aid on abortions.

MR. NESSEN: The so-called Hyde amendment?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: The Hyde amendment, as I understand it, changes its form as the matter is discussed and debated. I don't have a position to give you on that today. The White House has not taken a position on the Hyde amendment.

Q Aside from the Hyde amendment, where does he stand on the issue of whether the United States Government should pay for abortions? He does not have a position on that general issue or he does?

MR. NESSEN: He has directed Jim Cannon -- as we said last week after this Bishop's meeting -- to undertake a study of the various programs under which Federal money is used for abortions and to report back to him, the aim of the study being to minimize Federally financed abortions so that no more money is spent for federally financed abortions than is absolutely required by various court decisions.

Q Have you ever gotten the megatonnage ratings on those two Soviet underground nuclear blasts in July?

MR. NESSEN: I am told ERDA has not produced that.

Q When do you expect to get that data? It should fall within this time frame.

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a date.

Q I would like to go back to Ted's question on this question of the aerosol problem. The \$4 million study that the EPA has launched, is there a time frame? I am trying to get to the idea of whether the Administration is willing to have this study go on for two years or whether it wants it completed sooner than that or whether it accepts the two-year period the scientists recommend. Is there a time duration on the EPA study?

MR. NESSEN: Margaret will check that for you. She is our aerosol spray can expert.

Q Ron, can I go back to the abortion question? You said the aim of the study is to minimize federally financed abortions except in cases where absolutely necessary.

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't.

Q Yes, you did.

MR. NESSEN: I did not think I did. I think what I said, the difficulty the bishops were in here, which was last Friday, was -- as the bishops reported and then I elaborated on -- the President asked Jim Cannon and the Domestic Council and the Council office to undertake a study to make sure that federally financed abortions were kept to the minimum required by court decisions.

Q May I just follow this up and ask two questions. One, if Federal funds are to be limited for abortions, it would seem it would follow logically that only people who could afford them could buy abortions. Secondly, if States are to be left -- you said it is the President's position to have an amendment leaving it to the States to decide on an abortion law -- that would mean that only those who could afford to go to those States that provided abortions could get abortions.

It seems to me that the Administration's position is one which moves increasingly toward cutting out abortions for people who can't afford them but permitting them for those who can. Is that what the Administration's position is?

MR. NESSEN: I think that was more in the nature of a statement than a question, Marilyn, but I think everybody clearly understands what the President's position on abortion is and has been for a long time.

Q Why is the lady asking a question then if she understands it? Why don't you answer the question?

MR. NESSEN: I can restate the President's position on abortion for you.

Q I don't want that. I am asking a question that you may not be able to give an answer on today, but it seems to me that the logic of these two stands on abortion leads to the conclusion that the poor will not be able to get them but the rich will. Now, if you can get clarification of that, I would like it.

MR. NESSEN: Of what? You say, "It leads to the conclusion that." How do I pick that up and answer it?

Q Is the Administration in favor of making abortions available only for people who are rich?

MR. NESSEN: The President's position -- and long-standing position -- on abortion, I think you know. I can run through it again for you, but I think you know it.

Q Ron, the injection of the question of Federal money for abortion raises this issue of the question of who can afford them. If you cut off the money to the poor people who are now getting it under these federally financed programs, then they cannot afford it; whereas, if you cut it off for a rich person, they can go and get it somewhere else and that is where this issue comes from.

MR. NESSEN: Again, I understand your view of the matter, Fran, but I don't know what the question is.

Q Are you affirming that this is indeed an implication of the President's position?

MR. NESSEN: Last Friday, I said everything that I said today, so I don't see where today's story comes from. Last Friday, I explained to you that the President had directed the Domestic Council and the Counsel's office to undertake this study. In the meanwhile, Marilyn and Fran, and others, have -- as Marilyn said -- have reached a conclusion as to what this means, but I don't know what has happened today that leads to any thought that there is some new development here in this area.

Q Ron, all they did was to raise an implication, apparent implication, of the President's policy and ask whether the Administration agrees with that or disagrees with it.

MR. NESSEN: Neither. I merely will tell you what the President's position on abortion is and the study which I mentioned to you last Friday, but I am not going to take on conclusions or implications when I don't understand the question.

Q Ron, does the President favor federally financed abortion for poor people in the absence of a Supreme Court requirement that the Government do that?

MR. NESSEN: There is zero new in the way of abortions development.

Q Ron, it is not a question of what is new.

MR. NESSEN: I thought that is why we were here, for me to tell you what is new.

Q Ron, are you going to answer that question or not?

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand the question, Fred.

MORE

Q Let me rephrase the question, Ron, since I brought it up. Is it true that the President favors abortions more for rich than for poor? It is a yes or no question.

MR. NESSEN: I will tell you what the President's position on abortion is. That is all I will say today. It is what I said last Friday and periodically since I have come in.

Q Since I brought up the question also, can I explain why the question came up and also my perception of your role, which is to explain Administration policy? You said just now that the aim of the study -- I happened not to be here and I was not at the press conference -- you said the aim of the study is to minimize Federally financed abortion and that was why I asked the question.

MR. NESSEN: I would like to be quoted accurately, Marilyn. This is an area where I think it is important to be quoted accurately and that is the second time you read to me my remarks back incorrectly. It is an issue on which a lot of people are paying attention to the precise meaning of words, and I would therefore like to have what I say accurately quoted back to me.

The purpose of the study is to make sure that Federal spending on abortion is kept to the minimum required by court decisions.

Q Ron, is the President going to sign the defense bill?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q When?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the signing date for you. It has not been decided yet. I am not sure the bill is here yet. It is a big bill, and it would have to go through the normal process of being looked at by the Counsel's Office and so forth, but he will sign it.

Q Ron, is the President going to take action today on the Federal pay raise?

MR. NESSEN: The deadline on that is October 1.

Q What is the meeting about today, the Advisory Board?

MR. NESSEN: This is basically to discuss the matter, but not make a decision, as I understand it.

Q Ron, how come yesterday out in the Rose Garden when the President signed the Sunshine bill he had nothing but praise for it, but the statement you released here afterwards specified various reservations he had about it? Why?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I don't see the problem. He always issues longer statements fully explaining his position on legislation.

Q But he seemed to be wildly enthusiastic about the bill outside and the statement --

MR. NESSEN: I think the tone of the statement is largely in the same vein, but with reference to his reservations.

Q It was because one was on TV and one wasn't.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so.

Q Ron, could we get a statement from the President or the White House on the bill he signed today, the emergency powers bill?

MR. NESSEN: I said I would get you whatever paperwork is available. In a private meeting in his office with Senator Mathias and his family, and I guess Senator Church and a couple of people from the legislative office, the President would not normally make a statement, but I will find out whatever paperwork we have.

Q The remaining confusion in my mind at least is if you are going to get us whatever paperwork, material, that is available on this bill, why you don't have that -- you often start out press conferences by distributing material, you put it in the bins at 10:00 in the morning and there are large amounts of these things and you frequently do this with bills.

As a matter of fact, you almost always do with important bills. Why did the Press Office not have material ready?

MR. CARLSON: It normally would have been out at 3:30.

MR. NESSEN: He signed it during the briefing time. It would normally be put out at 3:30.

Q Is this a case -- we have examined various possibilities as to why the President did not want this extensively publicized but from the standpoint --

MR. NESSEN: Wait a minute now. The Administration has supported the bill so I don't see the implication there.

Q There have been no answers, just the question. Now, the question is, did the Press Office just miss the significance of this and not have any description of the --

MR. NESSEN: It could have been one of our rare screw ups, you know.

Q That is what I am trying to find out. Was this a screw up?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to look into this. I obviously did not track on this particular piece of legislation. Others have, and I will see what I can find out about why it was handled this way.

Q If the Democratic candidate did this he would be ridiculed for being a sloppy administrator and maybe for flip-flopping and all these things.

MR. NESSEN: Wait a minute, Walt. You are running real far with the ball on that one. I want to find out whether this is a piece of housekeeping legislation that does some mechanical legalistic cleaning up of the record books or whether it is a matter of substance.

Q Mathias' office says this revokes the President's power to declare martial law -- I have this all itemized.

MR. NESSEN: If we are going to attach such heavy significance to this, let me make sure I understand what the bill does.

Q Why did you come to a briefing and not know?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have an answer to that, Walt. I will check and find out why I didn't know.

Q Did you ever get an answer on the contraceptives, Ron? (Laughter)

Q Without raising a question of whether there should be transcripts for everything that goes on in this room, I am wondering whether meetings such as with Ambassador Scranton yesterday couldn't be held in the room as proper briefings instead of out on the driveway with everybody on the run? Do you have any guidelines on that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that there is a guideline. I think those are handled individually.

Q In connection with that, Ron, last week you definitely said--and Bill Hyland also said--that the release of a dozen names in Paris has no bearing at all on whether we are going to veto Vietnamese membership in the U.N. and the words were "We will face that issue when we come to it."

That was Hyland's words and you indicated the same thing, meaning the Vietnamese membership will be judged on its own merits. It has nothing to do with dead or missing.

MR. NESSEN: Wait. I don't recall anything like that.

Q We can go back to the transcript on it.

MR. NESSEN: My recollection is that the President himself said that we certainly would not go for a normalization of relations unless and until Vietnam accounted for our missing in action.

Q Well, we asked about that and you said the two were not linked despite the logic that they should be linked. You said the two were not linked.

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall that, either.

Q And yesterday Mr. Scranton said they are linked, and I am wondering if our policy changed since last week or what?

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall that last week's statements were exactly as you describe them, Bob. I think the statement was made by the President that there could not be any normalization of relations until Vietnam accounted for all the missing and as Bill Scranton said yesterday, Vietnam does not meet the minimum standards of humanitarian conditions required for membership in the world organization.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:37 P.M. EDT)