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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 JACK HUSHEN

AT 12:08 P.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 12, 1974

THURSDAY

MR. HUSHEN: I think we have today's schedule posted.

In addition to what is posted, at 8 o'clock this morning the President met briefly with two Republican Senate candidates, Mayor Jake Garn of Salt Lake City -- he is running for the Senate in Utah -- and Mayor Ralph Perk, who is running for the Senate in Ohio.

Q Is that just for pictures?

MR. HUSHEN: Just to have their pictures taken with the President.

The President also met this morning with several staff members, including General Haig, Bob Hartmann and myself. He then went into a meeting --

Q Is that individually or together, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: General Haig was by himself, Bob Hartmann came in while I was meeting with the President and may have stayed after I left. I am not sure about that.

The President met for about an hour and a quarter with the bipartisan Congressional leadership to discuss international developments and foreign assistance legislation. That took place in the Cabinet Room. In this meeting, the President sought Congressional support for increased levels of economic and military assistance to Indochina.

He also discussed with them his concerns over a number of amendments in the Foreign Assistance Act, which would severely limit his authority to conduct U.S. foreign policy. The President told the leaders that he was disappointed with recent moves to drastically cut military assistance to Vietnam, and asked that reconsideration be given to these actions.

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Q Did you say Indochina? Can you be specific?

MR. HUSHEN: Primarily Vietnam.

The President said the Administration has asked for minimal levels to assure adequate replacement of equipment on the one-for-one basis provided for in the Paris agreement, and he said that the recent cuts will seriously reduce South Vietnam's abilities to defend itself in the face of increasing North Vietnamese military actions.

The President also pointed out that economic assistance to Vietnam has been cut nearly in half by Congressional action, and that such amendments would not permit the U.S. to help in the vital reconstruction process necessary to give South Vietnam an opportunity to build a viable, self-sufficient economy capable of maintaining its freedom.

Q Jack, do you have any figures on that?

MR. HUSHEN: I can give you some. I think you probably ought to try to get them out of State.

Q When you say cut nearly in half --

MR. HUSHEN: Let me give you the military assistance request. That was \$1.4 billion.

Q Is that overall or just to Vietnam?

Q That is in the defense appropriations bill request for Vietnam?

MR. HUSHEN: I think that is just Vietnam.

Q What is it now?

MR. HUSHEN: It is \$700 million. It is cut in half. The economic assistance is cut from \$750 million requested for Vietnam to \$450 million in the House passed version, and \$450 million in the Senate.

Q These are just in the committee?

MR. HUSHEN: The foreign assistance bill is still under consideration in the House.

Q What was that last figure?

MR. HUSHEN: Four hundred and fifty million dollars, cut from \$750 million to \$450 million.

Q Jack, on another subject -- are you ready?

MR. HUSHEN: I have several things I want to say here.

As you know, the President is now meeting with Mr. Rabin. There is nothing I can say about what is transpiring in there, and I hope we will be able to get a report for you later today.

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As you know, the President and Mrs. Ford will host a State dinner in honor of the Prime Minister and Mrs. Rabin this evening. That will be at 8:00.

There will be two portions of the dinner open for full press coverage, and no formal dress is required for this part of it.

Those two are the arrival of the Prime Minister and Mrs. Rabin at the North Portico at approximately 8:00, and anyone wishing to cover that should be in position by 7:45, and also the entrance of President Ford, the First Lady, the Prime Minister and Mrs. Rabin to the Great Hall at approximately 10:00 P.M.

There will be other portions of the State dinner open to limited coverage. The exchange of toasts will be a photo pool only, with a small video camera pooling for the networks and other film requirements, and four still photographers pooling for still photo needs.

The pool members will be posted and this is black tie for them. As is customary, the toast will be piped to the Family Theater and the press room for those who desire to listen.

Also, there will be limited coverage of the entertainment following the dinner. A pool of writers will cover the full entertainment session, and four still photographers who cover the toast will cover the conclusion of the entertainment.

That is also black tie.

Q Do you have any time on the toasts?

MR. HUSHEN: We will get that for you.

Q No tape pool on the entertainment?

MR. HUSHEN: No. Still photos only.

Q Jack, can you speak up a little, please?

MR. HUSHEN: Is it the weak voice or the weak mike?

Bill Roberts is handling the details and anybody who has any further questions should address them to him. We would expect to have a transcript of the toast sometime this evening so you will have that.

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Q Before the dinner?

MR. HUSHEN: No, after the toasts are actually given.

This afternoon at 3:30 the President will meet with Congressman Les Arends, and at 4:00 with Congressman Wayne Hayes to discuss legislative matters. Both these meetings were requested by the Congressmen.

Q Is that campaign reform with Hayes, do you know?

MR. HUSHEN: I do not.

I do not have tomorrow's schedule for you yet but we will try to post that this afternoon.

For the weekend, I expect the President will remain in this area. I have heard no discussion about Camp David, for instance.

I have several announcements before we get to your questions.

The President is announcing the appointment of Bill Baroody as an Assistant to the President. With this appointment Bill will take charge of a new office of Public Liaison. I understand from talking to Bill that he described in some detail the functions of his office in a recent speech which he can make available to you if you care to.

Basically his office will provide the White House with direct access to a wide variety of private sector organizations which might not otherwise have a line of communications to the White House and to the President.

Q Will this have a political contact role, too, as it was used in the past?

MR. HUSHEN: The stress will be on public contact.

Q Why is this different from what he is already doing, Jack? Why do you say "new"?

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MR. HUSHEN: It will be different from what it was under Chuck Colson.

Q In what way? (Laughter)

I mean that as a serious question.

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I think just having Bill Baroody as head of the office will be a satisfactory answer for that.

Q He has been doing that, Jack. What is the difference from what he has been doing for the past few months?

MR. HUSHEN: I think we are just announcing the fact he now has the appointment.

Q Jack, is this just a change of title basically? He was called a Special Consultant when he did this for President Nixon. Is this a way to give him a little more money, or what is it based on?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know what he was paid before, but it is a change in his title.

Q Are he and Haig now the only Assistants to the President?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not sure of that.

Q What is his salary, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: Assistants to the President are paid \$42,500.

Q Does this encompass any elements of the Colson operation?

MR. HUSHEN: No, I don't think so. The Public Liaison Office will deal with all non-Governmental private sector groups including business, labor, farm, veterans, consumer, academic, professional, ethnic, youth and senior citizen groups.

I also have a few other personnel announcements to make. Other Assistants to the President are Mr. Ash, Mr. Timmons, Secretary Kissinger, Al Haig, and Ken Cole, in addition to Bill Baroody.

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Q Jack, is this a giant step forward for Mr. Baroody in the White House hierarchy, or is the title of Assistant to the President being somewhat reduced? That used to be the best title that President Nixon could convey.

MR. HUSHEN: That of Assistant to the President?

Q Assistant to the President. That was top staff level.

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I am not sure what you mean by a giant step forward. It certainly is a recognition of Bill Baroody's excellent work. In a long conversation with the President prior to announcement of this, the President wants a Public Liaison Office in keeping with his policy.

Q When is the President going to hold a press conference, Jack, in keeping with the open policy?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I can't give you a specific date, but I have seen absolutely no indication of him backing away from his previously-announced position of trying to hold them frequently. I think he will continue to do that.

Q Next week, do you think?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't rule that out or in.

Q Do you rule out this week?

MR. HUSHEN: I think I can safely rule out this week.

Q Jack, in a related question to this press conference -- the question has to do with yesterday on the Hill, it was revealed that Ron Ziegler is still on the White House payroll at \$42,500 a year. I want to ask you about Ziegler and I also want to ask if Jerry terHorst was misled when three times he assured us that Dr. McLaughlin was on his way out. Dr. McLaughlin is still here.

MR. HUSHEN: And he is still on his way out.
(Laughter)

Q Is that going to be shortly or what, Jack?

Can I ask this one part: Can you assure us that neither of these two gentlemen are under consideration as Press Secretary? Can you assure us?

MR. HUSHEN: I think I can safely assure you of that.

Q Is there any implication to what you are saying? (Laughter)

MR. HUSHEN: I have a few other things to get out of the way, some personnel announcements which I think you are already aware of.

The President is accepting with deep regret the resignation of Henry B. Turner as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Administration, effective September 20. The President is also accepting with regret and with appreciation for his contributions in the area of arms control, the resignation of Robert H. Miller as Assistant Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Mr. Miller will be remaining in Government service at the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs.

The President has accepted with regret the resignation of George E. Johnson as a Governor of the United States Postal Service. Mr. Johnson found it necessary to resign this part-time position because of increasing demands on his time from business. He is one of the original members of the board, having been appointed December 9, 1971.

The President is acknowledging the retirement of Martin Pence as Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii effective November 19, 1974. Judge Pence assumed the status of Senior Judge and will continue to be available for assignment.

The President is accepting with appreciation for his contributions the resignation of Kenneth Guenther as Alternative U.S. Executive Director of the Inter-American Bank. Mr. Guenther resigned this post to become Special Representative for Trade Negotiations in Ambassador Eberle's office.

I think we have also provided you with two messages from the Senate asking for advice and consent on a Consulate to Bulgaria and an Extradition Treaty with Canada.

In addition to these letters we can make available the State Department reports on these documents.

Q Is there anything in the Extradition Treaty with Canada that would bear on the subject of amnesty for draft evaders and deserters?

MR. HUSHEN: I am not aware of it. We will have to check that.

Q Jack, why is Ron Ziegler still on the White House payroll?

MR. HUSHEN: Mr. Ziegler is still on the White House payroll assisting the former President. We will have to check to find out how long that lasts, because I think at a certain time, there is a specified period of time. Beyond that he would then go on to the transition payroll.

Q And when is Father McLaughlin to leave physically? You say he is on his way out. When is he going?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I haven't talked to him to inquire as to a specific date, but there is no change in the previously-stated policy from this.

Q Jack, is it up to him whenever he wants to leave?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, he is leaving.

Q Two years ago he was also told he was leaving and he is a rather persistent gentlemen, and he still hasn't left.

MR. HUSHEN: We will see if we can get something more definite for you.

Q By tomorrow, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: Let me just give you a couple more things. (Laughter). I have a whole stack of them here.

The President today is transmitting to Congress a special message outlining the priority legislation he would like to have enacted before the conclusion of the Thirty-Ninth Congress.

We have provided you with a message which spells out specifically the bills which we consider to be top priority.

The President also is announcing today that he will appoint Professor Phillip E. Areeda of the Harvard Law School as Counsel to the President.

Q Does that mean he has fired Mr. Buchen?

MR. HUSHEN: No, sir; not at all.

Mr. Areeda will be a member of the senior White House staff and will work with Mr. Buchen who is also Counsel to the President and who today is being elevated to Cabinet rank.

Q Why?

MR. HUSHEN: In recognition of his talents.

We will have biographical information on Mr. Areeda shortly. His appointment will be effective October 14 and, until that time, he will serve as a part-time consultant, and while arranging his transition from Harvard University where he will be taking a leave of absence.

Q Jack, will Buchen's title change? Will he stay with the same title as Counsel to the President?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe he will keep the same title.

Q What is Areeda's expertise in the field of law?

MR. HUSHEN: He is described to me as a very solid lawyer.

Q How long has he taught at Harvard?

MR. HUSHEN: That will be in the biographical information.

Q Jack, he is an expert on antitrust law, and I wonder if that fact had something to do with his appointment?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think so. At least I am not --

Q We have had a lot of solid lawyers around here.

Q Is he a Republican, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know what his political affiliation is. Let me try to explain a little. I do understand he has some expertise in the antitrust field. It is my understanding he was not being brought into specialize in the antitrust area, but to be a prime assistant to Mr. Buchen in all areas.

Q Both will have the title of Counsel?

MR. HUSHEN: Right, and one will have the Cabinet rank.

Q Jack, do you have any kind of briefing set-up on this message? There are some questions as to this text.

MR. HUSHEN: The message to Congress?

Q Yes.

MR. HUSHEN: No. I might be able to answer some of your questions and I got agreement from Bill Timmons to take the ones that I couldn't handle. But I will try to take some of your questions if you like.

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Q I would like to know what the President feels are the objectionable features. I am referring to page 6, on health, manpower, health services, and Health Resources Planning Act. I would like to know to what degree of intensity he is going to continue to seek a sound compromise on a comprehensive health insurance plan, whether he still wants and is going to try to jawbone it for this Congress or not.

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think we are very optimistic about trying to get that through this Congress. What we have given them are the ones that we would like to see passed, and there are only about four weeks left. We tried to pick out the ones we are really anxious to get passed to reach the President's desk in acceptable form.

Q There was a story yesterday, I believe, quoting Mansfield to the effect that a post-election session could be called, special session could be called on the basis of an agreement between Wilbur Mills and Russell Long on national health insurance. Is the White House involved in that compromise? Do they support that?

MR. HUSHEN: That sounds like something you better talk to Bill Timmons about.

Q Jack, on page 2 of this, the President asks for immediate action on the recissions that he is proposing under the Budget Act and on deferrals. Did I miss something, or are these specific matters in this message or in a separate message that I didn't see, are they coming or what?

Q In other words, what is the list of them?

Q What are they?

MR. HUSHEN: Where are you?

Q About half way down on page 2, immediate action to be taken.

MR. HUSHEN: My guidance on that is that the recissions and deferrals message will be going up shortly.

Q Today?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think it is going up today.

Q How can they take immediate action on it if they haven't got it?

MR. HUSHEN: One thing at a time. They will be getting it very shortly.

Q Jack, on the foreign aid discussion that the President had this morning, did he also urge on them that the Congress drop the current bill and instead pass a continuing resolution on foreign aid because of these amendments?

I know at the bottom of page 3 he says, "I strongly urge the Congress to continue the current programs." Is the Administration now seeking a continuing resolution on foreign aid rather than actual passage of the proposed bills?

MR. HUSHEN: I will have to check that.

Q Also, in the discussion with the leadership, did he discuss the legality of continued military aid to Turkey. This, as you know, has caused some anxiety on the Hill.

MR. HUSHEN: It was not discussed at the meeting this morning.

Q Which wasn't, the second question or the first?

MR. HUSHEN: So I don't make a mistake, give me your question again.

Q The second question was, did they discuss the legality of military aid to Turkey? Is that what was not discussed?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think they did discuss that.

Q Well, Jack, in connection with the President's views on aid to Indochina and especially Vietnam, President Thieu is quoted as saying he hopes to begin a new round of discussions with North Vietnam on a better peace treaty.

What is the U.S. position on that? Do we support that, and will we join in those talks of theirs? Will we be represented there?

MR. HUSHEN: That sounds like something you better ask the State Department. I can't give you any guidance right now.

Q Jack, to go back to the health insurance bill, you say you are not very optimistic. Does that mean that in effect this President has abandoned hope it will go through this session? Has he given up on it?

MR. HUSHEN: I can't say he has abandoned hope.

Q Has he given up from a practical standpoint of getting health insurance legislation?

MR. HUSHEN: We are giving Congress a list today that we think will be more than enough for them to handle.

Q Jack, do they plan to take up the trade bill?

MR. HUSHEN: I think we are into it.

Q Let me ask a question I started to ask earlier; that is, at least it seems to me, that the Nixon family--and Eisenhowers and the Coxs--is going out of its way now to tell the American people that the state of Mr. Nixon's health triggered the Presidential decision to give a pardon.

My question, of course, is, was this really the trigger of the timing? I am not talking of the pardon. Did this trigger the timing of the pardon?

MR. HUSHEN: Not that I have any information of.

Q Would you deny that it triggered the timing. I am talking about the timing.

MR. HUSHEN: I understand.

Q Because when you read the statement to me, it doesn't address itself specifically to the timing.

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I just can't --

Q Are you troubled with that question?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I am troubled in the sense I can't read the President's mind.

Q Is it a possibility?

MR. HUSHEN: I think what the President said was that as soon as he had reached his conclusion of what he felt ought to be done, he wanted to announce it as soon as possible.

Now, one of the things that came to his attention, of course, were the other charges that Mr. Jaworski had, the other areas of allegations.

I am not in a position to say that any information coming to the President about the status of the former President's health triggered his decision.

Q You are in no position to deny it, either?

MR. HUSHEN: That is true.

Q Did any information come to President Ford about Mr. Nixon's health, prior to or at the time he made that decision?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, in the sense that he reads the newspapers, and he talks to people. For instance, he saw Benton Becker after Mr. Becker returned from San Clemente. But in the conversations that I have had with the President about the former President's health, I have not gotten a strong indication that -- in fact, I haven't gotten much of an indication that the health question would have been the trigger, as you put it.

Q The timing, the trigger of the timing?

MR. HUSHEN: I certainly couldn't deny that it may have played some part, but I am not in a position to say that that is what --

Q Well, what was the timing, if that wasn't it? The timing, I mean, this rushing in and moving. Can you take that question back to the President? Really, this is a question --

Q -- that goes to the heart of it.

Q This is a question for four days, now, since Sunday, and Buchen had no answer to it. It is still a big question mark, and I think it ought to be answered.

Q The answer always doesn't really address itself to the timing, it addresses all the other elements, but not the timing. Do you have an answer on this?

MR. HUSHEN: The urgency in making the announcement was that once he had the information from Mr. Buchen, that he could make the decision that he made. He wanted, and as he said in his statement, as soon as he had come to that conclusion that he wanted to make the announcement as soon as possible.

Q Jack, in the Buchen briefing, he indicated the President came to him immediately, or shortly after the news conference, and began making inquiries. Did the tone of the questioning over the Nixon pardon in the news conference prompt the President to want to bring the matter of a pardon to a speedy conclusion?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't think so.

Q You have no indication of that?

MR. HUSHEN: No.

Q Jack, since you have decided that the President does read the newspapers, would it be possible to just make a subtle inquiry as to whether he wasn't puzzled by these reports about the President's ill health, when from the President's own son-in-law there was the announcement that his father-in-law is a great natural resource and he belongs in the United States Senate.

I am puzzled, on one side we hear the President is in terrible health, and from David Eisenhower we are assured that he is a great resource that should be in the Senate. I think this is a puzzle to more than one of us.

Q What can you tell us on the question of pardons?

MR. HUSHEN: I think you would all agree the reports on the former President's health are mixed.

In the back, I think Robert Pierpoint has something he wants to ask.

Q It just seems to me that this is a question that has got to be answered by the President himself in some form, and that is, he is the one that brought up the matter of the President's health in his statement on Sunday with relation to the pardon. That is why we are all anxious to know what he thinks about the state of the President's health.

MR. HUSHEN: I don't have any problem reading that statement in the sense that the way he put it being the allegations that were hanging over the President's head were threatening to his health.

As I said the other day, it seems to me that a prudent man could conclude that if he had those kinds of charges that might be leveled against him, it would be threatening to him.

Q Did Mr. Ford, being a prudent man, conclude that, and on what basis did he conclude it, and to what degree, to what extent did it affect his decision on timing? I think that is what we are trying to get out.

Q Jack, it is time to change now. Can I ask this question? Why did he turn around two days after his press conference --

Q Wait a minute. You are not letting Hushen answer the question.

MR. HUSHEN: I can see the easiest way to resolve this stalmate here is to take all these questions and try to get an answer for you.

Q This one, too, ~~whether~~ you answer it now or come back to it, does the President share the view expressed by Mr. Buchen that accepting the pardon carried an inference of guilt on Mr. Nixon's part? I think that is a paraphrase of what Mr. Buchen said.

MR. HUSHEN: There probably were discussions between Mr. Buchen and Mr. Ford that I certainly was not privy to, and before I answer that question, I would like to have some better guidance.

Q I am not saying that. I am asking whether you will answer it or get the answer. It is up to you.

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I think as far as right now, we are going to let Mr. Buchen's statement stand.

Q Jack, can you tell us what the status of the pardons are today, and also could you explain while we have the stenographer here, what it was that we fouled up with your first briefing the other day on that question?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I will take, I guess, the first part of the question first. By the status of the pardons, there is no status of the pardons.

Q Are there any requests?

MR. HUSHEN: Not that I am aware of.

Now, let me just try to explain, as best I am able to, what we are doing in this regard.

What is under study and what has been under study since I think just about the inception of the Ford Administration has been the President's pardoning power, and that was being looked at with regard to the Selective Service violations, draft evaders.

It was again looked at in his power to pardon the former President, and it is being looked at overall to determine what should be the guidelines under which pardons can be granted because, as I understand it, the guidelines that are used by the pardon attorney are not statutory, and this is just something that we are looking at overall.

Now, what I was trying to say on Tuesday was that if a request for a pardon came in and it happened to be from a Watergate defendant, it wouldn't just be thrown in the wastebasket. It would get the same kind of consideration as any other pardon request would.

Now, where I think that we went our separate ways was when I said that this was something that was under study, and I tried to keep it as tightly within bounds as I could by cautioning you not to expect that tomorrow, or that the President had anything on his desk, it nevertheless seemed to get played that way.

I think it was kind of either an expansion or misinterpretation of what I said.

Q Jack, do you stand by what you said? Is it under study?

MR. HUSHEN: What is under study is the overall pardon policies of the Ford Administration.

Q Who is conducting that study, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: It is primarily in Mr. Buchen's shop.

Q But Mr. Buchen said he had nothing to do with it the other day.

MR. HUSHEN: I will let him address that.

Q Is it now in Mr. Buchen's department?

MR. HUSHEN: You see, that is one of the places where we kind of had a little problem in that he had been conducting it previously. He had been looking at some of these other things. He had been doing all the research on it, and the transmission inside the White House wasn't quite as fast as it probably should have been.

Q Jack, you are quoted as saying in the Washington Star that the reporters in this room misquoted you and took your words on Tuesday out of context.

MR. HUSHEN: I think out of context is more accurate than misquoted.

Q All right. We took them out of context. You are now saying that the context you intended was that what was under study was the President's entire pardon power. Would you please furnish us with the portion of that transcript of Tuesday's briefing where you said that?

MR. HUSHEN: I didn't say that.

Q Then what was the context that we are alleged to have taken out of. All you said was that the entire matter was under study. There was no context to take it out of.

MR. HUSHEN: That is right, and I tried on two occasions to caution you not to jump to the conclusion that anything was going to be done as a result of the study.

Q Are you saying that the stories did not say that, did not quote you as saying that? All the stories I saw did quote you as saying that.

MR. HUSHEN: That is true, but also, there was the very strong implication, in the stories that I read, that in effect the decision about what to do had been made, when in fact there had been absolutely no decision.

Q Would you name the newspapers that carried that implication in their stories?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I am not going to argue or debate you about it.

Q Jack, you were asked a very specific question by me whether this study went to other people than Watergate, whether this was an overall thing, whether there were other people they were studying, and you said no, not at all, it was confined to the Watergate.

Now you are changing that completely from what you said before. I have reread that text. There is nothing in there to indicate that this was an overall study of the President's power of pardoning anybody. You confined it to everyone in Watergate only.

Now, you read that transcript over again, as I did, and there is nothing in there to give us any other impression.

MR. HUSHEN: Would you identify yourself?

Q Marder, UPI.

MR. HUSHEN: The area where I was asked, was this limited to Watergate or did it go beyond that, I said that I think it is limited to Watergate.

Q That is correct. That is not what you are saying now.

MR. HUSHEN: No, and that was an incorrect statement. The part where I said, "I think."

Q In other words, you made an incorrect statement on Tuesday?

MR. HUSHEN: In that area, where I said I think, it is limited to Watergate, it is not.

Q Would you like to withdraw in light of that your statement to the Washington Star that we quoted you out of context?

MR. HUSHEN: I think I will just let this matter stand where it is.

Q There are several stories concerning pardons in the Washington Post today. I wonder if you can confirm any of them: One that President Nixon got the strong idea from President Ford, whether tacitly, or otherwise, that he was going to get a pardon; two, that the White House got calls from Haldeman before Nixon left, asking for a pardon and might have even been threatening in the requests. What do you know about it?

MR. HUSHEN: To take the last one first, we know absolutely nothing about any calls by Mr. Haldeman to Mr. Nixon.

Q Does that include General Haig. He knows nothing about such calls?

MR. HUSHEN: I am speaking on behalf of the President, not on behalf of General Haig.

Q Have you checked with General Haig?

MR. HUSHEN: I have not.

Q Can you check that?

Q Do you know of calls from Mr. Haldeman to Mr. Haig on this subject of pardons for Haldeman that would be given --

MR. HUSHEN: I did not talk to General Haig before I came out here this morning.

Q What about the Ehrlichman part of that, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I have no knowledge of that, either.

There was another part of your question.

Q The other part was, did President Ford give any --

MR. HUSHEN: No, I raised that with the President this morning, and he said that is absolutely untrue, there was no communication between Mr. Ford and Mr. Nixon regarding anything about a pardon for the former President.

Q Do you recall his words in answering that question?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I think he said, no, that is absolutely untrue.

Q Well, does he say that he never at any time ever made a commitment before President Nixon left to give him a pardon?

MR. HUSHEN: Absolutely.

Q Jack, is a pardon for John Connally under study here, or at the Justice Department?

MR. HUSHEN: To my knowledge it is not under consideration here. You might ask the pardon attorney.

Q Jack, I just wanted to ask you about the Evans and Novak column yesterday which said that a Ford White House adviser had said that Julie Nixon Eisenhower spoke to the President. Somebody "got to Ford." Have you asked the President about this, and can you deny that?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, I can. I raised that with the President this morning, and he said that he and Julie Eisenhower have never discussed the matter of a pardon.

Q No, it was speaking of his health, and did she discuss the health of her father with President Ford?

MR. HUSHEN: To the best of my knowledge, that is not true either.

Q Would you check that out?

Q Why would a White House adviser that is close to President Ford say that kind of a thing to Mr. Novak if it wasn't true?

MR. HUSHEN: I could often say I wonder why any White House adviser talked to -- but I won't.

Q Open Administration.

Q Just to get this on the record, could you tell us if you raised the subject with the President if he talked to any member of the former President's family about a pardon or about the health of the President?

MR. HUSHEN: I am almost certain the answer to that is no, he did not talk to any member of the Nixon family about the former President's health.

Q It includes, you know, husbands and wives and brothers.

MR. HUSHEN: No, the only time I am aware in the time that I have been here of any communication between President Ford and any member, direct communication between President Ford and any member of the Nixon family was when the President saw Julie, the night they were over at the Kennedy Center, but it certainly didn't appear to me there that there was any kind of serious discussion.

Q Jack, if my memory serves me correctly, Mrs. Ford said at her press conference that she had been in touch with Julie Eisenhower. I think she said she had been in touch with Julie Eisenhower on the day she held the press conference.

Could you find out perhaps whether some communication was delivered to the President through his wife?

MR. HUSHEN: All right, I will ask.

Q Just to clean this matter up, Jack, other reports on this question of communications involving Mr. Nixon's health have stated that General Haig and Anne Armstrong brought to the President's attention the state of Mr. Nixon's health in the context of a pardon.

I am going beyond family members now to ask you specifically about those two people, General Haig and Anne Armstrong. Did they discuss that with the President?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I am really not in a position to answer that question. Let me say that Anne Armstrong and Al Haig talk to the President frequently. If they were in contact with the former President, it certainly is within the realm of possibility they would pass on the fact they had talked to him, pass on to the President that they had been in contact.

Q Jack, is General Haig in telephone contact with the former President frequently, perhaps daily?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I just don't know how to answer that. I think the best way to get your answer to that is to address it to him.

Q Let me ask one more question on pardons. Senator Scott said this morning that it was his feeling that all of the people involved in the Watergate should be tried before the cases are reviewed on pardon.

Does the President share that view? Is it his view that they ought to be tried first and then he would review the pardons if they asked for a review?

MR. HUSHEN: I think he does. I think there was never any intent on our part to give the impression that was given that the Watergate defendants were going to be pardoned at any time and especially not prior to the trial.

Q Jack, you have said that the health might have been a consideration in the President's decision to pardon former President Nixon. What steps did President Ford take to determine the state of President Nixon's health? What was the discussion about? What actual steps did he take? Did he send a doctor out there to check on him or anything?

MR. HUSHEN: No, and that is why I don't think it entered into it that strongly. It was just a matter -- I think Mr. Buchen handled that pretty well.

Q Didn't Mr. Becker report to the President that he had observed Mr. Nixon for several hours, the changes that had come over the former President, the loss of weight, his behavior?

MR. HUSHEN: It is my understanding the only thing he communicated to the President was that the former President had lost some weight. And beyond that, I am not aware of any other judgment that Mr. Becker made about the state of the health of the former President.

Q Was that Mr. Becker's primary mission in going to San Clemente, to look into the President's condition?

MR. HUSHEN: Absolutely not.

Q Jack, to clarify the previous comment you had on pardons and trials, are you saying that there will be no pardons of any Watergate figures before trial?

MR. HUSHEN: We have no requests for any form of Executive clemency.

Q Yes, but I thought you had answered that. I asked you, did the President share the view of Senator Scott that these people should not be pardoned before trial? In other words, they should go through the same trial process?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe that he does, but let me add to that, we have no requests.

Q You have no request but you believe if you get one he wouldn't act on it until after the trial?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe that is true.

Q Just to clarify, Jack, when you said no request for Executive clemency, that legally really is not the same thing as a pardon. You meant to include pardon there, too, didn't you?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q Jack, in accordance with your promise to keep us informed and the open candor of the Administration, who is on this committee, organization, or whatever it is, that is considering this?

You couldn't tell us the other day. Could you tell us, and how many of them are Nixon holdovers?

I think this is very important -- who is receiving these things, who will be considering, will Nixon holdovers be considering?

MR. HUSHEN: If your question is directed to the entire spectrum of pardons, both teams are working on it. We have people, for instance, on the conditional amnesty program which is part of it. Some of the research is being done by people who were here before President Ford was here as President.

On the pardon of the former President, that research was only done by Ford people, so to speak.

Q Jack, I hate to change the subject for a minute, but I must.

I want to get some information on the designation of another person as having Cabinet rank. When President Nixon had Anne Armstrong and Dean Burch as Counsellors, they were of Cabinet rank and, when they were reappointed as Counsellors by President Ford, do they retain Cabinet rank and do other Counsellors, Hartmann and Marsh, also have equal Cabinet rank? That is the first part of this. Do you know?

And do Ash and Scali still have Cabinet rank?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the answer is yes.

Q Jack, to get back to Watergate, did Mr. Jaworski and Mr. Buchen meet yesterday?

MR. HUSHEN: The answer is yes.

Q I said to get back to Watergate.

MR. HUSHEN: Yes, I heard you. I will have to ask Mr. Buchen. I am just not aware of it. There have been conversations between the two men.

Q On what?

MR. HUSHEN: Oh, well, going back to prior to the decision to pardon the former President.

Q I am only asking because Mr. Jaworski said yesterday that he hoped to meet yesterday with Mr. Buchen. I would like to find out if they did meet and, if they did meet, what the topic of the discussion was.

MR. HUSHEN: If Mr. Jaworski said he hoped to meet with Mr. Buchen, perhaps Mr. Jaworski will tell you whether he did or not.

Q Jack, what is the significance of Buchen being given Cabinet rank? Will he have a Cabinet department? What is his title, or what is his position?

MR. HUSHEN: Well, I think among other things it would differentiate between the two Counsel.

Q What is his title then?

MR. HUSHEN: Mr. Buchen's title is Counsel to the President with Cabinet rank, and Mr. Areeda's title is Counsel to the President reporting through Mr. Buchen.

Q There are reports that the President's advisers all disagreed with the pardon of the former President. Could you comment on that?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't really think it serves anybody any good to be discussing the pros and cons of advice that is given to the President.

Q Jack, let me ask you two questions and interrupt this, but I thought we would get some action before the briefing end. One, did the President discuss the trade bill with the leadership this morning; and, two, will you have a read-out on the Rabin-Ford discussion at some time, and if so, when?

MR. HUSHEN: I expect to have something that I can tell on the President's meeting with Mr. Rabin early afternoon, hopefully.

The trade bill did not come up in the bipartisan leadership meeting this morning.

Q Jack, Jerry terHorst told us that there had been a hold-put on nominations submitted by President Nixon. Is there a go-ahead now on all the nominations that are pending -- some 40, including Earl Silbert?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know the specific status of Mr. Silbert.

Q It says there are other nominations before the Senate, some pending, and he hopes that Congress could expedite action.

MR. HUSHEN: Basically the answer to that question is yes, but I will have to check on Mr. Silbert's status.

Q Yes, they are to go ahead and move?

MR. HUSHEN: Yes.

Q They have been reevaluated and okayed?

MR. HUSHEN: I believe so.

Q Jack, I don't want to interrupt all this Watergate thing, but I don't want you to get away before asking you to respond on the status of stories in the last few days about Chile and the United States' role in Chile as reported by CIA Director Colby in secret testimony to the House.

Is the President aware of this situation and is he looking into it specifically? Is there any review now underway?

MR. HUSHEN: I cannot tell you if the President is aware. He meets virtually daily with Secretary Kissinger, but any questions on that other than is the President aware, would have to be referred to the State Department.

Q I would like to continue that if I could for a minute. Assuming that these stories are true, since there have been no basic denials of the stories, and they reflect United States policy since Secretary Kissinger was presiding over the group of 40, is there going to be any change in policy, or is this going to continue to be the United States policy to intervene in a clandestine way in a democratically-elected government?

MR. HUSHEN: I think the State Department has addressed itself to some of those questions, hasn't it?

Q No, Jack, and I don't know on what grounds you would refer questions on the President's policies to the State Department. The question is about the President's policies.

MR. HUSHEN: I said I would only refer you to the State Department in answer to certain questions, but not about the President's policies.

Q I wish you would pursue that, if you would.

MR. HUSHEN: I think the responsibility would lie here for the President's policy, and I can't answer that.

Q Do you know if the 40 committee is still functioning?

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know.

Q Would you ask the President if it is his policy to attempt to destabilize other governments?

Q Or just their own?

Q Jack, earlier this week you were told that Rabbi Korff was here, and perhaps you have since answered, but you said you would find out with whom he met in the White House. Did you get a chance?

MR. HUSHEN: I was told that he met with Bruce Herschensohn, although somebody else said that they saw him in the West Wing, which is not where Mr. Herschensohn's office is.

Q But he was here on your grounds, not at the EOB?

MR. HUSHEN: Right, but for all I know, he may have been down to the mess.

Q Is Mr. Herschensohn staying on in the White House, Jack?

MR. HUSHEN: I think not. I think Jerry terHorst said that he would be leaving, too.

Q You said in the mess, with whom was he meeting in the mess, Jack.

MR. HUSHEN: I don't know. I do know that he had a meeting with Mr. Herschensohn. They may have had lunch together.

Q Do you have any update on the telephone-telegram reaction to the pardons?

MR. HUSHEN: I might. Yes, I do.

As of last night, the telephone calls, of roughly a total of 19,000 calls that have been logged in, more than 10,000 in favor of the President's decision.

Q Since what time? Since Sunday?

MR. HUSHEN: Since the decision was announced on Sunday. The letters and telegrams are running still about five to one in opposition. We do still have some letters we haven't opened and tallied yet.

Q Do you know how many letters and telegrams there are?

MR. HUSHEN: Somewhere in excess of 30,000, I think.

Q How do you account for this discrepancy? Is there any theory as to why it would be so vastly different over the phone?

MR. HUSHEN: The only thing I can ascribe to it right now is that the people that are calling in two, three or four days after have given a chance to think about it, maybe read about it and reflect on it, and concur in the President's decision that it was the right thing to do.

Q Are you still saying, as you said the other day, that there was no organized effort by the White House to stimulate telephone calls?

MR. HUSHEN: I would hope not.

Q Do you know specifically one way or the other?

MR. HUSHEN: No, to the best of my knowledge we are not doing that.

Q That is not what Rabbi Korff was here about?

MR. HUSHEN: I really doubt it. I didn't talk to Rabbi Korff.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Jack.

END (AT 1:08 P.M. EDT