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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 11:34 A.M. EDT

JUNE 11, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: We have three young men here from West Springfield High School, who are on the "That's Academic" team from that school, so we welcome them to our briefing.

Q Springfield what? Illinois? Massachusetts? Virginia?

MR. NESSEN: Virginia.

And we also have Miss Blakely with us today. We are happy to have her with her flowers in her hair.

Q Who is Miss Blakely?

MR. NESSEN: She is a friend. She is in a movie that opened last night, and expressed an interest in seeing a briefing.

Q Have you ever thought of going into the MCing business?

MR. NESSEN: I thought I was, Peter.

Moving right along, the President, as you know, is meeting now with Israel's Prime Minister Rabin. I think the plan is that we will have a ---

Q Hasn't that ended?

MR. NESSEN: It is still going on.

I think what we will do today is simply have a printed brief report on today's meeting; and then, as you know, they are meeting again tomorrow at 10:30. And I think we will have more extensive information for you available after tomorrow's meeting.

Q A press conference in the rain afterwards?

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MR. NESSEN: The exact plans for the briefing tomorrow are not set, but we are hoping for rain and we have the umbrellas ready. (Laughter.)

Q Who is in there, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: For the United States, it is the President, Secretary Kissinger, Secretary Sisco and General Scowcroft. And on the Israeli side, it is the Prime Minister, the Ambassador and -- who is the third on the Israeli side?

Q It is in the pool report.

MR. NESSEN: Well, it is in the pool report.

All right. Now, also, you know that at 7:30 this evening the President is going to be the host at a working dinner in honor of the Prime Minister. There will be open press coverage of the Prime Minister's arrival at the North Portico, and -- of course, that is open coverage -- then there will be pool coverage of the toasts, which should be at about 9:00.

The pool will need to wear black tie to get into that. The toasts will also be piped back here on the loudspeaker system.

Q Where will the people be? I mean, is a writing pool permitted into the dining room; is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: For the toasts?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: We will get it worked out later, Helen. It is the regular -- same people we take for toasts at State Dinners and so forth.

Q It will be inside the State Dining Room?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q How and why was the decision made to let the toasts be covered?

MR. NESSEN: The toasts are usually covered.

Q It was my understanding that initially the United States side had indicated the preference not to have them covered.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't know that, Ted. As far as I know, the toasts are normally covered at dinners that the President gives.

Q Ron, is it true the President originally wanted 20 people at the working dinner and that the Israelis asked that it be upgraded to 50?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard that, Mort.

Q Also, are the Israelis at all upset, or can you tell me why the decision was made that the President would not go to a dinner that is being given at the Israeli Embassy?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Mort. This is the first time I have heard any of these issues raised.

Q How many are going to be there tonight?

MR. NESSEN: We will put out the guest list. I don't have it right now.

Q Is there any truth to the rumor that at long last the President will indicate to the Israelis just how they could be more flexible?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard that rumor, Les.

Q When will the guest list be available, more or less?

MR. NESSEN: It will probably be available after the briefing. You will get it this afternoon.

Q Is it stag?

MR. NESSEN: Stag.

Q Why?

Q Golda retired. (Laughter.)

MR. NESSEN: I think it was stag even before Golda retired, wasn't it?

Q Ron, there must be some women somewhere -- (Laughter.)

Q Is Sarah McClendon in the pool, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen the pool.

Q There must be some women somewhere capable of going to a working dinner in the State Department.

MR. NESSEN: That is out of my area.

All right, the President is having lunch today with a woman, with officers and directors of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, including Kay Graham. That will be in the State Dining Room at 12:45.

Q Is he speaking there?

MR. NESSEN: He probably will chat informally during lunch and probably will make a few remarks after lunch, and probably will take some questions or listen to comments.

Q Will there be a transcript?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is just off the record. It is a private lunch.

Q Did they ask for it or did he ask for it?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is part of a continuing thing he has done out of town and in Washington of meeting various groups, not necessarily journalistic groups, but just from various groups from society.

Q Was this arranged by Baroody?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is this off the record?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Agreed to by them that it would be off the record?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure we ever talked about the ground rules.

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Q If it is not off the record, we would like to know what the questions and answers were.

Q I think we would like a transcript, if it is not off the record.

MR. NESSEN: This is the same thing that he has done throughout the country not only with journalistic groups but with all other kinds of groups in terms of having lunches and dinners and chats in the office and so forth.

I think you know, one of the things he has tried to do is to get in touch and sit down with different groups from Society and listen to their ideas, and this is part of it. It just happens to be that this is a journalistic group, but he has done this with other groups.

Q If it is off the record, does that mean those journalists that are having lunch with him do not report the conversations at lunch?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate anything is going to be said there. I think more of the talking will be done by them than by him, but let me see how it goes and see if I can give you a report on it, if there is any new ground broken.

The publishers actually are here this morning and will be having briefings from Frank Zarb, Alan Greenspan and Dr. Kissinger, and I will give you the guest list for the lunch in a little while.

Q Can we go back to the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q Can you tell us when the United States was aware of the fact that the thinning out had taken place months before it was officially announced?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Barry.

Q At the time the thinning out was announced, did the United States believe it was a bona fide thinning out?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Have you tried to find out?

MR. NESSEN: No, because you just asked me the question.

Q Will you try to find out?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

This afternoon, at 2:15, the President is going to greet 900 student winners of the 11th annual Government in Action Youth Tour to Washington, sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. These students were selected from among 20,000 high school juniors and seniors on the basis of local essay competitions.

If the weather hold up it will be in the Rose Garden, and the President will have remarks off-the-cuff, no prepared text. It is open coverage, and the students have been in the White House during the day, today, taking a tour.

At 3:00, the President will meet President Nicolae Ceausescu, of the Council of State of Romania. We will also have a printed report of some kind after that meeting.

The package of routine announcements today is not quite ready, but it will be by the end of this briefing.

Just to give you an idea of what is coming -- the President is nominating James D. Keast to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture. He is also appointing five members to the Board of the Federal National Mortgage Association. He is transmitting to the Senate for its advise and consent an agreement with Brazil concerning shrimp and protocols extending the wheat convention and the food aid convention. You will get these letters that the President is sending, and also, the backup material is available in the Press Office, if you want to see it.

The President also is announcing the names of five U. S. high school seniors, who have been selected as part of the President's Australia Science Scholars Program for 1975. They go to Australia to study for a year.

The President is designating the AID Administrator, Dan Parker, as United States' Representative to the 20th Session of the Governing Council of the UN Development Program that will be held in Geneva from June 11th to June 27th.

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Q Is that the same Parker that is supposed to go to Mexico and speak on behalf of women of International Women's Year, and does this mean he won't be in Mexico then when that time comes, because that meeting, I think, was during the 19th and 20th?

MR. NESSEN: It is the same Dan Parker, Sarah. What is the date of the Mexican meeting?

Q 19th and 20th.

MR. NESSEN: We will check that while we are here.

The President also signed an Executive Order -- did you have something to do with that, Sarah?

Q No, I can't claim credit for that.

MR. NESSEN: We have the President signing an Executive Order of which you will get a copy, which amends the Executive Order that deals with the Interagency Classification Review Committee. Actually, this is a technical change because the Atomic Energy Commission, as you know, has been split into two new organizations -- the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Energy Research and Development Administration. This takes care of the technicality of the rights of these two organizations to declassify material.

On the broader subject of declassification, I want you to know that the Interagency Classification Review Committee is about to present its annual report to the President. It is being printed right now, as a matter of fact, and on Friday I hope to have that for you. It outlines how many millions of pages and documents and so forth have been declassified.

Q Is the report classified?

MR. NESSEN: It is not, Sol.

That is my announcements.

Q Ron, while you are pursuing various questions about the thinning out of the Israeli forces, will you see if you can determine if Secretary Kissinger was aware the thinning out had taken place earlier when he had his news conference in Salzburg?

MR. NESSEN: I will, Tom.

Q Is the President going to retain Richard Helms as an Ambassador to Iran in view of the Rockefeller Commission report which indicates that he was less than candid to a Congressional committee and did a few other things that were not very savory?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard anything about a change for Ambassador Helms.

Q Does the President still have respect for his integrity in this job?

MR. NESSEN: He certainly has full respect and support for his Ambassador to Iran.

Q On a related question, Ron, did the President keep Mr. Helms in Iran because it is such a center for the CIA?

MR. NESSEN: I had not heard that, Sarah.

Q Ron, does the President plan to see Mr. Helms when he is here?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of any plans to see Helms when he is here.

Q Ron, can you tell me when the President might act on the Rockefeller report, either with administrative action or legislative requests?

MR. NESSEN: Right. Well, I think the President indicated the other night that the next step in this process was to ask the departments and agencies involved in the recommendations to send to him their own comments on the recommendations and any thoughts they have themselves on how to correct some of the problems. A memo is being drafted here today. It is not quite finished -- I just checked before I came out -- but it is being written and it will go to the Secretaries of Defense, State and Treasury, and also to the Attorney General and to the Director of the CIA, and it will ask for their comment on the recommendations and for any recommendations of their own, and it will ask them to send that in as soon as possible, and I think as soon as possible means certainly no more than a matter of weeks, at the most.

Also, as I say, any comments on the recommendations made by the Rockefeller Commission. And that is the next step and that memo is being written today.

Now, after that, the President will take that and then will decide what to do administratively, and also what legislation he might want to ask from Congress. I just don't have a timetable on that other than to say the President considers the subject matter important and that I would look for fairly quick action. I cannot pinpoint it any closer than fairly quick action.

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Q I would like to ask you a question that goes to the timetable with respect to the -- I don't know what you want to call it -- the supporting material, the evidence, the files, the names, these things that the Rockefeller Commission has -- not the report itself -- but the supporting stuff.

MR. NESSEN: I understand.

Q Has that physically come to the White House yet, to Mr. Buchen's office or wherever it will come to?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q When did it arrive?

MR. NESSEN: The counsel's office has been in contact with members of the Commission to talk about the actual transfer. The material will not move from the EOB here to the West Wing. It will be a transfer of custody. It won't be a movement of material. The material that they accumulated, the Commission, in total fills 12 file drawers, approximately, and that can be stored in four safes and the material relating to the assassination is slightly less than one file drawer.

Out of that 12 file drawers about one of them, or slightly less, contains assassination material. So in effect the custody has passed to the White House. The material is in the EOB and will stay in EOB.

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Q How long do you anticipate it will take for Mr. Hills or Mr. Buchen or whoever it is to do whatever review of that material is going to be done and then get it over to the Justice Department and to the two Congressional committees?

In other words, when do you anticipate this evidentiary material will actually arrive up on the Hill and over at the Justice Department?

MR. NESSEN: Actually, it has already begun, Jim. There were some lawyers from the Justice Department here last night in the Legal Counsel's Office. As a matter of fact, they got right to it. They got some of the material out and started going over it last night, and I would expect within the next day or so they will have at least started through all of the material, but they did start last night.

Q At some point, are they going to take it over to the Justice Department, or are they going to do their work over here?

MR. NESSEN: They will do their work over here.

Q Now, the Hill, the two committees --

MR. NESSEN: They have been in contact with the Church Committee already.

As we said, it is going to be turned over under the procedures that have been followed for the other material, and that is already under discussion. The first material that will be turned over, or actually has been turned over to the Church Committee, is transcripts of interviews with witnesses who appeared before the Rockefeller Commission in connection with the assassination allegations, and last night, or yesterday, the Church Committee took with it one transcript of one witness. And I am not able to tell you who the witness is, but they are already reviewing the testimony of that witness.

Q Well, do I infer from what you are saying here that the actual material itself is going to stay right there in the EOB for the indefinite future and that people like the Church Committee's investigators and the Justice Department's Attorneys are going to work from copies that they can take away with them?

I am just trying to pinpoint the physical location of this stuff. Who is going to actually hold the original material?

MR. NESSEN: Jack has done a lot of research on this, and let me talk to him about the details.

Okay. I have been thinking the Rockefeller Commission had its offices in the EOB, and Jack has reminded me that they have them on Jackson Place, so the material is up there at Jackson Place. They have already moved the assassination material down here, and the other stuff will be moved.

Q Down where?

MR. NESSEN: EOB.

The other file cabinets are in the Jackson Place office, and as soon as the other safes are in place, which will be a day or so, or maybe today, that 12 or 11 file drawers will be moved over and put into safes in the EOB.

Now, the Justice Department will work in the EOB. The Church Committee will be able, when they work out the procedures, to take away the material that is arranged for it, or to take away copies of it.

Q Copies?

MR. NESSEN: Or originals. I am not sure what the details are.

Q That is what I am trying to get at. I am just trying to find out if the original material is going to be spread out in any sense around town?

MR. NESSEN: You want to know where to go to get your leads?

Q I just want to find out if they are going to work from copies or whether the original stuff is going to physically remain under the White House's control or what?

MR. NESSEN: We will have to check it.

They have been turning over lots and lots of stuff to the Church Committee, and I don't know whether they are getting copies or originals.

Sarah.

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Q Ron, Senator Tower said yesterday he was not aware that any of this material was still classified and that therefore, as Hills said the other day, that it would not go to the Church Committee. Hills said the Church Committee was very happy about all the arrangements. Tower said he was not told at all that it was still classified and would not be coming to them.

MR. NESSEN: You mean the assassination material?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: It is all classified, but that is no hindrance to turning it over to the Church Committee.

Q No, I am not talking about just the assassination material. I am talking about any of the material that Hills said was still classified and would not go to the Committee. The Committee apparently does not seem to realize they are not going to get all that.

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall Rod saying there was anything that would not be turned over.

Q Yes, he said some of the material was still classified.

MR. NESSEN: All the assassination material is classified but that is no hindrance to turning it over to the Church Committee because an enormous amount of classified material has already been made available to the Church Committee.

Q I would like to ask another question. We have a precedent in this country of -- when they found out, I believe, that the Government engaged in experiments on some human beings in Alabama regarding syphilis, they went around and tried to find all the people that had been the victims and tried to make it up to them through aid, and all that. I wonder if the Government is going to be doing a similar thing to the people who were given LSD?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the answer to that, Sarah.

Q Will you please ask the President about that and give us an answer? I am sure the President is very concerned about this.

Q Also, Ron, I don't think the President has -- correct me if I am wrong -- has the President issued a strong condemnation or any sort of condemnation of illegal acts which we read about rather extensively in this report yesterday? Has the President said, "These are wrong"? You know you say he supports Mr. Helms as his Ambassador to Iran, but I am wondering, does the President condone the illegal acts that were sanctioned by Mr. Helms when Mr. Helms was over at Langley?

MR. NESSEN: Let me put this in a little bit of a context for you and then I will answer your specific question. I think you probably, some of you who have followed the President in his days as Vice President, know that he campaigned -- Phil will certainly remember, and others -- very hard against the so-called FEDNET proposal, which would pull a lot of information about private individuals into some sort of central computer system. And it was not just the specific FEDNET program that he spoke against.

He spoke out about his views of privacy and the Constitutional rights of people to privacy, and so forth. He also was the Chairman of the President's Committee on Privacy at the time he was Vice President, and I think he made his views known quite strongly there about privacy and against invasions of people's privacy and of their homes and lives.

Now the specific comments on this report -- I think when the time comes for him to take both his administrative actions and legislation recommendations -- I think you will have a further statement by the President on his views of this, of the evidence that was turned over.

Q Wouldn't it be more timely now, in view of the fact that the President the other evening made a rather strong statement saying we need the U.S. intelligence community and specifically the CIA?

MR. NESSEN: I think if you read the whole statement, Walt, you will see that his views on this, I think, are clear, and I think you will have further statements of his views. I know you are not suggesting that he condones any of this.

Q No, I am not, but I was just wondering if perhaps he gave you a statement that you could read, or you had some idea how strongly he felt about the obvious violations of Constitutional rights in here.

MR. NESSEN: I think you heard some of it the other night and you will hear more of it when he comes up with his proposal.

Q Ron, did you say he would be submitting legislation?

MR. NESSEN: If that is his decision -- if legislation is needed.

Q The decision has not been reached?

MR. NESSEN: He hasn't got comments back on these recommendations. He is still reviewing the 30 recommendations. Some of them were for legislation.

Q What have you decided about a Rockefeller Commission briefing?

MR. NESSEN: The decision on the briefing was that there would not be one on the grounds that the report will stand by itself and that some of the questions about what went before the issuance of the report were pretty well cleared up by Rod Hills.

Q Ron, there was a formal request on Monday, I believe, that the President have another news conference after the release of the material. Is he considering that?

MR. NESSEN: There won't be another one this week, certainly.

Cliff has been trying to ask something for hours here.

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Q Going back to the classified papers, can you tell us the procedure on security? In other words, who is protecting to make sure these classified papers remain intact and number?

We have had the experience, you may recall, where papers in the White House disappear and things like that. So, I am asking, is Secret Service, for example -- are they protecting the classified papers on the assassination? And the Church Committee, how do they get copies or originals? What is the procedure on all that?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware --

Q Question?

MR. NESSEN: Cliff is wondering, in light of what he thinks was the destruction of documents in the previous Administration, what safeguards were there that this Administration would not destroy any classified documents.

Q No, I did not quite put it that way, and I did not infer that at all.

I am asking, since non-White House persons will be coming into the White House, is there a modus operandi established for the protection and some orderly way of making available these classified documents?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there is, but I can't give you the exact details of it.

Q After the Rabin meeting is over, can you give us anything on it? How long will it last?

MR. NESSEN: We will see if they have a statement.

Q Ron, you mentioned lawyers from the Justice Department were here last night. I just want to clarify. They were working on the assassination material, is that right?

MR. NESSEN: That is the only material that has been sent here so far.

Q Isn't the President pleased that Mr. Levi has taken this immediate action? I mean, was that under the President's request, or was it Levi, or was it a joint thing? This seems to be very important that immediate reaction has taken place. Isn't the President pleased by this?

MR. NESSEN: Was there ever any doubt? I thought he made it clear the other night.

Q I had doubt. Sometimes the process of government is a little slow, Ron. I think that is obvious. I am just wondering, is the President very pleased with this? Did he initiate it, or what?

MR. NESSEN: Les, I think you have been around here long enough to know this President does things in an orderly way. He said he was going to do it, and he did it.

Q Were these lawyers from the Justice Department, or were they FBI agents, or was it a mix?

MR. NESSEN: They were lawyers.

Q No FBI?

MR. NESSEN: No FBI.

Q Ron, has the President met with Levi to discuss the material --

MR. NESSEN: There has not been an in-person meeting I am aware of. Whether there were phone calls, I don't know. It seems to me there was a memo going to Levi; wasn't there? There is a transmittal letter going to Levy.

Q Could we get a copy of the transmittal letter?

MR. NESSEN: It is not finished yet.

Q Ron, is this memo going out being prepared by Buchen for the President's signature? Is it going out by Buchen?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Can we get a copy?

MR. NESSEN: It is not finished yet. I will look into it.

Q On the Rabin visit, often protocol and social arrangements are symbolic of policy questions and are planned with some relation to policy. I wonder if you could say whether the White House views the arrangements being made for the Rabin visit as the equivalent of those accorded President Sadat in Salzburg? The lavishness of it, the openness of it, the exchange of visits -- are they equivalent, would you say?

MR. NESSEN: I never even thought about the question very much.

Q Can you tell us why there was not a South Lawn ceremony?

Q Let me try to narrow that down a little. Why was --

MR. NESSEN: It is not a State visit, obviously.

Q Why is it not a State visit? What is the difference between this visit and the one that took place last year?

MR. NESSEN: All this is done by the State Department, and I just don't know the answers to these questions. I never anticipated that would be a question.

Q Since the State Department is presently negotiating to bring Panama into more control of the Panama Canal -- and presumably, we will have access to the Panama Canal if this negotiation is completed -- I am wondering, is the President determined to back up the right of Israeli shipping to go through the Panama Canal -- I mean, through the Suez Canal, as seems to be indicated? Is this the President's policy?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I am going to get into the substance of that, Les.

Bob.

Q Ron, in the CIA report, there are indications that a number of people, newsmen and others, had their civil rights violated. There have been some suits filed in the past on behalf of people who have had civil rights violated.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q I am wondering if there is any method by which those people who have the right to sue the government are going to find out that they had their rights violated. Their names are not in the report, so is there a way by which they can find out and then enter suits against the government, or take other redress?

Q Just, for example, what newsmen had their phones wiretapped and were spied on? They, for example, might want to have some redress.

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into that one, Bob. I had not thought of that.

Let me help out Sarah here with some information on International Women's Year. The American delegation, in its order of protocol, has Pat Hutar, who, you probably know, is a woman and is a U. S. delegate to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. She is first in the protocol order. The second is Daniel Parker. They share the title of Co-Head of the Delegation. Jill Ruckelshaus is third. She is Chairman of the President's National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, and Jewel Lafontant, who is the Deputy Solicitor General of the United States, is the fourth in line on the protocol list. The conference in Mexico City runs from June 19th to July 2nd.

Q Ron, I think you are mistaken about that. I think that has been changed. Do you want to check that out?

MR. NESSEN: It was just handed to me by Jack. Are there changes?

Q I was just in Harrison Berger's office and there is a change. LaFontant is the head one now.

MR. NESSEN: What happened to Daniel Parker?

Q He is down, number three or four.

Q They are doing it alphabetically, Ron.

Q Ron, the point of controversy was not ---

MR. NESSEN: I know, and I am going to give you the point of controversy here in a moment. The Women's Year Conference in Mexico City runs from June 19 to July 2. Daniel Parker will be there for two days -- June 19th to 21st, after which he will go off to Geneva and will leave only three women there as the American delegation.

Q But the point of it, Ron, is not that. The point of it is arrangements up to now have been that the spokesman, the person who makes the speech for the United States, would be Daniel Parker, not Hutar or Jill Ruckelshaus or Mrs. Ford or anybody else.

Now, what are you going to do about that? It is ridiculous to have the women of the United States go there to meet with women of other countries and have a man come forth as the only person who can speak.

Q He is going to be in drag. (Laughter.)

Q That is not a bit funny. (Laughter.)

MR. NESSEN: I didn't say it.

Well, to be more serious ---

Q The women have protested this officially, so the White House certainly must know about it.

Q What response did the President make to the telegram protesting it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what response he has made, but I will find out for you.

Q Will you please try to find out if the White House is going to change this and keep Mr. Parker from being the spokesman for the women?

MR. NESSEN: Let me say this, just generally speaking. My understanding of the Women's Movement is that one of its aims is to break down consideration of people's abilities on the basis of sex.

Q That is right; we want a chance.

Q Don't give it to her. (Laughter.)

MR. NESSEN: It seems to me that Mr. Parker's sex should not be held against him. (Laughter.)

Q If they are going to have co-speakers -- but if he is going to be the only speaker, that is not right.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know any more about it, but I just thought I would share with you that general bit of philosophy.

The Rabin statement is almost ready, and it may be ready before we leave here. At this rate, it will be.

Q A question about the Middle East, please. The President used a phrase in his press conference that I did not understand -- perhaps other do, but I did not -- and I wonder if you could clarify it.

In listing the three options he said would be discussed with Premier Sadat, the third one was a comprehensive U.S. plan under the umbrella of the Geneva Conference. What did he mean by that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he said a comprehensive U.S. plan under the umbrella of Geneva, did he? These three options have been talked about for some time now, going back before the news conference. One was a resumption of step-by-step, and the other is an overall settlement at Geneva; and the third is convening of the Geneva Conference with an overall settlement as the ultimate aim, but within the framework of a Geneva Conference to make some interim steps along the way to that overall settlement.

Q Could I ask a follow-up to Mort's question?

MR. NESSEN: I did not get the impression from what he said or what has been said before that there would be an American plan.

Q The phrase "under the umbrella" is what I was talking about.

Q As a follow-up to Mort's question, please, Mort has made a legitimate observation that there has not been quite the ceremony associated with his meeting with Rabin as there was with Sadat. I would like to ask, this is not a State visit, but Prime Ministers who are heads of government -- not heads of State -- have had the South Lawn arrival ceremony.

Is it a diplomatic thing, the fact that perhaps we owe the Israelis a State visit, that we can't have Rabin here on a State visit? Is it a matter of protocol?.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I was not involved in the arrangements, and I did not anticipate there would be interest in this so I did not bother to look into this matter this morning. I can do it or perhaps the State Department people could help you out more quickly on this. I just simply don't have the answers because I did not bother to look into it.

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Q Ron, in Salzburg, there were several briefings by an American, and then, in the same forum, the Egyptians were able to brief. Are we going to have a similar arrangement with the Israelis now?

MR. NESSEN: Mr. Pattir, the Press Secretary of Prime Minister Rabin, indicated to me that the Prime Minister would be having a news conference at 3:00 tomorrow, which, I suppose, takes care of part of that. And we are also pointing toward some sort of briefing schedule for tomorrow, which I don't have arranged at the moment. In Salzburg, we also did not have anything arranged ahead of time. We sort of made it up as we went along.

Q Will this be a joint activity, as it was in Salzburg?

MR. NESSEN: That has not been decided yet.

Q Will it be on the record?

MR. NESSEN: Mr. Rabin's news conference?

Q No, what you plan.

MR. NESSEN: I have no reason to believe it won't be.

Q Ron, there seems to be an effort afoot on the Hill for a full-scale Congressional inquiry into various unanswered questions regarding the Mayaguez affair. This morning Congressman Michael Harrington and John Burton had a press conference to discuss that. I was wondering, would the President support such an inquiry and fully cooperate with it as far as supplying needed documents and that type of thing?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is the President's role to tell Congress what to investigate or what not to investigate. I assume he would cooperate with it. There is no reason not to.

Q Is the President satisfied that all questions have been answered already?

MR. NESSEN: As you know, he did have some questions at the end of that operation, and I don't know what the status of his various requests for answers is. But by the time he gets all the answers back, he will be satisfied.

Q Ron, can you tell us how much we promised to give to the European countries in return for them buying the F-16?

Senator Tower has admitted that a third of the work will be done in the European countries, and I understand there is some other concessions that we made, that the President approved.

Q Three million dollar machine gun deal with Belgium --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I think, if I remember correctly, on the way to Brussels, or perhaps it was at the briefing we had here before we left Brussels, I think, when the question of the F-16 came up, I think you were told, at that time, that one of the considerations was the offer to set up assembly plants in Europe. I don't think there was ever any secret about that.

Q Assembly plants for the F-16 or for other things, too?

MR. NESSEN: All I remember being said at the time was that part of the American proposal was that the plane, or parts of the plane, would be assembled in Europe. What other promises, if any, were made, I don't know.

Q Could you find out for us?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure that it is properly a White House matter, but I will look into it.

Q He said it had to be approved by the President -- was approved by the President. That is why I am bringing it to you.

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it.

Q Ron, just for practical working purposes, these questions that have been raised about the Rabin visit, which you were unable to answer about the thinning out of the troops and the absence of the President from the dinner tomorrow, et cetera, and the symbolism of the South Lawn ceremony, will you be able to handle all those this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: I think it would be faster to get them from the State Department.

Q Are you going to leave everything to the State Department?

MR. NESSEN: I think all those matters you mentioned can be most easily and quickly answered by the State Department.

Q In all fairness,,the State Department usually says that is a White House question. If it is on the South Lawn, it is a White House question.

Q This is called Ping-Pong.

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it, Joe.

Q Can George answer these questions? He is a State Department representative.

MR. NESSEN: Can you answer any questions about the protocol of the Rabin visit?

We will get the answers here if that will help you.

Q But you were there when Sadat came to Salzburg, and I am wondering if you could just, for those of us who weren't, give us some of the detail. Were there trumpets? Was there an honor guard? Was there any of this? Can you contrast the arrival of Rabin with the arrival of Sadat, following on Mort's question, which, I think, was well taken?

MR. NESSEN: I am trying to remember the arrival in Salzburg. They met at lunch.

Q There was nothing else?

MR. NESSEN: No. Let me check some answers and come right back here in a minute.

MORE

MR. NESSEN: The statement is in the final stages of being drafted and redrafted, and we will have it for you shortly.

Two, whatever differences are perceived in the ceremonial aspects of the visit with President Sadat in Salzburg and Prime Minister Rabin here, let me just say there is no political significance in whatever differences you see. There is no way to equate the two visits.

In the case of President Sadat, both Presidents were guests of a third country and many of the arrangements were made by Austria for its two guests. It was also the first time that President Sadat had met President Ford, and that accounted for some of what you saw as ceremonial.

Now this visit -- it is not the first time that Prime Minister Rabin has met the President -- they have met before. In fact, Prime Minister Rabin was Ambassador here for a long time so he knows the President; he has many friends here. There is a relationship that goes back many years.

The ceremonies of getting acquainted, in protocol terms, are not necessary for this visit. It is basically a working visit and that is what the arrangements reflect.

As I say, it is not possible to equate the two because in one case they were in a third country where they were both guests. Here it is the United States where Prime Minister Rabin is a guest. Prime Minister Rabin has brought his wife with him. President Sadat did not. Mrs. Kissinger is having a dinner for Mrs. Rabin tonight. So there is just no way to equate the two, but regardless of those little details, let me just say overall there is no political significance to any differences in ceremony.

Q Why is the President not going to be at dinner at the Israeli Embassy tomorrow night, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the answer, Les, but whatever the answer is, it has no political significance.

Q You don't know of any other engagements?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure ---

Q No political significance?

MR. NESSEN: Third, your questions about the withdrawal of Israeli troops and tanks from the Sinai -- I am not going to be able to provide you with any information on that today, and I suggest that you save the questions for the substantive briefing which we hope to have tomorrow.

Q Ron, there was a senior official -- not a senior official but almost -- who gave the briefing the first day, and then there was another briefing the second day ---

MR. NESSEN: Again, if you are trying to equate or balance off or make equal the briefing schedule for the two meetings, I think, again, you are looking for political significance where there is not any, Marilyn.

Q Without any political significance, President Ford apparently gave a briefing to the Egyptian press in Salzburg. Will he do the same for the Israeli press here?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of any request, but I could take it up if there were one.

MORE

Q There is a request on behalf of the Israeli press.

MR. NESSEN: Would you get me that in writing with names and so forth?

Q What was the question?

MR. NESSEN: He mentioned that the President had met with some Egyptian editors in Salzburg and wondered whether the same courtesy would be afforded Israeli journalists here.

Q Ron, I don't quite understand your answer about the thinning out of troops. You said you can't give the answer today, which is fair enough, but you refer to the news conference tomorrow. Are you leaving it to Rabin to answer the question?

MR. NESSEN: I said, the United States' substantive briefing tomorrow would be a proper place to bring this up.

Q How long did the President's meeting last?

MR. NESSEN: The length of the meeting -- an hour and 55 minutes.

Q Ron, did the Israelis complain about the ceremonies or the treatment or the absence of the President at their dinner?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of any.

We have a real live woman to answer questions about International Women's Year. Pat Lindh will try to help out for those of you who have problems with the International Women's Year Delegation spokesman and so forth.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 12:20 P.M. EDT)