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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:00 NOON EDT

JUNE 18, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: The President had breakfast this morning with a group of Democratic Congressmen. It is a group that has met over the years every Wednesday morning.

Congressman Bolling is kind of the unofficial leader of it. Congressman Bolling, back in May some time, had a White House social affair and suggested to the President that maybe the President would like to join one of these Wednesday morning groups, and it was decided that this morning would be the morning. So they did.

I did not attend, but I am informed that this is a group of the President's former colleagues that has met every Wednesday. They asked for the meeting. As I say, the meeting was useful. It was really just a discussion of a whole range of issues, including legislative matters, foreign policy and domestic issues.

I am told that the Members carried on their discussion as they normally do every Wednesday morning; that the President was just one of the participants.

Q Who else was there?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the complete guest list yet.

Q How many were there?

MR. NESSEN: I say I don't have the full guest list.

Q Where was it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: It was over in the Residence.

Q Did they consider dumping Carl Albert?

MR. NESSEN: I am told Carl Albert did not come up.

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Q Why was this not on the President's schedule?

MR. NESSEN: The Members had indicated they would prefer to have a quiet, private breakfast with the President.

Q So the President personally said he would go off the public schedule?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he made that ruling, Phil. The Members felt they have been doing this all the time and to them it was just another Wednesday breakfast.

Q Why are you telling us now?

MR. NESSEN: Because I have had a number of queries about it.

Q Are you going to give us the list?

MR. NESSEN: As soon as I get it, I will. I don't have it now.

Q Why does it take all that time to get the list? After all, they have to be cleared in by the gate.

MR. NESSEN: I just don't have the list, Bob.

Q I put in a request this morning at 9:30 for the names. It is now 12:00 and we still do not have this list. Are you stalling on this?

MR. NESSEN: We are not, Phil.

Q Why do we not have the list?

MR. NESSEN: I have not been able to pull the list together yet.

Q No one here in the White House knows that?

MR. NESSEN: We are getting the list together, Phil. There is obviously nothing wrong or secretive about the President having breakfast with some of his former colleagues.

Q Not at all, but why isn't it on the public schedule? Does he hold secret meetings like this all the time?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't choose the same words you do. I would say he meets a lot of people all the time.

Q Isn't this the public's business when the President meets with other public officials?

MR. NESSEN: It was the feeling of the Members that they would like to have it private.

Q But the President doesn't have to go along with that, does he?

MR. NESSEN: No, he doesn't.

Q Which Member? Who asked that it be private?

MR. NESSEN: Dick Bolling is the one who is the unofficial leader of this group.

Q Did he ask that it not be announced?

MR. NESSEN: It is my understanding he asked that it be a private breakfast.

Q Did Governor Holshouser ask that last night's dinner be a private dinner?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware the President had dinner with Governor Holshouser. He did see Governor Holshouser yesterday afternoon.

Q Was that on the public schedule?

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall what the public schedule was yesterday.

Q It wasn't on the public schedule I saw.

Q Can you give us a reading on what they talked about?

MR. NESSEN: I can't. I wasn't there.

Q What is your policy on the President's meetings with public officials? It seems to me the so-called open White House is slipping into a pattern of the President meeting with other officials and we are not being informed of it.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there is a policy, Bob.

Q Shouldn't there be?

MR. NESSEN: I think there is a policy in the sense that the President has private meetings from time to time.

Q With public officials?

MR. NESSEN: Some public officials.

Q From outside the Administration? Don't we have a right to know that?

MR. NESSEN: I hardly know how to answer your question. This is the system.

Q Why? That is what I am trying to get at.

MR. NESSEN: I think it is the President's preference that some of his meetings are private. It is the preference of some of his guests.

Q Are you talking about unannounced meetings? He has private meetings all the time. We are talking about no announcement of them.

MR. NESSEN: I suppose that is a good description.

Q What does the word "private" in your reference to Bolling mean? No one is suggesting a press pool should attend the breakfast.

MR. NESSEN: Private in the sense of not putting it on the schedule.

Q That is what I want explained. Is that in fact what your understanding is, that Bolling asked that it not be announced?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think, Dick, that anybody sat down and said, "What should we do about the public schedule?" Congressman Bolling and the others wanted to come in and have a private breakfast with the President.

Q They had a private breakfast, Ron. Did they specifically ask -- the fact they were meeting with the President -- that this not be announced to the press? That is the question.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether that specific request was made or not.

Q That is what you seemed to say earlier?

MR. NESSEN: It was certainly the indication they gave, that they would like to come in privately.

Q From whom did you get this indication?

MR. NESSEN: From the Congressional liaison people.

Q Is it the President's desire that his meetings with officials outside this Administration, public officials, be kept from the public?

MR. NESSEN: All of them?

Q Any of them.

MR. NESSEN: Some.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: Because he likes to see people privately from time to time, and people like to see him privately from time to time.

Q We mean secretly. We are not asking to be in on them. We are asking to be informed of them, and you are saying he wants that kept secret from us.

MR. NESSEN: I think it is like the day Cronkite came in to see the President for 15 minutes, or a half-hour.

Q He is not a public official, I might point out.

MR. NESSEN: It wasn't announced, Bob.

Q I am delighted it wasn't announced. (Laughter)

That may be a response to Bob Pierpoint, but it is not a response to me.

Q Now, wait a minute. (Laughter)

Q That is a question. I see nothing wrong with announcing that Walter Cronkite is coming in to see him for 15 minutes.

Q Ron, I think the question here is can we depend on these daily schedules being actually the daily schedules, or is this just going to be a partial thing?

MR. NESSEN: I think you know that the President does from time to time have visitors in who don't appear on the schedule.

Q The fact of the matter is that the President almost always has two schedules, does he not? I am not saying just occasionally, but almost always has two schedules. A schedule is given to us, that the public knows about, and a longer schedule includes that schedule plus those unannounced and undisclosed meetings. Is that the case?

MR. NESSEN: I probably wouldn't phrase it quite that way, Jim, but I think you know it is the case.

Q Could we go back to the meeting this morning for a moment? It is significant to me he met with a group of Democrats, and I would like to know if these Democrats happen to be the ones who supported him on vetoes, if there is any particular pattern to the group there, and I would like to know who attended.

If it is possible, can you post the list and let us know, or get the list before you leave?

MR. NESSEN: It is a group that has been meeting every Wednesday at the office of Gillis Long. They have been meeting there every Wednesday for I don't know how long.

On May 8, after a State dinner, Congressman Bolling was chatting with the President and said it would be good if the President could attend one of those regular Wednesday morning meetings. Congressman Bolling wrote a letter on the 21st of May saying, how about let's getting together on this, and the breakfast was arranged.

Q Has this group got a name?

MR. NESSEN: No, it doesn't have a name.

Q They weren't just going to specifically discuss compromise on legislation, were they? Was that the aim of the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No, it was not.

Q Do you know how many, roughly, we are talking about? I mean, are we talking about four or five, or 20?

MR. NESSEN: We are trying to check.

Shall we move along?

Q Ron, last question. Why are you so reluctant to accept Jim's terminology, and Bob's terminology, of "secrets" and "undisclosed," if it is secret and undisclosed? What words would you indicate for these quiet contacts?

MR. NESSEN: Private.

Q Private. That is different from secret.

Q Since the President reads all these transcripts, and all of his senior advisers, at least from my standpoint, so there will be no misinterpretation, this is a serious protest to what has occurred.

MR. NESSEN: What is specifically being protested?

Q This was not published in the President's schedule today that he was having this meeting with these Democratic Congressmen.

MR. NESSEN: Okay. It is noted.

Q Can you tell us some of the other people the President has met with privately, recently? You mentioned Walter Cronkite. Are there others you can think of right offhand?

MR. NESSEN: I can't, right offhand.

Q What about the Governor of North Carolina? Did he meet with him last night?

MR. NESSEN: I did see Governor Holshouser late in the afternoon. I think he did meet with the President.

Q You mean, you didn't ask the President to give us some information on that meeting so that you could tell us, and you are the Press Secretary?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't, Sarah.

Q Will you please go do it now? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: All right. You mean right now.

Q You have several aides who could be doing it for you.

Q Do you have any news, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I have several items I think might interest you. I don't know if we will ever get to them at this rate. Would you like to get to them?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: The President met briefly this morning with Ignatiy Novikov, the Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Construction Affairs. The meeting permitted the President to emphasize the importance he attaches to continuing mutually beneficial steps to improve relations between the two countries and to strengthen detente. It also gave the President an opportunity to endorse the 1974 agreements on cooperation in housing and other construction, to express the President's satisfaction with the implementation of that agreement, and to note that it symbolizes a meaningful bilateral cooperation.

Q Did they discuss the problems in constructing new embassies for the United States in Moscow, and the Soviet Union here?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't sit in on the meeting, but I don't have a feeling that that came up.

Q On that same meeting, was any message delivered from Brezhnev, either formal or informal?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

The President met at 11:30 with representatives of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

Q Excuse me, Ron. Your answer, not that I know of, does it mean it is possible?

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard anything about a message being delivered.

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Q Ron, it is fairly customary for top Soviet officials, when they come to the United States and know they are going to be seeing the President, to bring some kind of message from Mr. Brezhnev. As I say, it is not absolutely unanimous, I think, but it almost always happens, even if it is nothing more than pleasant or polite greetings.

I would like to know if he brought something, anything of substance, or even just polite greetings.

MR. NESSEN: Bill Greener will check the NSC and see if Mr. Novikov brought polite greetings or something other than polite greetings --

Q In that greeting, was there any mention of the European security conference or an upcoming summit in July?

MR. NESSEN: -- and whether there was anything on the upcoming summit conference in July, and if Secretary Brezhnev is coming here.

Q Was there any scheduled meeting between him and Secretary Kissinger, too. Is the Secretary of State taking any part in that?

MR. NESSEN: Did the Secretary of State take part? Was that your question?

Q Will he take part? Will he be meeting Mr. Novikov?

MR. NESSEN: Secretary Kissinger was in, and so was Housing Secretary Hills, since it had to do with construction.

Actually, Deputy Chairman Novikov is here for the first meeting of the joint commission, which was set up to implement the 1974 agreement on housing and construction. That agreement was signed in Moscow on June 28 by President Nixon and Premier Kosygin, and it has to do with setting up a range of scientific and technical activities in the field of housing and other construction which will be of mutual benefit to the two countries.

Q How long was the meeting this morning, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: It was a very brief meeting of ten or 15 minutes.

Q Ron, can we translate that, what you just said, that range of scientific activities and housing? Can you translate that? What does that mean? Does it mean they want some of our technology in building, some of our types of building? What is it?

MR. NESSEN: I am not actually that well-informed of the technical details of that agreement. You could get it from either Mrs. Hills' office or from the State Department.

Q Ron, was there discussion of expanding that agreement?

MR. NESSEN: General Scowcroft was at the meeting instead of Secretary Kissinger.

I don't frankly have that much detail about this meeting.

At 11:30, the President met with representatives of the U.S. Catholic Conference and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. I think there were photographs and film taken at the beginning of that meeting.

The Bishops asked for this meeting to discuss world food problems and other issues.

Q Is that still on, that meeting? Is it still on?

MR. NESSEN: We will check on that.

Q What are the other issues, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: The Bishops indicated that they wanted to talk about refugees, aliens and abortion.

Q Was this in line with the conversation between the President and the Pope in Rome, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I think the request for this meeting predates --

Q Did the President bring polite greetings from the Pope to the Bishops?

MR. NESSEN: I will check on that, Sol.

Q What did they say about abortion, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I wasn't in the meeting.

Q Can you get a readout on that? Did they make some specific points on abortion, and did the President make some specific replies we can be informed of?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I was not in the meeting. I can look into it for you.

Q Would you? That is pretty important.

Q Did they say anything to the President in the way of criticism or protest about the scope of the U.S. contributions to food? As you know, there has been a good deal of criticism about this. Did they state whether they were satisfied with the scope of the U.S. contribution and the extent of it?

MR. NESSEN: They did not. In the letter they sent in outlining the areas they wished to discuss, they didn't make any criticism in the area of food. They expressed their feeling that there had been some alleviation of the food problem in the world, but they still considered it a serious problem.

Q Ron, is it possible to get Cardinal Cooke to come out here?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure whether the Bishops are still here or not. Somebody was checking that.

Q Was anybody else from the Administration there, Ron, such as Secretary Butz, perhaps?

Q We would like to know what they said about aliens and what they said about refugees.

MR. NESSEN: Bill Baroody was there, and Ted Marrs was there.

The President met with the Bishops for 30 minutes and then had to leave on other business.

The meeting is continuing with the Bishops. Mr. Baroody and Ted Marrs and others.

Q Somebody suggested the Attorney General was there.

MR. NESSEN: Weinberger, Levi and Ingersoll were there.

Q That is what I wanted to pursue, if I could. You started to tell us when the meeting was requested. I believe a spokesman from one of the organizations said it was requested last December. Is that your understanding, too?

MR. NESSEN: In November of 1974, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a policy on the world food problem at their annual general meeting, and at that time they requested a meeting with the President with the view of presenting their views on the food problem to him.

Since then, there have been several tentative dates arranged, but the meeting was delayed until there could be found a date on which all the Bishops and the President were all free on the same day. So, the meeting has been in the works since last November.

Q You wouldn't call this critical? You wouldn't describe this as a particularly significant or important meeting in the sense that it took all these months to find a mutually convenient time?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I would want to characterize it one way or another.

Q Since the main subject was food and there were a couple of Cabinet members there, why was the Secretary of Agriculture not invited to be there? It is a serious question. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I can check and find out for you. I don't know the answer.

Q He is in Caracas.

MR. NESSEN: He is out of the country, I am told.

Q Since there is much interest in this, could you get somebody out here to brief us?

MR. NESSEN: I will see if we can find somebody.

Q Could we be told when the Bishops are leaving? That would be the biggest help of all. I assume they will leave by the usual visitor's entrance?

MR. NESSEN: I assume so.

Q Was the presence of the Attorney General and the Secretary of HEW an indication that aid to parochial schools was also discussed?

MR. NESSEN: It was not one of the matters they requested to be discussed. The matters, as I say, were food problems; refugees, which would explain the Attorney General; illegal aliens, which would explain the Attorney General; and also, abortion, which could explain the Attorney General.

Q Ron, please don't let us have to go out and grab these men as they go out. Let's have it in an orderly way. Let's have these Bishops come in and give us a report, and Ted Marrs would be good, too, or Levi.

MR. NESSEN: We will try.

Q Ron, what was the other meeting to which the President had to go; and was it on his schedule?

MR. NESSEN: The President had his normal, daily staff meeting with Bob Hartmann, following the meeting with the Bishops. That was scheduled for 30 minutes.

At 12:30, he will go out in the Rose Garden to greet the Loy Norrix High School choir and orchestra from Kalamazoo, Michigan. This group has been designated by the Michigan Legislature as the Bicentennial representative of the State of Michigan. They will present to the President a Bicentennial album they have recorded. They are in town June 16 to 19 for appearances in this area. The President will meet them when they have concluded a tour of the White House.

Those of you who wish to take pictures or film, Bill will gather you together right here and take you out.

At 5:00 this afternoon, the President is going to be the host at a reception for the officers and board members of the National Association of Broadcasters. They are in town for the semi-annual NAB Board Meeting. The President has addressed the NAB's convention in Las Vegas, as you know, in April. It is an informal reception. There won't be any remarks. It will be private. We will get together a guest list later today and give it to you.

Q Ron, would you kindly tell us what was the very important meeting the President had to go to that he had to leave the Bishops?

MR. NESSEN: I mentioned the President had his regular morning meeting with Bob Hartmann at noon.

Q That is more important than these topics the Bishops were discussing?

MR. NESSEN: The President does have a schedule to maintain, Sarah.

Q Let's put it this way, Ron: Are you absolutely sure that the meeting the President left the Bishops to go to was the meeting with Mr. Hartmann? Or is it possible there was some other meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No, that was the meeting he went to, Jim. Did you have an indication otherwise?

Q No, you characterized it as important; he left the Bishops to go to an important meeting. Then you said he went to a routine staff meeting.

MR. NESSEN: As I said, the President has a schedule that he needs to maintain each day. He would like to spend more time with some of the groups he meets with, but he does have to maintain his schedule.

Q Ron, he did spend more time with the National Council of Churches people. He spent more than an hour. Is there anything to be implied by the time difference there? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: No, there isn't.

Those of you who want to take pictures of the President at this greeting of the band should now go with Bill.

At 5:30, the President is going to meet with Ohio Governor James Rhodes. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss energy, research and development.

Q What time is it?

MR. NESSEN: 5:30. Governor Rhodes is an advocate of trying to extract natural gas from shale in the Appalachian States and that is what they will be discussing.

Following that meeting, the President will bid farewell to Lt. Colonel Robert Blake and his family. Bob has been the President's Air Force aide since last August and will be leaving July 1 for a new assignment at the National War College at Fort McNair. The President will present Colonel Blake with the Legion of Merit for his service at the White House.

Q Ron, did you mean natural gas from shale, or did you mean methane gas from coal?

MR. NESSEN: I meant natural gas from shale.

The President will meet with the NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns, the Deputy Secretary General Pansa Cedronio, and 15 permanent representatives to the North Atlantic Council on June 19 at 3:00, at the White House. That is tomorrow.

The meeting will focus on issues of current interest to the North Atlantic Alliance.

Q Will that include the Portuguese representative to the NATO Council?

MR. NESSEN: It says 15 permanent representatives. There are only 15 members.

Q I would like to back up and ask you on Governor Rhodes, do you know whether they talked politics?

MR. NESSEN: The meeting takes place at 5:30, so they haven't really discussed anything yet.

Q You said they will discuss energy. Will they discuss politics?

MR. NESSEN: The purpose of the meeting is to discuss energy.

Q Will they discuss railroads, too?

MR. NESSEN: The purpose of the meeting, as I understand it, is to talk about extracting natural gas from shale in the Appalachian area.

Q Has there been any progress in the President's move towards announcing his candidacy? Did his talk with Hartmann have anything to do with it?

MR. NESSEN: Let me move along in an orderly way, if I may.

Q Can you answer my question, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: If you don't mind, I prefer to go through my announcements.

The President will nominate Abbott Washburn for reappointment to the Federal Communications Commission.

The President is accepting with deep regret the resignation of Jack Franklin Bennett as Under-Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs, effective June 30. Since 1972, he has been Deputy Secretary and then Under-Secretary; then, Under-Secretary for Monetary Affairs. He plans to return to private life and we don't have a successor to announce right now.

The President has signed an Executive Order making the World Intellectual Property Organization a public international organization entitled to diplomatic privileges and immunities.

Q What does this organization do?

MR. NESSEN: It deals with patents, trademarks and copyrights.

The President is transmitting to Congress the Ninth Annual Report of the National Advisory Council on Extension and Continuing Education. We have copies of that in the press office for those who want to get a copy of it.

I am very pleased to announce today that Margita White will be succeeding Jerry Warren, who, as you know, as resigned to take on the editorship of the San Diego Union. Margita will take over Jerry's duties as Director of the Office of Communications. Her title, of course, is Assistant Press Secretary to the President.

Q What is the salary there, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Margita, how much do you make?

She makes \$36,000 and is worth every penny of it.

Q Why doesn't she become a deputy press secretary, as Jerry Warren was?

MR. NESSEN: Her title is Assistant Press Secretary to the President.

Q I repeat my question. Why doesn't she become Deputy Press Secretary, as Jerry Warren was?

MR. NESSEN: The Bishops just left. (Laughter)

Q Are they deputies?

MR. NESSEN: There is no particular reason, Jim. We are trying to get our titles sort of organized. As you know, at the time of the White House organization ---

Q Did you ask the Bishops if they would come in here and talk to us?

MR. NESSEN: I have been out here, Sarah, and didn't have a chance to ask them.

Q When you sent in a while ago, did you ask the Bishops to come in here and talk?

MR. NESSEN: Apparently, they declined to.

Q Did you get any word on that? Surely they didn't get the message.

MR. NESSEN: In answer to an earlier question, the Russian Minister who was here delivered an oral message from General Secretary Brezhnev and also they did discuss the European Security Conference.

Q Do you know what the message was?

MR. NESSEN: Since I have been out here, Jim, I have not had an opportunity to check.

Q I thought when they brought out the little piece of paper they might have written down what the message was.

MR. NESSEN: No, they didn't.

Margita's office is part of the White House press office. It's primary purpose is to expand the dialogue or two-way flow of information and communication between the White House and newspapers, magazines, television and radio, both here in Washington and out around the country. Margita has served as Jerry's deputy for four months. She will take on all of his duties and responsibilities, including sitting in on senior staff meetings and other White House meetings.

Q Will she be taking on the same salary?

Q No, it is \$2,000 less, and that is what I am trying to find out about. It is a strange kind of situation that I don't really think you have answered. She is taking a job held by a deputy press secretary at \$38,000. She retains her title of Assistant Press Secretary at \$36,000. Why does she not take on what is sometimes called the crux of power when she was given the job?

MR. NESSEN: I think you know when the White House was reorganized earlier this year, or late last year, one of the purposes of the reorganization was to make the organization of each of the nine divisions in the White House, and titles, more in keeping with the actual organization and purposes of each position and office.

On that basis, this job is one of the only, I think, four or five commissioned officers in the press office. She is an Assistant Press Secretary to the President, and that is why it was done.

Q Is Margita a naturalized citizen?

MR. NESSEN: She is.

Q Are you going to operate henceforth with just two deputy press secretaries instead of three, as you had had?

MR. NESSEN: That is the plan, Jim.

Q One of the reasons we are asking is there is the indication she is going to do the same job, but not getting the same pay, and this is discrimination against a woman.

MR. NESSEN: No, it isn't discrimination against a woman, Bob. I never actually think in terms of any of the sex of the people working for me. Margita, obviously -- (Laughter) -- obviously, Margita is held in very high esteem by the President and by me, because she is one of the few commissioned officers in the press office and she has been given a very large responsibility to run this office, which shows the faith and trust we have in her.

Q You are aware, Ron, I am sure you are, that one of the main complaints, or irritations of the Women's Liberation Movement is the extent in this country to which women do the same work as men, but make less money, which seems to be precisely the situation in this case.

MR. NESSEN: If it had been decided to replace Jerry with a man, he would have made the same salary and had the same title that Margita has.

Q Isn't it a fact Jerry Warren was a deputy press secretary before you all came here?

MR. NESSEN: That is true, John.

Margita served two years as the Assistant Director for Public Information of USIA. She recently received the Superior Honor award for her work at the USIA. As I say, both the President and I feel she is extremely well-qualified to replace Jerry. She knows the kind of office the President wants to run there because actually the whole concept of that office was born with Herb Klein, and Margita helped Herb set that office up in 1969.

Since she has been Jerry's deputy, she has arranged a whole series of lunches, receptions and meetings between the President and various representatives of the press around the country and in Washington. And I know that many of you know her and I think respect her. I am sure that you will be happy to have her in this job.

Q These lunches and things arranged around the country, are they still being paid for by the taxpayers, not by the Republican National Committee?

MR. NESSEN: They are being paid for out of the White House entertainment fund.

The President has asked the Secretary of the Army, Howard "Bo" Callaway, to become the chairman of his campaign. Secretary Callaway has agreed and will be submitting his resignation as Secretary of the Army in the near future. He will take over his responsibilities as the campaign chairman within the next three weeks.

Q What State is he from?

MR. NESSEN: Georgia.

By Friday of this week, the President will authorize the establishment of a campaign committee in accordance with the Federal laws. The reason for establishing the committee at this time is to make certain that the re-election effort is conducted in a manner fully consistent with the requirements of the Campaign Reform Act of 1974.

In addition, forming the committee now will make it possible to begin work leading up to the formal public announcement by the President of his candidacy sometime in the next few weeks.

The report, as I say, will be filed with the Federal Elections Commission sometime before Friday. At that time, the name of the chairman will be filed as Dean Burch. That is a temporary arrangement because Secretary Callaway cannot formally take responsibility or get engaged in any way in politics until he has severed his relations with the Army and his resignation is effective.

Q When will that be?

MR. NESSEN: Secretary Callaway is, I understand, issuing a statement at the Pentagon explaining his inability to get involved in politics in any way until after his resignation is effective, which will be within the next three weeks.

Q Ron, the Secretary was on the trip to Georgia, was he not?

MR. NESSEN: Was he? I didn't go on that trip.

Q Was he in on the meeting with the Georgia politicians?

MR. CARLSON: Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I would like to finish my announcements.

Q The Secretary is a Georgia politician and a former Republican politician, and a former Member of Congress from Georgia?

MR. NESSEN: He was a friend of the President's in the House. In fact, we have a biography, which I believe is being drafted now.

Let me finish the announcements, and then I will give you the biography.

At the point when Secretary Callaway takes over as chairman of the campaign in early July, then the President's filing with the Federal Election Commission will be amended to show Mr. Callaway as the chairman rather than Mr. Burch. Meanwhile, Mr. Burch has agreed to continue to serve as chairman of the President's informal advisory committee on his election.

Q Is there a formal name for the committee?

MR. NESSEN: No, there is no name for the committee as yet.

Q Will it have a name when the filing is submitted?

MR. NESSEN: I assume.

Q Why is it being done Friday?

MR. NESSEN: I say sometime between now and Friday the papers will be filed.

Q Is there a deadline of some kind for Friday?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why is it three weeks before Callaway takes over? He has waited this long. Why didn't he wait and do it once and for all?

MR. NESSEN: The President does want to make sure he complies with the law.

Q But there is no deadline?

MR. NESSEN: There will be some travel in the next few weeks, and the President is insistent on making sure that travel that might be construed as campaign travel, that he has a committee to handle it and there is the need to start filing reports and raising money, disbursing money, getting an office and so forth and so on.

Q Ron, why Mr. Callaway? Why does he feel Mr. Callaway is such an effective campaign leader in view of the fact that Mr. Callaway lost to Lester Maddox in the Governor's race in Georgia?

Q He didn't.

Q It was decided in the legislature, and he lost it there. It was that close.

Q Did Callaway actually win the election, but lost on the number of counties he won?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure, as most of you recall, in that election Mr. Callaway got more votes than Mr. Maddox. Neither one of them got 50 percent of the votes, so under the Georgia law and constitution, the matter was decided by the State legislature in favor of Mr. Maddox.

Q What year was that, please?

MR. NESSEN: That was 1966. He was a candidate for Governor of Georgia in 1966.

Just to answer Les' question, Mr. Callaway, the President believes, is eminently qualified for this position. He is a friend of the President's of some years. He served with the President in Congress. He has a distinguished record of public service and also in politics.

Q Ron, is the reason for making this announcement today with indications it will have to be changed shortly, be amended, in order to upstage Governor Wallace's speech at the Hilton right now?

MR. NESSEN: It isn't, Adam.

Q Will there be any other officials named when this unnamed committee files?

MR. NESSEN: I expect between now and Friday, when the official papers are filed, that the names of the campaign finance chairman and the campaign treasurer will be included in the filing. Then, as we go along, there obviously will be other officials added to the committee. But, I would expect those two positions will be filed by Friday.

Q Have they not been decided upon already?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has a fair idea of who he would like for those two jobs.

Q White House staff members have made no secret whatsoever about the fact Mr. Packard is going to be finance chairman. Why are you unable to -- I won't even say confirmed -- it is not even an open secret, it is a matter of fact.

MR. NESSEN: I think all of you know well and good there is no secret, as Jim says, that Dave Packard will have a role in the campaign. At this moment, I am not able to give you the names of the finance chairman or the treasurer.

Q Ron, will there be any kind of formal announcement on the part of the President or will the papers just be filed?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I know that those of you who are familiar with the campaign laws know that really the formal public announcement in front of the TV cameras and so forth is a tradition, and the President will do it, and he plans to do it sometime in the next few weeks.

As far as complying with the election laws as they apply to a candidate, when he files sometime before Friday, he will then be in that position.

It is not unusual in American politics. I think some of you remember in 1964--there actually was no law at that time that required this--but, as I recall it, Lyndon Johnson didn't announce his candidacy until about the second day of the convention.

I think you see, for instance, at the moment, George Wallace really is in the position of having placed himself under the election law in terms of having filed and announced his various officers and raised money and filed reports, but has not made an official, or the traditional, public declaration of his candidacy. So, it is not unusual.

Q Ron, just what you say, that it is not unusual for him to wait even longer than this, why this business of going through this three weeks' thing with Dean Burch when there is no understandable crisis?

MR. NESSEN: There will be trips, Bonnie. There will be fund raising, the hiring of employees, and an office, the renting of telephones and office equipment. In order to totally comply with the election law, he wants the machinery in place to begin to do those things.

Q Do you know where the office will be located?

MR. NESSEN: It will not be where you think it will be. (Laughter) I am told somewhere downtown, but I don't know precisely where.

Q Will you please clarify -- I have forgotten -- once before you named Secretary Laird to some committee in connection with the campaign. What was that? Is he still going to be there? What is his status?

MR. NESSEN: There is this informal advisory committee on the campaign, as I mentioned, of which Dean Burch is chairman, and will continue as chairman, and it is made up of Laird, Harlow, Herman, Scranton and Douglas. Of course, that continues in operation.

Q Ron, is there some reason that the Republican National Committee can't handle these travel things under this new law? Is that no longer legal?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. The RNC cannot get involved until he is the nominee of the party.

I do want you to know, so it doesn't come as any great surprise, that as we go down the road here there will be occasions on which he may appear purely as the leader of the Republican Party. On those occasions, the event would be paid for by the RNC. On the occasions when he appears purely as a candidate, it will obviously be paid for by his committee; and on those occasions when he appears purely as President, then the White House will pay.

Q Who makes those decisions?

MR. NESSEN: All that is being really put together. Some very clear guidelines are put together and they are not finished yet, and I don't have them to give you.

Q Is this already clear, Ron, on each speech or trip, in which capacity he is going on?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure you will ask me and each time I will have an answer.

Q Is this committee going to represent the President individually, or will it represent the President and Vice President?

MR. NESSEN: The President.

Q How intricately will the President be involved in the affairs of his campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: Many of the details I know you want to know have simply not been decided yet, and that is one of them.

Q Ron, can you tell us when the formal announcement will be made, where it will be made, and will that announcement, will that event be paid for by the Republican Committee?

MR. NESSEN: The fact of the matter is that the specific date has not been determined yet, or the place.

Q Had Dean Burch agreed to be chairman of the President's campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: You mean as the temporary chairman, until Mr. Callaway comes aboard?

Q No, I mean had he agreed to what will be listed on the papers, which is that he will be listed on that filing paper as chairman of the President's campaign committee? Had he agreed to be chairman of the President's campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: During the interim, until Bo Callaway resigns from the Army?

Q That is not my question.

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand your question, Ted.

Q The papers will show Dean Burch as chairman of the President's campaign committee.

MR. NESSEN: For two or three weeks.

Q Are you saying that he had agreed only for that limited time but had not agreed, without conditions, to be chairman of the campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: I don't get the drift of your question.

Q The drift of my question is, he is going to be listed as chairman of the campaign committee.

MR. NESSEN: For two or three weeks.

Q Until you file a new one. At the time, he agreed to be chairman of the campaign committee. Did he know that it would be only until Bo Callaway or someone else agreed to do it, or did he agree to be chairman of the campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: No, he understood what the plan was.

Q Let's turn it around. Why wasn't Mr. Burch asked to be the permanent chairman of the campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: I think many of you know Dean quite well, and I think you know of Dean's extreme interest in getting a law practice re-established, and he didn't want to spend the time and energy as a campaign director.

Q You are leaving the inference that the President asked him, and he said, "No, I am terribly sorry, Mr. President, I am busy and want to get this law firm started."

MR. NESSEN: I didn't think I left that inference, no. It didn't happen.

Q It did not happen. Why didn't the President ask him?

MR. NESSEN: The President wanted Mr. Callaway as his campaign manager.

Q You are saying flat out Dean Burch was not asked and accepted and is now being replaced?

MR. NESSEN: That is certainly my understanding, Ted.

Q Ron, what legal apparatus, if any, will be set up to cover the campaigning by the Vice President?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any information on that.

Q Ron, do you have a candidate for Secretary of the Army?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, if the GOP convention selects Governor Reagan as its Vice Presidential candidate in exercising the openness which you said the President feels all such conventions are, does the President feel he and Mr. Reagan could work together effectively as a team?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President's views on the Vice Presidential nomination are precisely as he stated them the other day, Les, and he has not changed them.

Q What was his reaction to Senator Kennedy's charge that the Vice President has indulged in what he terms utterly irresponsible innuendos, and has avoided the question of assassination and passed the buck to Congress. Does the President feel Senator Kennedy is completely wrong on this, or not?

MR. NESSEN: I think I went into some detail yesterday on the President's --

Q I know, but I would like to ask you in the light of the fact this was reported by the AP this morning, what is the President's reaction to Senator Kennedy's statement? Does he agree with it? Does he disagree? Does he feel it is completely wrong, or what?

MR. NESSEN: He doesn't have a response to that question, Les. He has the feeling I expressed to you yesterday, that the matter of the several investigations of allegations of assassinations ought to be handled with the utmost prudence, that they shouldn't come out as they have because, after all, the question that some of you have raised here, is the public being served, I think really is the proper question.

Is the public being served by the present method of little bits and pieces coming out each day. One day we hear that Presidents were involved and the next day we hear they weren't. One day we hear there was a plot against DeGaulle, and the next day we hear there wasn't.

MORE

Q We heard it on Sunday from the Vice President, Ron. That was a big VIP, wasn't it?

MR. NESSEN: One day there was a story about a poison ring. The next day there was no poison ring. One day there were poisoned cigars, and one day there weren't.

So the question is the public being served, I think, goes to the very point the President is making about not handling this story in this manner, but rather handling it in what he believes to be the responsible manner he has outlined.

Q Will this be a Ford for President committee or a Ford-Rockefeller committee?

MR. NESSEN: This is the President's campaign committee.

Q What did the President mean the other day when you said on his behalf that they would seek the nomination individually and as a team?

MR. NESSEN: As I understand it, this is the normal way for a candidate for President to set up his committee.

Q Ron, has the President received a letter of resignation ---

Q You are ignoring the question. Dick and Ted asked you the same question, and I am amazed that you are sort of, say, well, the Vice President has to sort of fend for himself in this campaign. Is that the impression you want to leave?

MR. NESSEN: I could probably go ahead and read back to you what the President said the other day.

Q Why did you make the distinction this is a Ford election committee and not a Ford-Rockefeller election committee, in light of the statement you read us the other day?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I made that distinction. I think some of you made that distinction.

Q I got that in answer to Dick's question and in answer to Ted's question. Is this a Ford election committee or a Ford-Rockefeller election committee?

MR. NESSEN: It is a Ford election committee, as is traditional for any candidate for the Presidency.

Q It hasn't been true that the Vice President runs a race for Vice President again. That has been outvoted by both parties. They don't do that at all.

MR. NESSEN: It would certainly be improper for the -- well, I can, because they represent the President's views today as they did the other day, read you the President's views that he wants Nelson Rockefeller for his running mate and his high opinion of Nelson Rockefeller and his conviction that they can convince the delegates that they should be renominated. I can do all of that for you again. You are looking for something that is not there.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:55 P.M. EDT) #249