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NEWS CONFERENCE

#314

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:30 A.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 3, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I want to move along because some of the members of the Wednesday Club indicated they would be pleased to come down and talk with you after the meeting with the President, if you care to hear from them.

Q Which ones will be coming out?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is Javits, Case and Percy will come down. If you care to film them and record for sound, I think they indicated they will be happy to do that.

I think the most interesting thing that happened this morning was when Senator Scott told Helen she had a secret agreement with Doug before the wedding, and I think we ought to find out what that was and all the costs.

Q Do you think those are silly questions?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't at all.

Q I just wanted to get that on the record.

MR. NESSEN: We have put out a summary schedule of the trip, and we are checking one point someone has raised, whether the President is indeed going to two Republican luncheons in Seattle. We will get that by phone.

Your check-in with baggage is 8:00, and the press plane leaves at 8:45. The actual bible will be ready sometime late this afternoon. I don't anticipate we will have any prepared texts before we leave here.

The only two speeches of consequence as far as advance texts are the one to the youth rally tomorrow night and the one to the State Legislature Friday, and we will have those for you along the way, but we won't have them before we leave.

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Ray Zook wants me to tell you there will be a continental breakfast served on the plane, plus a hot lunch. The plane is not able to serve two hot meals, for some reason, on one flight, so the breakfast will be sweet rolls and orange juice and coffee and then a hot lunch.

Q Will we have to pay for the breakfast like we did on the DC-9 last Saturday?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Henry is coming back between 10:00 and 10:30, and we can't pinpoint the time any better than that. He will come back to Andrews. The President will go out by helicopter to greet him. The President, I believe, will have some remarks to make.

Obviously, the event is open for whatever coverage you care to give it. We will have somebody from our office there; namely, Bill Roberts. The press area will be set up, the lights and so forth. I will go out with the President and be there for whatever help I can be.

Henry will come back to the White House with the President, and they will have a meeting up at the Residence on their return.

Tomorrow morning at 7:45 the bipartisan Congressional leaders will be in to hear a briefing by the President and the Secretary, and because of the take-off time, it seems to me that you are either going to have to send other people from your offices here to catch the Members as they leave -- you will have to do that, plus I will brief the pool on Air Force One as to what went on there.

It is not a very satisfactory way, I don't think, but we are really more or less forced to do that by the travel plans.

The letter that I mentioned to you yesterday from the President to Speaker Albert and Vice President Rockefeller did go up shortly after five o'clock last night. We have copies. We can Xerox them for whoever cares for them.

I think I could read you the key passage, if you prefer.

Q Albert and who?

MR. NESSEN: Albert and Rockefeller in his role as President of the Senate.

Q One quick question. On that meeting in the Residence with the President and Kissinger, will there be any coverage of that? Will there be a picture?

MR. NESSEN: I asked the President, and he indicated if there was a desire for people to take pictures, we could probably arrange that.

The key passage of these letters to the Hill yesterday is: "I intend to request formally that Congress approve this document" -- the document being the documents that you got yesterday -- "I would appreciate your views on the form which this approval should take."

The rest of it he just says, "I am going to send you a full set of documents and be making a formal transmission and so forth."

Q Will copies be available?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, we have them here right now, and for people who want them, we will Xerox the letters and give them to you.

I don't have anything in the way of further announcements to make.

Q Ron, there is more to it than just the one document. Will the Administration send up a package, which will also include the spell-out and include the economic aid to each side -- Egypt and Israel -- as part of the Congressional --

MR. NESSEN: Dr. Kissinger will testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee tomorrow afternoon. I don't have a precise time yet. Of course, that is where he will begin to outline in great detail and answer all the questions which they have, which I suspect will duplicate many of your questions.

Next week at some point -- the date has not been fixed yet -- he will testify before the House International Relations Committee. But the money, obviously, will have to be in an appropriations bill. Of course, that will go up and will depend on Congressional approval.

Q Rhodes is asking for a vote on the proposal only. He is not asking also for a vote on the aid linked to the proposal, is he?

MR. NESSEN: That will come in a separate vote on the appropriation.

Q Will he be bound by the vote on the proposal, or will he wait and be bound by a total package vote?

MR. NESSEN: Since the form of the Congressional approval has not been decided yet, it is hard to answer that question.

Q Congressman Rhodes said this morning the money involved in that Middle East package will be substantial. Apparently the President gave him a fairly good idea of what substantial will be. Can you be more specific than you were yesterday about how much this thing is going to cost?

MR. NESSEN: I really can't until Dr. Kissinger gets back and spells it out.

Q Are you prepared to answer any of the other questions you were asked yesterday such as where the civilian personnel or the technicians will come from?

MR. NESSEN: Only that they will be civilians, they will be volunteers, they probably will come from a contractor of some kind. I don't have the precise details.

Q Volunteers now?

MR. NESSEN: That is what has always been said.

Q I had not been aware that volunteers --

MR. NESSEN: If it is a private company, a private company can't recruit and force people to go to the Sinai. If people sign up to work for the company in this capacity, that's volunteering.

Q You haven't worked in private enterprise for a while.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, yes I have. (Laughter)

Q Ron, do we know about the contractors?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is it true -- am I mistaken when I say that the President has not yet -- or the Administration has not yet -- sent up its foreign aid bill for the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Presumably that bill will reflect this agreement?

MR. NESSEN: Presumably.

Q When is Sadat coming?

MR. NESSEN: Actually Sadat has been invited for some time now to come to the United States and has accepted the invitation in principle. As you know, the President reiterated that invitation on Monday during the phone call, but at the moment there is no indication that has been firmed up.

Q Ron, I am sorry, are you quite sure those technicians will be working for a private contractor and not for the U.S. Government?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding but, again, I prefer to have Dr. Kissinger spell out the exact details of it.

Q I want to be clear, in the letter to Albert and Rockefeller the President says he will formally request the Congressional approval of this document. I assume you are referring only to the proposal.

MR. NESSEN: He says, "I am enclosing for the immediate information of the Congress the text of a proposal to be signed by the President of Egypt regarding the terms under which American civilian personnel can play a role in connection with an early warning system in the buffer zone between the Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Sinai." That is one of the pieces of paper we handed out yesterday. One was headed "Proposal." That was this one. Then he says, "A similar proposal will be signed by the Prime Minister of Israel. The text of that document is also enclosed. I intend to request formally that Congress approve this document" -- this one here.

Q Only the proposal but not the agreement?

MR. NESSEN: Wait a minute. "As soon as the official text of the other documents related to the Egypt-Israel agreement initialed on September 1 have been signed by the parties in Geneva, which I guess is tomorrow, I will be making a formal transmission of the text of the agreement and related documents for the information of the Congress." This is the one he is asking approval of. This is a proposal which relates to use of American civilian technicians.

Q He is not asking for approval of an agreement between two other sovereign nations?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think that is clear in the letter.

Q Another thing that has to be clarified, presumably this technical equipment is from the automated battlefield so-called protection devices.

MR. NESSEN: I just am not able to go into that much detail. I think it is a subject you would want the most up-to-date and factual information on and I think for that we have to wait for Henry's return.

Q Will that be an open hearing tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I talked to Bob McCloskey this morning about that subject and he has sent a cable to Dr. Kissinger raising that question and has not received a reply. If he doesn't get a reply back during the day, I would think that would be one of the things Dr. Kissinger will deal with first when he gets back tonight.

Q Senator Jackson says he has been informed there is a secret understanding in the agreements between the United States and Israel and between the United States and Egypt. Yesterday you said you were not aware of any secret understandings. What about today, how do you respond today?

MR. NESSEN: First of all, I just wonder where Senator Jackson got that. He doesn't say. For my part, my knowledge of any secret agreements has not changed since yesterday. I am not aware of any. I am sure the members of the Foreign Relations Committee will ask Dr. Kissinger that question tomorrow.

Q To pursue that a little bit, you are not aware of it. Were you told there were not?

MR. NESSEN: I have not asked the direct question.

Q Why is that, we asked that question yesterday?

Q Ron, it has been widely reported that there is a memorandum of agreement between the United States and Israel which will be presented for the first time publicly when Kissinger testifies.

MR. NESSEN: I have to check, Peter. I don't recall seeing that.

Q There was a long story in the Washington Post I think yesterday to that effect.

MR. NESSEN: I just don't know the answer to the question.

Q Does the President have any feeling one way or the other whether the Secretary of State testifies under oath before a Senate committee?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I don't know, whatever the routine manner is. I haven't heard many express a view one way or the other.

Q Are you going to put the President's remarks out in advance?

MR. NESSEN: If we get them written in time they would be put out in advance for use on delivery.

Q Who is going to represent the United States at the signing in Geneva?

MR. NESSEN: There will be an American official there as a witness and the last time I checked it had not been decided. There was a name proposed but I don't know whether it has been decided or not. The American would not take part in any signing ceremony because it is an agreement between two governments but he would be there as a witness.

Dick.

Q Is the President going to meet with Senator Mansfield today?

MR. NESSEN: It is not on the schedule.

Q That wasn't my question.

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he is not.

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Q Ron, the White House was very forthright about the reaction a month ago or so to the Solzhenitsyn situation. You gave us, I think, 480 to nothing. I think we all appreciate this candor. How is it there has been no such tabulation in regard to reaction to Mrs. Ford's statement?

MR. NESSEN: That is something you will have to take up with Sheila.

Q Tell me this: Does the White House, does the Press Office, have anything to say about the Wall Street Journal's report that the White House aides are frightened that if she doesn't keep talking it will sound like the President shut her up and if she does, he may lose the election?

MR. NESSEN: What was the question?

Q Do you have any reaction to the Wall Street Journal front-page story? Is there any truth to this, or is there no reaction?

MR. NESSEN: No reaction. I thought you were going to ask for a reaction to the Middle East settlement.

Q That has been asked.

MR. NESSEN: There are a fair number of telegrams of support which have come in from some of the major Jewish organizations. There is a telegram from the President of B'Nai B'Rith International, David M. Blumberg, saying congratulations.

It says it is only fitting Israel should have the economic and military aid and civilian monitors to police the agreement since Israel has made substantial strategic concessions. It would be unthinkable if the hard-won step toward peace in the Middle East should fail because of Congressional disapproval.

There is a telegram from the President of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds saying warmest congratulations on the Middle East agreement. You have my support for full Congressional approval.

The Chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council says we welcome the agreement, and it commends the President and says, "We hope it will prove to have laid the groundwork for progress toward a stable and just peace with security, which has been the goal shared continually by Israel and the United States."

The American Jewish Congress, I guess Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, has sent a lengthy telegram saying, "We wholeheartedly support your call for the use of American civilians to monitor the new Sinai agreement. The American's presence there is essential for peace in the Middle East and for reducing world tensions. The fact that small numbers of American civilian technicians will be stationed on both sides and will be there at the request of both parties should eliminate any apprehension that Americans will be drawn into some future conflict.

"American citizens will not be there in any partisan capacity and will not be identified with the cause of either side. Any analogy to America's past involvement or to conflicts in any other part of the world is wholly misleading."

Q That is a telegram?

MR. NESSEN: It says telegram at the top. (Laughter)

"We trust that Congress, recognizing the crucial nature of the American commitments to monitor the agreement, to providing substantial military and economic aid to Israel, and to assuring her oil supplies will take appropriate action to ratify these commitments."

Then it goes on to say, "We are grateful for the contributions of our Government, and so forth and so on.

There are a couple of others.

Q What is his office?

MR. NESSEN: President of the American Jewish Congress.

Q Were these expressions solicited by the White House?

MR. NESSEN: No, they were not.

Q Were there any anti's?

MR. NESSEN: Frankly, the public response has been relatively small, as you will see when I get this list off my desk.

Q Ron, will they allow the screening out of Jewish civilians to this as they do in our military units in Saudi Arabia?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea.

Q In other words, you said they have to be strictly neutral. I just wondered if they are going to allow this or do you know?

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

Q Ron, is there going to be any type of Kissinger briefing tomorrow, particularly if this is closed testimony?

MR. NESSEN: That is one of the reasons I talked to Bob McCloskey this morning, to try to find out for you what his schedule was. It is somewhat crowded, because he has that leadership breakfast and the testimony in the afternoon.

Of course, if the testimony is open, that would kind of take care of it. If it is not, I am going to talk to Henry tonight about the timing of the briefing.

Q Ron, does the President feel it should be open? Doesn't he feel the American people should know about this thing from the first step onward?

MR. NESSEN: That is really a matter for the committee to decide.

The mail count and telegrams and so forth are very, very light. This is as of nine o'clock this morning.

On Monday there were 16 telegrams and on Tuesday there were 22 telegrams, for a total of only 38. Since there were so few, the mail room has not begun a breakdown of those yet.

On the telephone calls, there have been only 13 so far on this issue, ten of them opposed to sending the technicians, one in favor, and two that were more or less just general comments.

So, you see, there is not much public response so far.

Q Isn't it going to be necessary for the President to meet again with Mansfield before he goes on this trip?

MR. NESSEN: On the subject of the oil?

Q On the energy.

MR. NESSEN: Mike would be up here tomorrow certainly for the morning meeting.

I said there were three topics on the agenda. One was a report on the Middle East agreement, oil, and a report on what some of the Members did in the way of travel this summer. So, it could come up tomorrow.

Q All that takes place within a two-hour period, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Can I go back to the public reaction for just a minute?

MR. NESSEN: The part of it that would be reduced in time, if it needed to be, would be the report on their travels. Seriously, that is the judgment the President has made, that that would be the compressible part of the meeting.

Q Is two hours set aside for this?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, from 7:45 to about 9:30 or 9:45, roughly two hours.

Q Is the President disappointed by the so far apparently small public response to the Middle East settlement? Is he aware of the fact there have been so few calls?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he is aware of the mail count or the telephone count, small as it is, so the answer is no, I don't think he really knows about it.

Q Ron, is there being prepared by any place in the Administration a contingency plan for New York City's finances?

MR. NESSEN: Absolutely not.

Q Let me take it a step further. There are stories in the Daily News this morning that a high-level Ford Administration team -- we can skip the adjectives, just take the overall thought -- has been quietly working on a contingency plan for dealing with the New York City financial collapse. There is no team?

MR. NESSEN: There is no such -- I forget what they call it -- contingency plan or whatever being prepared at the White House.

Q Ron, excuse me. Does that include the Bureau of the Budget and the Treasury Department?

MR. NESSEN: There is just no such thing being prepared.

Q Ron, yesterday you said something to the effect that the Administration was watching this situation. I would like to carry it just one step further from Cliff's question.

Judging by the financial markets and by other comments, there is coming to be a growing concern over the ripple effect or the consequences of a default by New York in the financial markets and in other cities.

Is the situation being watched by the Government from that standpoint? In other words, is there any study going on or analysis going on of what would be the impact of a default by New York City? If so, if there is any such attention being given, who is doing it?

MR. NESSEN: As the President told Governor Carey last night, the situation has been and will continue to be monitored by Secretary Simon, who is primarily responsible in this area, by Bill Seidman, by Alan Greenspan, by Arthur Burns, who is not, of course, directly part of the Executive Branch, and by others.

I think if you look at who was at the meeting last night you will see those that are monitoring the situation. The only thing I know that goes to your point is that Dr. Burns has said publicly that whatever may happen, he would assure that there is no adverse effect on banks around the country.

Q Is there not, Ron, among other things, a very close look being given to the adequacy or inadequacy of the Federal bankruptcy laws regarding municipalities, and isn't a draft being made for a proposed revision?

MR. NESSEN: I am told there has been something going on on the Hill for quite some time totally unrelated to this, Jim, that is anticipated to take something like a year or more to complete. It was not begun, and is not progressing in a way that is related to the New York City problem. It is something that has been moving along for a long time and will take a long time to complete.

Q Ron, since the Administration has been saying it cannot help a single municipality, is there anything being done in the Administration to prepare a program to help municipalities generally in financial crisis?

MR. NESSEN: You know the President's views on general revenue sharing and his belief that unless mayors, and Governors, too, for that matter, notify their Senators and House Members that they want the general revenue sharing extended -- and also with the annual increase that the President has proposed -- that there is a real danger in the President's view that revenue sharing may expire without extension.

So, he believes that billions and billions of dollars are being funnelled to cities and states through general revenue sharing, which allows them to decide how best to spend the money. But that program is in danger if the mayors and Governors don't tell the Members of Congress that they want it extended as is.

If they start toying with the formula, there is a danger it could expire.

Q Has the President asked the Justice Department to keep him informed of the impact of busing orders in such cities as Boston and Louisville?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he has made a specific request. Obviously, the Attorney General would keep him informed of any developments that he needs to know about.

Q But no specific request?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Ron, has the date been decided on for a trip to New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: No, or even if there is going to be a trip to New Hampshire has not been decided on either.

Q The New York Congressional delegation publicly said yesterday they would like to meet with the President next week. Has that request been communicated and whether or not it has been, do you know the President's feeling on meeting with the New York Congressional delegation for that specific purpose?

MR. NESSEN: What is the specific purpose?

Q The New York financial problem.

MR. NESSEN: Is it?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of such a request and will have to see if the request has reached here yet.

Q Ron, back on the Middle East and the secret understanding business, you say you don't know whether there is one, or any, because you haven't asked the direct question. I wonder if you could ask and get back to us?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will leave this for the Foreign Relations Committee and Dr. Kissinger to handle tomorrow.

Q All these New Yorkers are asking about the shortage of money up there. What is the future of David Kennerly? There was a report published in a weekly news magazine of general circulation that the President is kind of getting tired of him.

Q If not the President, can you tell us who is? (Laughter)

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

Q Who paid for David's trip to the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: I will need to check on that, Helen. I don't know.

Q Ron, the President was supposedly going to make a decision this week concerning that multi-billion dollar proposal for a corporation to finance energy development. Can you give us any update on that?

MR. NESSEN: I would not look for a decision one way or the other in that short a period of time.

Q Ron, the Vice President, when he was addressing the Lieutenant Governor's Conference in Mobile, was introduced by Governor Wallace and he said, I think the quote was, "George and I have not always agreed, but we have always respected one another." I am wondering, has the President always respected Governor Wallace?

MR. NESSEN: Let's move on to something we can give an answer to.

John?

Q Ron, can you tell us what the President has said either to the Justice Department people or to David Mathews over at HEW about busing? I assume Mathews talked to him about busing last week. Has the President issued any sort of guidance or any Federal officials? We know he is on the record with his comments. I just wonder if there is any position the President has taken.

MR. NESSEN: His private statements on busing to his advisers and Cabinet members are no different than his public statements. I don't know of any specific guidance or instructions he has given, but his views privately and publicly are the same.

Q Ron, on the energy situation, you said there wouldn't be a decision in so short a time. When can we expect something?

MR. NESSEN: I really can't put a time on it, but it certainly will not be in the short period you referred to. I don't have a date.

Q Do you anticipate the President naming a Secretary of Interior during his trip to the West Coast?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have an indication that he will.

Q Will there be a trip bible, a fuller one than you related?

MR. NESSEN: We will have to do it a day at a time. We will have to put out the first day tonight at some time and then we will get the Sacramento bible out sometime tomorrow because there are still some loose ends in the Sacramento trip.

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Q Does the President plan to have a news conference with the White House Press Corps group any time soon or does he feel he has found a way to communicate effectively with the conferees and local news people?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is an either/or situation, Tom. I think he likes to hear the complaints and the comments of citizens in different cities he goes to and I think he will continue to do that. He also likes to hear the kind of questions that local newsmen have and, obviously, he will continue to have the White House news conferences that he has.

Q Is there any scheduled?

MR. NESSEN: There is not much time left this week for one.

Q Will there be a news conference in Seattle that you know of?

MR. NESSEN: No. In Seattle he has that White House Conference at which he will take questions or listen to the comments and complaints of citizens of the community.

Q Ron, have you decided who is paying for this trip?

MR. NESSEN: Well, since no formula has been submitted yet to the FEC and since at least some of the events are political, it would be the normal system of the Republican National Committee.

Q How are they coming on that formula, by the way? Do you have any idea?

MR. NESSEN: It is getting close.

Q They will pick up the tab, is that your understanding?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q On the subject of political travel, do you have anything to report to us about the answers to all those questions you were asked yesterday about political expenses?

MR. NESSEN: I might. I probably don't have all but I think I probably have some.

Q Before you get into that, I wanted to ask one specific. About six weeks ago you were asked by Bob Schieffer, Peter Kumpa, and several other people for cost figures on the Traverse City-Chicago-Traverse City trip. You said it would take a while because it would be a while before the bills would come in. Is that coming along?

MR. NESSEN: Really, I think I can answer both your questions simultaneously, Tommy. You know the Republican National Committee files its quarterly report and it lists all the expenses that they have paid for Presidential travel and that is the place to get it. We just don't assemble it here at the White House. That is the place to track down some of these answers.

Q Does that include stuff like advancements, hotel rooms, per diem and that sort of thing?

MR. NESSEN: It certainly includes advancements' expenses, and travel fare, the rental of the airplane and the President's expenses and so forth. Some of the other I might be able to help you with. I think you asked about Secret Service per diem. It is \$21.00 a day plus hotel.

Q Per man?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

The WHCA per diem is \$25.00 per day which includes meals and room. In some of the higher cost areas the WHCA people can get up to \$40.00 a day but most of them double up in a room and, therefore, keep their per diem down to \$25.00 a day. I think you know the costs on the airplane, we have done those.

Q Let's have them again, if you have them, please.

MR. NESSEN: The Jetstar is \$889 an hour. The DC-9 is \$1,004 an hour, and Air Force One is \$2206 an hour.

Q Ron, would you explain whether that means an hour in flight or an hour in use, or an hour on the ground?

MR. NESSEN: The money figure is calculated on the basis of the normal amount of waiting time, maintenance time, crew costs and so forth.

To get the actual cost of a trip, you take the number of hours in flight and multiply it by \$2206. But the other costs that you refer to are already cranked into the \$2206.

Q Would that cost be doubled for back-up flights?

MR. NESSEN: If there is a back-up flight. There isn't always.

Q There normally is, isn't there?

MR. NESSEN: No, not always. It depends on where he is going and so forth.

Again, if you would allow me to say, I know there is a great deal of interest in the cost of travel but I just want you to know that the President's aim in all of this and, as I have told you before, a great deal of time is spent here making sure that the President's travel is paid for both within the spirit and the letter of the law. Of course some of these people who travel are mandated by law and of course will travel with the other Presidential candidates also.

Q Ron, can I just ask you, I am not clear about the \$2206 on Air Force One. Does that include all on-the-ground costs? You say certain things are cranked into the \$2206, does that include all on-the-ground costs or just some and, if so, which ones?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a complete breakdown but I am told this includes the normal amount of waiting time, maintenance time and crew costs.

Q You mean waiting time on a trip, not the time sitting at Andrews, but on trips?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q I distinctly heard you say the speech and the appearances in Sacramento would be as part of his Presidential duties. You did say that and that has not changed?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Then on this trip, does the Republican National Committee pick up the tab just for the Seattle portion and not the Sacramento portion?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think, Les, as we said last fall when he campaigned for Congressional candidates and now in his role as leader of the Republican Party, there are trips that have stops or events that are Republican Party events and others that are Presidential events. Until the formula is submitted to the FEC, rather than haggle or split hairs about how much of the trip is Presidential and how much is Republican Party, the Republican Party pays for the whole thing.

Q They are paying for this whole trip?

MR. NESSEN: They have been doing that, as I say, ever since last fall.

Q Thank you, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: John.

Q Has the White House tabulated, or has it received any telegrams or phone calls or letters about the President's travel? Are you having any kind of public response from people saying we think it's good, keep coming around, or we think you are wasting the taxpayers' money on these trips?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't checked. I guess during all this little debate we have had, I am somewhat reminded of two recent periods where people wrote, and I guess some of you wrote, about Presidents who barricade themselves in the White House and become captives on the Potomac and so forth, and I guess some of you suggested that it would be better for Presidents to get out and around the country and see what people outside of Washington think and worry about and complain about, and this President does that to some extent.

Q I think there is another issue here as well and that is the issue of economy in government. It is costing quite a bit for the President to fly around as President of the United States. It is impossible in these figures to figure out exactly how much. We are told so much per diem for Secret Service men and we don't know how many Secret Service men there are, or how many WHCA personnel.

MR. NESSEN: Both the Secret Service men, and WHCA, as I think we explained yesterday, feel the precise number of people they travel with, they need to keep that to themselves for the President's security.

Q I am asking you the bottom line on a trip, what does a trip cost, the bottom line?

MR. NESSEN: The way to do that is to get the quarterly reports from the RNC, take any trip you want, find the numbers and you have it.

Q That will give you the WHCA costs and the Secret Service costs?

MR. NESSEN: You will have the per diem costs of WHCA and Secret Service. They feel they do not want to give the exact numbers in the case of the Secret Service for reasons of President's protection.

Q What about the exact cost of WHCA?

MR. NESSEN: It is the number of people times \$21.00 a day or \$25.00 a day.

Q Plus hotel rooms?

MR. NESSEN: Hotel rooms come out of the WHCA per diem and are in addition to the Secret Service's.

Again, we talk so much about what does this cost and that cost. There has never been any suggestion that I know of that this President is in any way violating the campaign law. As I said a moment ago, I don't know of any suggestion that it is better for a President to stay put in the White House and not get around the country and see what the people think.

Just in the nick of time I have been rescued by Senators Case, Javits and Percy who have been with the President for a meeting of the Wednesday Club, and they will tell you what was discussed and will answer your questions.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 12:11 P.M. EDT)