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NEWS CONFERENCE

#324

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 11:33 A.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 18, 1975

THURSDAY

MR. GREENER: We have posted a list next to the sign-up sheet to find out how many people would ride a bus to Andrews tomorrow. We need at least a dozen or more to make it worth the cost of laying it on.

Q A lot of that depends on what you are going to do here in the morning.

MR. GREENER: At this time, we are planning to brief.

Q What time?

MR. GREENER: 11:30.

Q Can't you brief earlier?

MR. GREENER: I will try to brief earlier.

Q What is the President's schedule.

MR. GREENER: Right now it doesn't look like much of anything except internal staff meetings, but I will get that for you later.

Q Can you brief as early as 10:30?

MR. GREENER: I will try to brief as early as 10:30.

Q What is check-in time at Andrews?

MR. GREENER: 1:15.

We have available in the Press Office a summary schedule of the President's trip this weekend. We plan to have the bible ready tomorrow morning, but this summary schedule will give you the approximate arrivals and the times the President is schedule to speak, for your planning purposes.

MORE

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Q Will you have the Oklahoma speech here before you leave?

MR. GREENER: I hope so.

Q Do you know the subject?

MR. GREENER: I do not.

Q How about getting it tonight?

MR. GREENER: If we can, we will have it for you tonight. As soon as we get it, we will not hold it up, I assure you. I realize you have a filing problem.

Q Will that be for release at 6 o'clock tomorrow evening Eastern Time, or will that be for release on delivery, which is after 6 o'clock?

MR. GREENER: I haven't decided. I will look at it and see.

Q Will you consider having it available at 6 o'clock?

MR. GREENER: Yes, we will.

Q You don't know the subject?

MR. GREENER: I do not.

The President is meeting this morning, as you know, with Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, presently leader of the opposition in the House of Commons. Mrs. Thatcher is in the United States in her capacity as Conservative Party leader and will be meeting with senior U.S. officials and several Congressional committees during her visit.

The President wanted to take this opportunity to invite her to the White House and have an exchange on international issues of interest to both the United States and Great Britain.

The President will meet later with Prince Saud bin Faisal, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia today at 12:30 p.m. Prince Saud is in the United States as head of the Saudi delegation of the United Nation's Assembly in New York and has come to Washington at the invitation of Secretary Kissinger, as well as to some meetings on the Hill.

The President will be meeting, as you know already, later today with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in the Oval Office at 4:30 p.m. Foreign Minister Gromyko is in the United States for the current session of the U.N. General Assembly and is coming to Washington at the President's invitation for review of United States and USSR relations and international issues of interest to the two countries.

I don't have an agenda for you now, but we would hope to provide you with a readout shortly after the meeting.

I was asked earlier whether Secretary Kissinger will participate in the meeting, and he will.

Q Can we get a readout on Faisal, too?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q On the Gromyko meeting, was there a National Security Council meeting yesterday or is there one scheduled for today? I don't recall seeing it on the schedule yesterday.

MR. GREENER: There was one yesterday.

Those are the only announcements. I promised to get an answer to a question of whether the President believes in segregation.

I asked the President. His answer is, "I don't believe in segregation of any kind."

Q That wasn't the question, Bill. I think I will have to --

MR. GREENER: Try again. (Laughter)

Q I think the question was whether the President believes in school desegregation.

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Does that mean he is giving up his plans to play at the Burning Tree Golf Course?

MR. GREENER: Is that a school?

Q Did he display any displeasure with Rod Hills for releasing classified information carelessly in Pike's office?

MR. GREENER: The President had no comment on it.

Q Is he aware of it?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Bill, how did the President feel about the Biden Amendment passage and will he sign that into legislation if it passes the House?

MR. GREENER: You will have to refresh me more than I am right now.

Q The Biden Amendment passage last night, the anti-busing amendment which prevents HEW from ordering busing or from holding back funds from schools with the intent of getting them to bus children.

MR. GREENER: I did not discuss that with him and I am not familiar enough to answer your question but I will check.

Q Bill, if the United States agrees to sell Pershing missiles to Israel, will the United States insist they not be mounted with nuclear warheads?

MR. GREENER: Well, Helen, that is a purely hypothetical question at this point.

Q It is not at all. It is a very valid question because the Defense Minister of Israel has already said it would not do so, but are we going to try to get it in writing?

MR. GREENER: Until the decision is made whether or not such missiles will be purchased, I have no comment on it.

Q Bill, the addendum says, or contains the phrase, "with a view to a positive reaction," which is quite a clear indication that this sale is going to go ahead. Now, what restrictions will be placed on the use of the missiles or on the arming of the missiles?

MR. GREENER: The answer is, Jim, this is all obviously still a matter of discussions and no final decisions have been made that I can announce.

Q You mean the U.S. would not object?

MR. GREENER: I did not say that, Helen. I said until those decisions have been made, that it is purely hypothetical for me at this point to discuss what restrictions will be placed upon them one at a time.

Q You are leaving open the possibility the United States would permit --

MR. GREENER: It is not my intention to leave it open.

Q -- would acquiesce willingly in the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Do you mean to leave that impression?

MR. GREENER: I do not.

Q What is the policy of the United States with respect to the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Middle East? Are we against it?

MR. GREENER: Are we against the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Middle East?

Q Yes.

MR. GREENER: I don't know that we ever discuss the deployment of nuclear weapons, do we, Jim?

Q I wasn't speaking of our own deployment, I was speaking of deployment of nuclear weapons by other nations.

MR. GREENER: I am sure that the President is on record and has been on record as against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Jim.

Q Does that mean the President is going to put pressure on Israel to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as part of our giving them the shopping list weapons they want?

MR. GREENER: It means nothing more than I said, that he is against proliferation.

Q Does the President have the intention of putting pressure on Israel to get them to sign the nuclear weapon non-proliferation treaty as part of this weapons deal?

MR. GREENER: It is a subject I have never taken up with him, Walt.

Q It is not all that implausible an idea. The United States was signatory to that, I think. It is something we have supported. We have always tried to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Here we are on the verge of giving Israel Pershing missiles which could be equipped with nuclear weapons. Do you mean there has been no thought of pressuring Israel to sign the NPT Treaty?

MR. GREENER: I didn't say that, I said I had no answer for you, Walt.

Q The question of Marilyn Berger's story today says that Pentagon sources say the first time they knew about these sophisticated weapons being on the shopping list was when they read it in the newspapers. Is it true there is no liaison between Kissinger and Schlesinger on what this Sinai agreement involved?

MR. GREENER: To my knowledge, it was all discussed at the proper levels with both departments.

Q When the President talked with President Sadat on Labor Day, was the entire conversation recorded and released to the press or was there another conversation that was not, or was part of that conversation withheld?

MR. GREENER: To the best of my knowledge, Tom, we had everything piped in and released and, as for whether it was released to the press, if part of it was out, it was because, as you will recall, we had a great deal of trouble hearing it.

Q I think there is a report in Cairo today that President Ford is supposed to have made some type of commitment for discussions with the Palestinian Liberation Organization during that telephone conversation on September 1. Do you know if that report is accurate?

MR. GREENER: I have nothing beyond the transcript, which you and I both have read. It is not in that transcript.

Q Could there have been another phone call, Bill?

MR. GREENER: I have asked that they check on it. I know of none.

Q In terms of the trip coming up, it seems to me that the White House reporters covering the President are going to be out of pocket most of the time and not be near him or with him except on his public appearances. I think that should be scrutinized very carefully because when the press organizations send their people to the West Coast, it costs a lot of money and I think they want to be covering the President.

MR. GREENER: You are referring to the time he is in Monterey?

Q And LA, he is going to be in a different hotel, also in Monterey, San Francisco, and so forth.

MR. GREENER: But there is coverage at all times, isn't that right, Helen?

Q There is coverage but there isn't coverage for all the people who --

MR. GREENER: The only part of the trip that appears different to me is that portion in Monterey from trips we have been taking.

Q He will be at a separate hotel in LA, too?

MR. GREENER: We have done that in the past.

Q It is not a good policy.

Q Monterey is a pretty big portion of the trip, isn't it?

MR. GREENER: The only problem there are the rooms that are available. There is no restriction on people if they can get rooms. We could only get seven double rooms. That is all we were able to obtain.

Q Is that true in LA, also?

MR. GREENER: For the reason we are not staying in the same hotel? It is my understanding there was not space.

Q Is there space in the hotel where we are staying so the President could be there?

MR. GREENER: Phil, I do not know.

Q I think what we are talking about here is an obvious pattern by somebody who really does not worry too much about the rest of the Press Corps. So long as they get a pool coverage, they feel they have fulfilled their obligation. I think we would like to object, for the record. We object to this apparent change in policy.

MR. GREENER: I hear it and am taking it into consideration.

Q That is to Warren Rustand and all the others.

MR. GREENER: Those writers that wish to cover the ceremonies in the East Room should meet at the side door of the briefing room. Thym will take you over to the East Room now.

Q Is the President aware of the telephone threat on his life last night or sometime at least in the last few hours? A man in Oklahoma City is in jail or they are holding him under a heavy amount of bail for a threat in which he telephoned the White House switchboard, I believe.

MR. GREENER: I will have to check that.

Q Does it change his plans in any way?

MR. GREENER: There is no change in plans.

Q Where will he be staying in Pebble Beach?

MR. GREENER: At the Firestone residence.

Q Leonard Firestone?

MR. GREENER: Leonard K.

Q Is that right near the golf course, or do you know?

MR. GREENER: No, I don't.

Q He will be there two nights?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Bill, has the President seen a letter to the Wage and Price Council from George Eads in which he warns the steel industry if they try to block imports of steel in order to preserve their ability to raise domestic steel prices?

MR. GREENER: From George Eads to the Wage and Price Council?

Q Yes.

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge, has it been brought to the President's attention.

Q Does the President have any reaction to the House vote yesterday on oil price controls?

MR. GREENER: While I am looking for that, I will point out several of you have asked about fact sheets on the Medal winners. Are they out yet?

Q Yes.

MR. GREENER: The question was about the passage by the House yesterday of the price controls on domestic oil, is that right, Mort?

Q Right.

MR. GREENER: First of all, let me point out that the legislation, as passed yesterday, would be completely contrary to everything we are trying to achieve, which is a national energy program to reduce our dependency on foreign imports.

The legislation would have an immediate adverse impact on domestic exploration and drilling. It would result definitely in an immediate increase in demand.

Q How would that happen?

MR. GREENER: Because of a major price rollback.

By 1985, the legislation could impact production by over a million barrels per day.

Q Domestic production?

MR. GREENER: Yes, domestic production.

Q Does that mean reduce?

MR. GREENER: Yes, reduce.

Q Does that mean he is going to veto it?

MR. GREENER: I don't believe the bill is here.

Q Bill, are you finished with the statement?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q You didn't answer Helen's question.

MR. GREENER: The answer, Helen, is we would hope that in working with the Senate that a suitable legislation to achieve the aims that the President has outlined could be sent to his desk.

Q Given this expression by the House after all the efforts at compromise, and given the New Hampshire vote, which was partly conducted on the basis of energy policy, how does the President feel about the extent to which the country appreciates what he is trying to do on the energy front?

MR. GREENER: The President feels what he is doing is correct. He has stated before that he feels the people of the United States are in some places ahead of their representatives in understanding the necessity to have a firm energy policy which will reduce our dependency on imports and, therefore, put us at the mercy of whatever price rises, embargoes or others that may be imposed by the OPEC nations.

Q What is his evidence for believing that the people are ahead of their representatives? How has that been expressed to him in any distinguishable way?

MR. GREENER: By discussions he has had around the country and from -- primarily that.

Q Bill, in Barbara Owen's column today it points out a direct conflict plus a direct contradiction in the President's policy in which she says the President wants to decontrol so prices will go up and people won't consume as much but, on the other hand, he wants to keep OPEC from raising the prices, which would have the same effect of raising prices of foreign oil and the people would use less.

Does the President view this as a contradiction in policy?

MR. GREENER: No, he doesn't.

Q Why not?

MR. GREENER: Primarily because in one instance, combined with a plowback feature, plus a windfall profits feature, the increase in price would in turn increase production within the United States and thereby further decrease our dependency on foreign oil with the money staying in the United States and not going to the OPEC nations.

Q Will he talk about OPEC with the Saudi today, the Foreign Minister?

MR. GREENER: I have no agenda on it. We will have a readout on it for you when it is over.

Q Has the President said any more on the Wyman-Durkin election, beyond what you said yesterday?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q Before we get into busing, could I just finish this one? The House vote against the President's position was larger than it had been before, and the people in New Hampshire voted quite clearly against the President's position.

In light of these developments, does the President feel that his position is now well enough understood and does he plan to make any addresses to the Nation or somehow or other get his message to the people, his position, so it might perhaps be better understood?

MR. GREENER: He plans to continue speaking out on it, as he has around the country, and, as most of you know, on the last trip twice.

There are no scheduled nationwide addresses at this time, if that answers the question.

Q Would that be the subject of the Oklahoma speech, by any chance?

MR. GREENER: I do not know the subject of it.

Q If that is it, it is an important part of this.

MR. GREENER: I understand.

On the threatening phone calls, those, of course, are handled by the Secret Service, as you know. The man to contact on it is Jack Warner. The President is not normally told of such calls. However, of course, he may read stories in the newspapers about them.

Q Why isn't he told?

MR. GREENER: Why doesn't someone rush in and say there has been a threatening phone call?

Q No, why isn't he told?

MR. GREENER: I don't believe the information is withheld from him. I simply meant they do not normally go in and tell him at this point in the day or something.

Q Do you have any objection to the Secret Service releasing information on this alleged phone call? Does the White House have any?

MR. GREENER: Do I have any?

Q Does the White House have any objection to this information being released to the public?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q May we revert to the busing issue and ask you, you gave us a response on one specific question asked yesterday. I am asking what happened to the list of court cases the President was referring to in his press conference.

You recall you said you would get or we could get from Justice, or at any rate some way or other it would be made available the court instances the President was talking about.

MR. GREENER: I am glad you said court instances. As you know, I pointed out there has only been one case where there has been court ordered busing subsequent to the signing of the bill.

What the President was referring to were judicial proceedings subsequent to that under each of those. Those are being reviewed at Justice, and I have not received any information beyond that, and whatever comes out will come out from Justice on it.

Q That is not correct again. Both in the Boston case and Louisville case, the plans ordered in those school districts were ordered this year and had to conform to the law.

Q So was Dallas and Corpus Christi.

Q When they issue the plan, the judge then usually issues a decision that goes along with it that clarifies the plan and how it fits in with existing legislation.

MR. GREENER: That was the second round, wasn't it? That is what I meant. It was not the original order issued prior to August 21 last year.

Q Is that the way the legislation works?

MR. GREENER: In what way?

Q That new changes in court orders do not come under the law if the original court order --

MR. GREENER: No, it does not, and that is what the President was referring to, that with new orders on it he would urge them to review the Esch amendment in making their decision.

Q He also said there were some cases in which the courts had not taken into account the Esch amendment already.

MR. GREENER: Correct.

Q In many instances, he said, Bill.

MR. GREENER: Those are the ones I said Justice is reviewing those proceedings and subsequent orders, and the information would be coming from them.

Q Bill, if the Justice Department has to review some court proceedings to find instances in which the courts allegedly didn't take the Esch amendment into account, if the Justice Department has to go back and search for them, how did the President know there were some instances of this sort?

If he had been informed of them, presumably by the Justice Department, why does it take the Justice Department any time to go and find these things?

MR. GREENER: The President, as I said before, in making a statement was talking of the general principle of doing it.

Q He was talking about specific cases in which he said some Federal judges hadn't taken the education amendments of 1974 into account. He was not talking about general principles; he said some had not done it. If he knows some have not done it, he must have gotten that information somewhere. Why does the Justice Department have to go and find it.

Q What is the Justice Department doing about it?

MR. GREENER: What is the Justice Department doing about what?

Q About the specific cases that the President charged were not following the Esch amendment.

MR. GREENER: The Federal courts are separate from the Executive Branch, and I would point out, though, that HEW is following the guidelines, which is under the Executive Branch.

Q I think what she means is, presumably, it is quite obvious the President would look with disfavor on Federal judges who ignored the Esch amendment and the legislation. Wouldn't the Justice Department have already brought this to the attention of these Federal judges in one way or another, saying we disagree with your decision because it didn't take the Esch amendment into account?

MR. GREENER: I wouldn't know. That would be a question properly addressed to Justice, wouldn't it?

Q I am still trying to get an answer to my question. If they have to go searching for these examples, how come the President knew about it?

MR. GREENER: The President was referring to the subject of discussions that he has had with the Attorney General.

Q Bill, is this a case where the President intended to make it clear he was talking about future cases but he actually didn't, he spoke in the past tense about past cases? Is it a matter of he misspoke or he didn't say everything he intended to say?

MR. GREENER: I think it is clear the President was primarily speaking of future cases.

Q Does the President think the Esch amendment will speed, with all deliberate speed, integration in this country?

MR. GREENER: The President feels since, in his opinion, busing has not been the best avenue to achieve, as he stated, quality education, that the other examples within the Esch amendments, or the other proposals, should be tried.

Q I am not talking about quality education. I am talking about integration of schools in this country. Does the President think the Esch amendment will speed integration of schools in this country?

MR. GREENER: He feels it is a method to achieve the aims of the court decision and that they should be tried prior to trying busing, as he said.

MORE

Q Bill, you just said something very interesting, at least to me. You said that it is clear the President was referring primarily to future instances. Now, a reading of the transcript, of course, makes it quite clear the President was speaking in the past tense. He said the thing that bothered him was that some Federal judges apparently had not taken the Esch Amendment into account, in the past tense. Are you now correcting the transcript of the President's press conference to say --

MR. GREENER: No.

Q -- to say that he was speaking of the future primarily and did not mean to say some Federal judges had already done this?

MR. GREENER: No, I am not correcting the transcript. I am simply stating that, as he was talking, in answer to the question, that he was discussing the general principle.

Q You are saying further that it is clear that he was speaking primarily of future instances, that he was worried about this as a potential thing, not about instances that had previously occurred, already occurred?

MR. GREENER: Well, in every case the purpose of such a statement must be to correct things in the future. We couldn't correct anything in the past, could we, Jim?

Q Bill, has the President asked the Attorney General to appeal those decisions where courts have not taken account of the Esch Amendment?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q Why not?

MR. GREENER: I will have to check into it.

Q Isn't it a fact the Justice Department has no information that any order issued subsequent to August of '74 failed to follow the Esch Amendment?

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge. That is not true, Ted.

Q Excuse me, then there are some? The Justice Department tells us that they have no information that there have been any judicial orders issued since August of '74 in which the court failed to follow the Esch Amendment, that in fact the only one that has been issued since was Corpus Christi --

Q Which involved walking instead of busing?
(Laughter)

Q -- in which the Justice Department sided with the desegregators? (Laughter)

MR. GREENER: I think I stated a moment ago that was the only case ordered originally and I said they were reviewing judicial proceedings, not cases.

Let me make one announcement, the Faisal meeting has been delayed to 12:45.

One other item, the subject of the Oklahoma speech is agriculture and oil.

Q Bill, I am at a loss now to understand your position, the White House's position. You are agreeing, as I understand it, that there have been no decisions since the enactment of the Education Amendments of 1974, that there have been no decisions in which those amendments were ignored by the Federal courts. The President said that there had.

I ask you once again what Bill Theis asked you, did the President misspeak himself and is the White House now attempting, without acknowledging it, to try to correct this thing? If not, how in the world can you read what the President said and then stand up there and say what you are saying?

MR. GREENER: As I said yesterday, there have been judicial proceedings -- which this gentleman just pointed out to me -- in both Boston and Louisville that once the arrangements had been made, they had to present their plan to the court for them to order it, is that correct?

Q But that contradicts --

MR. GREENER: Let me finish. There have been judicial proceedings on a number of cases, not just the one that was ordered as mentioned in Corpus Christi, judicial proceedings on previous orders which, I should say, the Justice Department are going through now to answer your very question of specifics.

Q It was pointed out the Justice Department has said, no, we can't find any in which the courts ignored the amendments. This, of course, can be easily settled if you will just produce the list of these cases. In the meantime, you are leaving open the possibility the President spoke totally off the top of his head, shot from the hip, or whatever part of your anatomy you want to use, and can't back it up.

MR. GREENER: I did not mean to leave that open, Jim.

Q Is the White House going to produce the list?

MR. GREENER: The White House is not going to produce the list.

Q Is the President aware the head of the Civil Rights Commission says the President is simply wrong and there are no such cases? In both the Boston and Louisville cases, at least some of the measures outlined in the Esch Amendment were followed.

MR. GREENER: The President is aware of the statement the Commission made.

Q This whole question of busing that has been raised repeatedly by the President in the last few weeks -- he spoke in Dallas in front of a Republican audience and was obviously prepared at his press conference. As a Presidential candidate, does the President want busing to be an issue in the Presidential campaign?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q Why is he raising it then?

MR. GREENER: The President has raised it voluntarily one time. Every other time it has been in answer to questions.

Q Is the President going to support any anti-busing measures coming from the House or the Senate, specifically either constitutional amendments or some of these amendments that would prevent HEW from ordering busing?

MR. GREENER: I would have to look at each one individually and get an answer for you.

Q Why does the President want to refrain from it on the campaign trip?

MR. GREENER: Why does the President?

Q What is the question?

MR. GREENER: Why does the President want to refrain from raising busing as an issue.

Q Or does he?

MR. GREENER: He does.

Q He will not do it again voluntarily, is that correct?

MR. GREENER: I am not going to state categorically what the President will or will not do in the future.
(Laughter)

Q Does he feel that was a mistake when he raised it voluntarily?

MR. GREENER: I wouldn't characterize the President's statements.

Q Can I ask you, why does he think he should refrain from making it a political issue?

MR. GREENER: Because it is, one, a case for the courts to decide, second, it is a highly volatile issue and one in which statements could exacerbate an already tenuous situation.

Q Bill, are we through busing?

MR. GREENER: I hope so. (Laughter)

Q The President was expected to name members to a commission studying the proliferation of electronic banking eight months ago. There is a suspicion the delay here is deliberate and that we are actually waiting for electronic banking to spread to such a degree that any study of its proliferation will have difficulty in proposing adequate regulation to protect the public from unregulated electronic banking. What is the reason for the eight-month delay and when does the President intend to name the Chairman and the other commission members?

MR. GREENER: In answer to the second question, I don't have any announcement to make today and the delay, I would assume, is simply the normal process of arranging for such a commission.

Q What is the normal process?

MR. GREENER: As for that specific commission, I would have to go into it and find out from personnel what the delay is.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:10 P.M. EDT)