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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:37 A.M. EDT

OCTOBER 16, 1975

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: I am at your disposal.

Q Ron, was the President ill overnight or was he injured in that traffic accident so you wanted to cancel that picture that was scheduled and normally would be held? We haven't seen him and I wondered if he was all right.

MR. NESSEN: He is all right and I don't know what picture has been cancelled.

Q It was the radio operators in the Rose Garden and I think Newsweek Magazine was allowed a picture but the rest of us had crews here and were prepared to photograph the occasion as is normal in the case.

Q Why were no reporters -- normally when the President meets a group in the Rose Garden we are allowed to go out. What was the group?

MR. NESSEN: This was a group of, I think, about 12 veteran telegraphers, I guess, who are having a 50th Anniversary celebration of some kind in Washington who were on a White House tour. As happens once in a while, the President says he would be happy to see them at the end of their tour. So he went out and saw them for a couple of minutes. He had no remarks.

Q It was on the schedule and I wondered why there was no coverage.

MR. NESSEN: There was no coverage ever planned.

Q It gives the President a chance to ham it up.

MR. NESSEN: Then there would be a story about the media event of the day required every day to have the President's picture taken.

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Q I know you had the White House photographers out and White House movies, we could see them as we peeked around the corner.

MR. NESSEN: Bob, the briefing paper for the brief meeting is here. I know you have seen these briefing papers before. One of the items covered is what sort of press coverage to have and it says White House photo only. So there was no question of cancelling a photo of minor little hand-shaking with 12 guys who had just finished a tour of the White House.

Q That is what I said, you had somebody from a newspaper.

MR. NESSEN: But they weren't covering the event. As I understand, they were taking a picture of the President they need for a cover of some kind.

Q You are aware there has been criticism lately of the President that -- I don't know if there is a lot of it, but there is some -- maybe it is a part of the criticism that the President spends too much traveling, going to ribbon cuttings rather than staying home and minding the store. Are you all trying to counter that by cutting down on the number of photos of the President?

MR. NESSEN: No. As I said, this was a five-minute meeting with 12 guys who had just finished a tour of the White House. The whole question of whether he has time to do his business is another whole matter. Those stories are absolutely not true but there is no relation between that and this.

Q Ron, has the President communicated in any way by letter --

MR. NESSEN: I can sense something coming down the pike this afternoon. I better tell you now so I see what is coming doesn't happen this afternoon. This is the possibility of a Presidential event with the President this afternoon of two thousand lawyers from around the world who are in Washington for a World Peace Through Law Conference. There is no room in the White House for two thousand people so in order to see them, it has to be outdoors. A decision whether to see them or not is being put off to see whether it rains or not. The reason I am telling you now is if we waited to tell you this afternoon, you would say they drummed up a picture at the last minute to convince us that he is all right. I did want to tell you that now.

Q Will it be open coverage?

MR. NESSEN: If held, it will be open coverage. It will be at 3:15.

Q That logic doesn't always hold, because it was held this morning and there was no coverage.

MR. NESSEN: For 12 people just finishing a tour of the White House.

Q What is the cut off?

MR. NESSEN: There is no cut off, everything the President does is not photographed. This was so minor, there were no remarks, he went around and shook hands and went back to his office.

Q What was the President's reaction to Secretary Kissinger's remarks that Mr. Nixon was odd and unpleasant?

MR. NESSEN: He had none.

Q Did he read the story?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he did.

Q Is that lawyers' thing going to be here on the White House grounds? The President is not leaving the White House?

MR. NESSEN: No, if it doesn't rain, it will be outside in the garden.

Q The new issue of the Washington Monthly has a very well documented article which comes to the conclusion that "President Ford committed perjury in his Vice Presidential confirmation hearings of 1973 when he declared repeatedly and vehemently that he had not in any way dealt with the White House in his efforts to squash the Patman investigation the previous year." Are you familiar with these accusations and do you have any rebuttal?

MR. NESSEN: I am not familiar with the accusations.

Q They document the September 15, 1972, taped conversation between Nixon, Haldeman and Dean in which they discuss cutting off the Patman investigation and the President said, "Jerry," meaning Ford, "has really got to lead on this, or I think Ehrlichman should talk to him. Ehrlichman should say, 'Now, goddammit, get the hell over with this. He has got to know it comes from the top.'"

During the ensuing two weeks, Mr. Ford met repeatedly with the Republican Members on the Banking and Currency Committee and subsequently the subpoena powers were voted down and the investigation was squashed.

At his confirmation hearings, he denied quite explicitly he had anything to do with cutting off the investigation for partisan or political reasons.

MR. NESSEN: Is this the question you mentioned to me yesterday I ought to be prepared to handle one day, as you said you were going to spring it on me one day. This is the one you are springing?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: The committees of both the House and the Senate conducted quite an extensive investigation of the then Congressman Ford before confirming him as Vice President, and apparently didn't come to the conclusion -- I don't know what magazine that is --

Q Washington Monthly.

MR. NESSEN -- Washington Monthly, came to.

Q Therefore, a Congressional investigation always come to the proper conclusion?

MR. NESSEN: The Senate and House and the committees of the Senate and House had this matter before them and indicated their decision by their vote. I don't know what more I could add to that.

Q Ron, has the President communicated in any way with the driver of the vehicle that collided with his limousine to express any sentiment about how it was not the driver's fault?

MR. NESSEN: Well, he plans to call him some time today. I don't have an exact time on it, but he plans to call him and mostly the purpose being to express his pleasure that no one was hurt in the accident.

Q Could we film this telephone call?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so, Phil.

Q Ron, along those same lines, there is a story out that just about everybody --

Q But somebody was hurt.

MR. NESSEN: To express his pleasure no one was hurt in the car which struck his car.

Q There was apparently another breach of security which has not come to light that the Secret Service's two-way communications gear is easily plugged into -- that is, ham radio operators can, with something called a tumbler, get in and monitor all of the Secret Service two-way conversations, and indeed several of them in the Hartford area were doing this. Is the White House concerned about this breach of security here and the potential trouble it could cause?

MR. NESSEN: I hadn't even heard that.

Q It is on Brand X wire this morning -- (Laughter)

Q -- there is a private eye up there who says with very easy monitoring equipment he and friends were monitoring all Secret Service communications of the President's movements in Hartford and they say it is a very easy thing to do.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, this is the first I have heard of it, but if it is an alleged breach of security within the Secret Service, I think Jack Warner ought to handle that question.

Q Ron, will the Government pay for the damage to that car since the President's limousine was running a red light?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the insurance arrangements are but I am told Jack Warner has some information on the insurance.

Q Did you find out about the seatbelt?

MR. NESSEN: The seatbelt was not hooked.

Q Have you received the report that Mr. Rumsfeld requested from the Secret Service?

MR. NESSEN: It has not been received yet.

Q Do you have any more on the accident you can give us today?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything prepared, no.

Q Was there any indication that a lead Secret Service car going through the intersection at Market Street radioed back and asked for more security at that intersection and that extra security was never provided?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know about that. I read that somewhere but I don't know anything about it. But Jack Warner would, and if something like that happened, it would be covered in the report.

Q It was nothing that ever came through official White House channels in any reports you have seen?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q When will Jack Warner give us a picture of the damage to the limousine?

MR. NESSEN: We called Jack yesterday and expressed to him the desire of a number of people that pictures be allowed and expressed to him the Press Office view that the pictures should be allowed. It is his option and the Secret Service's decision. I don't know what their decision is. We recommended that they do it.

Q Ron, would you take this to the President and tell him we have requested a picture of it and the Secret Service has refused to allow it and ask him to step into this?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I am reluctant to take a matter like that to the President.

Q We have no other recourse, we have no other appeal. Jack Warner has refused to give it, that is why I am asking you.

MR. NESSEN: Let me take it to another level short of the President and see what I can do.

Q Where is the car right now?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea.

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Q Did he explain to you, Ron, why he would refuse a logical, reasonable request like this? It surely isn't security.

MR. NESSEN: He simply heard our recommendation and didn't commit himself.

Q Have you a deadline of time by which you want this report to come over from the Secret Service?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly within a few days.

Q Maybe you could tell them to put it in that report?

MR. NESSEN: Why they won't allow any pictures of the car?

Q When it comes, has there been any discussion of whether it will be made public, whether it will be released to us after it is reviewed by the White House?

MR. NESSEN: There hasn't been any discussion of that except I am aware of your interest in having it made public.

Q This phone call the President is going to make to the driver of the car, where he is going to say he is glad no one was hurt, is he also going to express the view that it was not the driver's fault?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what he is going to say. He hasn't made the call yet, or he hadn't when I left the office.

Q Would you brief the press on what the President said after he has called the driver?

MR. NESSEN: Let me find out.

Q Can you have it dubbed in the same as the call to Egypt--Alexandria?

MR. NESSEN: I think there is probably a better connection between here and Hartford. (Laughter)

Q Will the President call the chief of police in Hartford --

Q And congratulate him? (Laughter)

Q Is he going to call the chief of police in Hartford, to your knowledge?

MR. NESSEN: For what purpose?

Q To solicit votes as a Republican? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: What else have we got?

Q Has the President had any similar contact with the gentleman who is reported to have saved his life in San Francisco?

MR. NESSEN: He sent the letter.

Q But no telephone call?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why not?

Q Why a phone call to someone who almost killed him but not to someone who saved his life?

Q I asked a question and you didn't respond to it.

MR. NESSEN: I heard your question.

Phil?

Q My question is, Keys, the attorney, the district attorney--U.S. Attorney from California is in Washington, or was in Washington yesterday. Did he talk with the President, take any kind of a deposition or statement from the President?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q He was calling several reporters, I think, from the White House. He was in a Secret Service office here.

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he did not see the President.

Q Ron, does the President have any response to the New York Times story this morning saying the SALT talks are in deep trouble? I wonder if you could give us the state of the President's mind about the future of the SALT talks.

MR. NESSEN: I think the American view, or the Administration view on the standing of the SALT talks was given accurately by Dr. Kissinger Sunday on Meet the Press, and that remains the position.

As for the Gelb story, the basic premise of that story is not right. The State Department yesterday, or earlier, I think, addressed this matter and said -- which is correct -- that on the main features of the position, on the American position in the talks, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense are in agreement on it and, in fact, Secretary Kissinger indicated on Sunday that Foreign Minister Gromyko had U.S. propositions on which we are waiting for a response.

I think it is fair to say that one of the propositions was arrived at jointly by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense and then brought to the President for his approval. So there is no philosophical difference between the two on that.

Q That may very well be but the story says that this proposal was designed to be rejected by the Soviets, and that would fit with an agreement between Kissinger and Schlesinger.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the basic premise of the Gelb story is not right.

Q Could you respond to that point in the article that the difference between Schlesinger and Kissinger was only one point behind all this, and another was --

MR. NESSEN: That the whole SALT negotiation is a sham.

Q No, it didn't say it was a sham, but the latest proposal was designed to be rejected. This doesn't mean the whole SALT negotiation is a sham.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what proposal they are talking about, but the President is desirous of negotiating a SALT agreement.

Q Is he optimistic about the chances of reaching a SALT agreement this year?

MR. NESSEN: I think you need to look at Henry's remarks on Sunday which reflect the President's views, or vice versa, that there are two or three issues that need to be resolved and the Secretary is hopeful that will be resolved in the next months and that an agreement will be reached.

Q One other question: Is policy on SALT being in any way affected by the President's political situation in the United States; that is, by conservative pressure from those who are suspicious of detente?

MR. NESSEN: I have never heard of it. I think the President has always made the point that detente is a process and that, where it can apply, it will and that the United States, in none of its negotiations with the Soviet Union, it is not a one-sided proposition. I think at the time following the Vladivostok preliminary agreement Dr. Kissinger explained then that in many of the areas the Soviets went quite far towards accepting the American view.

Q At the Helsinki Conference when the President signed the Final Document and made his speech, he said that we would judge the Soviets not by what they signed, or what they said, but by what they did.

In light of that, is the President viewing with any interest, or does he consider it an internal matter, the Soviet Union's decision -- whatever it is -- on whether to let the physicist accept the Nobel Peace Prize? Is that the sort of thing the President meant when he said we will judge them not by what they say but what they do? Is this a matter the President is watching with any degree of interest or does he consider this a Soviet internal matter?

MR. NESSEN: I have not talked to him on it and don't know what his views are.

Q First, may I ask two unrelated questions? Earlier this week I asked whether you could tell us what the President and General Haig talked about in the several times that they have met, and you said you would look into it. On that question, what is your answer?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is proper to discuss in detail the President's private talks with any individual and I would just say that in general ways the items that obviously would be of interest to the two people, including primarily NATO matters and European matters.

Q Would that exclude the Watergate matters or Richard Nixon matters?

MR. NESSEN: I have no indication that they did and I wonder if you do.

Q No, I was not there. That is why I am asking these questions.

MR. NESSEN: Neither was I.

Q I am asking you because you know more about these things than I do.

MR. NESSEN: Primarily the subjects would have been NATO and European affairs.

Q The other question is, can you take us behind the scenes possibly and explain how the President arrives at the certain decision, specifically that he will call the man in Hartford and will not call the man in San Francisco?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I can help you with that, Cliff.

Q Ron, is the President giving the Secretary of State any instructions on the new initiatives on his trip to China beginning tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: You mean new negotiating initiatives?

Q Yes, to start carrying out, or to advance the betterment or normalization of relations between the two countries?

MR. NESSEN: I need to look into that, Dick. I did not before coming out.

Q Ron, after the tax cut, tax spending cut proposal, you reported a very light response from people in general to the proposal. Did that build up in substance?

MR. NESSEN: The last time I checked, a couple of days ago, the total number of telegrams, letters and phone calls totaled roughly 900-some.

Q Pro, con, or what?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't think there was any further interest in it so I didn't bring it out here with me. The people who called or wrote to support the President's proposal were far ahead of those who opposed it, but I don't have the exact figures.

Q How would that small response square with the President's statements that the American people want a tax cut? Without disputing what the President maintained, how does that rather apathetic response square with what the President is saying?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that it is a rather apathetic response.

Q Well, small?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I think the general feeling by the people who look at the mail and so forth has always been that when there is some issue that comes up that a large number of people are against, you get quite a large response but that you don't always get a large response by people who are in favor of a thing.

Q Exactly. So how does the President know?

Q Ron, has Warren Rustand submitted his resignation?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he has submitted his resignation.

Q Has he departed?

MR. NESSEN: No, he has not departed. In fact, the President has not accepted his resignation yet.

Q Is there any doubt he will?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q What is his official office?

MR. NESSEN: Director, Scheduling Office.

Q His latest title, I don't believe he has been that for a while.

MR. NESSEN: Would someone check that?

In his letter, Warren says, "For family and personal reasons of which you are aware, I herewith submit my resignation at a date to be determined."

Q Budget Director Lynn is going to be testifying Tuesday before the Senate Budget Committee and Chairman Muskie says he is going to ask him at that time to give details on these tentative spending guidelines drawn up. You told us the other day that the Administration did not intend to release those to Congress, so it looks like there is a conflict in here.

Could you give us anything on whether Mr. Lynn will restrict his testimony when answering this?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think Jim has prepared his testimony yet. Again, I think that is all beside the point; that all the President is asking Congress to do is to go on record as only wanting to increase the taxpayer's bite this year by \$25 billion. He is not asking them to go on record now as setting a Defense Department budget or HEW budget at a certain level --

Q But my question, Muskie is specifically going to ask Lynn to provide the figures next Tuesday. What is Jim going to do?

MR. NESSEN: I think Jim Lynn will make some of the same points I have made, which is this is beside the point. All he is asking Congress to do is go on record that Congress is going to spend only \$25 billion more of the taxpayers' money next year than they spent this year.

Q So he is going to refuse to provide those figures?

MR. NESSEN: He has not prepared his testimony, as far as I know.

Warren Rustand's title is Appointments Secretary to the President.

Q Can you give us anything beyond that, besides his family and personal reasons, what they are?

MR. NESSEN: That is the reason he states in his letter and I myself don't know the reasons. Warren indicated this morning he would be happy to talk to reporters who called him.

Q When did he submit this?

MR. NESSEN: On the 15th of October, yesterday.

Q Does the President have any reaction to New York City's latest plan for cutting expenses?

MR. NESSEN: No, at this point I don't believe that the State Board has accepted the plan as being an adequate first step to get their affairs under proper management.

Q Did the President ask --

MR. NESSEN: I do think there is -- if you go over to this question about what is Jim Lynn going to testify to and look at the mess New York City is in, I think you will see the longer range and broader reason why the President believes and why he thinks a lot of Americans believe that the Government just has to start living within its means.

You have heard the President say that the deficit this year will be \$60 billion to \$70 billion. Without a limit on the rise in spending next year, it will be \$60 billion or \$70 billion again so you have back-to-back deficits totaling \$120 billion to \$140 billion, and many more years of that would point the Federal Government in the same direction New York City is going.

New York City's problem is that for 10 or 12 years it has lived far beyond its means.

Saul, you may feel this is political rhetoric, but as I have said before, I only reflect to you -- the only thing I do here or try to do here is reflect to you the President's views.

Q I would like to go on record as saying I do not consider this political rhetoric. I consider you are doing your job.

Q Did the President ask for Rustand's resignation?

MR. NESSEN: No, he didn't, as I think you will see in the response.

Q Is he accepting it, then?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he will accept it.

Q On the matter of the President's tax and budget proposal, have you, the President, or anybody else said what the calculated 1977 deficit would be if his proposal were accepted?

MR. NESSEN: \$40 billion to \$44 billion. But you see, John, to elaborate a bit, that is the figure. The ultimate aim of the plan, as the President has said, is to have a balanced budget within three years because what he is really doing is not turning the rise in spending around and having an actual reduction in spending but rather to stop the steepness of the rise. So with that approach, after three years you would get to a balanced budget.

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Q To follow up John's question, I wonder whether the OMB or Council of Economic Advisers have done similar projections as to what the deficit would be if there was a quicker recovery from the recession? In other words, what kind of estimates do you do? Estimates based only on what you are going to propose, what you think the problems are, or do you do projections based on what would happen if there was a quicker recovery from the recession, for instance, since that is what has produced the deficit largely.

MR. NESSEN: I don't agree with you that is what produced the deficit largely. Those computers over there run all the time.

Q Do you have any figures for it?

MR. NESSEN: The data on which they are based is updated all the time and the figures have a \$60 or \$70 billion deficit without the spending curve or \$04 to \$44 billion with the spending curve is based on the latest estimates of the state of the economy.

Q That is what I am getting at. You gave John Osborne a figure for the deficit. Now, do you have further figures, estimates, that you can give us for what the deficit would be if there were a faster recovery from the recession?

MR. NESSEN: Is John here?

Is not the range of the deficit being 40 to 44, is a high and low range which takes into account changes in the pace of recovery, revenues and so forth? That is why we have a range?

MR. CARLSON: You can't estimate it exactly without knowing revenues.

MR. NESSEN: The 40 to 44, while you have a \$4 billion difference is to take into account variable factors, one of which is higher revenues in case the economy turns around faster.

Q You have given, in your budget projections for the budget this year, some projections for the economy that show continued high unemployment and so forth and so on. I am wondering whether the OMB goes on and says, if we could stimulate the economy somewhat more and get recovery underway faster, what the deficit would be, would it narrow and how much would it narrow by? You don't have any figures like that for us?

MR. NESSEN: No. I do have the President's view which he expressed yesterday at the food meeting, which is that the figures which have come out and will be coming out in the next few days indicate to him that the economy is recovering at a healthy and steady pace rather than, as he frequently uses the expression, being given a quick fix to give a jolt to the economy and then see the same kind of roller coaster effect there has been over the years.

He believes his economic policies have brought about a steady and long-term rise in the economy.

Q I am not trying to debate with you whether it should be done or not. That is not my point. That is a political matter. I am merely asking whether or not any such projections have been done.

MR. NESSEN: I will ask Jim Lynn and Alan Greenspan.

Let me go back to the mail question, if you want to hear it. The updated public reaction to the President's tax cut proposal, as of 11 o'clock today, about an hour ago, the total of mail and telegrams -- and I assume phone calls --

MR. ROBERTS: No, not phone calls.

MR. NESSEN: Mail and telegrams total 1,172. Those favoring the President's program were 970. Those who are opposed to the President's program 115.

Q Have you ever heard a mail count on --

MR. NESSEN: Those who had a comment but didn't come down particularly on one side or the other, 87.

Q Have you ever heard a mail count on those people who have written the President and told him he ought to stay home and not travel so much?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't, no.

Q Could I get back to a question? Senator Mansfield says it is time for us to establish relations with the new Governments of Vietnam, South Vietnam and Cambodia. Is the President giving any consideration to Senator Mansfield's recommendation?

MR. NESSEN: I thought you said Humphrey.

Q No, Senator Mansfield.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think the position has changed since the last time the President talked about that, Ted.

Q Ron, yesterday Secretary Simon, in Williamsburg, in discussing the tax cut and spending cut proposal, described it as an anti-inflation tool. He placed quite heavy emphasis on this. It is a little hard to equate that with what the President said last Thursday night about how this really wasn't aimed at the economic policy. Could you rationalize the two?

MR. NESSEN: The decision to go ahead with this program was not based on a need to either stimulate the economy or restrain the economy. The decision was made on other grounds.

But having proposed the program, you can then look at it and say, okay, you didn't do it for that reason, but what would its effect be? Now the economists generally think that the short-term economic effect is basically neutral. I think what Bill Simon is talking about is the inflationary impact of what would happen if you had back-to-back \$60 to \$70 billion deficits with the Government soaking up all the available capital and what that would do to interest rates. Interest rates are a major factor in inflation. He is talking about the long-term implications and getting down to this balanced budget in three years and what the anti-inflation effects of what that would be.

Q Ron, has the President ever spoken out, either to you or on the record that you know of, as favoring a Constitutional Amendment similar to those in effect in most States requiring a balanced budget eventually?

MR. NESSEN: He mentioned, during his meeting with the Appalachian Governors in Elkins, that he was aware that the Southern Governors had gone on record as favoring such a Constitutional Amendment and one of the Governors said, "Yeah, but he would have a lot of loopholes in it." I don't think he ever addressed the issue of whether there should be one. He is aware of the public discussion.

Q Has the President read the Task Force on Drug Abuse Report yet, and has he made any comments on its recommendations, particularly those that would affect marijuana?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether he has finished reading it or not, but he has made no comment and would wait for the 60 days to receive the comments of various agencies.

Q Ron, we are now a day beyond the tentative target the Administration had set for lifting the embargo on grain sales for the Soviets. As far as I know, the embargo is still in effect. Do you have any concrete indication as to when that might be lifted?

MR. NESSEN: Secretary Robinson has gone back to Moscow to continue the negotiations and they are still going on.

Q When will he announce something on the long-term grain agreement, today or tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear your question.

Q The long-term grain agreement, when will the White House announce something on that, today or tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, Robinson is back in Moscow negotiating.

Q So it won't be this week?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to announce on that.

Q Is the President disappointed that his deadline is now past?

MR. NESSEN: He never considered the precise date of October 15 a deadline.

Q What is your answer on travel?

MR. NESSEN: There is no travel this week.

Q The weekend I was asking about.

MR. NESSEN: There is no travel on the weekend.

Q No travel on this weekend?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Are you contemplating anything next week?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to announce on next week.

Q When you said the President's seatbelt was not hooked, does that mean they were somehow inoperative in the car or he just was not wearing them?

MR. NESSEN: He just wasn't wearing them.

Q What is the President doing today?

MR. NESSEN: Working.

Q I mean, we have no schedule. Can't you tell us?

MR. NESSEN: He had staff meetings all this morning, as he always does, with five minutes out to shake hands with the telegraph operators.

Q Can you tell us the matters he is dealing with at these staff meetings?

MR. NESSEN: What else do we have?

Q I think that is a serious question, can't you look at that?

Q Ron, this is the second time you have looked at him and ignored him. I would like to ask you this, have you ever seen the President listen to a reporter's question and then deliberately ignore him as you have done twice to Dick today and have done to me and others?

MR. NESSEN: That is why he is the President, I guess: and more popular. (Laughter)

Q One more question about the accident in Hartford, Ron. This was obviously a situation in which the life of the President was endangered by a traffic situation that should and could have been avoided. My question is, do you think steps will be taken so that in the future the President's motorcade column will be kept closed up and the necessary police personnel stationed at intersections?

MR. NESSEN: One of the purposes of the report requested from the Secret Service is not only a factual account of what happened and why it happened, but recommendations on how to prevent it from happening in the future.

Q Ron, are there any questions on overtaking local police forces?

MR. NESSEN: If that is indeed a fact -- and I don't know that it is -- I presume it would be reported on by the Secret Service.

Q On September 15, the President said the CIA reorganization plan would be made public soon and shortly. Do you have any anticipated dates?

MR. NESSEN: I don't, Mort.

Q Ron, I would like to get back to the grain sale issue. Has Secretary Butz been in touch with the President on what is reported to be Butz' unhappiness on lifting the embargo on sales to Poland?

MR. NESSEN: His unhappiness about what?

Q Lifting the embargo on sales to Poland?

MR. NESSEN: That he was unhappy about lifting the embargo? It was quite the opposite, Russ. Secretary Butz was always in favor of lifting the embargo to Poland.

Q But he didn't know it was going to occur.

MR. NESSEN: I think I know the story in the paper you are referring to, if you are referring to the Post story.

Q I am referring to the fact Butz apparently is excluded from any input on these decisions?

MR. NESSEN: That is totally wrong. Secretary Butz has not reflected to the President some of the things that the newspapers said he was feeling. Secretary Butz is the chief spokesman and the chief operating officer in the area of agriculture--is and has been.

When an issue involves not only agriculture but also overseas food shipments in the form of food for peace, food as it relates to worldwide sales, domestic consumer interests in food sales and so forth, obviously the President would want to get the views not only of his chief operating officer and adviser in the area of agriculture but also advice on the broadest possible basis. If I could make an analogy for you, in the area of energy, Frank Zarb is chief operating officer of the Federal Energy Agency, but clearly he alone does not make those decisions in the energy field because they cross a lot of different lines in a lot of different areas. As you know, Secretary Morton is in fact the Chairman of the Energy Policy Council and he is the Commerce Secretary.

So what really is the fact is that the President wants to get the broadest possible range of views on agricultural matters.

Q Ron, I would like to ask, following up Walt's question, just one other question, if I could, about the seatbelt. Does the President often not wear the seatbelt and is it due to the fact the car was going very slowly, and is there a buzzer in that car? (Laughter)

Really, this is a serious thing because it is very important, I think.

MR. NESSEN: I don't, but I will answer the question. There is no buzzer that I know of. Since I don't ride in the car all the time, I don't know whether he buckles up all the time or not.

Q Have you ever seen him buckle up?

MR. NESSEN: I have only been in the car a few times.

Q Have you heard from Ralph Nader about this whole thing? (Laughter)

Q Ron, has the President seen Henry Ruth's report and read it?

MR. NESSEN: It was not a report to the President, as far as I know. I am sure he read the newspaper stories.

Q Is it being submitted to the White House?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

The Henry Ruth report is not a report to the White House, is it?

MR. CARLSON: What is it?

MR. NESSEN: The final report of the Special Prosecutor's Office.

We will find out.

Q Could you find out something about what he is doing today?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think the President ever spends much time loafing.

Brent Scowcroft came in at 7:40, as he always does, to give the President his daily intelligence briefing. Bob Hartmann came in at 8:00 for his usual half-hour meeting to discuss the matters in his area. Don Rumsfeld came in at 8:30 for his regular meeting on the matters in his area. Dr. Kissinger came in at 9:30 for his regular daily meeting. 9:00 was the wireless operators meeting.

I went in at 10:30 for my regular meeting, to get some answers to your questions. At 11:00 Jack Marsh went in for his meeting. That is the schedule.

After 11:00 I know the President was working on the speech he will give to the lawyers if it doesn't rain.

Mildred Leonard, the President's secretary, is coming in at 12:30 to take dictation and handle various other personal matters with the President.

Probably after that the President will have lunch. This afternoon he has a meeting scheduled. He has at least one scheduled meeting this afternoon, which is on the food stamp proposal he will be sending to Congress. He does have some various other papers on his desk to read and he has some other meetings at the end of the afternoon.

Q Who is attending the food stamp meeting?

MR. NESSEN: The people working on the food stamps, the Domestic Council and Congressional people.

Q Can you give us an idea of what he was discussing with those folks? Obviously he doesn't have time to meet with everybody the same amount of time when he has other appointments on his schedule.

When I raised the question I simply wanted to know what he was focusing his attention on today. You can't tell us any of that?

MR. NESSEN: You mean the subjects of these meetings? No.

Q Mr. Butz will not be at the food stamp meeting; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the attendance list is. I can check it for you.

Q What time will the lawyers thing be?

MR. NESSEN: 3:15.

Q Ron, has the President watched the World Series?

MR. NESSEN: No, not that I know of.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:20 P.M. EDT)