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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:54 A.M. EST

NOVEMBER 25, 1975

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I have a lot of little tid-bits for you today.

You probably noticed the President has a somewhat lighter public schedule today than usual. He did spend the morning with his various staff people and still is, as a matter of fact.

There is a long meeting this afternoon continuing his preparation of the 1977 fiscal budget. Today's meeting begins at 2 o'clock. It is scheduled for 90 minutes. These meetings have generally been running about twice as long as they have been scheduled for, so this one is expected to run somewhere between two and three hours. The schedule today is for the Department of Transportation and some small agencies, as well as some left-over items that have not been included in the budget meetings.

The President is also spending a fair amount of time these days preparing for the trip to China, the Philippines and Indonesia. He has now received four briefing books and two folders on the trip prepared by the National Security Council.

Tomorrow, Thursday and Friday the President will be spending time on the budget and on the China preparation.

On Thanksgiving Day the President will work in the afternoon on China preparations and pretty much the whole of Friday afternoon has been set aside for China preparation.

I have some information about China for you. First of all, tomorrow at 2 o'clock in the Press Office Dr. Lukash will send someone here from his staff to give you your cholera shots. You need cholera within six months of this trip and smallpox within three years.

Q Is it not smallpox within 10 years?

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MR. NESSEN: No, three years. This will be the last chance to get shots at the White House for the trip. Cholera and smallpox are required.

We have been in almost constant cable and telephone communication with the advance people in China and I have some information for you.

Some of you who are going to China or whose organization is sending someone to China -- we ought to get this stuff on the wires, too -- and if you care to stay behind after the President leaves, you should let us know that by 2 o'clock this afternoon and we will pass that on to Eric Rosenberger who is in the People's Republic. He will put in a formal request that you be allowed to stay behind and then we will let you know as soon as possible when we get an answer, but give us your request by 2 o'clock today if you want to stay behind.

If any of you have any specific story ideas or specific interview requests with any Chinese, you should also let us know that by 2 o'clock this afternoon and we will have Eric file those requests with the PRC.

Now, conditions there. It is getting colder. It was not all that cold when the advance people arrived but it is getting colder. Temperatures are now down around 20 degrees on your average day with 30-mile-an-hour winds. We have from both Bob Mead and Eric the strong recommendation that you wear warm clothing, especially those who are going to be participating in stake-outs and what is likely to be a wait at the airport for the arrival.

In addition to the temperature and winds, it is extremely dry in China at this time. Eric suggests you bring with you nose drops, chapstick, mouthwash, and he asked me to say this with a straight face -- some kind of body lotion. He said that his skin is quite dried out and itchy because of the dryness there.

I don't have the exact schedule for you for departure on Saturday and the details of Alaska and from then on, but we should be getting those by tomorrow, hopefully.

In China, as those of you who were on the other trip remember, the schedules are done day-by-day and they are usually approved by the two parties late in the evening and are distributed to the press early in the morning.

Eric also suggests that you bring your own supply of all the plain paper and carbon that you need because the Chinese prefer not to use your standard Western Union or ITT forms and, in fact, use of those forms could delay your copy, so bring plain paper and carbon paper and bring all you think you will need for the whole trip.

Bob Mead will be coming back here tomorrow. He has been in China and he is going to bring with him some forms that you will need to fill out. These forms are security forms and you can fill them out before you leave or on the plane going over. You will have plenty of time and you need to fill out two copies.

The Press Office will collect these forms on the press plane and turn them over to the Chinese officials at the airport and then the Chinese officials will use those forms to give you your press card. You should carry your press card with you at all times in China. It is a card which in effect gives you the authority to practice journalism in China.

A second card also will be given to you, and this will probably be handed out at the press center. It is written in Chinese and it will permit you to first of all enter and leave the press hotel, which is the Minzu, and also you should carry it with you because if you get lost in Peking -- what the card basically says in Chinese is that you are a foreigner and that you are staying at so and such hotel and to please help you get back there. (Laughter)

Eric has asked me to bring up a subject that he feels should be called to your attention, and that is behavior in China. The Chinese have been extremely gracious to the advance team, very helpful and cooperative, and Eric has found it to be the nature of the Chinese that he has encountered on this trip to be courteous and he hopes that our press party will make an effort to reciprocate the courtesies.

He suggests, for instance, letting Chinese enter an elevator first, offering an American cigarette in return for the offer of a Chinese cigarette, just the common courtesies -- thank you and please, and so forth. It will reciprocate for the kind of treatment our advance team has received.

Press facilities: At the airport there will be 10 long distance telephones. The press center is at the Minzu, as I said, also known as a Nationalities Hotel. The press center will be on the 10th floor. There are 20 long distance telephones and 10 Telex machines in the press center.

Phone calls can be made collect and we also think -- we will have to nail this down -- that you can use your phone credit card.

If you use the Telex, you need to pay for it with a UIT communications card.

Q What is UIT?

MR. NESSEN: We will check that out for you.

Tomorrow, as I say, we should be giving you details of the schedule.

Eric has one final word, which I guess those of you who have been there before know, and that is that the food is just superb.

Q Ron, on the possibility of telephone credit cards not being permitted, what will one do then?

MR. NESSEN: Make them collect.

Q Or pay cash?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think they will take cash.

Q Ron, the last time we were able to phone readily from our rooms in the Nationalities. Is there anything to indicate we can't do that this time?

MR. NESSEN: I will ask Annie, who is taking care of all of the arrangements.

Q Is this the same hotel we were in last time?

MR. NESSEN: It is, yes.

Q Did Eric say whether the 20 long distance phones in the Minzu -- whether they put any more lines available at the Shanghai heads? Usually what it is, no matter how many phones they have upstairs they have only two lines out of Shanghai.

MR. NESSEN: I will ask that. I will take all your questions and get answers for them.

Q You say the press center is at the Minzu?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Last time the press center was adjacent to the hotel.

MR. NESSEN: Eric says the press facilities are on the 10th floor and they are somewhat small but, he feels, adequate.

Q They are about as big as this room?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q I know you don't want to get into day-by-day travel, but is it true we will not spend Saturday night in Anchorage but go directly to Tokyo?

MR. NESSEN: You will go directly to Peking. You will get into Peking the night before the President.

Q What about a Kissinger briefing tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: Somebody will have a briefing before we go.

Q Do you know what day?

MR. NESSEN: I am hoping tomorrow. It depends somewhat on making some arrangements I haven't made yet.

Q Is there a refueling stop?

MR. NESSEN: We think in Yokota; somewhere in Japan.

Q When will we be arriving?

MR. NESSEN: All this is not locked up, but what the general outlook is is that you will arrive in Peking somewhere between 9:00 and 11:00 on Sunday night and the President will arrive early to mid-afternoon on Monday, with the exception of the Air Force One pool.

Q That is local Chinese time?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, Chinese time.

The way I think we have it worked out is that everyone can cover the pipeline in Alaska, file, and then go on to Peking, with the other event and the overnight in Alaska being covered by the Air Force One pool or people you may send from your West Coast bureaus.

Q What time is the pipeline event?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't nailed it down yet.

Q Does that mean we go to the pipeline physically or only a pool to the pipeline and we then file what the pool gives us?

MR. NESSEN: The UIT is the correct designation of the credit card. You can phone from your rooms and there will be more details along the line in your press notes. I don't frankly have enough on Saturday's and Sunday's events to go beyond that general outline of Alaska.

Q The President will be spending the overnight in the Anchorage area?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q You say there is another event Saturday night?

MR. NESSEN: I think there is an event for Senator Stevens' birthday in Anchorage some time Sunday afternoon.

Q No overnight for the press before they get to Peking?

MR. NESSEN: That is right, yes.

The President is taping a Thanksgiving message to the Nation today for release at 6 o'clock Eastern Time tomorrow. ABC is the pool for the taping, which will be done in the Cabinet Room. To get the videotape of this you should contact Mike Duffy at ABC-TV, 393-7700. He hopes to have them ready at 6 o'clock today.

Those of you who want audiotape of the President's Thanksgiving message to the Nation should contact the radio desk at ABC. The phone number is also 393-7700, or you can make your own tapes when it is played through the mult system in the press room at 2:15 today.

The transcript which we are putting out will be available later this afternoon, also embargoed for 6 o'clock tomorrow night.

Q Is this a newsy-type thing?

Q Is this his Thanksgiving Day proclamation that has already been released?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is a message proclaiming Thanksgiving and this sort of comments upon it.

Q On a scale of two, how would you rate the message? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: At the direction of the President 17 agencies and departments of the Executive Branch will make public tomorrow their plans to be more responsive to the American consumer.

If you recall, the President had a meeting here with various agencies and departments to tell them that he wanted them to take steps to be more responsive and this will be published in tomorrow's Federal Register and will be available to the press at the briefing tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock in Room 450 of the EOB.

Q Ron, is that the Federal Register which is available tomorrow morning?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it is.

Q Tomorrow morning?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Does that include the FEA, Ron, insofar as issuing press statements that you were sure that I had read --

MR. NESSEN: Bill Baroody and Virginia Knauer will conduct the briefing which will be open to all media consumers representatives of each of the departments and agencies, and also will be available to answer specific questions about their own specific plans.

Q Did you give a time?

MR. NESSEN: Two o'clock tomorrow afternoon in Room 450 of the EOB.

In addition to this, the President has approved a plan which calls for consumer conferences to be held in 10 cities during January to make consumers more aware of the services available to them from the departments and agencies. Let me run through the cities since they are some of those you represent.

All in January now -- Chicago on the 13th; Kansas City on the 14th; Boston on the 16th; Atlanta on the 19th; Houston on the 21st; Philadelphia on the 23rd; Denver on the 26th, San Francisco on the 29th and Los Angeles on the 30th.

Bill Baroody's office and Virginia Knauer's office have more details on this.

Q That is only nine.

Q Will the President appear at any of these things?

MR. NESSEN: The President will not participate, no.

Let me try and find the other city and the other date.

Q Are these things set up like the regular conferences the President had?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to check with Bill Baroody and Virginia Knauer because I don't know, frankly. But if you want to cover the briefing tomorrow in Room 450, contact Gail Campbell at 456-6623 by 5 o'clock today and she will take care of clearing you.

Q Won't a White House pass get you in automatically?

MR. NESSEN: Check with Gail, but I think so.

I owe an apology to Les Kinsolving because yesterday I said I was sure he had seen the press release from the FEA. It was a draft press release from the FEA which had not been actually issued but had been prepared by the FEA to answer questions on the matter. I think you did get in touch with them and they did give you the information on the press release.

I apologize for that. I think I also was excessively cryptic yesterday on the Pat Moynihan story. I think everybody has probably figured out by now that Pat is definitely staying. He has no plans to resign and so forth.

Q Why were you so cryptic?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I was in one of my cryptic moods. (Laughter)

The real reason was that very little of the meeting was taken up -- I mean very little of the meeting was taken up with any discussion of Pat leaving and I didn't want to give the impression that a good deal of the meeting had been taken up with that. I leaned so far backward that I fell on my head.

Q When will you be able to distribute the briefing book for the trip?

MR. NESSEN: I am told they will be ready Thanksgiving. Friday they will definitely be ready.

Q About the meeting with Ezra Taft Benson, after this very gracious apology, I don't mean to throw a difficult question right off the bat --

MR. NESSEN: Oh, come on, now. You are too old to learn new tricks, Les. (Laughter)

What is it all about? What are you asking?

Q He is President of the Council of the Twelve of the Mormon Church. I am wondering what would he be meeting with Apostle Benson about?

MR. NESSEN: That is a tough one but Ezra Taft Benson is in Washington on church business and asked for a brief opportunity to come in and have a courtesy call with the President. This is a 10-minute courtesy call.

As far as I know, the subjects that are likely to be discussed are --



Q Salvation? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I think the President was planning to congratulate Mr. Benson on a project run by the Church to settle Vietnamese refugees. A social service agency of the Church has settled 560 Vietnamese refugees at no cost to the Government and the President wanted to congratulate him for that.

Mr. Benson also made a speech in October which was brought to the President's attention, and the President will comment on that and then Mr. Benson will speak on whatever matters he has to bring up.

Q What was the speech, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: It was in Denver. The Vice President held one of his Domestic Policy Meetings in Denver on October 21 with Nelson Rockefeller presiding, and Ezra Taft Benson made a statement there that the President wanted to comment on.

Q Did he like it or not like it?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he did. (Laughter)

Q Ron, do you expect a statement on New York at any time today?

MR. NESSEN: Not today, no.

Q Tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: As I understand it, the State Legislature has not acted yet.

Q Governor Carey says they have achieved an understanding -- there is a need for some refinement in language -- but there will be passed a \$100 million tax proposal. Would that satisfy the President if that were passed?

MR. NESSEN: The President is not passing judgment on what method New York State uses to --

Q Is the tax proposal then the bottom line?

MR. NESSEN: The tax proposal or any other proposal, any other particular proposal is not a matter for the President to say. I have said over and over again that the President is not recommending or endorsing any particular course of action.

What he said he would review was what steps the State and City had taken to assume their primary responsibility for the proper fiscal management of the City's affairs but, as for which particular steps, he doesn't have any comment or recommendation in that area.

Q Ron, this morning Secretary Simon was quoted as saying that, even if the tax package is passed, a response from the White House might not be immediately forthcoming. Are we to assume there might not be the response before the President leaves for China?

MR. NESSEN: I would think he would keep the promise he made last week to review what action they take.

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Q Ron, will there be any news on a Supreme Court Justice nominee prior to the trip to China?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a timetable, Saul. I just don't have any feeling of when it is coming.

Q Did he get that tenth city?

MR. NESSEN: The tenth city is Washington, D. C. in early February, I don't have a date.

Q Has the President made a decision to shut down the ABM site in Grand Forks?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know enough about that situation to give an intelligent answer. I think you should check with the Pentagon.

Q To get back to New York, the Carey proposal on taxes, as far as anybody knows, that is the only thing on the legislature's agenda at this time. Is it fair to assume that the President will act on the basis of this or not act on the basis of this particular tax proposal?

MR. NESSEN: To go back to the statement, he said he would review what action they take without endorsing any particular course of action.

Q Can this be fairly called a Rumpelstiltskin approach?

Q If he can get a headline, you can. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: You have to explain that to me. I don't understand that one.

Q I read a story to the effect that, contrary to the public attitude around here that the President welcomes competition, that the President was personally angry at Reagan's entering the race and that the phone call from Mr. Reagan to Mr. Ford announcing that Mr. Reagan was going to enter the race was not all that friendly but bordered on being icy and that the President is miffed and has considerable feelings about Reagan entering. Is that the President's attitude?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear the phone call. You know what the President's view of the campaign is. I don't think I can add anything to it.

Q Is it possible the President has two views, the public view you state here and the private view which is apparently leaking out from other sources?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the other sources are that are leaking and I don't know what they are leaking. I think you know the President's view that he is confident he will win the nomination and election.

Q Excuse me, this story went even further to suggest that in that call with Mr. Reagan, the President suggested that Reagan's entry in the race may indeed cost the President the election because of the divisiveness within the Republican Party might lay it wide open to the Democrats.

Is the President concerned that the Reagan challenge could cost the Republicans the election?

MR. NESSEN: He expects to win the nomination and the election, Walt.

Q Has the President been told that Senator Mathias has raised the possibilities of a third-party race, and does he have any reaction?

MR. NESSEN: You mean something different from what has been in the paper the last couple of weeks.

Q Yes, this morning.

MR. NESSEN: I haven't seen that myself and don't know that the President has.

Q Since the President is not afraid of Mr. Reagan, will he accept the New Hampshire radio invitation to debate?

MR. NESSEN: He hasn't made any firm plans for campaigning in New Hampshire. As he said before, his main job is to concentrate on being President and he will be judged by his record as President.

Q Has the President gotten the written text of the energy bill yet and, if not, what is the delay?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. He hasn't gotten it and you will have to ask the Hill what the delay is.

Q When the Secretary of State was here the other day with Ambassador Moynihan, did they bring up the Middle East with the President. Did they talk about the Middle East?

MR. NESSEN: I was not in the meeting. I know the bulk of the meeting was taken up with future policy in the UN. Whether that was an aspect of it, I don't know.

Q Can you tell us, do you know how the President feels about the situation in Syria and Israel at this time?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean "at this time?"

Q I mean as of yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: Haven't we talked about what the President's position is?

Q I know his position but the report is that the negotiations are going badly there.

MR. NESSEN: I just don't think there is any change in the position, Cliff. The United States believes that there needs to be continued forward momentum toward the next step and toward a permanent settlement. We stand ready to help any of the parties that want us to help them. It is up to them to choose the format or the method for taking the next step.

There has just been no change in the American position.

Q Ron, Schlesinger said on Sunday that he felt that the United States, thereby the President, did not act forcefully enough and quickly enough in protesting to the Russian violations or ambiguities in the Soviet compliance to SALT I. One of the aviation magazines came out with an editorial yesterday much more strongly than Schlesinger saying we are not taking strong action, the Soviets are violating SALT I. Do you have anything on that?

MR. NESSEN: I think, John, you read part of the Secretary's comments and not the other part. In answer to your question, he said that, among the things that you have just quoted, he also said there are sufficient ambiguities in the agreement that one cannot demonstrate conclusively that any particular action on their part is a violation.

Now, you know, the question of Soviet alleged violations has come up over and over again over the months and I think the President has said, and others have said publicly, that there is no evidence that the Soviets are violating the SALT agreements.

The President has also indicated publicly before -- going back many months -- that some ambiguities have arisen which relate to a precise interpretation of some provisions of the SALT agreements. Now these ambiguities have been referred to the body set-up to consider them, which is the Standing Consultative Commission in Geneva, a joint American-Soviet body established in 1972 to look into just these very questions.

As a result of these references to the Consultative Commission, most of the ambiguities have been resolved successfully. There are a few remaining ones and we are seeking clarification of the remaining ones, so there is absolutely no difference from what has been the case all along.

Q Ron, there were some stories over the weekend to the effect that the President might meet with Brezhnev sometime in January or sometime early next year in a place perhaps other than the United States. Do you have anything on that?

MR. NESSEN: There is no meeting planned between the President and Brezhnev at this time.

Q Is there work underway on that possibility, however?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q You don't rule it out, of course?

MR. NESSEN: There is just no meeting planned.

Q Along the same lines, Secretary Kissinger told the reporters in Detroit, I believe this morning, that there is a possibility -- but it is not absolutely firm yet -- that he would meet with Soviet leaders sometime next month to see what could be done to break up the log jam on the SALT talks. Does that in any way figure in connection with your response to the question?

MR. NESSEN: This is something Henry has said I know in the last previous press conference before today and certainly in several others, that he would be willing to discuss SALT issues should the situation seem to warrant it with Soviet officials. But I don't have anything on the likelihood of such a meeting. What he said today is what he has said over the last several press conferences on that issue.

Q Even if no Ford-Brezhnev meeting is planned, does the President think one might be fruitful at this time?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has said that he feels that the prospects of a SALT agreement being concluded are good but that the United States is under no timetable to conclude such an agreement.

Q So he disagrees with Mr. Schlesinger that the chances are less than 50-50?

MR. NESSEN: I would rather put it in terms of what the President believes.

Q Does the President believe that a SALT agreement, a completion of a SALT agreement, is now absolutely necessary as a prerequisite for an interim meeting with Brezhnev?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will leave it where it is, Walt.

Q That is an important question because that is what we have hinged on all the time and I am trying to see if there is a shift in policy and tone here.

I will ask it again, is it the view of the President that a SALT agreement must be completed before he meets with Brezhnev?

MR. NESSEN: I will give you the answer again, since you gave me the question again, I think I will leave it where it is.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 12:25 P.M. EST)