

This Copy For _____

NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH BILL GREENER

AT 11:58 A.M. EST

DECEMBER 17, 1975

WEDNESDAY

MR. GREENER: I think Sheila's office has posted the press coverage plans for the Christmas Ball this evening and her office will be handling all the coverage.

Just to summarize the details, the plans call for open coverage of the arrival of the guests in the Diplomatic Reception Room as well as of the photo of the President and Mrs. Ford and Susan on the staircase, also on the beginning of the dancing in the East Room.

The press that is covering should assemble in the Press Room by 8:30. There will be pool coverage of the President and Mrs. Ford and Susan greeting the Christmas carollers inside the West Hall at about 9:15 and that pool has been posted.

Photo coverage of the evening will end after the photos of the start of the dancing. Writers and reporters will be free to mingle with the guests throughout the evening. Black tie or a long dress is required for writers and reporters, formal wear not required for photographers.

One other thing on parties. Let me announce that Friday night's press party is an off-the-record party, and we will remind those who are not here today as they come in the door, when they are welcomed that it is off-the-record. The only reason I am making that statement is so that we can all enjoy ourselves and not be concerned about coverage during the evening.

I believe that is all the announcements I have. As I stated, I think we can do this fairly fast maybe.

Q Yesterday you told us the President was seriously concerned about the increased amount of Soviet and Cuban arms and equipment going into Angola and we wrote that story, yet you didn't tell us about what the American role is in Angola. Inasmuch as we wrote the White House view yesterday about the President's concern about what the Soviets are doing, can you tell us today what the Americans are doing in Angola?

MR. GREENER: No.

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Q Can you tell us who authorized whatever the Americans are doing in Angola?

MR. GREENER: Well, I think that is a subject of closed Senate debate today and let's wait until that is over, Walt.

Q If it is a closed Senate debate, it is not a public debate and perhaps we can talk about it here.

MR. GREENER: Well, as I stated, I have nothing further to add to it, Walt.

Q Did the President authorize whatever the American role is in Angola presently?

MR. GREENER: The President authorizes the role of the United States in any country.

Q Well, the reason I ask is because I understand from what I have read that acting CIA Director Colby opposed American involvement in Angola and the CIA opposed it, and that being the case I would like to know who authorized it or who recommended it?

MR. GREENER: I have nothing to add to what I have already said, Walt, on the subject of Angola.

Q Yesterday you expected us to write the story that the White House is concerned about the Soviet and Cuban roles in Angola and yet the White House is not prepared to tell us what the American role is there.

MR. GREENER: That is correct.

Q That is unreasonable.

Q Is the President prepared to transfer funds from the Defense Department to the Central Intelligence Agency for activities in Angola?

MR. GREENER: As I said before, I have nothing further to say on the subject of Angola than what I have already said.

Q Can you tell us why, Bill?

MR. GREENER: I think that when something is said on it the President will say it.

Q When might that be?

Q Do you expect the President to hold a press conference?

Q Do you know -- does the President have a news conference or a speech in mind?

MR. GREENER: I don't at this time, Bob.

Q Would you rule out a speech or a news conference this week?

MR. GREENER: No.

Q You cannot rule it out?

MR. GREENER: I cannot rule it out but I would not encourage you to go on the assumption that there will be one, but I cannot rule it out.

Q Bill, have either Zarb or Dunlop threatened to resign if the President refuses to sign their pet projects.

MR. GREENER: Not to my knowledge, no, David.

Q Bill, is the President encouraged by that vote last night in the House that failed to get a two-thirds majority on the tax cut bill, that procedural vote indicating that they might not be able to override a veto?

MR. GREENER: He didn't discuss that specifically. He still feels, as you know, as he stated, that he would veto any tax bill that comes down here without a spending ceiling connected with it and he expects and hopes that it will be sustained.

Q Bill, is the President still planning to veto that as soon as possible and is there a possibility that he might use a pocket veto so that the question of override would not occur?

MR. GREENER: Well, the President will be waiting for the bill, he does not have it yet; and as for exactly how he will handle it, he has not stated, Fran.

Q Bill, didn't he say that he would veto it before Christmas.

MR. GREENER: He said that he would take that into consideration, the request that they had given him that he veto it.

Q You said yesterday that he would veto it this week.

Q I asked specifically.

MR. GREENER: If it is received, we anticipate that he will veto it. I just said that he had not specifically stated. It depends on when it gets here and what happens how he handles it.

Q Well, it is coming down this afternoon.

MR. GREENER: Then you know more than I do about it, Bob.

Q But you are not backing off of your promise or your statement yesterday that if it arrives here he will veto it this week?

MR. GREENER: If it arrives here, he will take immediate action is what he said.

Q Well, that is different.

MR. GREENER: I am sorry, I didn't mean to mislead you.

Q I want to know if you rule out the possibility of a pocket veto.

MR. GREENER: I have not asked him that specifically but I will.

Q Bill, doesn't immediate action --

MR. GREENER: Rule it out? Yes, I think it would, Ted. I just said I have not specifically asked him that question.

Q Will you?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Bill, yesterday you said that you would check to see what is the White House justification for the limousine use of these 17,000 limousines. You said you would check.

Q How many?

Q \$17,000. There are 800 of them estimated by Proxmire on charges that this is a violation of the U.S. Code.

Q Will you send a car out for the answer, please?
(Laughter)

Q And also the missionary episode. You said that you would ask about that. The CIA use of missionaries but not Fulbright scholars.

MR. GREENER: I have nothing on that, Les, for you yet.

Q You could not find anything, Bill? Did you inquire or is it just something you overlooked?

MR. GREENER: It is just something I overlooked, Les.

Q Would you check into it?

Q Bill, I want to put this question on the record in this form. In view of the American experience in Vietnam, why is the White House position on Angola of "no comment" about the American role at all defensible? How do you defend that position of "no comment" on American involvement in Angola after the American record in Vietnam?

MR. GREENER: I think you are drawing a parallel which does not exist. The President or the Administration does not feel that there is any parallel between Angola and Vietnam, as we stated yesterday.

Q Bill, is President Ford willing to rule George Bush out of contention for the Vice Presidency in 1976 in order to assist his nomination in the Senate?

MR. GREENER: Well, the President discussed George's opening statement with him and concurs in that statement and I just would refer you to the exact statement that he made.

Q You didn't ask him today in response to the recommendations by Senators Humphrey and I think Jackson that he be categorically ruled out.

MR. GREENER: I did discuss it with him and he said just what I just said and that is that he stands behind the opening statement that Mr. Bush made before the committee.

Q But that was not included in the opening statement, it came up in the questioning.

MR. GREENER: No, he had an opening statement in which he explained his position and I just said that he stands with that.

Q But it takes it a step further than that in the questioning and the request that Ford act to remove him as a possible Vice Presidential candidate.

MR. GREENER: Well, all I can say is just what I said, Fran, that he discussed this with him, that he agrees with that position and that --

Q That means that he would not rule him out. Bush says that he would not rule himself out for any such position.

Q Well, I get the impression, going back to Angola, that what you are saying is that the President is getting together some kind of statement on Angola that will be released in some forum somewhere in the not too distant future and that the White House is aware of the need to make some sort of statement, that the President is aware that he must personally make some statement, and that we will get it somewhere down the line and it is just being put together now, and you are just sort of getting your cards together.

MR. GREENER: John, you are making more assumptions than I think you should have from my statement. All I said was that when something is said on this, it will be said by the President. I was asked whether any such thing was being contemplated -- would I rule out the possibility of any such thing, and I said I would not.

Q Is he distressed at all by the nature of the debate that is now going on in Congress? You told us yesterday that he thinks that there ought to be a discussion on the geopolitical significance, but is he distressed at all by the nature of the debate that is going on on the Hill?

MR. GREENER: You mean the public debate or the debate that is going on now in the Senate?

Q I am talking about both, actually.

MR. GREENER: I think he feels it is important for them to receive all sides of it and I think they will in that debate, and so does he.

Q The public?

MR. GREENER: The Senators that are discussing it at this point, Bob, was all I was answering.

Q He does not feel it is important for the public to know what is going on at this stage?

MR. GREENER: Yes, he does.

Q Well, then could you tell us what is going on?

MR. GREENER: I don't have the information for you, Bob.

Q He feels it is important but he has not either given you any information or, if he has, he has said you are not to give it out. How, then, is it to get out to the public?

MR. GREENER: Well, I think it will get out and I think you will understand it, Jim. That is all I can say.

Q He does not feel it is important now, is what you mean.

Q Going back to Bob's question, you certainly seem to be implying that there is going to be some kind of White House statement or Presidential statement on Angola.

MR. GREENER: I think there have been some statements already made on Angola, one by Ambassador Moynihan -- Secretary Kissinger.

Q We are not asking about what has been said up to now but, rather, what might be said, and twice you have now implied that there is some kind of statement or Presidential statement being contemplated without going into the details or without going into what it might contain. Why can't you at least tell us that much, that there is something being contemplated?

MR. GREENER: I don't know that it is being contemplated, Jim. I simply said that when it is said I assume it will be said by the President.

Q But just a minute ago you said that you were confident or some words to the effect that you felt the public would be informed on this matter. How is it to be informed?

MR. GREENER: That is something still to be decided.

Q Bill, repeating in some sense a question that has been asked you before, but I would like to repeat it, do you, as spokesman for the President, question the accuracy of the information put out the other day by "a senior American official" or "high American official" to the effect that a total of arms and other assistance worth about \$50 million has been and is being provided to two factions in Angola? Do you question the accuracy of that information?

MR. GREENER: I don't question the accuracy or not question it. I am not going to confirm or deny the report.

Q Bill, are you aware or do you have any impression that the President is concerned that our intelligence about Angola is not what it might be, that the CIA has not been put into question in recent months and last year, and does he feel the CIA's effectiveness was undermined in any way and that we would have had a better intelligence job in Angola had it not been for the revelations and the controversy surrounding the CIA? He has expressed his concern in the past that the CIA's effectiveness not be undermined.

MR. GREENER: I understand that. All I can tell you is that the President feels he is receiving adequate intelligence information on the activities in Angola.

Q Bill, has the President ruled out any current or future use of American troops in Angola?

MR. GREENER: I have not heard the question arise except that there is no current use of American troops in Angola.

Q You don't know that he has assured Senators or --

MR. GREENER: I do not know. I would have to check that for you.

Q Did you ask him about Les Gelb's story this morning in the Times?

MR. GREENER: What part of it?

Q All of it.

Q Well, the general tone of it was that the President is not prepared to commit American troops, is not interested in doing that.

MR. GREENER: Well, let me just give you this one thing. I checked on this last night late and also this morning.

On the Gelb story, we have no exploitative interests in Angola nor do we contemplate any form of U.S. combat intervention there.

But to repeat again, we are concerned --

Q Now whose statement is this? Yours or the President's, or what?

MR. GREENER: It is my statement reflecting the President's position.

Q What do you mean by "combat intervention"?

MR. GREENER: Where people are fighting.

Q Does this include spotter aircraft and advisers who don't get into combat?

MR. GREENER: Well, there are no U.S. advisers or pilots active in Angola.

Q U.S. advisers or U.S. military advisers?

MR. GREENER: U.S. advisers.

Q Is that the whole statement, Bill?

MR. GREENER: No, I had some more.

Q Let's hear the rest of the statement.

MR. GREENER: We are concerned about the extent of outside intervention in Angola as we have stated before.

Q Outside intervention, did you say?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Q Bill, despite the disclaimer that there are any parallels with Vietnam, this statement unfortunately takes us back a few years to the position where we were talking about U.S. combat troops and advisers. There is a report that there are at least eight CIA advisers. Can you deny that there are American CIA advisers in Angola?

MR. GREENER: I will have to check that. As I said, I checked yesterday, late last night. There were no U.S. advisers or U.S. pilots in Angola.

Q You said last night no U.S. Government sponsored personnel, either pilots or advisers.

MR. GREENER: That is correct.

Q Now if you can say that, that would deny Bob Pierpoint's question.

MR. GREENER: I assume there was. I was just going to double-check a specific new question.

Q What are you contemplating? Are you willing to say that the President's position is that he does not contemplate any form of non-combat intervention -- non-combat or combat?

MR. GREENER: What is non-combat intervention?

Q Advisers who don't get out and shoot people.

Q Training personnel.

Q Military non-combat personnel.

Q The stuff we started out with in Vietnam.

Q People in a military non-combat role, Bill.

MR. GREENER: We will just have to check that. I just gave you exactly what I had and that was U.S. combat intervention.

Q Also in checking on the advisers, whether there are any U.S. funded or U.S. supported advisers in Angola.

MR. GREENER: I understand your question.

Q And also "exploitative" does not rule out any U.S. interests in Angola, obviously. Could you tell us what the U.S. interest in Angola is?

MR. GREENER: I believe Ambassador Moynihan has already spoken to the subject and I would say that those are our interests.

Q Would it be possible to check this question of advisers now? This word "combat" in your statement, as has already been pointed out, is precisely the same kind of language that was used for so many years in Vietnam while we had at the end, before combat troops were sent in, some 26,000 advisers in Vietnam. So could you find out whether this statement also applies to non-combat personnel?

MR. GREENER: Yes. She is doing it right now, Jim.

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Q What is an exploitative interest in a country? I don't understand that phrase. What does that mean?

MR. GREENER: We have no desire to exploit Angola in any way.

Q Including the natural resources? I mean aren't we protecting resources that we might choose to buy at some point and which we bought in the past, oil and other resources?

MR. GREENER: I would not consider when you make a purchase between countries that you are exploiting them.

Q Do we have any exploitative interests in the world anywhere?

MR. GREENER: Not that I know of, no.

Q Bill, can I go back to the theme Walt Rogers had before, I still don't really understand why it is that you can't say anything about our activities there. I don't think you have really answered that question at all. You have said that when something is said that the President will say it but are we ashamed of what we are doing over there or is there some specific reason that you can give us for not being able to confirm or deny the stories that have come out?

MR. GREENER: Not beyond what I have already given you, Dick.

Q You have not given us anything.

MR. GREENER: I am just simply standing on the statements I made on Angola.

Q How can you, as a spokesman for the President, stand up there and condemn the Soviet and Cuban role in Angola and not tell us whether the Americans have a role or what it is? I mean, how can you do it?

MR. GREENER: It is very difficult. (Laughter)

Q Bill, I believe you have said, or come pretty close to saying, that the Soviet interference over there would be a breach of the SALT agreement. Would any intervention by us --

MR. GREENER: SALT? I never mentioned SALT.

Q Not the SALT but any intervention by us be a breach of that agreement?

MR. GREENER: We are saying that it is not helpful to detente, the actions that they are taking with the massive intervention of arms and men from the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Q Do we interpret the Soviet Union to have a combat role in Angola at this time?

MR. GREENER: I can only speak to the combat role of the Cubans at this time.

Q And?

Q Is that a combat role?

MR. GREENER: Pardon?

Q Are the Cubans in a combat role?

MR. GREENER: I do not know. I know the troops are there.

Q But they could be non-combative trainers and advisers.

MR. GREENER: I suppose. (Laughter)

Q Bill, on this statement of yours you have in effect said that there are no American advisers of any kind in Angola but, unfortunately, that does not rule out the strong possibility that some of them are working in Zaire across the border and directing activities in Angola. Could you tell us whether there are any advisers advising the Angolans in any place, whether there or anywhere else?

MR. GREENER: Bob, I just said that someone is going to have to check on all these technical questions that you are giving me. All I had was the simple point that there were no U.S. advisers or pilots active in Angola.

Q And over Angola?

MR. GREENER: And over Angola, yes.

Q Or under? (Laughter)

Q Seriously, they could be based in Zaire flying into Angola.

MR. GREENER: I understand what you are saying.

Q Bill, what does that word "active" mean?
(Laughter)

MR. GREENER: John, it means nothing more than just what I said.

Q Well, does it mean that they are in Angola but inactive?

MR. GREENER: No, it does not.

Q It means they are not in Angola?

MR. GREENER: That's correct.

Q Under? (Laughter)

Q Bill, this is not a joke.

MR. GREENER: I am not trying to make a joke of it, Bob.

Q We have had the same situation with Vietnam before, as you well know.

MR. GREENER: Better than most, Bob.

Q You just said that it is a technical question whether they are operating in Zaire advising the Angolans.

MR. GREENER: I did not mean technical, I meant simply-"specific" would have been a better word. You have asked about eight or nine specific questions which I do not have answers to and I said we would check.

Q All right. You said yesterday you would find out how many penetrations of the White House grounds had been made from the Secret Service and you have not come up with that answer. Have you found that?

MR. GREENER: I don't know if they have that or not.

Could you get that total?

Q I want to go one step further.

MR. GREENER: Do you want to ask them again?

Q To follow up on Bob's question, just let me ask. You said you would check on this. When do you think you would give us the information?

MR. GREENER: I have no idea, Dick.

Q You said they are checking now. Quite obviously we are all very hopeful that somebody can come back with an answer at least to this adviser question while this briefing is underway.

MR. GREENER: I said she is trying to get that, Jim.

Q While we are waiting for that, I would like you to explain to us, please, why this situation is not parallel to the early American involvement in Vietnam?

You say there are no parallels and we are supposed to take that on faith. I would like more information on why this is not parallel.

MR. GREENER: Well, basically, as you know, there were advisers in Vietnam and I am saying there are none in Angola, and that seems to be a big difference.

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Q But there is, indeed, a convergence of big power interests in Angola as there was in Vietnam; there is a civil war as there was in Vietnam; the Soviet Union and the United States are on two opposite sides as there was in Vietnam; and there is a very strong likelihood that the Americans are pumping some sort of assistance into Angola as was done in Vietnam and we are not absolutely certain about what role the Americans are playing in Angola as indeed the Americans played a role in Vietnam.

Now, can you tell us why this situation is not parallel?

MR. GREENER: Just exactly what I said -- the early activities in Vietnam included the activities of advisers and this does not include any American advisers.

Q That is why we are so anxious to find out whether any advisers are contemplated, Bill.

MR. GREENER: I understand your question, Jim.

Thank you.

Q That says he was confirmed by the Senate.
(Laughter)

Q Just in the nick of time.

MR. GREENER: We do not have --

Q Who is this speaking?

MR. GREENER: Bill Greener. Can't you hear?

Come on now, Walt. All right. You have been bugging me.

We do not have, nor do we contemplate sending, military nor non-military advisers to Angola. As I said last night, there are no U.S. Government sponsored advisers in Angola.

Q Bill, could you run through that once more since we have struggled through it?

MR. GREENER: All right.

We do not have, nor do we contemplate sending, military nor non-military advisers to Angola. As I said last night, there are no U.S. Government sponsored advisers in Angola.

Q What about Zaire?

MR. GREENER: Secretary Kissinger said that we have tried to be helpful and provide "some assistance" to neighboring friendly countries, and he declined to go any further.

Q Can you run through that again, Bill?

MR. GREENER: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger said that we have tried to be helpful and provide "some assistance" to neighboring friendly countries. The Secretary declined on further questioning to go any further.

Q Bill, what is the White House prepared to do -- I think this came up yesterday. Roy Ennis of CORE is recruiting an army of U.S. veterans to go to Angola. Is the White House prepared to restrain this in any way or just take a neutral attitude as if they were tourists or what? What is the attitude on this? This made page 1 the other day.

MR. GREENER: This is simply a matter, as I pointed out to you, of what this would do to their U.S. citizenship and this is a matter which Justice is prepared to discuss.

Q I see. In other words, the Government, the Ford Administration would think of possibly revoking their citizenship?

MR. GREENER: The Ford Administration would think of adhering to the law which was passed that deals with that matter.

Q Bill, you said you were going to check yesterday on whether or not there have been any U.S.-Soviet communications involved in Angola in the last week or 10 days.

MR. GREENER: I have nothing further on that, Dick.

Q Bill, what political role does President Ford envisage, if any, for Vice President Rockefeller?

MR. GREENER: I have not heard him discuss this at all.

Q Will you check on that?

MR. GREENER: Certainly.

Q There is confusion because after the first Rockefeller briefing out here after the letter, Rocky said he had no role. Nessen came back out and told us Rocky would have a role in the campaign. Rocky came back out and said today he didn't figure he would campaign in either New Hampshire or Florida. So is he going to campaign or isn't he? Does the President anticipate Rocky will campaign for him or not?

MR. GREENER: Well, the Vice President has already stated that he would be willing to help.

Q That is not really what he said.

Q He said the other way today, Bill.

MR. GREENER: He only answered specifically on two, as I recall -- Florida and New Hampshire.

Q No, no. I asked him about across the board, not just Florida and New Hampshire. I asked that specifically and then talked to him about across the board in the primary season and his answer strongly indicated that he was ruling out any role on that.

MR. GREENER: Well, in answer to the question you are asking me, what the President contemplates, I will be glad to ask him.

Q Do you know, Bill, whether the President considers it legal for the Vice President to campaign for him? That was the question Rockefeller raised at his news conference over at EOB when he bowed out as running mate. Today Rockefeller did not mention the legal problem. Has that been worked out?

MR. GREENER: That was a legal problem only under the new law of who pays for those activities, is what he said. He could not pay for them himself nor could it be done out of the office, and that is quite true. It will be paid for by the President Ford Committee or the RNC if it were for the National Committee in some way.

Q Can you tell us if the President has made any decision or is close to one on either the common situs bill or the energy bill?

MR. GREENER: He has made no decision on either one of them.

Q Will he sign the New York City bill today?

MR. GREENER: The New York City bill, as you know, did not come down in a separate bill; it is approximately some \$11 billion. It is being analyzed and you know it includes almost everything -- Farmer's Home Administration, Special Milk Program, Food Stamp Program, Manpower Administration, Health Services. They are doing the analysis on it and as soon as it is completed it will go to the President.

Specifically on New York City, the President said as far as he knows that is perfectly acceptable.

Q Bill, since the President is concerned about what the Soviet Union is doing in Angola, has the President, the Secretary of State or anyone in the Administration contacted the Soviet Union in any way, either through a warning, through a threat, through a discussion or a diplomatic note urging them to cease and desist what they are doing?

MR. GREENER: This was the specific question that Dick asked me and I said I had nothing on that today.

Q Do you have any resignations to announce from the White House Press Office?

MR. GREENER: No, I don't.

I do have one announcement to make before you say thank you, and that is in response to a lot of requests for photos of General Scowcroft, there will be a photo opportunity this evening at 5 o'clock in his office.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 12:30 P.M. EST)