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NEWS CONFERENCE

#445

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 8:22 A.M. EST

FEBRUARY 25, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: The President made an unscheduled appearance at the senior staff meeting. He was applauded when he walked in. He congratulated and thanked the staff.

He referred to the victory in New Hampshire as "a great springboard" and he said "If we win a couple more" -- this is pretty much a direct quote -- "If we win a couple more -- and I think we will -- we will be ready for the finals" -- parenthetically he is talking about the November election -- "we will be ready for the finals and I think we will win there, too." Then he thanked everybody again and went on for his first meeting of the day.

It was reported to the senior staff after he had left by people who were gathering up the figures that not only is the President ahead in the popular vote, which you have seen, but he is leading in 19 out of the 21 delegate races and, of course, that is what the primaries are for, is to pick delegates to the Kansas City Convention, and he obviously is winning the vast majority of delegates in New Hampshire and he continues to feel that he will have the majority of the delegates locked up and, therefore, will have locked up the nomination considerably before it is time to go to Kansas City.

Q Was Rogers Morton in on the senior staff meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Rogers Morton was on NBC at the very moment of the senior staff meeting.

Q What did he actually say when he congratulated the staff? I mean, what did he mean?

MR. NESSEN: What was the word he used?

MR. CARLSON: "Congratulations for your maximum efforts and your staunch coolness."

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Q What maximum efforts by the senior staff?

MR. NESSEN: Sitting up half the night, for one thing. (Laughter)

Q How about all the night?

MR. NESSEN: No, really, for over the weeks helping him develop his policies.

Q Is he going to change his campaign strategy --

MR. NESSEN: Certainly not.

Q -- or is he going to continue to be President except on weekends?

MR. NESSEN: He has no choice. He is President.

Q Are we going to see the President at all, talk to him?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. Let me give you two additions to the schedule and I am going to put this on the telephone.

At 10:15 the President has a meeting with William Scranton and retiring Ambassador Patrick Moynihan in the Oval Office. I think you will probably be invited to join that.

Q Pictures?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Sound?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Any announcement?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't be surprised.

Then at 5 o'clock, the President has had a long-standing engagement to meet the members of the Inland Daily Press Association. These are people who meet in Washington once a year and the President has seen them during their previous meetings, both as President and Vice President. There are something like 200, roughly, editors and publishers of small and medium-sized newspapers, mostly in the Middle West. That is called the Inland Daily Press Association, at 5 o'clock in the East Room, and that will be open for full coverage and the President will speak to them and, just by way of guidance, I would say that that would be his opportunity today to comment in person, for you where it is coverable, on the results of New Hampshire.

Q Will he meet with any of the political people on assessing New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: I think probably late in the day he is probably going to sit down with some of the political people and have a go on what happened in New Hampshire.

Q Is that after their 2 o'clock session?

MR. NESSEN: It certainly would be, yes.

Q He is satisfied with the votes? I mean, he thinks he did --

MR. NESSEN: He is delighted with the votes.

Q He doesn't think it is a squeak-through?

MR. NESSEN: As one of your colleagues said, the winner is the winner and the loser is the loser. That was Mr. Broder. If you look at where he was two weeks ago, how far he came in such a relatively short period of time --

Q We don't know where he was two weeks ago. You never did tell us where you thought he was.

MR. NESSEN: The polls and surveys indicated he was perhaps as much as 15 points behind. Then the momentum turned and he closed the gap.

Q Was that a Presidential poll that indicated that, because I didn't see that?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check out exactly what the source of that is, but that was the feeling. He came quite far in a short length of time, overcame the big Reagan lead, and Reagan really gave it a shot. He was up there 21 days. The President was up there 56 hours. Reagan had the Governor, had the only Statewide newspaper, gave it everything he had and couldn't win, so obviously we are delighted that the President won.

Q Has he called Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Is he likely to?

MR. NESSEN: I will check that out.

Q Do you know what time the President went to bed last night?

MR. NESSEN: The President went to bed at about 11:30.

Q So it was before he had actually pulled ahead?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know it was, yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:35 A.M. EST

FEBRUARY 25, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: You saw the events this morning in which the President announced he is nominating William Scranton to be U.S. Representative to the United Nations. I am sure you are curious as to why Pat Moynihan didn't come. He was invited, initially said he thought he would be able to come, and then discovered he had an event midday in New York today to which he could not get time to get back and that is why he wasn't there.

Q Why did the President wait until after the New Hampshire primary to announce his nomination?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, he said he wanted Henry to be there this morning.

Q Any other reason?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any.

The President will have a meeting with Clare Boothe Luce about now. The President had been hoping to have this meeting for some months past, and there were conflicts on her schedule and the President's schedule, and it could never quite be arranged, and now it is.

Mrs. Luce, as you may know, is a member of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and has been since 1973. It is possible that they will talk some about the President's recent intelligence reorganization and also about some other matters. (Laughter)

Q What is he asking her to do with him? To try to get that passed, or what?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think she would be able to do that in her capacity as Foreign Intelligence Adviser.

Q Is he asking her to help him out in the campaign, or what?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Do you know if she has announced she is supporting Ford for President?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that, Bob.

Q Are you saying no to both of those, an appointment or the help in the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any appointment for Mrs. Luce, or whether the campaign matter will come up in this meeting.

Q What are the other matters?

MR. NESSEN: Basically, Mrs. Luce wrote an editorial in the Wall Street Journal a while back, and it laid out some of her feelings about America and its role in the world and its domestic situation, and that is what sparked the President's original interest in talking to her, was that editorial in the Wall Street Journal.

Q She is coming in at his request?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Is he going to get her to sort of be a disciple of this theory or something?

MR. NESSEN: No, he just wants to talk to her about it.

Then, this afternoon, at noon, there is a group coming in from the National League of Cities. The Executive Committee of the National League of Cities requested this meeting. Basically it is a discussion of the revenue sharing bill and the problems that it has encountered on the Hill.

Q Do you have the names of the participants, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Mayor Hans Tanzler of Jacksonville, Mayor Tom Moody of Columbus, Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, a member of the City Council in Seattle named Phillis Lamphere, and Alan Beals, a Director of the National League of Cities, along with the number of staff people from the Domestic Council. It is a discussion of revenue sharing matters.

Q What time is that?

MR. NESSEN: That is at noon.

At 2:00 this afternoon the President is having a meeting with some of his economic advisers. There are a number of items on the agenda. It is a relatively routine meeting, just kind of a weekly opportunity to discuss a number of economic issues.

At 3:00 the President is meeting with the Inter-parliamentary Conference participants from both the United States and Mexico. This group has been meeting annually since 1961 to discuss mutual problems and cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

Q Is that open for coverage?

MR. NESSEN: No, and the main reason it is not is that it is going to be terribly crowded and conflicts with another event I will discuss in a minute.

Q Will they discuss the heroin coming into the United States from Mexico?

MR. NESSEN: What is happening today is basically a social occasion, Sarah. The actual business meeting of the Interparliamentary group is in Atlanta on February 26 and 27. That is tomorrow and the next day. I would expect it will be discussed there in their business session.

Q Will the President urge that they discuss it there? Will the President take upon himself some leadership there because I think he is very interested in this, isn't he?

MR. NESSEN: The President has taken a fair number of steps on the problem already. They include his meeting with President Echeverria in November 1974.

Q They didn't have the problem then. The problem I am talking about, we didn't have it then.

MR. NESSEN: Since that time, there have been high-level meetings between American and Mexican officials to develop a program aimed at stopping opium at the source, as well as heroin processing, and other enforcement measures in Mexico as well as a more effective operation at the border.

Q I don't believe we have had any meetings since it got to be about 90 percent coming from Mexico and going to cities all over the country.

MR. NESSEN: In November the Mexican attorney general announced plans to intensify the eradication and interdiction campaign in Mexico and to assist him and the Mexicans in their efforts, the United States agreed to provide more technical support in the way of material and manpower.

Recently, the President asked that his continuing concern about this be relayed to the Mexican Government. He also directed that the Mexican Council Drug Abuse Task Force reconvene for the special purpose of making specific recommendations for improving the ability to control drug traffic along the Southwestern Border.

The latest development is a proposal by President Echeverria to form a high-level Mexican and U.S. commission to seek additional approaches on both the supply problem, which is a Mexican problem, and the demand problem, which is an American problem, for more effective control on both sides.

The President believes this is a positive proposal and is currently giving it active study within the Executive Branch.

Q Ron, do you know whether the President also will bring up the matter of Mexico voting on the United Nations resolution against the United States?

MR. NESSEN: Is this the Zionism racism thing? I don't expect that would come up in the context of this social occasion.

Q What is this social occasion? What does that mean?

MR. NESSEN: A brief reception.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: In the State Dining Room.

Q I don't know why we can't go to the State Dining Room.

MR. NESSEN: You will have a writing pool, as always, for social events.

Q Despite all this pretty social occasion and everything, are they going to have any discussions or will the President ask them to take up anything, discuss the abject poverty and horror worse than in India that exists right at the Texas border, of poor Mexicans trying desperately to get into the United States?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, Sarah, this is basically a social occasion. Their business meetings are in Atlanta.

Q Aside from all this pretty social occasion, will he ask that something be done to discuss these problems because, you know, the President and Echeverria, when they last met, they agreed there would be further discussions about how to solve these problems and they were going to ask the United States to help Mexico do it? Wasn't it 1974 -- and nothing has been done about it since?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure a social reception for Interparliamentary members is the place where that kind of substantive --

Q But the President can ask that this be taken up in Atlanta.

Q Ron, what are the other events?

MR. NESSEN: I thought you would never ask.

At 5 o'clock there is a group called the Inland Daily Press Association coming, which is the oldest and largest regional press association in the country, representing over 500 daily newspapers primarily in the Middle West and primarily in the small to medium-sized category. They are at the White House today to receive some briefings from Jim Lynn, Alan Greenspan and Bill Baroody.

As part of that they were scheduled to meet the President at 5 o'clock and they will meet him in the East Room. He will have some opening remarks and will take questions from them and will go over to the State Dining Room for a reception.

This is open for full coverage and you should have your cameras set up in there by 3 o'clock, sound and cameras, the reason being it has to be in and set up so that these other briefings by Lynn and so forth can transpire without interruption. You can begin setting up in there as early as 1 o'clock if you would like to and we will have people take you over there.

Q Will you arrange to have that through the House mult?

MR. NESSEN: I think it will be.

This will be the opportunity to, I believe, or I expect this will be the opportunity where the President will be asked and probably comment on his victory in New Hampshire.

Q Ron, will the White House Press Corps be allowed to ask questions at this?

MR. NESSEN: That is not the format planned.

Q Why did you say in the Oval Office in front of the President today when I tried to ask a question on New Hampshire that that was not the time to do it, that we will have a time later to do it? When will that time be?

MR. NESSEN: That is this 5 o'clock thing.

Q I will be able to ask questions at that?

MR. NESSEN: I said there would be an opportunity to hear the President's views on New Hampshire later today, which there will be.

Q As I recall, you said, "You will have an opportunity."

MR. NESSEN: To hear the President's views on New Hampshire.

Q I want to know when I will have an opportunity to ask the President a question on New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: There will be an opportunity, as I said, to hear the President's views on New Hampshire and hear him answer questions.

Q I wonder what kind of policy we have going here when an accredited White House correspondent is in the Oval Office and cannot ask the President a question. If he does not want to answer it, that is his prerogative, but is this a new policy where the Press Secretary is going to stand over the shoulders of correspondents and tell them they are out of order to ask a question?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't say you were out of order. The event was the announcement of the introduction of a new United Nations Ambassador and the comments by the Ambassador and the President and the Secretary.

Q And the President asked the reporters last night if they had gotten any sleep like he did. He opened it up.

MR. NESSEN: I have a fair number of things to do yet.

Q This is a very serious matter. You may not think it is but it is very serious.

MR. NESSEN: I do think it is a serious matter.

Q You indicated this morning when I was trying to ask him about New Hampshire that I would have an opportunity to do it later. That is what you indicated. That is apparently not so. It was never planned for the White House correspondents to have this opportunity. I want to know why not?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I forget precisely what words I used, but I indicated there would be an opportunity later today to hear the President's views on his victory in New Hampshire, as indeed there will be at 5 o'clock.

Q Is he going to say something in his remarks about that, or will we have to depend on the questions?

MR. NESSEN: In his opening remarks? I don't know precisely how it will be done.

Q Have you planted a question with the Inland Daily Press Association?

MR. NESSEN: No, but I assume, Mort, they are people that represent -- those members are just as interested as you are.

Q We don't believe in this whole business, where we are in a press situation at an airport, all these trips coming up, and everything in the past, that we are supposed to be a bunch of dummies standing there, props, even though we are moving with the President for two days, one stop after the other, and you are not allowed to ask any questions.

You don't have to cut us off. The President can do it very well. He knows how to cut us off if he doesn't want to answer a question. But I notice every time we try to get a question in to the President, you cut us off at the past and I don't think this is necessary.

MR. NESSEN: This President answers lots of questions in lots of settings much more than --

Q As a member of the White House Press Corps, I would like to request from now on the President of the United States be allowed to decide whether or not he wants to answer our questions.

MR. NESSEN: All right, let's move on.

Q How long will that question session last?

MR. NESSEN: At the 5 o'clock event?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: It is anticipated it would be 15 to 20 minutes.

Q Ron, you mean the President, after going through that victory and everything, isn't going to come out here today and say anything? He is just going to wait for something to happen with some out-of-towners at 5 o'clock?

MR. NESSEN: I think you have summed it up, Sarah. (Laughter)

Q At whose direction or whose initiative are you intervening between reporters and the President in settings such as the Oval Office, or airports, or this or that? Is this on your own motion, or are you operating under instructions from him or from someone else to do this?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of any airport occasion, Jim.

Q Nevertheless, what about the question? It did happen apparently this morning with Phil in the Oval Office. What I am asking is, whose decision was this for you to say this? Is it something you are doing on your own or does the President want it this way, or who?

MR. NESSEN: That was on my own this morning.

Q Is there a general policy, or are you playing each situation by ear, or what?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, this morning was supposed to be the announcement of Bill Scranton's nomination, his reply, and the Secretary and so forth. I knew this other event was coming where the President indicated he planned to offer his reaction to the New Hampshire primary. So, knowing he was going to do that and knowing the Oval Office occasion was another event, I then told Phil there would be another opportunity later to hear the President's views on New Hampshire.

Q What will be your general policy?

Q What is the rest of the schedule for this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: I will get to that if we ever get through all this undergrowth here.

Q At almost all times there are major issues. New Hampshire is not something in isolation. There are always major issues we want to ask the President about when we see him in any number of different contexts. What is your general policy, or do you have one? Are you going to permit this or do you have a policy of trying to reserve this for certain special occasions? I am trying to find out what your general thinking or general policy is.

Q Are we barred from asking the President a question at airports --

MR. NESSEN: Now, Helen, you know you can ask the President questions at any time day or night.

Q He jumped on me one time. He said, "Wally, I thought you were one of the locals."

MR. NESSEN: You know I will be happy to discuss the mechanism of questions and answers --

Q What is the answer to my question?

MR. NESSEN: The general policy is anybody can ask the President questions about anything, at any time, and that is still the policy.

Q Ron, you know that is not true. Some of us cannot ask the President questions at press conferences -- we are not recognized. (Laughter)

Q And some of us asked George Bush a question and you intervened. I would like to know, what is the story here, Ron? Why do you do this?

Q Listen, if you will just bombard us with information here -- (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I am trying to get to it.

Q The general policy is that anyone can ask the President a question at any time. That is the policy, right?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Can you give us the President's reaction to the New Hampshire results, please?

MR. NESSEN: First, the pool for the 12 o'clock photo should meet over here at the side door and somebody will take you around. I think 12 o'clock is the National League of Cities officials.

Let me sort of backtrack to last night a little bit. Some of you were here throughout the night and early morning and others were not, so I will kind of bring everybody up to date on what happened through the day and night.

Mrs. Ford called the President from Florida some time after 11 o'clock and, after that call, the President turned in for the night. Up to that point, he had been receiving phone calls from both Dick Cheney, who was here in his office, and from Rog Morton, who was over at the PFC. He did go to bed at about 11:30, the President did, without, obviously, knowing what the final outcome was.

He got up at 5:30, which is about his normal time of waking up, and turned on the radio and got the latest returns from the radio. Unfortunately, I did not ask him what station it was.

Q I am sorry about that, Ron. (Laughter)

Q It wasn't TV, it was radio?

MR. NESSEN: It was radio.

Then Dick and I had spent the night here and, as promised to some of you last night who wanted something fresh by 7 o'clock, we called the President at 6:35 and read him some later returns which had come over the wires and his reaction at that time was that he was delighted by his victory.

The next thing that happened was at 8 o'clock the President came unannounced to the senior staff meeting and was applauded when he entered, and he congratulated and thanked the senior staff for its work and said, "If we win a few more" -- he said, "This is a great springboard" and he said -- this is a quote -- "If we win a couple more, and I think we will, we will be ready for the finals," meaning the general election, "and I think we will win there, too." That is the end of the quote.

Q Does that mean the President intends to knock Reagan out of contention by the end of the Florida primary?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that I can --

Q You said a couple more. That would be Massachusetts and Florida.

Q And Illinois?

Q Illinois is afterwards.

MR. NESSEN: Those are really pretty much the extent of what he said this morning in his own words --

Q Then, did he leave the senior staff meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he did.

Let me do it this way; that is, give you some more general views of the staff on where we stand this morning. Also, let me say at this point, at 6 o'clock tonight the President will meet with his campaign strategists; namely, Bo Callaway and Rog Morton. He will then discuss --

Q Will you bring Callaway and Morton out afterwards?

MR. NESSEN: I doubt it but I will ask.

Q Will there be a photo of that?

MR. NESSEN: It wasn't planned to do so, Phil.

Q How about a readout?

MR. NESSEN: I said I will check and see what there is to say after that meeting.

Q Do you expect him to change his strategy?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate any change of strategy. You know the President will spend most of his time in the White House fulfilling his responsibility of running the Government and the foreign policy and will campaign at about the same schedule he has been campaigning.

Q That is every weekend?

MR. NESSEN: That is roughly right.

Q Any second-day thoughts about the Nixon trip? Does he think it wouldn't have been quite so close if that had not occurred?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't see how you can assess what persuaded the voters to vote the way they did, Bob. It is just not possible to say whether the trip had any effect on the election.

Q Mr. Callaway was not at all reticent last night about talking about it.

Q Does the President agree with Spencer?

MR. NESSEN: I am telling you the view of the White House on the trip.

Q There is a lot of talk that maybe it hurt. You don't have any assessments on that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is possible to assess the effect of the trip at all.

Q The White House conclusion now is that the Nixon trip didn't hurt the President's campaign in New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see how you can possibly assess the effects.

Q What do you suppose the effect of Stu Spencer's remarks will have in Florida, where President Nixon used to maintain a house?

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

Q Does the President believe he will win in Florida?

MORE

MR. NESSEN: Let me say one or two final things about New Hampshire, and then let me move on to the other primaries, if I could.

One thing that the President was told about this morning is that the race for delegates is looking pretty good, and even though it shifted sometimes, the latest number, as far as I know, is that the President is leading and appears likely to win 19 out of the 21 delegates. After all, that is what primaries are about, selecting delegates for the National Convention, and he feels with those delegates he is winning in New Hampshire.

The others he anticipates, both convention States and primary States, that he will have a clear majority and enough to win the nomination well before the date of the Kansas City Convention.

Q So, he is predicting a first ballot nomination in Kansas City, is that right?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Actually, this is the first time you have ever said that. He has always said before he would win at the convention.

MR. NESSEN: I am saying he expects to have a majority of delegates before he gets to the convention.

Q First ballot?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Did Governor Connally call in last night

MR. NESSEN: No, he did not.

Q Did the Vice President?

MR. NESSEN: He called in here a couple of times, but I don't believe he called the President.

Q He didn't talk to the President?

MR. NESSEN: Not as far as I know.

Q Did he talk to Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: Let's get an accurate list from the operator of the calls.

Q You say he feels he will have the nomination before he reaches Kansas City. Did he say that to you?

MR. NESSEN: This is kind of the White House feeling.

Q You said he said it.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the President said that. He did not say it specifically at the staff meeting, but that is his view.

A few final words on New Hampshire. The President does feel that he was trailing there as recently as two weeks ago, that Reagan certainly gave it the maximum effort that he had. He had the Governor of the State leading his campaign, and he had the only statewide newspaper supporting his campaign, and he spent 21 days there compared to the President's 56 hours. It was supposed to be his State in the North, and he couldn't win it.

The pick-up that the President had over the past two weeks leads him to believe that the momentum has really, first of all, swung his way, and he believes will continue to swing his way, and will show up in the Vermont and Massachusetts primaries, which are next, and into the Florida primary and those afterwards.

I think the slogan of the campaign up there was an appeal to the voters of New Hampshire to start the President on the road to victory, and he believes that it indeed did start him on the road to victory.

Q Ron, does the President expect to win every primary in which he is up against Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: No, I wouldn't think he would.

Q Where does he expect to lose?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to single out the States where Reagan may be stronger, but he does not expect to win. Of course, Reagan has ducked out on those States where he feels he would lose.

Q I am talking about where they are both in it head to head.

MR. NESSEN: Let me clear up that question. Reagan has ducked out of those States where he doesn't think he will do well, so you don't really get a fair test. There are States where both the President and Reagan are entered where it is possible that Reagan will win.

Q Are you talking about Florida?

MR. NESSEN: That is not one that I had in mind, no.

Q Do you expect the President to win in Florida?

MR. NESSEN: I believe the President said he expected to win in Florida, and that is good enough for me.

Q It apparently isn't because you just said previously he doesn't expect to win all the primaries.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, but Florida is not one he expects to lose.

Q California?

MR. NESSEN: I said it is possible that he will -- let me go back. The original question was do you expect the President to win all the primaries, and I said no. But Florida is not one of those he expects to lose.

The phone calls last night, if I can just get that cleared up, from the period of when the vote counting really got started through 11:30 or so when the President went to sleep, Rumsfeld called, Morton called, five calls from Cheney, one from the Vice President and the final call of the night was from Mrs. Ford.

Q The Vice President did talk to the President?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Ron, since you feel that the Nixon effects can't be assessed and you do not apparently agree with Stu Spencer, I am wondering what would be the President's reaction if the Soviets decided to have a Nixon anniversary. (Laughter) Would the President not say anything to Mr. Nixon, or what? What would be the reaction? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: That is a fairly hypothetical question, Les.

Q I know, but it is not beyond the realm of possibility. I mean, all kinds of things are predicted. I am wondering what do you think the President would do in this? Would he be very docile? Would he advise Mr. Nixon to stay home, or give my regards to Brezhnev, or what? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I think it is too hypothetical to take on.

Q Do you have any reaction to Barry Goldwater's comment that Nixon might better have stayed in China?

Q Question.

MR. NESSEN: The question from Dick was, I think, a wire story that I saw quoting Barry Goldwater as having some thoughts about the Nixon trip. I really think, thinking back over all the things I have said and all the things I have been asked about the Nixon trip, I think probably you understand the position, and I don't really see anything I can add to that position today.

Q Ron, one of the things Goldwater did say this morning was he believes Nixon's activities in China violate the Logan Act. Does the President share that view?

MR. NESSEN: The Logan Act is what?

Q It says that only the President or Secretary of State can discuss foreign policy with foreign heads of State.

MR. NESSEN: I think if you look back at all we have said about the Nixon visit as a private citizen, I think you will know the answer to that question.

Q I really want to know because Nixon is indeed a private citizen, as you have said repeatedly here, and if I understand the law, it prohibits a private citizen such as Richard Nixon doing these sorts of things. That is what Goldwater says. Does the President concur?

MR. NESSEN: I have not talked to the President about that, actually.

Q Does the President have any plans to travel to Illinois now?

MR. NESSEN: I forgot to tell you some more details about the Florida trip, thank you.

Beyond the trip to Florida this weekend, there are no specific travel plans.

Q I thought you already announced the California trip.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, that is right.

Q Is that still firm?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, it is.

I don't have anything to give you on Illinois, but there are people thinking about the matter.

I really did forget to tell you some more details of the Florida trip. I had it buried under some other pieces of paper.

Q Besides Florida, do you have any other announcements?

MR. NESSEN: No, I gave you as much as I could on the reaction to New Hampshire and that really is all the announcements I have.

Q Before going to Florida, could I ask one thing that seems to be hanging on this Nixon thing? Now that the President has had a chance to talk with the Secretary of State, how about the briefing thing? When and how is that going to take place?

MR. NESSEN: There is nothing new on that, Bob. There are no plans for the President to see him or talk to him. If he feels he has something that is significant, I am sure he can get in touch with the State Department.

Q Ron, he spent eight hours with the Chinese leaders to date. Are you saying the White House does not anticipate he will be worth consulting on what was said in those eight hours.

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans, Jim.

Q I hear that the President in one of his interviews with Hearst or somebody was quoted as saying he really didn't want Nixon going to China, but he said Henry did.

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall the President ever saying anything like that. As far as I know, it is not correct.

Q I have not seen the transcript.

MR. NESSEN: It is not correct.

Q In terms of the New Hampshire vote, the closeness, would that indicate to you the New Hampshire voters do not see a difference between Ford and Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: As one of your colleagues, Mr. Broder, said, the winner is the winner and the loser is the loser.

Q That is not my question.

MR. NESSEN: Given the fact the President did start so far behind and that Reagan had all these advantages in New Hampshire, the Governors support, newspaper support, the fact that the Governor said on Meet the Press last Sunday that Reagan was going to win by 55 percent, Governor Thomson made a better offer here at the dinner the other night -- two bets, a bet with Rog Morton in which Governor Thomson offered to bet a quart of maple syrup from New Hampshire against a quart of oysters from the Eastern Shore, Governor Thomson, of course, taking Reagan, and lost his quart of maple syrup. He also made a bet with Governor Noel of Rhode Island, I guess a money bet.

Q That was in the White House? (Laughter)
In those sacred precincts?

MR. NESSEN: Seriously, the Reagan people obviously expected to win, win by 55 or Governor Thomson one time mentioned 59.

Q I asked if the voters see a difference.

MR. NESSEN: I am saying despite all those advantages of Reagan, the President closed the gap in the last two weeks, and overcame them and won.

Q Does Reagan have the same advantages, perhaps in lesser degree in their States, the fact he is campaigning more extensively in them? Is he considered by the White House to be ahead in those States as well?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I have not taken a reading on Florida, or Massachusetts, or Vermont. I understand he has not entered. Vermont is one of the States he ducked out of because he didn't think he could win. In Massachusetts, he is not campaigning much up there; openly, anyway.

Q Why do you suggest the support of the one statewide newspaper is such a great thing in view of the New Hampshire Congressional delegation, in view of the fact that almost everybody that Loeb endorses gets beaten? Why do you think this was such a great privilege?

MR. NESSEN: We just felt that the only state-wide newspaper, to have the publisher as clearly an advocate of former Governor Reagan, was considered to be an advantage.

Q Have you read "Who the Hell is William Loeb," and do you know what the sales figures are on that, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Do you want to hear about some Florida events?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Mayor Tanzler, head of the National League of Cities -- he is a Democrat, he is from Jacksonville -- has agreed to come out and talk to you, if you would like to hear, about the meeting with the President today on revenue sharing.

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Q What time?

MR. NESSEN: He is the President of the National League of Cities and, if you are interested, he could come out here in about 30 to 35 minutes.

Q When are we going to get the health message?

MR. NESSEN: Some time this afternoon when all the changes are made.

Let's do this: I think some of you want to file before you get to Tanzler.

On Saturday, the President will go to Florida that morning. He will participate in naturalization proceedings at 10:00 a.m. in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida in Miami. About 1,200 people are expected to be sworn-in. The location of the event is the Dade County Auditorium and the time is 10 o'clock on Saturday. It is the swearing-in of new American citizens; about 1,200 will be sworn-in plus their families.

Q Is that mostly Cubans, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: That is probably right, Bob, although I am not sure of that. I think you could say a large number would be Cubans.

Q Is that his first event on Saturday?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is -- 10:00 a.m., yes.

Q I thought you said 12:00.

MR. NESSEN: No, 10:00 a.m.

Q He will speak at this?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

I don't know if any of you recall this, but last July 4 the President went over to Fort McHenry in Baltimore for a July 4th, 1975 celebration, part of which was the swearing-in of new citizens and he did speak to the new citizens, and he will do the same in Florida.

At 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, the President will begin a motorcade between West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. At 1:00 p.m. it begins.

Q About how many miles?

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MR. NESSEN: In time, it should take about 4-1/2 hours and half-way through there will be a stop for filing and any other needs. Also, there will be some opportunity during the 4-1/2 hours to talk to the President, Helen.

Q Like what?

Q What does that mean?

MR. NESSEN: That means -- I don't know what it means, actually. (Laughter)

Q This is the post-election euphoria.

Q Where is the half-way point?

MR. NESSEN: Just a moment. The Dade County Auditorium, the swearing-in of the citizens is the first event.

Now, the President will speak and then back to the airport and then the airplane flies to West Palm Beach.

Q Could you have Ann Compton pool the narrative on the bus microphone for the 4-1/2 hour bus ride?

Q Where is the opportunity to talk to the President? I am thinking of deadlines.

MR. NESSEN: I am looking at that right now.

Q Also, Ron, is that motorcade down A1A?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct. The motorcade departs the Palm Beach Mall shopping center en route to the Fort Lauderdale Airport, driving time is 4-1/2 hours, stopping along the route to greet citizens. It is the Dixie Highway, Route A1A. The stop will probably be at the Spanish River Park in Boca Raton.

Q What time would that be?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have an exact time, Bob, but let's say half-way through. If it starts at 1 o'clock, say, 3:00 or 3:30 would be the stop.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: The Spanish River Park in Boca Raton.

Q How far is that from Miami?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to get an Atlas and a road map to look it up. It is in that Park that the President will probably -- it is not completely arranged yet -- but what he would do is presumably come over to the press area or stand up on the platform or something and have a kind of news conference.

Q How long?

MR. NESSEN: That stop will be approximately a half hour.

Q Will there be filing telephones?

MR. NESSEN: That is where the filing is, that is correct.

Q Will that be a local news conference?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think we are that far along in the plans.

Q Will there be time to file after the President holds this news conference?

MR. NESSEN: Let me work all these details out. It is obviously not fully planned.

Q Is this going to be like a slow-paced motorcade so he can wave to people for 4-1/2 hours?

MR. NESSEN: And stop occasionally, too.

Q The press can't file and continue in the motorcade.

MR. NESSEN: I understand that.

Q Would you expect the motorcade to be like the thing we did for Louie Wyman?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q The Louie Wyman thing was a disaster. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: That is what I meant in my answer to Walt. (Laughter)

Q Ron, did you say the plane would go to West Palm Beach or Palm Beach? You said the motorcade would organize in the West Palm Shopping Center.

MR. NESSEN: You have to cross over to get to A1A, don't you?

Q Will there be anything else during the day?

MR. NESSEN: There will be some other things during the evening which we haven't gotten nailed down yet.

On Sunday at 11 o'clock, he will go to church in Sarasota.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the church yet, Les.

Q Have you found out whether you will have enough rooms for all of us or what you will do in that respect?

Q We would like to request we stay at the same hotel with the President if he stays at a hotel.

MR. NESSEN: It is possible there may not be enough rooms for all the press in Sarasota. We are working on it.

Q So, could he stay at the Howard Johnson's?

MR. NESSEN: Then at 12:30 on Sunday the President will make a speech in the Sarasota Shrine Hall, and at 3:30 the President --

Q Is that a Masonic Shrine type thing?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Will that be where he will take questions afterwards or just a speech?

MR. NESSEN: That is not resolved yet.

Q What is the audience there?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is public.

Q Then?

MR. NESSEN: Then at 3:30 in the afternoon, another audience in Tampa.

Q Do you know what time the arrival is in Sarasota Saturday night?

MR. NESSEN: Tentatively 6:40 p.m.

Q Is there any meal on Saturday or Sunday? Is there time for any meal? Twice we have been to New Hampshire and not had time for one sandwich.

Q Is that event at 3:30 in Tampa the last event?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Can I go back to your analysis for a second --

MR. NESSEN: Let me get an answer here for Fred. At the moment, that is right -- the Tampa event is the last scheduled event of the Florida trip and he would then return from there.

Q Is he going to go to the circus down there, the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q He is bringing it. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Well done, Fran.

Q Ron, you painted a picture of New Hampshire as though the President was the challenger and Reagan was President, pretty much as though the President was the underdog. What are the liabilities that the President overcame? What are the liabilities as the incumbent that he overcame in New Hampshire?

MR. NESSEN: I think I mentioned some of the specific advantages Reagan had. You know I talked before about, the President does have the first responsibility to stay in the White House and be President, run the country and foreign affairs. As I have talked before and usually been hooted down when I said it, there are liabilities having to sit there in the office and make decisions every day and prepare budgets --

Q And be on the Cronkite Show every night.

MR. NESSEN -- and you know, how do you handle the Social Security Trust Fund to keep it in business, and so forth. Those are the kind of decisions a President has to make day-in and day-out and take the consequences of.

Q Ron, in past elections sitting Presidents have at least been the favorites, at least in their own party. What is the difference now?

MR. NESSEN: I think you all have written about what is different this time.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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