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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:30 A.M. EDT

MAY 11, 1976

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: There is a lot of stuff to go through, so let's begin. You saw the signing ceremony for the bill creating the Office of Science and Technology Policy. I don't have the name of a science advisor to give you today.

Right now the President is beginning a meeting with Republican Congressional leaders to discuss with and receive their views on the Federal Election Commission legislation passed by Congress.

At 12 o'clock there will be a picture and brief greeting to the Multiple Sclerosis Mother and Father of the Year.

The President, as you know, is having a lunch today for Her Majesty Queen Margrethe of Denmark and His Royal Highness Prince Henrik.

There will be toasts which will be piped over here.

Q About what time do you think?

MR. NESSEN: The lunch begins at 12:30 so the toasts could come in the 1:15 area.

Routine weekly meeting with the Vice President.

The Administrator of the Veterans Administration, Mr. Roudebush, will be in this afternoon.

There will be a meeting later in the afternoon with various heritage group leaders.

Then this evening the President plans to spend the evening in the Residence. Mrs. Ford, I think some of you know, will be going to the ballet with the Queen. The President has asked Rog Morton to have dinner with him, and also Ambassador Scranton to have dinner with him. So that is his plan for the evening.

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My plans are to stay in the office and see what develops and what we will say about it later in the evening. I would not look for anything certainly before -- I would be very be very surprised if we had anything before 10 o'clock. I understand the western strip of Nebraska is in the Mountain time zone so that means the polls will close there even later.

Q What time will the dinner be with Morton?

MR. NESSEN: 7:30, 8 o'clock, somewhere around there.

Q Is it your plan to put a dinner lid on, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly would.

We may have a few matters to put out here toward the latter end of the afternoon, but at some point I think we could put a dinner lid on.

Q Ron, would you expect that the President would decide one way or the other on the Federal Election Commission thing today?

MR. NESSEN: It is possible, Bob.

Q It could come today?

MR. NESSEN: It could come today but that is by no means certain that he will.

Q Is this meeting that is going on now for him to tell these people what his views are or to listen to them?

MR. NESSEN: To listen to them.

Q Well, he already knows their position, doesn't he?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that he has had an opportunity to sit down with them and hear their views discussed.

Q These are all Republicans?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Does the President have any later view of the Nebraska and West Virginia primaries than he had yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: No, yesterday's remains his view of the outlook.

Now you have received, I think, this morning a statement outlining steps that the President has taken to help the victims of the Italian earthquake. I believe you received that already.

Now tomorrow. I would look for the bible for tomorrow's trip to Michigan late this afternoon, hopefully. If we can't make that, it will be available in the morning.

The press check-in at Andrews will be 9 o'clock. The press plane will take off at 9:30. The President will leave at 10:10 from Andrews.

The press plane will arrive in Detroit at 10:50 and the President will get there at 11:30.

Q That is still Eastern time, isn't it?

MR. NESSEN: That is all Eastern time, right.

Q What time is he due to be back in the White House?

MR. NESSEN: We are still looking for somewhere around 11:00 to midnight.

Q Even though you say you don't have a bible or won't have a bible until late today or tomorrow, can you give us any highlights other than the Detroit Economic Club just for those who have to write advance stories?

MR. NESSEN: There are going to be a couple of opportunities for him to meet with local reporters, I mean not a news conference, but small interviews, and there will probably be some campaign-type events, but it is still being put together, actually, and I don't have the details yet.

Q Ron, could I ask you a question about that Economic Club meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q You told us yesterday that that was in a hall in South Pontiac.

MR. NESSEN: No, I am sorry. It is Bloomfield Hills, I believe.

Q You said yesterday --

MR. NESSEN: I know. There was a mistake.

Q What time is that?

MR. NESSEN: 4 o'clock.

Q And the text will be available in the morning?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly available in the morning, yes. We are going to still try to get that speech out tonight, an advance text of it, but it really depends -- the President is going to take a look at the draft at about 3:15, I think, and depending on how heavily he wants to rewrite it will determine when we get it.

Q What kind of embargo will that have?

MR. NESSEN: We are thinking, maybe, if anybody cares, to put a P.M. embargo on it, even though it is not delivered until late in the afternoon.

Q That is a fine idea. Now, when are we going to get it? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Jim suddenly takes interest.

It all depends on how heavily the President wants to rewrite it this afternoon. We are aiming for this afternoon or evening.

Now, moving along to Thursday. The President will participate in a luncheon on Thursday, a Bicentennial Salute to Small Business. This is at the new Regency Hyatt Hotel. The President will speak there at about 1:30.

Q Is this in Washington?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the Regency Hyatt Hotel in Washington. The President will speak at 1:30.

In all honesty, because of the trip tomorrow, I don't think we are going to have an advance text to put out before Thursday morning at the earliest.

Q The subject?

MR. NESSEN: Small business, obviously.

Q Not necessarily. He could speak about foreign policy.

MR. NESSEN: Well, he will speak about small business, among other things.

Then again on Thursday, this time in the evening, the President will speak to the American Jewish Committee's Annual Dinner at the Washington Hilton. That will be at 8:30 in the evening. Again, because of the travel tomorrow I don't think realistically we can expect a text before Thursday morning. When we do get a text, we could put it out for 6:00 P.M. release on Thursday, if anybody is interested.

Q That would be on small business, too?
(Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Okay. Then the weekend trip now. I really don't have, frankly, all that much to add to it. I can give you a couple of the cities we will be visiting.

The advance people are out on this trip now and the details of the various stops just frankly have not been firmed up enough to announce them, but the cities I can tell you will be Johnson City, Tennessee --

Q This is on Thursday?

MR. NESSEN: Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

Q Is that the first stop?

MR. NESSEN: Johnson City will be the first in Tennessee, right. Then Memphis, Tennessee.

Q Wait a minute, now. Johnson City and then Memphis?

MR. NESSEN: Right. Then Louisville and then Flint all on Friday.

Q Flint is in Tennessee?

Q Flint, Michigan?

MR. NESSEN: Flint, Michigan.

Q All on Friday?

MR. NESSEN: All on Friday.

Q Overnight in Flint?

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

Q Is he going to get in early enough on Friday to --

MR. NESSEN: We just really are not far enough along to announce the events at each stop.

Q Can you give an approximate check-in time for us on Friday morning?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot give it to you right now.

Q What about Saturday?

MR. NESSEN: On Saturday in Michigan several cities, the names of which I cannot give you all right now but we will end up in Grand Rapids on Saturday night.

Then on Sunday, obviously we begin the day in Grand Rapids on Sunday and travel to Saginaw and then return to Washington in the evening.

Q Ron, on Saturday is he going to travel by train from Flint to Grand Rapids?

MR. NESSEN: No decision has been made on that yet.

Q What about this rumored train trip across Michigan, is that one?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no decision made on that yet.

Q Can you tell us where, if you decide to go, you are going to be stopping?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there is no decision on whether to go that way or not.

Q When is the Tulip Festival?

MR. NESSEN: Where is it?

Q Is he going to that?

MR. NESSEN: There is just simply no details of what he is going to be doing in Michigan available yet because the advance people are still putting the trip together.

Q How does he think he will do in Michigan?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I have not talked to him that far ahead yet.

Okay. So I think that is about all the announcements I have.

Q Is it anticipated that tomorrow when the President lands in Detroit that he will talk to local reporters and he will employ that airport news conference?

MR. NESSEN: We just have not thought that far ahead yet, Walt, as to what he will do when he gets off the plane.

Q There will be several opportunities to meet with local reporters, so what would that be then?

MR. NESSEN: I think he has one T.V. interview scheduled and I think an editorial board, if I am not mistaken.

Q Ron, did you mean to leave us with the impression you don't know how he feels he will do in Michigan?

MR. NESSEN: No, I just meant to say that I have not really sat down and talked to him about Michigan yet but I will as we move closer to the primary.

Q Well, we are going there tomorrow. It would be helpful if we could know today.

MR. NESSEN: Okay, I will try and get that before the day is over.

Q Is he going to Maryland at all?

MR. NESSEN: It is possible that he will make a trip to Maryland.

Q Monday, maybe?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything definite on that, if he goes.

Q Would it be Sunday, right after the Michigan trip, by any chance?

MR. NESSEN: To Maryland?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is Jack still going to Western Maryland?

MR. NESSEN: I have not seen Jack's travel schedule, actually.

Q Will there be any Q and A at the Economic Club?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so.

Q Because it is traditional for the economists to ask questions after a major speech.

MR. NESSEN: Well, one of the early proposals for the trip, there was a provision for Q and A at the Economic Club following the speech. I will have to check and see if that remains in the final schedule.

Q There is a fairly lengthy piece this morning in the Post where several people on the Hill are quoted as saying unless there is really a major boost provided by the Ford Administration at this time there is no chance of repealing the Byrd Amendment.

I know you have said on several occasions that the Administration is on record as supporting repeal, but are they planning to really launch an all-out effort this time?

MR. NESSEN: I think I said before that the Administration is on record clearly as favoring repeal and exactly what mechanism the President follows in pushing for repeal is one of the matters that is being discussed, now that Dr. Kissinger has returned from Africa.

Q Ron, is the President concerned about Howard Baker entertaining Ronald Reagan three or four days before the primary?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't know he was.

Q Did you ever get an answer to Naughton's question of several days ago on the President's views about black majority rule in Rhodesia within two years?

MR. NESSEN: I thought that we went around for about 45 minutes that day about that.

Q That was because I don't think we ever got an answer, and I was wondering if perhaps you would have one today for us on that subject.

MR. NESSEN: I will say now and I said then that everything Dr. Kissinger said on that trip represents the President's policy and is an articulation of the President's policy.

Q So the President does indeed favor black majority rule in Africa --

MR. NESSEN: Are we going to get a whole new story about this today, Walt?

Q No, but we were just left hanging.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't think anybody was left hanging the other day. There certainly was not any intention to let anybody be left hanging. I said that everything Dr. Kissinger says in Africa and everywhere else is an articulation of President Ford's foreign policy.

Q Speaking of Kissinger, I wanted to know how the President felt about one of the editors of the New York Times suing the Secretary of State in a new wiretapping case?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't ask him this morning.

Q Ron, of course the President has a right to have anybody in for dinner he likes, but isn't it a curious mix -- his political leader and a man who is now divorced from politics? Can you say why, for example, he chose --

MR. NESSEN: They are both old friends.

Q They will stay and watch the returns, will they not?

MR. NESSEN: Presumably.

Q Ron, did the President see Ambassador Dobrynin today?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Can you tell us anything about changes at the President Ford Committee?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Last week I believe you put out an announcement that an Under Secretary of Commerce was resigning to go over to the PFC. Are there any other Administration figures who are going to be leaving Government to go to work for the PFC that you know of?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q Are any PFC workers going to get jobs with the Government after today's stories? (Laughter)

Q Has the President made up his mind on the election bill?

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

Q Do you know for a fact whether he has or not?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know he has not.

Q What can you say about last night's meeting with Morton and Stu Spencer?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 11:47 A.M. EDT)