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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:00 NOON EDT

JUNE 23, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Well, let me mention one addition to the schedule today. At 4 o'clock the President is going to meet with a couple of Members of Congress who have requested to come down and talk to him about the transition quarter issue as it applies to foreign aid. The attendees will be Senators Case, Javits, Humphrey and Inouye, and from the House, Congressman Rhodes, Michel and Broomfield.

Q Is that specifically Israel money they want to talk about?

MR. NESSEN: I think their main interest lies in transitional quarter funding for Israel, but it is a broader issue, in the President's view.

Now I mentioned to you last week the --

Q Excuse me. Before you go further on that, you say their main interest is in more money for Israel. Is that more than the \$200 million that the President is --

MR. NESSEN: No, I mean their interest is in transitional quarter funding for Israel.

Q Has the President changed his mind on that in any way?

MR. NESSEN: No, the President's view is still that his proposal for the two fiscal years and the transitional quarter, which adds up to something like \$4 billion for Israel, is adequate for the 27-month period.

Q Well, what about the Marder story in the paper this morning?

MR. NESSEN: Well, that remains the President's position, that the original funding that he asked for is adequate. I think it would be fair to say that Members of Congress have other views on the matter and that the President is willing to consider their positions.

Q The story suggests, does it not, that a compromise has already been reached, that he is going to --

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MR. NESSEN: One story I read did suggest that but I think all I can say at the moment is that he is willing to listen to Members who do not agree with his views, that the amount already requested is adequate.

Q There was a story that reported \$200 million.

MR. NESSEN: That was a story that I read, yes.

Q Is that the figure to which you are responding?

MR. NESSEN: I am not responding to any particular figure. I am just saying that the President feels that the money he asks for the entire 27-month period is adequate. That includes the transition quarter. But he is willing to listen to Members of Congress who have another view.

Q In other words, he is willing to consider something else.

MR. NESSEN: He is willing to consider their views, yes.

Q But has he made a counter-offer -- an extra \$200 million?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of anything I would call a counter-offer. I think all I am really aware of is his willingness to consider the views of Members who have other views.

Q The story says that the Ford Administration budget has bought a White House counter-offer for an additional \$200 million which Israeli supporters call inadequate. You are saying they have not made that?

MR. NESSEN: No, all I am going to say is that he is willing to consider the views of Members --

Q We are asking you if a counter-offer has been made.

MR. NESSEN: I know what you are asking me.

Q You are not going to answer that question?

MR. NESSEN: I am saying he is willing to consider the views of Members who think that transitional quarter funding is necessary.

Q Well, Ron, can I ask this? I am terribly confused about it. Does he still stand by his original budget proposals?

MR. NESSEN: He stands by his view that the money he asked for for two fiscal years, including the transition quarter, a total period of 27 months--the money added up to \$4 billion--he felt that that was adequate for Israel's military needs and also was proper in light of our own budgetary circumstances, and that is his view now. But he is willing to consider the views of others who don't feel that way.

Q What confuses me is your phrase, "including the transitional quarter," which indicates --

MR. NESSEN: Twenty-seven months -- well, \$4 billion was requested for a period of time, two fiscal years, which add up now, because of this transition period, to 27 months.

Q Ron, related to this, the Democratic Platform as well as Governor Jerry Brown have both said that the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and since Congressman Jerry Ford said on March 17, 1972 in Cleveland that our Embassy should certainly be moved to Jerusalem, why hasn't the President ordered this change now that he has been setting foreign policy for nearly two years?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Then, do you know of any other country in the world where the President allows Dr. Kissinger to keep an embassy in a city which is not that nation's capital?

MR. NESSEN: I would have to think about that one for a minute.

Q I wonder if you could ask the President about this since the Democratic Platform has got it in there and it is a pretty big issue.

MR. NESSEN: I know it is.

Q As I understand it, 14 other embassies from nations that are in Jerusalem, so if you take the question then --

MR. NESSEN: I will take the question.

Q Thank you.

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MR. NESSEN: On the summit meeting in Puerto Rico, I have been trying to arrange a schedule of briefings and one of the complicated problems is that many of the people who I think you would want to talk to are in Paris for the OECD meeting and other places in Europe, so what I am able to do is to arrange a briefing at 3:15 on Friday, in Room 450 of the EOB. We will be announcing this more formally on the wires and whatever, but I want you to know that there will be a briefing, and this will be on a background basis. That will be the basis for the attribution and for the coverage.

The purpose, really, and the reason we decided to put it on background, is that it is hopefully to provide you with the information you will need in the three days down there rather than to provide any big news to spark any news stories on Friday.

In addition to that --

Q Are they going to black out their faces and change their voices? (Laughter)

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

Q Who will brief, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I have not gotten the list of briefers yet. That is still being put together.

Q Can we have a briefing on press operations?

MR. NESSEN: As soon as we get all the press arrangements made, we will give you a very detailed briefing on that.

Q When do you think that might be, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I would not think we would have all the details of the press coverage arrangements until Friday.

Q Will this be part of your regular daily briefing?

MR. NESSEN: What I hoped to do was to reduce it all to some kind of guide book or leaflet of details of the press coverage.

In addition to that briefing on Friday, though, for those of you whose companies have economic or foreign policy reporters covering the meeting, I have also gotten an agreement from some of the people involved to either talk to you on the phone or in private meetings to provide you with additional information that you may want, and those who have agreed to do that are General Scowcroft and his Deputy for International Economic Affairs Bob Hormats, at 456-2235 and 456-3393.

Another person who has agreed to talk on the phone and in small, private meetings, is Ed Yeo, who is the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs, and his number is 964-5634.

Alan Greenspan has agreed to do this, and he is reachable at 456-5042, and so has Hal Sonnenfeldt, who is the Counselor at the State Department, and his phone number is 632-4404.

Q Some of these people are out of the country.

MR. NESSEN: I was going to say, Brent and Ed Yeo are in the country now and all the others on that list will be back tonight and have agreed to take your calls and see you tomorrow and Friday.

So, I think that is all the announcements I have.

Q I have a question on Puerto Rico, before we leave that. I understand the Governor of Puerto Rico has sent a cable to the President protesting the demand of a White House advance man named Robert Goodwin, who says that Puerto Rico shall not play its national anthem nor display its flag, and the Governor says that, "We are not a State; we are a Commonwealth," and so my question is, why should Puerto Rico not be allowed to display its flag and play its anthem?

MR. NESSEN: Well, obviously somewhere along the line in making the arrangements for the trip there was a misunderstanding, but it has all now been worked out and, of course, the Puerto Ricans will play their anthem as they have, I understand, in connection with the visits of other foreign leaders and will fly their flag as they have on the occasion of other visits.

Q Has the Governor been informed of this?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know he has, yes.

Q The Puerto Ricans wanted to do this as each of the visiting dignitaries arrived. Is that the arrangement now?

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

Q Did the President have any personal involvement in the apologies?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, no, Helen. These are advance men working out advance arrangements.

Q It is in the negative sense against the positive sense. Did he apologize, or send any message?

MR. NESSEN: He was not involved in it so obviously he didn't apologize, but I don't know what an apology would be for. It was at the stage where advance men were making arrangements with officials down there and at some point there apparently was a misunderstanding, which has now been worked out.

Q Was this a misunderstanding by the White House advance party?

MR. NESSEN: A misunderstanding, I guess, at some point along the way that the arrangements had been finalized when, in fact, they were still being worked on.

Q Who interceded on behalf of the Puerto Rican Government here?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by "interceded."

Q Well, I can be more specific. The Puerto Rican Government is represented by a law firm in this town which happens to be the law firm of which John Connally is a member, and I want to know if indeed that law firm was responsible for interceding on behalf of the Puerto Rican Government and persuading the White House that perhaps the Puerto Rican National Anthem should be played?

MR. NESSEN: Well, because press arrangements do play a large role in the arrangements for Puerto Rico, I have been attending all or most of the meetings and so I can tell you that the arrangements on this matter were worked out there on the spot in San Juan and, to my knowledge, no Washington law firm was involved.

Q Jack Marsh didn't get a call from the firm of Vincent, Searls, Connally and Elkins?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Ron, on Monday you told us that the President was calling delegates, telephoning delegates.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I did. I didn't intend to, if I did.

Q Is he calling delegates?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea. I think he is now and then maybe calling delegates, but I don't know.

Q Are they uncommitted delegates? Do you have any idea how many?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. You need to check with Jim Baker or Rog Morton over at the PFC.

Q Before we get too far from Puerto Rico, I have one more question. Was the misunderstanding straightened out and was it worked out prior to the Governor's cable coming here, or after?

MR. NESSEN: It must have been because about 10 minutes ago nobody knew that a cable had arrived here and it had all been worked out by then, so I guess I would have to answer yes.

Q It was worked out today or yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the exact timing was.

Q Why is it that you don't know what the President is doing in his political behalf?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't say that, Helen. I just said that I don't, as a practice, keep up with every phone call that he makes or does not make.

Q We are not asking for every phone call. We are asking for some sort of view of what he is doing.

MR. NESSEN: I know that, and everybody who has asked me what is he doing, if anything, in the way of talking to delegates, I have referred them to Jim Baker and Rog Morton.

Q Does Jim Baker know what the President is doing?

MR. NESSEN: If the President is doing anything that has to do with delegates, and I don't know that he is, Jim Baker or Rog Morton would know about it.

Q Why wouldn't he be doing anything?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know whether he is or not.

Q Baker's office says to contact the White House for specifics. They don't know how many names the President has called on the list that they have sent over here.

Q Can we find out?

Q Ron, a related question. Whenever we have asked about the President's even considering the possibility of defeat and whether he will practice law in Grand Rapids or what, you have spoken and acted as if the President could not imagine such a thing and you have repeated only that the President expects to win on the first ballot in Kansas City and in November.

Now, Hugh Sidey of Time reports that the President has "allowed as how he could be defeated," and quotes Mr. Ford as saying: "If you feel you have done the right thing, defeat does not gnaw at you. I have had enough experience in athletics to know that you can lose."

The first part is, is Time's report inaccurate?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I would have to look at the transcript or that portion of the transcript they printed.

Q You are not sure it is inaccurate? In other words, you won't --

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to sit in judgment of Hugh Sidey's column.

Q Okay. Then, why do we learn this from Time rather than when we have asked you repeatedly?

MR. NESSEN: What have you learned, Les?

Q What I just quoted from Hugh Sidey.

MR. NESSEN: The President does believe he will be nominated on the first ballot and elected in November.

Q I thank you again for that, Ron. That is the 241st repetition but the question is, why did we learn in Time when we have asked you several times does the President ever consider the possibility that he might be defeated and what is he going to do and you keep repeating this.

MR. NESSEN: Because that is what he believes.

Q But Time says that he has acknowledged the possibility of a defeat. Now, is Time wrong and, if not, why do we learn it from them?

MR. NESSEN: Well, as I said, I am not going to sit in judgment of Hugh's column.

Q In other words, you won't deny that the President may have said this?

MR. NESSEN: The President believes that he will be nominated on the first ballot and elected in November. That is what he believes.

Q Is the President actively involved in seeking the nomination? Now what we find is a real gap here as to what the President is doing. We have not gotten any insight and the morgue-like quality of the White House is --

MR. NESSEN: The what-like quality?

Q Morgue, M-O-R-G-U-E. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I thought it was more lively than that. (Laughter)

I don't have any -- you know, I don't know what all the details are, Helen, and that is why I say Rog Morton and Jim Baker are the ones to help you.

Q Well, I don't think they know either. Morton did give a report today at the Cabinet meeting. Can you tell us what he told the Cabinet -- not Cabinet, the Congressional leaders?

MR. NESSEN: Pretty much what he said in public before.

Q Ron, is the President having any other delegate groups in for lunch, for example, or for dinner?

MR. NESSEN: There are none scheduled.

Q When is the West Virginia meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is Friday.

Q Do you know what time and who is coming?

MR. NESSEN: Lunch would be in the middle of the day and I will have a participants' list. (Laughter)

Q Is it more than one?

MR. NESSEN: You know, I will have a participants' list.

Q When?

Q Did he have some delegates in last night?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge, no.

Q Did he have some delegates in on Monday?

MR. NESSEN: I understand that three delegates came to see Dick Cheney on Monday and that he was planning to drop in on the Oval Office if the President was free -- whether he did or not I don't know, I think he probably did.

Q Where were they from, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: South Carolina.

Q Has he had any recent contact with delegates from the State of Mississippi?

MR. NESSEN: I have no idea.

Q When are you going to have this list of participants for the West Virginia meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Either tomorrow or Friday.

Q Have you been told not to discuss politics from this podium or to give any insight as to what is happening?

MR. NESSEN: No, I have not, Helen. I don't know the answers to all these questions. I know where you can get the answers and I recommended you go over there. I just don't have the answers. I am not into the campaign that much.

Q Ron, if the President is calling delegates, who is he telling about it? Is he telling you or is he telling Rog Morton?

MR. NESSEN: I guess he is telling the phone operators.

Q Well, presumably he is telling the telephone operators but is he telling anyone else or is it a secret?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is not a secret. Why would it be a secret?

Q Why would he not mention it to you?

MR. NESSEN: I don't go around and track down all the phone calls the President makes, and I am not sure I would recognize a phone call to a delegate if I saw one. I mean, I don't know the names of the delegates.

Q Ron, Baker and Morton certainly won't know if Dick Cheney took these three delegates by the nose and led them into the Oval Office.

MR. NESSEN: I said I thought he did.

Q Can you find out if he did or not?

MR. NESSEN: I will check, yes.

Q Ron, did Mike Duval leave the White House staff to join the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: Who?

Q Mike Duval. Bob Ray announced on Monday that he expected Duval to make the President's presentation to the Platform Committee. Is Duval going to make that as a White House employee or is he going to make that presentation as a PFC employee?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I will have to check. This is the first time I have heard of it.

Q May I ask a question about Lebanon?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Has the President expressed any feeling especially on the role played by the PLO in the evacuation of Americans and does he feel now that the PLO can play a more constructive role? Is there any change in his outlook of the PLO?

MR. NESSEN: There is no change in the American policy toward the PLO.

Q I am not talking about that. I am asking about the President's outlook on what the PLO might do.

MR. NESSEN: The President's outlook on what the PLO may do?

Q May do or have been doing, and does he feel that they have been acting in a more responsible manner and there can be some new rapport introduced?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think the basic American attitude -- well, let me make two points. One, the President, as you know, expressed gratitude to all the parties who helped in the safe evacuation from Beirut. That is point one.

Point two is that the basic attitude toward the PLO has not changed and the attitude is that as long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist or acknowledge the Security Council's Resolution 242 or 338 then we will not deal with the PLO.

Q Ron, has there been a protest by the Israeli Government over the message sent to the PLO through the Egyptian Embassy -- the report from Jerusalem?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of any message sent to the PLO. What do you mean, a message of --

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Q The message conveyed to the PLO through the Egyptian Embassy.

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of an Israeli protest to that allegation.

Q Will you know at any time today whether tomorrow is the day the busing legislation will go up?

MR. NESSEN: I should know by the end of the day today whether tomorrow is the day that the busing legislation goes up.

Q Will you tell us?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I will.

Q Ron, did the President personally approve of U.S. funds to the Christian Democratic Party in Italy?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of any money being paid to the Christian Democratic Party.

Q Congressman Michael Harrington of Massachusetts made a statement to that effect yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: I have not heard of it. I will have to look into it.

Q Does the President have any public reaction to the election in Italy?

MR. NESSEN: Essentially no, but I would say his view is that the parties which are not Communist and which are not Facist won a majority and therefore Italy has the opportunity to continue with the Democratic government.

Q Ron, is the President the Commander-in-Chief of the Merchant Marines? (Laughter)

You are jumping to conclusions. I am just wondering, is he the Commander? I don't know. Is that considered part of the armed forces?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. It is under the Commerce Department.

Q He must be aware of Nancy's complaint that she is being thrown out for copulating in the barracks but the man is not.

MR. NESSEN: Who?

Q The President noticed that and --

Q It takes two to tango.

MR. NESSEN: Noticed what? (Laughter)

Q Noticed the story, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: He may have. He reads the papers in the morning.

Q You have not discussed that with him?

MR. NESSEN: No, I haven't.

Q Ron, you were going to check to see if the President had any reaction to the news that Iran is buying up part of the Occidental Petroleum Company.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I don't know if you know this -- I didn't know this, as a matter of fact, until I did check for you -- there is an interagency committee which is called the Foreign Investment Review Committee, and this is made up of representatives of the Treasury, State and Commerce Departments, the FEA and the NSC. The purpose of this committee is to review investments in the United States by foreign governments and make recommendations to the Economic Policy Board, and they will meet and they will make a recommendation on this particular investment to the EPB.

Q Ron, has the President expressed any view on Angola and the UN?

MR. NESSEN: Well, you know that that may be coming up for a vote, I guess it could be this afternoon, and so I think our Ambassador there will make our position known when he speaks and votes.

Q Ron, one more on Occidental. Does this Foreign Investment Review Committee have the authority to recommend that the President bar such a purchase by a foreign country? Just as a matter of fact.

MR. NESSEN: I don't actually know the answer to that. They have just begun to look at this matter and so I think it would be premature to say. I think historically the position has been that the Government does not have a problem with foreign investments in U.S. corporations when they don't involve management control of the company, but that is just by way of kind of a historical setting for that. I would rather wait until this committee has had a chance to review the situation.

Q We don't view this as a possible recommendation. Just as a matter of fact, does it have any power?

MR. NESSEN: Can you ask Margaret to check that?

MR. CARLSON: I think it has national security implications or something.

MR. NESSEN: They could recommend --

MR. CARLSON: But I think it would be premature to get into that.

Q When will this outfit meet and is there any time frame on when they might make the recommendation?

MR. NESSEN: Why don't you get together with Margaret, who has done a fair amount of research on this, and talk to her after the briefing.

Q Ron, do you have a monthly statement on the rise in the cost of living?

MR. NESSEN: Not a monthly statement. It is the fact that --

Q It has been several months, which is why I put it that way.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think the increase in May of six-tenths of one percent was somewhat larger than expected, but if you take the past couple of months and the anticipated figures on out, for the rest of the year, it looks like the projection made originally of inflation of six percent or less for calendar 1976 will come about.

Q Do you feel kind of secure in that because the UPI sees a projection of over seven percent?

MR. NESSEN: I think UPI got their projection of seven percent by taking .6 and multiplying it by 12, and you know it is not anticipated that it will be that high. It is anticipated that the projection of six percent or less will become reality.

Q Ron, will the President brief Democratic leaders on the busing legislation?

MR. NESSEN: The plan is that when the legislation is completed to the President's satisfaction, that the committee chairmen, who are Democrats, of the committees which would handle the legislation will be briefed on the legislation.

Q Before it is sent to the Hill?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q When do you expect the legislation to be completed?

MR. NESSEN: As I told Walt, it is possible that it could go tomorrow, but I will not know until late in the afternoon whether the President has given his final approval of the legislation.

Q Who will be the sponsors of the bill?

MR. NESSEN: I think some of the people who were here yesterday indicated that they were willing to sponsor it. I don't know whether they will be the actual sponsors.

Q Some said they won't know until they read it.

MR. NESSEN: Yes. That is fair enough.

Q You don't know --

MR. NESSEN: I cannot give you the sponsors right now.

Q Ron, are these Judiciary Committee matters or Education and Labor Committee matters?

MR. NESSEN: I think there will be more than one committee involved in the legislation.

Q Ron, has there been an investigation of Ambassador Meloy's murder and the security arrangements that were underway at the U.S. Embassy and will there be any changes in any of that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the answer to that here, Mort. I think the State Department can probably better help you with that. I don't have the answer.

Q Do you have any more evacuations over there?

MR. NESSEN: No. You know, if the President felt it was necessary to close the Embassy or to evacuate or to urge the remaining Americans to again evacuate, he would do so if he felt that was important.

Q Ron, on the busing legislation, you mentioned that there are probably more than two committees involved. Does that mean the President has decided to introduce a whole new bill and will have to go through the whole process rather than try to get this done as an amendment in some legislation that is already moving?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I just don't know enough about the legislative process to say whether it would be added as an amendment or would begin the legislative process fresh, and I am not sure that is a White House decision anyway. I think that is something that --

Q What are the President's hopes by going through the legislative process?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there will be a message that will go with it, Ed, and that will spell out what his hopes are for its consideration.

Q Ron, did you order that reporters and photographers not watch the President on helicopter take-offs from the South Lawn, and since we know that you did order it --
(Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Why do you ask?

Q -- and denied it for a whole week --

MR. NESSEN: I didn't deny it.

Q I want to know why you are adopting such a regressive press policy?

MR. NESSEN: I just thought we would go back to the way it was done for a very long time; that is, a protective pool to make sure the helicopter gets off safely, and it is possible to do that from the portico and that is why I --

Q Have you tried to see the helicopter from the portico?

MR. NESSEN: I saw some pictures of it and I have stood there myself and watched it come and go.

Q What is the reason for this? This does not make sense at all.

MR. NESSEN: It is a protective pool to make sure the helicopter gets off safely and lands safely, and that can be done from that position.

Q What was the reason for the change?

MR. NESSEN: That was the reason.

Q Why not do it at the other position?

MR. NESSEN: This is the way it was done for a long time, I guess, under Kennedy and Johnson -- I don't know if Kennedy allowed pools at all out there, but certainly under Johnson that was the procedure.

Q What is the reason? You are still not explaining why we cannot stand near the Diplomatic Entrance.

MR. NESSEN: I am saying that that is the way it was done for a long time and that is a place where the protective pool can fulfill its function.

Q That is not true. You cannot see the helicopter from there.

MR. NESSEN: Well, if anything were to happen to the helicopter, which is the purpose of coverage anyhow, then certainly the pool would be moved out to a position to cover any malfunction. (Laughter)

Q Aw, come on.

Q You are kidding.

Q Did you have any complaint?

Q Was there sensitivity over head-bumping getting in and out of the chopper?

MR. NESSEN: The reason it is being done is for the reason I have stated.

Q You have not stated a reason.

Q You have not given a reason.

MR. NESSEN: I have given a reason.

Q No you haven't.

MR. NESSEN: The reason is not acceptable to you, but it is a reason, that the --

Q Do you have any complaints about stories?

Q Reactionary.

Q Would you say that this was changed in order to prevent photographers from taking pictures of the President bumping his head again?

MR. NESSEN: Ted, you know I never over-criticize press stories.

Q Oh, Ron, Ron. Now you're in a good mood today but you are evasive.

MR. NESSEN: No. Really, there is a biblical reason for doing it -- do unto others as they have done unto you.

Q Is this a Presidential order, or is it yours?

MR. NESSEN: No, the President had nothing to do with this.

Q And it was just your idea, that suddenly, after two years, you decide that we cannot watch the helicopter take off?

MR. NESSEN: No, to go back to the way it was done under all the previous Administrations.

Q Are you aware that from that position, at least yesterday, we could not see the President until he came to the door of the Oval Office; we could not see him get on or off the chopper?

MR. NESSEN: Well, as I say, the purpose of the pool, Ann, is to provide protection in case something should go wrong with the helicopter, and that can be done there, as it was all through the previous Administrations.

Q No, no. That is not the reason.

Q You cannot see from there, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, if anything should go wrong, then you would be brought out to cover it.

Q There was no White House staff around --

MR. NESSEN: Sure there was.

Q -- to take us out there.

MR. NESSEN: Sure. If anything should happen.

Q Is he afraid that reporters might ask him a question?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, I think you have known the President long enough to know that he is not afraid of any questions.

Q What about his open Administration, especially at this stage of the game?

Q He doesn't hold any news conferences.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, the natives grow restless.

Q I was wondering, since the President has indicated that he does not favor legislation to outlaw bribes by U.S. companies abroad, what reaction is there here to yesterday's vote by the Senate Banking Committee approving such a bill to outlaw the group of foreign governments?

MR. NESSEN: Well, it has got a way to go in the legislative process. You know what the President's view of the proper method of dealing with the problem is, and so I don't think I will comment on that.

Q This helicopter thing, one last thing. Fran Lewine bugged you all last week about that. I understood you to say last week to Fran that they would indeed be allowed back out to the Diplomatic Entrance.

Q But he also denied that he knew where the policy was made or whose policy it was.

Q My question is, have you reversed what you told Fran Lewine last week about the Portico entrance?

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall telling Fran that.

Q Well, I heard it and I was with Fran at the time.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think I did.

Q But you are confirming for the first time that the order has been given to put them in the new place rather than --

MR. NESSEN: Revealing publicly for the first time, Bob. You heard it here.

Q For three running days.

MR. NESSEN: Admitted. Confessed. I think "confessed" is the best word.

Q Now, clear me up. Whose order was it? Was it yours?

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Q This thing last week was not a one time affair that happened, just some foul up or something?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is a permanent return to the previous policy.

Q So you can be historically consistent then, that is the reason we are given?

Q Tradition?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so. I think the reason I gave was that the purpose of the pool is to cover protectively the movements of the helicopter and this is where it is possible to do it.

Q When did the helicopter policy go into effect?

MR. NESSEN: When did the policy go into effect, policy-watchers?

I think last week.

Q Then you said for three days that you would know --

MR. NESSEN: No, no. I said I would check and I did check.

Q Why did you say you would check when you gave us --

MR. NESSEN: I was checking with myself to see if I wanted to do it and I decided I would do it.

Q Oh, Ron, I can't believe what I'm hearing.

MR. NESSEN: Believe it, Les.

Q The last time the President did leave by chopper that we were allowed to go out on the South Lawn and watch was the day that the chopper did not take off and they brought in another back-up chopper.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that is correct.

Q That was the day he left for Missouri.

MR. NESSEN: Then there was a trip to Camp David the next night and a trip to -- where, the day after that?

Q Were those viewed by a pool on the South Lawn?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know they were.

Q If that is a case where the President is on the chopper and it does not take off and they bring in another chopper, is that the kind of emergency or problem that you would take the pool out onto the lawn for?

MR. NESSEN: Probably.

Q Has he hit his head since the policy went into effect? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: I always get on first, Bob, and I am never standing there in the door checking it out.

Q Ron, did you at some time--two weeks ago--hit your head that would cause you to make the change in that policy? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: No problem.

Q Did you ever think that changing the policy might call more attention to this than the photos might?

MR. NESSEN: I thought, what will the reaction be?

Q Did you ever think that your credibility was at stake when you were asked about three days and you said you would check on an order that you had given?

MR. NESSEN: No, because I was indeed checking and talking it over with my staff and thinking about it myself before deciding that I had done the right thing.

Q Ron, the last time I went out to see him take off a group of tourists was allowed to come and shake his hand before he got on board. Will tourists still be allowed to watch the take-off?

MR. NESSEN: Probably.

Q Ron, can I change the subject?

Pat Moynihan said at breakfast the other day that he resigned after James Reston printed a column saying that the President and Kissinger privately deplored his conduct at the UN and that he had subsequently learned from Reston that Kissinger was the source.

Now I am told at the White House that the President both privately and publicly thought Moynihan was doing a good job. Therefore, the question is, how does Kissinger get the right to undermine a diplomatic representative whose performance the President approves of leading to his resignation?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, the President wanted Pat to stay and the Secretary of State wanted Pat to stay so I don't know what the basis of the question is.

Q Well, Moynihan says that he heard from Reston that Kissinger had told Reston that Kissinger and the President privately deplored Moynihan's conduct. Now Moynihan got it from the columnist who wrote the story and he has learned who the source is, therefore, Kissinger was in effect undermining Moynihan's performance at the UN; therefore, Moynihan resigned.

Now if this is not the way the President wanted things to happen, how was it that he will let his Secretary of State undermine a diplomat whose performance --

MR. NESSEN: You are assuming and accepting all of that, Mort, and to my knowledge both the President and the Secretary of State wanted Pat to stay and Pat indicated I guess in his letter that the reason he was leaving was to return to Harvard before he lost his tenure. It seems to me that if he had felt differently or had left for some different reason, he certainly would have stated it.

Q Well, he has stated it and he stated that when Reston's column came out that his position at the UN was irrecoverable and he could not perform his duties as a diplomat and that he, therefore, had to leave and he left in time to get his tenure back.

Now if the President approved of his conduct, did the President in any way reprimand Kissinger for undermining his Ambassador to the UN.

MR. NESSEN: You are assuming that Kissinger did undermine him, and to my knowledge Kissinger supported what Pat Moynihan did at the UN.

Q Then why would Kissinger tell Reston that both the President and Kissinger privately deplored --

MR. NESSEN: But I don't know that he did tell Reston that.

Q Well, Reston told Moynihan, or Moynihan says Reston told him.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, I see.

Q Those are all honorable men, wouldn't you say?

MR. NESSEN: I would say so.

Q But you dispute that Kissinger --

MR. NESSEN: All I know is that the President supported Pat and the Secretary of State did and wanted him to stay on and in fact on several earlier occasions talked him into staying on.

Q Ron, has the White House taken any interest or expressed any concern about the disclosure that the whole set of reports of surreptitious entry by the FBI were never turned over to the intelligence committees?

MR. NESSEN: I am not aware of that story myself.

Q It was on Page 1 of the Washington Post yesterday from the Los Angeles Times.

MR. NESSEN: Let me look into it, Don. I was not aware of it.

Q Ron, will there be a press conference this week?

MR. NESSEN: There are no plans for one.

Q When does he leave for Puerto Rico, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: On Saturday.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:40 P.M. EDT)