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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 10:20 A.M. EDT

JULY 8, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: I didn't really expect to have a briefing because the President was going to go up to the Cathedral, but there are one or two things I wanted to mention.

You have the travel pools, I think, that have already been posted, for the visit to the Cathedral and also for the trip to the British Embassy tonight for the dinner. In case any of you plan to go up to the Cathedral on your own, I am told the Cathedral has decreed pool coverage inside and that the Cathedral itself has selected the pool for the coverage inside.

Q Is the pool the White House pool?

MR. NESSEN: The travel pool that will go with the President is a travel pool.

Q You mean they don't get in at all?

Q How are we going to cover it?

Q Are you saying the church has selected the pool and that the pool covering the President cannot get in?

MR. NESSEN: No. I am saying the church has decreed what kind of coverage there will be inside the church and who will go inside the church.

Q The White House pool will go inside the church, then?

MR. NESSEN: If the church permits.

Q Can we find out?

MR. NESSEN: We are checking now.

The other thing is that the dinner tonight is covered by a fairly extensive pool -- in fact, a set of several pools -- and that has already been posted. Also, we had quite extensive negotiations with the British but in the end they did not win entirely, but they did select the pools, sizes at least, and in some cases the actual people for the coverage of the dinner tonight at the Embassy.

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Q So, how will the White House pool be affected there?

MR. NESSEN: The travel pool will be going along, of course, and there will be two pre-positioned pools to cover various events. It is quite a lengthy scenario, which pools go where. The travel pools will go some of the places; the other pools are pre-positioned. The wire services are obviously on all the pools -- the travel pool and the two pre-positioned pools.

Q We have to know, in order to have other people there, which we don't know.

MR. NESSEN: Doug Blaser had worked that out days ago and it has been posted a long time ago.

Q Did the British call the shots last night? Does this explain why no regular White House reporters were invited to the occasion here?

MR. NESSEN: No. The British don't set the pools for our dinners here at the White House, Phil.

Q What was the reason for that, then?

MR. NESSEN: Somebody told me we had the largest pool we have ever had for a dinner here at the White House.

Q Not one regular White House correspondent was invited last night -- not one.

MR. NESSEN: We don't invite people to pools, Phil.

Q No, I mean as guests last night.

MR. NESSEN: There were a number of representatives of journalism at the -- as I recall, the President of ABC was there and the publisher of the Baltimore Sun.

Q My question was, as is usual, we normally have working regular White House correspondents who get invited. Last night, there were none.

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure that that is true. There are representatives of the profession of journalism invited to almost every White House function, but they are not necessarily regular White House correspondents.

On the church, Fran, those who are in the White House travel pool, the writers, of course, can follow the President inside the church.

Q The writers? All the correspondents have notebooks.

MR. NESSEN: I mean people who write as opposed to cameramen or photographers.

Q What about the correspondents from the networks?

MR. NESSEN: You are a writer, aren't you?

Q What about tonight? You say the wires will be pre-positioned?

MR. NESSEN: And there will be a network minicam crew in the travel pool, another one in pre-positioned pool number one, and another one in pre-positioned pool number two.

Q Will the correspondent traveling with the pool also go with the other writers?

MR. NESSEN: There is a network correspondent pooler in all three of the pools for tonight.

One addition to the President's schedule today, and that is a meeting at 5:30 with UN Ambassador William Scranton. The purpose of this is for the Ambassador to report to the President on his recent trip to Africa and also to discuss his coming trip to Europe. The other person attending that meeting will be Brent Scowcroft.

Q Ron, does Scranton ever discuss -- as an original member of the Ford kitchen cabinet -- does he ever discuss campaign situations with the President in these meetings?

MR. NESSEN: To my knowledge, he does not, no.

Q Will they be discussing the Security Council debate on the Israeli-Uganda situation?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously, I don't know all that will come up at the meeting, but I would think that probably will be one of the subjects that they discuss.

Q Why isn't Kissinger attending the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I have to check to find out if he is. I will check and find out.

Other than that, I think I don't have any other announcements.

Q Ron, the Star said yesterday that the President was on the verge of making a big, highly-touted announcement about reducing the Federal paperwork burden. He was going to go on the TV and so forth. Can you give us any guidance on that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any highly-touted TV announcement of the reduction of paperwork. The President has given that order and set a date for it, and I believe that somehow we will indicate what the results have been of his order, but I don't know of any highly-touted TV announcement.

Q The Star said yesterday the President was planning to go on the TV.

MR. NESSEN: At the moment, there are no plans to. In fact, there has been no decision on how to announce what the results of that were.

Q Ron, I have a couple of political questions. Will the President be doing anything about trying to win the North Dakota delegates? Reagan is going in tonight, as I understand it, and I wondered if the President would make any phone calls?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is the voting begins in North Dakota at something like 2 o'clock Eastern Time.

Q Has he done anything on it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know specifically what he has done. I think probably the PFC could tell you -- Jim Baker, specifically -- what approaches have been made.

Q The other question is, Governor Carter has asked FEC to make a ruling for private funds to be used outside of the amount allotted for the general campaign for the transition from the Ford to the Carter Administration. I wonder if the President will support that money?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that question is ever going to arise, Phil. It is truly a moot point.

Q Ron, did the President talk to John Connally last night at the dinner party?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

Q And is there any political aspect to that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there was any political aspect to it, but he certainly talked to him. He was a guest and an old friend.

Q I am referring to any political discussions.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I did not eavesdrop on their conversations. I don't know what they talked about.

Q Connally did not have any conversation privately with the President?

MR. NESSEN: There were no private meetings over in a corner somewhere, but they obviously chatted at the dinner.

Q Did they discuss Barry Goldwater's comment on John Connally being the most qualified man in public life in the United States?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Dick, because I did not listen in on their conversation.

Q The Reagan forces say there was an uncommitted delegate invited. Do you happen to know who that would have been?

MR. NESSEN: I certainly don't.

Q Ron, did the President meet with Connally prior to the dinner last night?

MR. NESSEN: No, as I say, they did not have any private little meetings, either before or after or during, but maybe they obviously chatted at the dinner.

Q How about Clarke Reed or any of the others, Rosenbaum?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any private meetings that took place.

Q Does the President expect to see former Governor Connally today or anytime?

MR. NESSEN: They don't have a meeting scheduled.

Q Ron, after the President and Mrs. Ford, the Queen and the Prince retired from dinner and they had those few moments alone, did anyone else join them?

MR. NESSEN: We will check and find out.

Q Ron, so we don't get hung up on semantics here, you said they don't have any meetings scheduled. Are they trying to work one out?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate a meeting today.

Q What kind of coverage will there be on the 5:30 meeting?

MR. NESSEN: The Scranton meeting?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate any coverage.

Q Will he come down afterwards?

MR. NESSEN: I will ask him if he could.

Q Ron, it is not a big deal, but you keep dropping these words. Is he going to meet with him or isn't he, while he is in town, before he goes back to Texas?

MR. NESSEN: I don't anticipate that they will meet privately during this visit.

Q If he does, would you let us know for a change?

MR. NESSEN: I know of your interest in that subject. I will.

Q Can you project a week ahead?

MR. NESSEN: Let's see. Today is Thursday. Saturday, of course, is the trip. Sunday I don't know of any activities. Next week I think Chancellor Schmidt is coming -- the 15th, a week from tomorrow -- and then a week from Saturday the President will be going to Hartford, Connecticut, as we said before. It will be about a half-day trip in the morning hours, and he will come back a little after midday.

The main event of next week is Chancellor Schmidt coming a week from today, on Thursday, the 15th, with business meetings with the President during the day, a State dinner in the evening, of course, and a second meeting on Friday, the 16th. Next Wednesday is the President's birthday, incidentally.

Q Why is he coming? Because of the Bicentennial?

Q Is that an official visit?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it has a State dinner, so it must be. Next Wednesday is the President's birthday.

Q Is the President going to let us see the Kleppe-Coleman report on the pipeline?

MR. NESSEN: That arrived here yesterday. It has not reached the President's desk yet. It will later today and after he has had a chance to look at it -- there are two separate reports, one from Kleppe and one from Coleman -- and when he has looked at them, he will decide.

Q It won't be today, will it?

MR. NESSEN: The decision?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: No, I would think if he decides to put it out, we would put it out today.

Q Ron, what about a press conference? Is the President going to have one?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any plans for when there will be a press conference.

Q What is he doing on his birthday? Anything special?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know yet. I have to check on that.

Q Are you really thinking about a press conference in the next week to ten days?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there are no plans for one in that time period.

Q There are no plans?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why is he avoiding the press?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he is avoiding the press.

Q He hasn't had a press conference since last February 17.

MR. NESSEN: You mean he hasn't had a televised Washington press conference, but he has had plenty of meetings with reporters.

Q I mean he hasn't had a Washington press conference of any dimension.

MR. NESSEN: You mean a full-blown half-hour Washington press conference.

Q I mean a no-holds barred press conference.

MR. NESSEN: But he has all the meetings where he stops and answers questions.

Q Very limited, with Ron Nessen telling everybody "cut him off."

Q Would he have a problem with holding one during the Democratic Convention and pre-empting the air time? Wouldn't that be kind of dirty pool?

MR. NESSEN: The President doesn't determine whether he goes on television or not. That is up to the networks.

Q Is that why they were invited to the dinner last night?

MR. NESSEN: Who? Elton Rule? David Brinkley?

Q Is he going to the All-Star Game?

MR. NESSEN: He is not going to the All-Star Game.

Q What about the All-Star football game?

MR. NESSEN: When is that?

Q In August.

MR. NESSEN: I don't expect him to go to that one, either.

Q Does he have any idea who is going to be the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate?

MR. NESSEN: How would he know?

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 10:30 A.M. EDT)