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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:32 A.M. EDT

AUGUST 6, 1976

FRIDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let's move right along because I have a fair amount of stuff to tell you about today.

There are a couple of changes in the schedule. The NSC meeting will be held on Monday instead of today, the reason being that the material that was to be discussed will be ready on Monday, rather than this afternoon.

Q Has a crisis come about?

MR. NESSEN: No. The material they were to meet about was not quite ready.

Q What is the subject of the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: We never tell about the subject, Phil.

Q You did yesterday. You discussed an NSC meeting yesterday.

MR. NESSEN: That is because it had been printed so widely already.

Q Is that stuff you talked about yesterday that you didn't have the reason you are not meeting now because you don't have it?

MR. NESSEN: No, the meeting is not about the two Soviet nuclear tests.

Q Well, we are off to a good start, aren't we?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Let me give you some travel plans here. The President and Mrs. Ford are going to depart for Camp David this afternoon, and it could be as early as 4 or 4:30. They will go by helicopter. Those who will be covering up there for the wires or otherwise, should plan to leave by 3 o'clock.

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I understand we are not going to provide transportation. So you can get there in time for their arrival, you should plan to leave by at least 3 o'clock. These times could change as the day goes on, and if they do, I will keep you posted.

The other change in the schedule is that the President may come back tomorrow night and will definitely return, and more likely return, early Sunday morning, the reason being that he probably will attend church on Sunday.

Mike and Gail, his son and daughter-in-law, will be coming to Washington and the family wants to go to church together on Sunday, probably at the 11 a.m. service.

Q Where? At St. Johns'?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, probably.

Q Will there be any family participation in the service, like the son?

MR. NESSEN: No, they will attend as part of the congregation.

Q Ron, on Saturday, will he have any visitors at Camp David?

MR. NESSEN: Some of the staff will be going up, Phil.

Q No PFC people?

MR. NESSEN: I have got to check and find out who is going up there exactly. Some of the White House staff, I know, is going.

Q When was the last time he went to Camp David?

MR. NESSEN: I will check. I forget, Fred.

Q Do you have further times on Sunday?

MR. NESSEN: We are up through the possibility of a return Saturday night or certainly Sunday morning, and the possibility or probability of 11 o'clock church.

This means since the President will be coming back here almost certainly to go to church, the helicopter deal from Camp David is out, and instead, the President will fly to Philadelphia on Air Force One, departing from the South Grounds at 2:35 on Sunday by helicopter and leaving Andrews by plane at 3 o'clock.

The press plane plans -- this looks to me about the same as it was yesterday, which is a 1:30 check-in for the press and a 2 o'clock takeoff at Andrews.

The rest of the schedule, I think, pretty much remains the same -- 3:30 arrival at Philadelphia International Airport by the President; 3:45 a reception at the Spectrum with the Cardinals and other leaders.

Q What is that?

MR. NESSEN: The Spectrum is like an arena -- well, it is an arena. That is why it is like an arena.

Q Where is that?

MR. NESSEN: In Philadelphia.

Q Is that in a separate place?

MR. NESSEN: This is a complex which includes the stadium and the Spectrum.

Q It is in the stadium area.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, that is right. Anyhow, that is a reception with the Cardinals and other leaders.

At 4:30, the President will arrive at the stadium. He will speak very, very briefly at 4:45. When I say briefly, I mean a couple of minutes, and there will be no advance text of that. The President will attend church services and will depart at 6 o'clock from the stadium.

He will leave in Air Force One from Philadelphia at 6:15, and will get back to Washington at 7:30.

Q You mean he is going all the way up there with all of these arrangements, and all those people there, and as important an event as this is, he is going to speak two minutes?

MR. NESSEN: The purpose of the event is not to hear the President. The purpose of the event is to have a closing liturgy for a World Eucharistic Congress of Roman Catholics and the Cardinal invited the President to attend.

Q That doesn't mean they don't want to hear more than two minutes worth.

Q Are any of those Catholics possible running mates?

MR. NESSEN: Let me get on.

Q No, a question relating to this, Ron.

Why is it that he spoke for, I think, 23 minutes to the Southern Baptist Convention that had a lot of business to do and is only giving two minutes to the Roman Catholics?

Q How come he is not going to a Jewish event? (Laughter)

Q Actually, Ron, that is an insult to people to go and speak two minutes.

MR. NESSEN: To answer Les' question, the Southern Baptist thing was indeed a convention. This Sunday is a liturgy, a church service, and it is not envisioned that a church service would contain a segment of any particular length for the President to make a speech.

Q Why not, Ron?

Q Can we regard this as the beginning of the campaign against Carter, this attendance at a church?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly not. I hate to even be asked to deny that.

Q Ron, on the following Sunday, immediately before the Convention, is he going to go to church services three or four times, instead of just twice?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have his plans for the following Sunday, Ed, but I have a lot of announcements which I --

Q Is the place where he speaks in the same place where they have the service and is it at the same spot or is it in the same area?

MR. NESSEN: The President will speak immediately prior to a closing mass, which will include a blessing from the Pope, broadcast by satellite.

Q Ron, was he asked to hold it to two minutes? Is this the decision of the President or the advice of his staff or what? I mean, they have been talking all week, Ron, and they don't usually talk for just two minutes. I am sure they would be interested in hearing more from the President of the United States. I just wondered, why is it? Did they ask for that?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, the invitation came from Cardinal Krol for the President to participate, and --

Q Cardinal Krol, when giving the invocation at the Nixon 1972 Convention, took 4-1/2 minutes.

Q Ron, will you make your announcements?

MR. NESSEN: I would like to make my announcements and if there are further questions on the Sunday event, we do have background material and maybe we can help after the briefing for those that need further information.

The last visit of the President to Camp David was on June 12th and 13th. As you know, Sunday is the 2nd anniversary of the Ford Administration, and a little booklet has been put together which outlines what the President believes have been the major accomplishments of his Administration.

Q Is that paid for by the President Ford Committee or the taxpayers?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know why it would be paid for by the President Ford Committee.

Q Because it is a campaign document?

MR. NESSEN: It is not intended to be a campaign document.

Q Why would it be paid for by taxpayers?

MR. NESSEN: It is a Government document, Phil, and I believe some reporters have requested this kind of material outlining the accomplishments of the President's first two years. I don't know what involvement the PFC would have with it. Anyhow, it is available for those of you who want it, immediately after the briefing.

Q How much did it cost?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the vaguest notion,
Sarah.

Q Can you find out?

MR. NESSEN: Probably not.

Q Why not?

Q Will it be available for distribution?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, in the Press Office.

Q Will it be available for delegates at the
Republican National Convention?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of any plans for
that.

Q How many copies were printed?

MR. NESSEN: I asked for 150.

Q I mean, for overall distribution?

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

Q Is that for immediate release?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it is just a factual
compilation of the two years.

Q How many pages is it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: It looks to me like 93, Les.

Q Ron, where is it going?

MR. NESSEN: It is going to go into the Press
Office for people who want it. I think some will be sent
to newspapers and television stations outside of Washington.

Q How many are being sent out of town?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Whatever that
distribution is. It is a normal distribution.

Q Who put this together?

MR. NESSEN: The Communications Office coordinated
the compilation of it. It is the same as the one put out on
the first anniversary. It is the same kind of document that was
put out on the first anniversary.

Q It is primarily a press document rather than an official mailing to Government administrators or local officials?

MR. NESSEN: White House staff people will get copies of it also, so they will have handy a record or factual compilation of the accomplishments.

Q Does it include some of the things he feels he has not been able to accomplish?

MR. NESSEN: I will let you read it, Ann, and you can judge for yourself.

Q I still don't understand. How many copies are we talking about, roughly? Are we talking about 200, 300, or what?

MR. NESSEN: I asked for 150. How many will be printed for the White House staff, I don't know. I haven't seen the printing request, Dick, so I don't know exactly how many are being printed, but enough to fill the requests and the decisions to send them out.

Q I mean, you mentioned newspapers and publishing --

MR. NESSEN: Right, but this is a weekly mailing we have, as you probably know. Presidential statements, legislation and so forth, is mailed on a weekly basis to newspapers and other news organizations out of Washington who don't normally cover the White House.

Q It is only the recipients that normally receive such White House mailings that will be getting this; is that right?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I don't know the full distribution but they certainly will get it.

Q What we are talking about is, sure, this is the second anniversary of the Ford Administration, and sure, there was one at the end of the first year, and it so happens just as the Republican Convention is about to convene and just as we are going in to a general election. Our questions are very direct. The question is: Is the President Ford Committee involved as far as paying some of the expense of this document which will be used in the campaign?

Q Or will they distribute it?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, there is no involvement by the PFC because it is not a PFC document in any way. But if there is any change in that or if the PFC decides to pay for copies that go to somebody involved in politics, I will certainly let you know.

Q If the original cost of this would have been paid by the taxpayers and then the President Ford Committee would pick it up and use it as a political document?

MR. NESSEN: I know of no plans for the PFC to use this as a political document. It was intended, as last year's was, to in some degree respond to press inquiries, to respond to some queries by the staff to have all the material in one place so they could answer their own questions, correspondence, make their own speeches, and so forth.

Q Does the PFC plan to distribute this in any way?

MR. NESSEN: I thought I said before, no.

Q Does anybody at the PFC have any editorial control, input or whatever, in this thing?

MR. NESSEN: Why would they?

Q I don't know. It may be sent over to them. They have been involved in other decisions made here.

MR. NESSEN: I think you will see the authors of this have proudly signed it, Gergen, and Rhatigan from the Office of Communications. The editors are Halper, Luttig, Shuman and Van Cleve, and I know of no involvement by the PFC and I know of no reason why the PFC would be involved in the writing of a factual record of the accomplishments of the Administration for two years -- maybe accomplishments is not even the right word. Maybe it is just sort of a record.

Q Isn't that what he is running on?

Q Is this really entitled "Why Not the Best"?
(Laughter)

Q Ron, if the Governor of Georgia --

MR. NESSEN: Les, we have a number of things here today which I would like to push on with.

Q Well, this is pretty important. If the Governor of Georgia used State funds to publish a 93-page record of Jimmy Carter's accomplishments, are you seriously stating and sincerely suggesting that the Ford Administration would not question whether this is a political document?

MR. NESSEN: I have no way of answering that question, Les.

Q You would like to pass on that? Okay.

MR. NESSEN: Moving along now, the next thing I want to tell you about is the rubber strike. The President asked Bill Usery, or directed Bill Usery, yesterday to bring the parties in the rubber strike, which has gone on, I guess, now for over 100 days, to come to Washington and begin negotiations around the clock, starting at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning at the Labor Department with Bill Usery and others of his colleagues sitting in and to continue the negotiations until the strike is settled.

Another item I wanted to mention to you is that next Thursday, the 12th of August, the President has directed George Bush, and some of his colleagues, to go to Plains, Georgia, to give Carter the second of his foreign policy and security briefings.

Q Ron, this is very peculiar. George Bush has nothing to do with making foreign policy, does he? Or does he?

MR. NESSEN: Interestingly enough, I have read where this was unprecedented and that normally, the Secretary of State is the one who does these briefings for candidates. I checked and can find no occasion ever with any Presidential candidate where the Secretary of State has ever given the briefing.

Q But you didn't find that the CIA Director did, did you?

MR. NESSEN: It has been done, as I mentioned, in various ways, including one instance by a President, himself.

Q I say, you didn't find the CIA Director had ever done it before, did you?

MR. NESSEN: This is the procedure the President has decided is the best way to give Carter the background information he needs.

Q Answer my question, Ron. Did you find the CIA Director had ever done it before?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to review my notes and see whether the CIA Director has done it before.

Q Did Carter make this request?

MR. NESSEN: My information is Carter didn't request anybody; that this was the way the President decided it should be done.

Q What about Kissinger?

MR. NESSEN: Saul, as I say, the Secretary of State has never given these briefings before, even though I have read that.

The other item I wanted to mention today is we are going to announce phase two of the Vice Presidential selection process.

Over the weekend, or starting tomorrow, associates of the President will be contacting, first by telephone and then following up by letter, a number of individuals. These individuals will be informed that they have been recommended to the President for consideration as his Vice Presidential running mate and that the President has decided that he wants to consider them.

They will be asked, first of all, if they are interested. (Laughter) And if so, they will then be asked to compile information on a broad range of questions which include, one, a complete report on their health, a financial balance sheet of their assets and liabilities --

Q Personal?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

And third, the information on their taxes from 1966 through 1975.

In addition, they will be asked to compile information which would normally be required of any individual who is being considered for a high level appointment by the President.

There are two specific questionnaires which are used here at the White House to gather that kind of information. It would not be appropriate to use those specific questionnaires, but the questions from the questionnaires, the appropriate ones are the ones that will be asked. I was going to get a copy of those two questionnaires.

The questions deal with the person's prior record, his own personal history, his qualifications to serve in the post and so forth.

Then, the person will also be asked to commit himself, or herself, to make public, if they are the one selected, three items: One, the health report; two, the financial balance sheet of assets and liabilities; and three, the information from the taxes of 1966 to 1975, the tax returns.

This would be done in the same degree of detail that the President, himself, has published these three reports.

Q But not the actual tax returns?

MR. NESSEN: The person will be asked to commit himself to publish his tax returns.

Q Will he be asked to submit copies of --

MR. NESSEN: Let me go on.

The person will also be asked to agree to let the President's associates contact various friends and references they may give who could be expected to know about this person's background and answer questions as to their character and qualifications.

As I say, this process begins this weekend. This is the start of the process. The people contacted will be asked to keep the contact confidential and that is as much as I can tell you today about phase two.

Q When you talk about the number of calls -- you say they will be contacted -- obviously, you have a number that is determined like 12 or 20, and so on. The President has always said it was in the neighborhood of 12 to 15 good Republicans he would consider available. Can you give us a ballpark figure?

MR. NESSEN: I can't.

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Q Will they be asked to lie if they are asked by the press if they have been contacted, is that what you are saying?

MR. NESSEN: They will be asked to keep the contact confidential.

Q Ron, on this contacting, when you say by the President's associates, are you speaking of people within the White House or the President Ford Committee?

MR. NESSEN: No, the President Ford Committee is not involved. It will be the President's associates here at the White House.

Q It does not mean that the choice will come from one of those contacted?

MR. NESSEN: No -- well, I don't want to say no. I want to say that the deadline for the consultation process of people to send their letters in, the delegates, alternates and others, is the 11th of August, so obviously there are other names that can come in still-- I mean, there is time -- who the President might want to consider. So, that is why I say this is a start. But the time, it seemed to the President that the time -- it was now time to get started on this.

Q You are saying that X number of persons will be contacted?

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q Does this mean that the President's choice will come from X number of persons contacted or could he go outside that group?

MR. NESSEN: No, because there will still be others who may be contacted as a result of the remainder of the consultation process.

Q I am talking about the entire list --

MR. NESSEN: Oh, you mean by the time next Thursday or so comes around?

Q Right.

MR. NESSEN: And all the letters may have come back and the President may find some more names in there that he wants to check out and add to this?

Q Will he choose a Vice Presidential nominee from the total number of persons contacted?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q He will?

Q Is part of the process contacting Leon Jaworski for the records on Connally when he served as Special Prosecutor?

MR. NESSEN: I think when we get around -- you know, I have been fairly full and forthcoming in keeping you posted on each stage of this and when we get on to the next stage I will also.

Q Ron, has Jaworski been contacted to provide that information on Connally?

MR. NESSEN: For one thing, I am not going to speculate on who may or may not be under consideration by the President, but all those who are contacted and are asked to pull this information together and so forth will be treated equally. I just think today I am not prepared to discuss the process any further.

Q Ron, according to what you are saying, then, this story about Jaworski couldn't be true because you haven't reached phase three. In other words, John Connally couldn't have been contacted yet and he couldn't have given you his approval to contact his associates. In other words, this process is just starting this weekend so the story couldn't be true by definition.

MR. NESSEN: I will not speculate, as I say, on who is on the list and who is not.

Q We are not asking you to.

Q Why don't you say whether it is true or not whether Buchen has contacted Jaworski about Connally's background as was reported in the Wall Street Journal today?

MR. NESSEN: Fred, I have said over the past couple of days that now that this process is underway I am not going to deal with specific names of individuals and where they stand on the list or not on the list.

Q Ron, it seems to me from what you are saying that we have not reached the point where Buchen could have contacted anybody about a possibility; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: John, as I said, I really have given a lot of information at each stage and I am not prepared to give any more on the next part of the operation.

Q For any individual, have we gone past the stage that you talk about? You said it is going to start this weekend.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Then, by definition, whether Connally or anyone -- apparently the stories about anyone from the White House delving into their affairs could not be true; is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: As I told Aldo yesterday, the ones who know are not talking and the ones who are talking don't know.

Q Ron, where those individuals --

MR. NESSEN: I think I have been very forthcoming and I think I have given a lot of information and none of it has been misleading in any way, and I want to stick with that, and I would hope that you would wait until I am ready to talk about what happens next.

Q Ron, is it this hard and fast that indeed nothing has happened beyond what you have just told us here today? If that is true, --

MR. NESSEN: This is phase two of the process, and when we go on further I will tell you about it, as I have been.

Q Will those individuals who have declined to make public the information that you asked them to make public or to allow their friends and associates and special prosecutors to be consulted on their qualifications, be eliminated from consideration?

MR. NESSEN: As I explained phase two, they will be asked a series of questions, one of which is "Are you interested?" Then, if they are, they will be told to start compiling the following information. Then they will be asked to commit themselves, if chosen as the nominee--not as one of the finalists, but as the nominee.

Q Suppose they say they will not do that?

MR. NESSEN: That is hypothetical. I am not going to answer that.

Q It is no more hypothetical than the description you have given about what they will be asked.

MR. NESSEN: I think the President is asking for a commitment from them.

Q What if he doesn't get it?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to speculate on that.

Q Who are the President's associates who are going to do the checking?

Q But what if he doesn't get it?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is fair to say, Jim, that a person who declines to make that commitment would drop out of contention.

Q Is that something to be done by members of the White House staff or by the President Ford Committee?

MR. NESSEN: I said earlier, Howard, the President Ford Committee is not involved in this phase.

Q Ron, how many staff people --

Q Sarah, I was asking a question.

Ron, who are the President's associates who will do the checking into the background?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to name them right now.

Q How many are there, Ron?

Q Are they from the Legal Office?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to name them right now, or pinpoint them.

Q How many are there?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have a number to give you today.

Q Can't you give us just an estimated number of how many of these people are working at taxpayers' expense that will be taken off their regular jobs and put to work on this?

MR. NESSEN: None.

Q None?

MR. NESSEN: None will be taken off their regular jobs and put on this.

Q In other words, they will do their regular jobs and this, too?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Ron, can you give us some idea of a deadline on this in view of the August 11 deadline on the other? By when does the President want this material on his desk?

MR. NESSEN: Well, in this phase of the operation I want you to understand now, that nothing is going to be shipped in here. The people contacted this weekend will be told -- after all, it is going to take time to pull some of this together, you know. They will be told to compile the information, get it ready. That is this phase. I will tell you when we get to the next part.

Q Ron, what purpose will be served by having the people deny or not divulge that they have been contacted? Why keep that secret?

MR. NESSEN: What purpose is served by revealing it?

Q That was not my question.

MR. NESSEN: That was mine.

Q What purpose is served by giving us a piecemeal process of selection of a Vice President?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, look --

Q Is it part of the mystery?

MR. NESSEN: No, not a mystery.

Q Will you answer Ann's question. I had the feeling you were on the verge of answering it.

MR. NESSEN: I am trying to answer Ann's question. This is an important process and the selection is a very important one. The President is doing it, as you see, by quite a comprehensive and complex method and he feels that he will be able to proceed this way if the folks contacted treat their calls and letters confidentially.

Q I am afraid I still don't understand why it is important -- I am not asking whether they will divulge that information to us, but why not divulge that they are simply being considered?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think this is the way the President feels: The system has worked quite well so far and I think he feels it will continue to operate this way.

Q He does not think that the Carter open policy of disclosing the names of these individuals is fair to American voters?

MR. NESSEN: I suppose that is a judgment that you will want to make. This is the quite comprehensive system that the President has decided upon.

Q It is not an open one as the Democrats have done.

MR. NESSEN: As I say, I feel that is probably a judgment that you would rather make than I would be able to.

Q You would not deny that, then, that it certainly is not as open as the Democrats chose to do?

MR. NESSEN: Well, Phil, I think what I have done is to try to outline this next phase of the operation. I am, frankly, not familiar totally with the process that was followed by the other party.

Q Well, we have to know the names. The potential nominee announced the people he was considering, they all made a trip to Plains, and the American people saw them, knew their names. This is not the open policy that the President has chosen, so I would assume that you would acknowledge that conclusion.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think I would prefer not to answer the question because I don't think it is a question that I can answer. I think it is more of a conclusion.

Q Thank you.

Q Ron, I am curious why the President has to go through this complicated process when he said several times not long ago that he did not need to do that because he knew very well all of the people he had in mind.

MR. NESSEN: Well, Jim, I think the question he responded to was slightly different. The question was, are you going to call in a lot of people and, you know, go through the sort of public event of having them come and talk and interview them, and so forth that Phil mentioned. I think the President's answer to that was, no, he was not going to do that because he really knew most of the people he thought would be considered.

Q He said he knew them intimately and one would presume from that, that he would not have to go through their records, backgrounds, checks with individuals who know them, because he knew them intimately.

So, why is he going through this whole elaborate process?

MR. NESSEN: So that I will be able to answer your questions two weeks from now when you say, didn't he check these people out?

Q Do they have to be Republican and do they list their religion?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President has spoken before on the question of looking elsewhere as well as among the leading Republicans. I don't know on the question of religion.

Q Did that apply to party, Ron -- this elsewhere?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President said -- I have to look up the exact quote -- he said we have a lot of outstanding Republicans we can choose from, and elsewhere.

Q Ron, will you answer the question? Does that mean he is going outside the Republican Party?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to elaborate on what the President has said.

Q Well, he seemed to be perfectly willing to.

MR. NESSEN: I was quoting back to you what the President has said, which is as much as I know about --

Q Well, all right. Can you answer this question? It is a very simple question. Is he confining his contacts to people in the Republican Party?

MR. NESSEN: He is going to do what he said he would so, which is to look among the outstanding Republicans and elsewhere.

Q He didn't say elsewhere. He said maybe elsewhere.

MR. NESSEN: And maybe elsewhere.

Q Can you clarify what he meant by "maybe elsewhere?"

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to elaborate on his comments.

Q How many references from people will he ask these candidates to prepare?

MR. NESSEN: Enough to assure himself that the person he selects will be the highest quality person who meets the standards that he has set.

Q Ron, I wonder if you could break your rule of not giving out names in just one instance. Ronald Reagan has been mentioned frequently and since he obviously is still in a close fight with him, can you tell us if Ronald Reagan is going to be contacted and asked to send in his information?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to break my rule.

Q Ron, unemployment is up to --

MR. NESSEN: Why don't we finish with the Vice Presidential thing and then we will get to that.

Q Ron, can you tell us about how many letters -- not necessarily who is leading, but how many letters have been received in response to the mailing that went out?

MR. NESSEN: All I can say is a good many, because I really didn't have time this morning to get an accurate count.

Q The majority have come back so far to the point where the President thinks he better start phase two?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, a good many have come in as well as telegrams and mailgrams and personal comments to the President. I don't have the exact number, but the reason for starting phase two now is because of the need to go through these various steps in time to complete the selection by the Convention.

Q Has Dick Cheney given the President a list of the standing of these people?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he has given him a box score. I think he has kept him informed as to how the recommendation is going. Some of these recommendations have been made directly to the President so he knows how people are feeling.

Q Does the President share John Connally's judgment that the criticism of him is unfair?

MR. NESSEN: What is that, Jim?

Q Does the President share John Connally's publicly stated judgment that the criticism of Connally as a potential running mate is unfair and unfounded?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, in this context that we are discussing, I don't feel that I can answer that question, or should.

Q Ron, will these potential running mates be asked to supply the President with actual tax returns or a breakdown such as he had prepared for himself?

MR. NESSEN: I think when we get into the next phase, which is having compiled the information -- you know, there will be a next phase, and when we get to that I will tell you about the details of it.

Q Well, I thought the information on the tax was part of this stage.

MR. NESSEN: The information on the tax is in the same degree and detail that the President provided.

Q The President has never provided copies of his actual tax return. Is he asking these people to do anything more than he has done?

MR. NESSEN: We are talking about several different things here. We are talking about, one, the commitment to make public three documents.

Q I understand the difference.

MR. NESSEN: And the other is to compile information. Now, I don't know whether the standard two White House questionnaires I talked about, which are filled in by anybody under consideration for a top level Presidential appointment, requires the provision of actual tax returns or just the major information from tax returns. I will check.

Q Ron, can you give us any feeling for the number of people we are talking about? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: No, I can't.

Q I mean, are we talking about dozens, or are we talking about less than 20?

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you a feel for that.

Q Are we talking about a hundred?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't want to tell you.

Q Ron, I don't see anything in your procedure for the contact of anyone other than friends and references. If Connally, for instance, doesn't submit Jaworski's name as a reference, can he be contacted?

MR. NESSEN: I think the commitment being asked for is to agree to have people the White House chooses to contact as references.

Q Oh, not the potential nominees' references?

MR. NESSEN: Do you agree that when we come to review your qualifications and we want to get somebody to check this or that out, do you agree to let us do it? It is the White House's choice of who will do the checking that the person agrees to allow.

MORE

Q Does the White House then submit a list of names to the potential nominee and say, "These are the people we want to contact"?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is a general agreement, Russ, to allow the White House to delve into this person's background by contacting various people.

Q Contacting anyone the White House chooses?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q The nominees, then, would not have veto power over one or the other names?

Q Ron, will the White House do it or will --

Q Which question are you going to answer?

MR. NESSEN: Let me catch Russ' question.

Q The potential nominee, then, would not have veto power over one or two names on a list the White House might have?

MR. NESSEN: That is why they are asked to give their agreements to allow that kind of checking ahead of time.

Q Are there no exceptions? Nobody has been contacted yet, right?

MR. NESSEN: I see what you are driving at, John. I can't go beyond what I have said.

Q The thing is, you did say they would start this weekend. So, if we accept that, unless I ask if there are exceptions, I mean, are there exceptions, later on, we find out Jaworski was contacted this week, you know, and we come back, you said it was going to start this weekend.

MR. NESSEN: I know where you are heading, John. I can't help you.

Q You are sticking by this weekend; is that right?

MR. NESSEN: I am sticking by my announcement of phase two.

Q You are sticking with this weekend? You are aware of that. I want to make sure.

MR. NESSEN: I am aware of what I said, that it starts this weekend.

Q My question is whether the investigatory process will be done by the White House exclusively or will it use other arms of the Government, such as the FIB?

MR. NESSEN: I think we have indicated for about two weeks now it is not proper for the FBI to become involved in this process and it will not be.

Q Why is it proper for the White House to do this rather than the President Ford Committee, since this is not a governmental function?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Ed. You know, the President is the President and he is picking his running mate.

Q It is a party matter, not a governmental matter.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know how you make that fine distinction at this point, Jim.

Q You do. You rise above these things, Ron. You won't comment on these questions. I think Jim has an awfully good question, Ron.

Q Thank you, Les.

MR. NESSEN: I am sure he is happy to have your endorsement, Les.

Q That is immaterial, Ron.

Q Can you say whether the procedures for phase one --

MR. NESSEN: Let me get Sarah's question.

Q Will the White House tell these candidates the names of the people they plan to contact?

MR. NESSEN: When we get on down toward the next phase, Sarah, I will spell out in more detail how the President plans to make a thorough review of the qualifications of the candidates.

Q This is before he makes a review of the qualifications. You are telling us today of the machinery, how it will be done.

MR. NESSEN: The machinery calls for the people, if they are interested in being considered, to agree to allow the White House to contact various people necessary --

Q Anyone?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q They will not give these people a list of the people they plan to contact, right?

MR. NESSEN: The candidates are asked to allow the White House to contact references and people to check.

Q Anyone?

MR. NESSEN: Anyone.

Q They won't give them a list, like you won't tell John Connally, we are going to ask Jaworski about you? Right? I am not pinning you down to that particular one, but I mean, that is an example. You won't tell them who the people are you are going to contact?

MR. NESSEN: When I get on to the next phase, Sarah, I will tell you.

Q How many phases are there?

MR. NESSEN: There are enough phases to end up with a candidate at the Convention.

Q Does this phase involve people sending in this material or just compiling it?

MR. NESSEN: No, just compiling it.

Q That is all there is to it?

MR. NESSEN: That is this phase, correct.

Q Aren't they told to have it ready in 48 hours, or three days?

MR. NESSEN: As soon as possible. They are told to have it ready as soon as possible.

Q Will the PFC have any role in this, like will Rogers Morton be involved in it?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q No involvement by the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: That is my understanding.

Q Is this whole thing a complicated device to get Ronald Reagan's tax information? (Laughter)

Q I hate to break into this wealth of information, but could you --

MR. NESSEN: Have we finished with Vice Presidents now?

Q Let me ask you, have the procedures for stage three been decided on?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Can you say at this point how many stages you are going to have before the announcement?

MR. NESSEN: It all depends. There might be like sub-stages of other stages.

Q But how many stages?

MR. NESSEN: Three or four.

Q The potential candidates compile this information, then they sit on it until they are asked for it?

MR. NESSEN: They stay very close to the telephone during the next week, that is correct.

Q Whether publicly or not, would you anticipate that at some point, the President would meet with several potential running mates?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't rule it out.

Q Tell us about unemployment.

Q It might be the subject of tomorrow's story.

Q Is the President meeting with Mr. Connally today?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Did he meet with him yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: He did not, as far as I can tell.

Q Did he talk with him by telephone?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't checked, but I don't think so.

Q Is he going to Camp David?

MR. NESSEN: He is not.

Q Ron, considering your repeated statements that the President believes that he will definitely win in November, I am wondering, is he so confident of this that he believes Jimmy Carter's statements can be ignored by him and dealt with surrogates like Governor Rockefeller?

MR. NESSEN: Well, Les, I am just not prepared today to answer campaign speeches, as I wasn't yesterday. But you know, we will get there. The campaign will open in time.

Q What is the deadline for this phase?

MR. NESSEN: Of this phase?

Q Yes, this phase two.

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you the precise date, but certainly up around the end of next week some time.

Q That means it will be handled in Washington or Kansas City?

MR. NESSEN: What? This phase?

Q The results.

MR. NESSEN: I think I indicated yesterday that the President will announce his choice in the traditional way, which is in Kansas City after the nomination.

Q But you have said repeatedly today, here, that you will give us more information about --

MR. NESSEN: When we get to phase three, I will tell you.

Q Will it be in Kansas City?

MR. NESSEN: I would guess it would be here.

Q Ron, without meaning to belabor this, is this phase going to run through the end of next week?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q And none of these people are submitting any information during this phase. That doesn't leave the President very long to review the information, does it?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it does.

Q In other words, would you think by next weekend -- not this weekend, but by next weekend -- that people would be asked to submit the information they have compiled?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I will let you know when we get there, Dick.

Q Has he picked his nominators yet?

MR. NESSEN: No. My understanding is that the program for the Convention, including who fulfills what role, has not been finally decided on yet.

Q Has John Connally been asked?

MR. NESSEN: It hasn't been finally decided yet, Phil.

Q Has he been asked yet?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge he hasn't been asked, because it hasn't been decided who is going to play the various roles.

Q He said he had been asked -- Connally. You don't know that?

MR. NESSEN: I think I know where we stand on the Convention program, Phil.

Q Do you know if John Connally has been asked?

MR. NESSEN: There has been no final decision on the program, including that particular part of it. There has been no decision made on who is going to do what at the Convention.

Q Was Connally wrong? You are saying he is not going to be a nominator?

MR. NESSEN: The program has not been finally decided.

Q What about tentative decisions to ask Connally to make a nominating speech?

MR. NESSEN: There have been a number of line-ups or people thought about for different slots in the Convention, but nothing definite.

Q Connally said specifically that he had been asked to make a nominating speech. All I am asking you is, is that true?

MR. NESSEN: And my answer is, Phil, that to my knowledge the program and the people to play the various roles in the program at Kansas City has not been finally decided.

Q Is Mr. Connally one of those that has been thought about?

MR. NESSEN: Look, I don't have anything to announce on the program in Kansas City today.

Q Has the President decided when he will arrive in Kansas City?

MR. NESSEN: He has not decided when he is going to arrive in Kansas City.

Q What about the President's reaction to the unemployment figures announced today?

MR. NESSEN: The President--the White House is disappointed --

Q Which one?

MR. NESSEN: The White House is disappointed at the rise in the unemployment rate. As you know, employment rose sharply by 470,000, but unemployment also rose by 283,000.

If you look at the figures you will see that it was an extraordinarily rapid rise in the labor force -- 690,000 additional workers coming into the labor force -- which prevented the large increase in employment from reducing the unemployment rate further.

Q Is this just another one of those expected tics you were telling us about earlier, or is this something serious?

MR. NESSEN: I am trying to explain what the specifics of it were, Walt, which is that the labor force increased by an extraordinarily large number of people and it was that large increase in the work force which prevented the large increase in the number of people working from reducing the unemployment rate.

Q How many of the work force that increased were illegal aliens?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have that breakdown, Sarah. Maybe the Labor Department or Commerce Department could give it to you.

Q Have you finished your statement?

MR. NESSEN: Not quite.

We expect -- the unusually large increase in the labor force exceeds what has happened in the past by quite a wide margin. There was a similar large increase in the work force last year at this time, but this increase is unusually large, larger than our past experience and larger than what had been anticipated.

However, we expect that this increase in the labor force will slow down and that the unemployment will, over the rest of the year, decrease. We would expect to meet the goal or the forecast of less than 7 percent unemployment by the end of the year.

The underlying trends are good and the recovery is well underway.

I might just sort of, parenthetically say that earlier in the year when the unemployment figures were dropping steadily, there was some pressure to revise the forecast downward, and the President's economic advisers resisted that pressure and decided to stick with a lower conservative estimate which is now proving to be the correct course.

Q Did the statisticians give the President of the United States any clues as to why this sudden increase in the labor force?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any more details on why the labor force increased by --

Q Doesn't the President ask these people for this?

MR. NESSEN: I know that the President has spent time with Alan Greenspan in the past day going over this matter, and I am sure Alan has told him everything that is known.

Q Will you find out what Alan Greenspan has told the President, and what the President thinks about this?

MR. NESSEN: What he thinks about what, Sarah?

Q What he thinks about this, the President's feelings, other than being just disappointed. Can't you tell us what Alan Greenspan told him?

MR. NESSEN: Alan Greenspan told him what I told you, that there was an unusually large increase in the work force.

Q There must be some reason for this, some background as to why this action?

MR. NESSEN: I will see if I can provide any further details or you might want to contact the Labor Department.

Q I am really contacting Alan Greenspan, the President and you.

Q Last month when we jumped from 7.3 to 7.5, you said that was a predictable tic which you had indeed forecast there would be tics-upward. *

Is this jump another one of these predictable tics or is this one a bit more serious?

MR. NESSEN. I would rather not characterize it, Walt, other than to give the precise reason for it, which is the unusually large increase in the work force, so large that even though there was a really substantial increase in employment, it still did not offset and bring the rate down.

That is the specific cause, and to say that the underlying trends continue good, the recovery continues and that the specification is that the forecast of 7 percent, less than 7 percent unemployment by the end of the year holds up.

Q The last time it went up, you also stated that you thought there were problems with the seasonal adjustment factors, that they were, somehow, faulty and the rate actually had not gone up that much.

So far, today, you have not said anything about that. Are you satisfied with the seasonal adjustments?

MR. NESSEN: Alan Greenspan did not mention it to me. He mentioned this as the reason for the rate increase.

Q I would like to ask several questions --

Q Just a second. Do you know if young people were involved --

MR. NESSEN: The Labor Department gives a detailed breakdown of these figures, which I don't have here. That would be the place to get it.

I think it is interesting to note, again parenthetically and in passing, our own forecast for unemployment, as well as for inflation and GNP growth this year, are almost identical to the forecasts that were put out, I guess day before yesterday, by Alice Rivlin, up at the Congressional Budget Office, and goodness knows, she is no strong advocate of the President's economic views.

I also noted that yesterday the OECD published its own estimates for economic trends over the rest of the year and they also are in line with those forecasts of the President.

Q Is Alice Rivlin under consideration as a Vice Presidential running mate?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to confirm or deny that, Jim.

Q Is this situation going to get better, or -- where are these people going?

Q We are going to leave now, I hope. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Don Oberdorfer has been patiently waiting, or impatiently waiting.

Q I have several questions growing out of the Soviet nuclear test question.

MR. NESSEN: Yes?

Q Since the Russians began nuclear tests almost 30 years ago, the United States has been announcing Russian nuclear tests, major Russian nuclear tests. It has announced over 140 such tests.

It appears now that within the last several months there has been a change in policy with respect to these announcements. We were told yesterday by ERDA, which makes the announcements on the advice of the National Security Council which sets the policy for such announcements, that in the last month or two it had been decided not to announce a range of yields of the Soviet tests. And it appears that there may have been a decision, though ERDA does not say so, not to announce the tests themselves.

The reason for my statement is this: You have a pattern of past practice. For example, on April 21, ERDA announced a test from the Semiplatinsk test grounds in Russia ranging from 20 to 150 kilotons. It was announced the same day it was made, which is common practice.

On June 8, ERDA announced a test, again from Semiplatinsk, which was 20 to 150 kilotons. That is a wide range. Again, it was announced the same day that the test occurred.

A test occurred on July 4, or July 3, at 10:57 p.m. U.S. time in Semiplatinsk. It was not announced.

On July 29, another test occurred in a different area of the Soviet Union at 1:00 a.m. It was not announced. These two tests were announced on August 3 at 4:00 p.m., but the announcement, when it came, said only that seismic signals, presumably from the Soviet Union -- from the Soviet Union underground nuclear explosions were recorded by the United States on July 3 and July 29. That announcement was made in one case almost a month after the fact, and in the other case several days after.

When was the policy changed? Why was the policy changed? Was the President aware that the policy of announcing Soviet tests has been changed, and, if so, why did he decide to do so?

MR. NESSEN: Well, Don, first of all, I didn't know what the old ERDA policy was and I don't know what the new ERDA policy is, if there is a new ERDA policy. So, I will look into it for you.

Q I think, to add one thing to it, from the point of view of the press or reporters trying to cover nuclear matters, or people in Congress, that to suddenly stop giving a very important piece of information about explosions in the Soviet Union, which is certainly known to them and is known to us, is not the kind of thing that Mr. Ford, when he was in Congress, would have approved, and I am sure he would have been the first one to get up and raise hell about it.

MR. NESSEN: I was not aware of a change of policy, if there has been a change of policy. As I said yesterday, I have seen the figures that the President has seen in terms of size of the two Soviet tests in July. A determination has not been made with precision as to whether it was over or under 150 kilotons.

Q A determination has not been made with precision as far as the public record shows on the previous tests, which were given a range from 20 to 150 kilotons, which is a rather large range, but they were announced nevertheless.

Q What is the range of the last two tests, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to give the specific numbers, except what I said yesterday, that the upper limit is above 150 and the lower limit is below 150.

Q When you get this, will you give the information to all of us, please?

MR. NESSEN: I will.

Q Is there some reason for not wanting to reveal this information? If you could have determined in all of these past tests what the range was, why is it --

MR. NESSEN: As Don says, the range given of 20 to 150 is not the kind of -- you have to narrow that down to find out the -- the question you all wanted to know yesterday was, is it above 150 or below 150. We don't know yet. Don's question is, has the policy of announcing the tests changed, and is the policy of announcing the range or size of the test changed, and the answer is, I don't know.

Q The policy of announcing a range, Ron, has always been anything -- just general categories of low, intermediate or high yield. The range has always run somewhere like from 20 to 200 kilotons.

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q Now are you quibbling?

MR. NESSEN: I saw in the paper this morning a high source was quoted as saying the range was from 100 kilotons to 200 kilotons. I don't quarrel with that.

Q Then it is over the agreed limit?

MR. NESSEN: It could be.

Q Have we protested to the Soviet Union?

MR. NESSEN: We have to find out whether it is or not, Helen.

Let me go back and make the points I made yesterday. They are still valid. Don, I realize this is not on the point you ask, but I don't know the answer to your question.

The points I made yesterday, the treaty has not been ratified so it is not technically a violation. Secondly, we have not been able to find out the information to sort out whether it is above or below 150 kilotons.

Q Ron, yesterday at the State Department the same question was raised that is raised with you about this very matter, and Mr. Brown, I believe it was, said that they didn't know now, but the same geological question was the problem, but they would, after the treaty is ratified, have what he called data exchange.

MR. NESSEN: That is what I mentioned here yesterday.

Q The question in my mind, as the President's spokesman, is it your understanding that this treaty, when ratified, will mean that although we can't determine how big these explosions are, we will depend on the data provided us by the Soviet Union?

MR. NESSEN: No, we have what we are using now, which is our own method of gathering information and, in addition, we will have a provision for data exchange and, in addition, on certain tests, which involve the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we have the on-site inspection provision.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END

(AT 12:35 P.M. EDT) #554