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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E #457

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:42 P.M. EST

MARCH 15, 1976

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: On the schedule today you have already seen the President's speech to the Conference of Mayors League of Cities Meeting. You have also just seen the President meeting with the Ohio Farm Bureau leaders, and the only other event today is the swearing-in of William Scranton at 2 o'clock in the East Room, to be Ambassador to the United Nations and that is open coverage. That is all I really have today.

Q Is the President going to have anything to say in connection with the swearing-in? He had something to say with the announcement.

MR. NESSEN: Oh, yes. Let me see if the schedule didn't call for the President to -- yes, the President will speak briefly and will end his remarks by requesting that Justice Stewart come forward to administer the oath. So there will be some Presidential remarks.

Q Has the President talked with Mr. Spencer, by telephone or personally, since --

MR. NESSEN: If he hasn't already he plans to later today.

Q Ron, considering the requirement of the Federal Election Campaign Act --

Q Why is he going to talk to him? To tell him how he wants the campaign to be pursued?

MR. NESSEN: The President has had sort of regular meetings once a week or so with campaign people and this is just a routine meeting with Mr. Spencer.

Q He will have a meeting in the office here?

MR. NESSEN: I believe it has been added to the schedule for today.

Q What time will that be?

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MR. NESSEN: I will check to see what time it is.

Q Is this the first meeting since Callaway was relieved?

MR. NESSEN: Obviously.

Q It could have happened yesterday?

MR. NESSEN: It didn't but it is today, but it is a routine meeting.

Q I asked you if there was any telephone conversation?

MR. NESSEN: There was not, Phil.

Q Ron, considering the Federal Election Act, how can the President justify paying Mr. Callaway a \$42,000 salary for doing nothing to further his election? It says the expenses have to be qualified to furthering the candidate's election. How does he justify this?

MR. NESSEN: As you know, Bo Callaway is paid by the President Ford Committee and not by the Federal Government.

Q I know, but it gets matching funds and contributions from Republicans in good faith. Now certainly the President directs or has control of his campaign. How does he justify paying a \$42,000 salary to a person doing nothing for his campaign, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Bo has temporarily stepped aside, as you know, Les, until the matter is resolved.

Q Does the President want his campaign pursued in the same -- you say it is a routine meeting but it isn't exactly a routine meeting.

MR. NESSEN: It is exactly routine.

Q What do you mean by routine?

MR. NESSEN: It is the weekly meeting he has normally with his campaign adviser.

Q Will Bo be here?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Is he planning to pursue his campaign in the same way with no changes and so forth?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Will Morton attend?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to look at the participants, but I think so.

Q Can you tell us if the President is going to do anything about the Reagan request that Henry's speech in Boston last week be paid for by the President Ford Committee funds?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't heard anything about that.

Q Question.

MR. NESSEN: Walt tells me that Reagan asked the Kissinger speech, the travel and so forth be paid for by the President Ford Committee. I hadn't heard that.

Q Ron, you have seen the report alleging a plot to kill the President and Mr. Reagan in Kansas City. I just wondered if you have been in touch with the Justice Department or the FBI and if they told you anything?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to say anything about that report.

Q Is it being investigated?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to say anything about it because we don't normally.

Q Will the Secret Service tell us if we call over there?

MR. NESSEN: You can try.

Q What is the President going to do about steel import quotas?

MR. NESSEN: The deadline is tomorrow midnight and I guess we will have something for you by the deadline time.

Q Is this steel?

Q I can't hear these questions.

MR. NESSEN: Mort was wondering about the ruling the President must make on special steel imports, and we will have something for you by the deadline.

Q Will you wait until the polls close to announce it since you have until midnight?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know if we will or not, but it has nothing to do with the Illinois polls closing.

Q Do you expect it today?

MR. NESSEN: I don't expect it today, no.

Q Ron, why did the President fire General Nickerson?

MR. NESSEN: Who is General Nickerson?

Q The National Credit Union Administrator. It has been in the Washington Post three times now. He was fired and Senator McIntyre charged on the Floor of the Senate that it is a transparent political ploy in order to replace him with an Illinois lobbyist named Montgomery.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know who Mr. Nickerson is, but I will look into it.

Q He is a Lieutenant General in the Marine Corps and the first one to administer this. Will it be possible for you to look into it and find out why he was fired?

MR. NESSEN: First, I will find out if he was fired and, if so, why.

Q His wife told me yesterday he was fired.

Thank you, Ron.

Q Ron, what are the President's plans tomorrow evening? Will he be watching the returns or anything like that?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know, he will follow the same routine he has followed for previous Tuesdays.

Q Is he going out somewhere tomorrow evening?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q He did the last time.

MR. NESSEN: I know but there is nothing on the schedule for tomorrow night.

Q Is the President concerned the Callaway events could cut into his margin in Illinois?

MR. NESSEN: I don't see how it could, Mort.

Q What? You don't see how it could?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: I would ask you why should it?

Q Have you talked to Stuart Spencer, who doesn't seem to agree with you?

MR. NESSEN: I have not myself talked to Stu today, no, or over the weekend.

Q Ron, have you had any feedback from Illinois? There was a report there was some quick polling going on out there.

MR. NESSEN: I have not, no.

Q Was any White House sampling done yesterday in terms of what effect it would have in Illinois? Telephone calls or anything?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I am aware of.

Q What about North Carolina this weekend? Can you be more specific?

MR. NESSEN: I would leave myself free on Saturday.

Q An all day in-and-out probably?

MR. NESSEN: That is what it looks like, for planning.

Q Does the White House have any reaction to this so-called full employment bill the Democrats are introducing?

MR. NESSEN: I am glad you said so-called.
(Laughter)

Q I gather you do have some reaction.

MR. NESSEN: Let me answer the question about the so-called full employment bill. The bill sets unrealistic goals and it plans to get to the unrealistic goals by undesirable policies. Almost everything proposed in that bill has been examined at one time or another and rejected by the President and his Administration. Instead of going that route, the President has favored a more balanced and prudent approach and his approach is designed to achieve sustained economic growth and to achieve it without inflation.

Obviously, the way the economic numbers are coming out, his policy is working. This bill focuses on the creation of jobs in the public sector rather than following the President's policy of providing incentives for the creation of jobs in the private sector where the jobs are of a permanent nature, long range, satisfying, meaningful jobs at good pay.

Also, the bill proposes a level of Federal spending. By our calculations -- I understand the sponsors of the bill refuse to give out a figure of how much it would cost -- but our calculations are it would reach a level of spending that -- and the accompanying budget deficits that go with that level of spending -- which would threaten seriously to rekindle inflation.

This bill is a perfect example of what the President talks about when he says that the American people are tired of politicians making promises which can't be kept. The President feels that in this area --

Q Could you go a little more slowly, please?

MR. NESSEN: In this area the President intends, as he has said over and over again, to promise no more than can realistically be delivered to the American people and to deliver everything that he promises to the American people, and this bill, he feels, doesn't meet that standard.

Finally, the President feels that this bill follows the formulas of the last 40 years or so which were based on a now outmoded and discredited economic theory that bigger deficits automatically mean greater prosperity, and the experience of the past couple of years of a very sharp recession with high unemployment accompanied by high inflation shows what that policy leads to.

Q I think you anticipated that question.

Q Will he veto the bill? (Laughter)

Q Had the President been warned in advance by President Sadat of the intention of renouncing the Friendship Treaty between Egypt and the Soviet Union, and what are his feelings about it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think that this Government ought to respond publicly to developments in relationships between two other Governments. It just is not proper to do so.

Q Does that mean you will respond privately?

MR. NESSEN: No, I meant publicly, meaning here at this meeting.

Q Does the White House welcome this move by Sadat?

MR. NESSEN: I will not comment on relationships between two other Governments.

Q I want to get back to the Callaway thing. Did you discuss that with the President today and did he instruct you to come out here and if you were asked about whether it would affect his vote in Illinois, for you to say, "I don't see how it could, and why should it?" Did you discuss that with the President?

MR. NESSEN: No, I didn't discuss that with the President. As I say, why should it? I guess the best testimony as to whether it will affect it or not is Mr. Reagan, who says it will not. I suppose he ought to know better than most whether it would or not. I read where he says he sees no effects coming from this. I suppose he is the best witness.

Q Do you think he is an ordinarily qualified political observer?

MR. NESSEN: I think in this case he is better qualified than anyone.

Q Are you basing your answer solely on what Mr. Reagan said?

MR. NESSEN: No, I am basing my answer on the fact that obviously the President has no involvement whatever.

Q Ron, we understand there are some people who say it may hurt the President because this man is allegedly involved in an impropriety, possibly in bribery, and this whole image will not help the President win the Illinois primary. That is what some people think.

MR. NESSEN: Who are they?

Q Some observers are saying that.

MR. NESSEN: Who are they?

Q Lots of people are saying that.

MR. NESSEN: Who are they?

Q Peter Kaye, for one.

MR. NESSEN: I haven't heard Peter say that.

Q It was in print today -- yes, it is going to hurt. That is the question we are putting to you and just why do you think it won't hurt?

MR. NESSEN: I have already said, Phil, number one, Mr. Reagan says it won't hurt the President, from what I have read and, as I said, I suppose he is the most qualified witness on that.

Secondly, there is no involvement by the President in any of the allegations and, therefore, I don't see how it hurts.

Q Ron, it is part of your job to take our questions to the President.

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I know.

Q Knowing full well we would ask his view of the Callaway resignation, the impact that would have on the Illinois primary, why did you not ask him about this in an attempt to get his feeling on it?

MR. NESSEN: As I said from the very first day here, I always reflect the President's view of things.

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Q Ron, why did the President wait for Callaway to ask to be relieved rather than asking Callaway to drop out, as he has done many times? In other words, I understand the President has said that this is Bo's request he is acceding to, or words to that effect. Why is it the President didn't say, "Bo, you drop out," rather than waiting for Bo to suggest it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know why things don't happen one way compared to another one.

Q Does that mean he was reluctant to let Callaway step aside?

MR. NESSEN: I think we are picking and picking here.

Q Has the President asked for a report after the investigations are completed?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check on that, Helen.

Q What agencies are investigating this matter at this point?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q Did the President ask the Justice Department to get involved?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has he asked anyone in his legal office to check into the details and report to him?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge. I will have to look into that, though, and find out.

Q Could you enumerate the positive actions that President Ford has initiated in this affair?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I think not. I am sure you will for us.

You know, I think the matter was handled on Saturday in a manner you all know about, and I don't really think I can add very much today.

Q But the President is interested in the investigation, is he not, in what develops?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure he will follow it, yes.

Q Has the President expressed to you any belief he thinks Bo will be back at the committee anytime soon?

MR. NESSEN: I think somebody asked him in North Carolina on Saturday, and he gave some views on that, Ann.

Q Not on that point, Ron. Do you think he will be back, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Also, I have no way of knowing.

Q And he still has full faith in his integrity?

MR. NESSEN: I think you or somebody asked him that question on Saturday.

Q We never have a chance to ask the President any questions these days, particularly on campaign trips.

MR. NESSEN: Somebody asked him.

Q The investigation could go on for some time. In the meantime, can we expect Mr. Callaway will remain on full salary, although not doing any work?

MR. NESSEN: That is something you will have to ask the PFC.

Q Has Spencer's salary been upgraded?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to ask the PFC. I don't know.

Q If I can go back to Phil's question, I am perplexed by your unwillingness to answer that specific question. What positive, tangible actions has the President taken in the matter of Mr. Callaway?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by positive, tangible actions, Jim.

Q Oh, I think you do. I think you are a reasonably educated man who knows what positive, tangible, specific actions are, what those terms mean. (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: That is the nicest thing anyone has said to me all day, Jim.

Q Has he taken any specific actions with respect to the matter of Mr. Callaway?

MR. NESSEN: I think you know what happened on Saturday, and for the moment that is where the matter stands.

Q The White House position was that Mr. Callaway requested to be temporarily relieved of his duties, so that is something Mr. Callaway did, according to the White House public version. I ask you once more-- and your inability or unwillingness, I should say, to answer can lead only to the conclusion that no specific actions have been taken by the White House--I ask you once more what specific actions, if any, has the President taken in the matter of Mr. Callaway?

MR. NESSEN: Once more I will tell you that the Callaway matter -- you know how it was resolved on Saturday, and that is where it stands for the moment.

Q I am not sure we do, Ron, at least I am not sure I do because I am confused on whether or not this option that Mr. Callaway chose was suggested to him the night before by Mr. Cheney.

MR. NESSEN: I think we are not going to go into every conversation that was held on this matter. It was resolved, as you saw, on Saturday, and that is where it stands.

Q I am unclear on whether the White House forced him to make that offer.

MR. NESSEN: I think the statement says Mr. Callaway offered to step aside temporarily while the matter was resolved, and he went on and spoke beyond the statement to the pool on the plane, and the President in a statement said he had accepted his offer and in his own news conference said he had acceded to the request. That is where it stands.

Q You obviously understand what I am trying to get at.

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure I do.

Q The question is, was Bo Callaway told to offer the President his temporary stepping aside?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, I think I am going to leave it where all the various participants -- with the explanation of the various participants on Saturday.

Q Can I interpret it you cannot or will not answer that question?

MR. NESSEN: I think I have answered it, Phil. It was answered on Saturday.

Q It is a yes or no answer. Was he told to offer what he did?

MR. NESSEN: Bo offered, as the statement said and as he himself said, and the President accepted or acceded, as his statements have said.

Q The President is vitally interested in this, isn't he? There is not this detachment you spoke of? From the aspect --

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

Q It is the Executive Branch and these investigations are going on under his aegis, aren't they?

MR. NESSEN: My understanding is that they are going on in the Executive Branch, yes.

Q You leave us with the impression if Bo hadn't suggested it, the President would have done nothing. You don't mean to leave us with that impression do you, Ron? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't, Les.

Q A reasonable fellow like yourself?

MR. NESSEN: An educated man like myself. I mean reasonably educated. (Laughter)

Q Seriously, what is your answer? Do you mean to leave us with the impression that had Mr. Callaway not offered this nothing would have happened?

MR. NESSEN: Phil, you know we had the events of Saturday, and I don't know what purpose would be served by saying "what if" --

Q I guess, truth. I don't know.

MR. NESSEN: I think probably the truth has emerged pretty clearly on this, Phil, unless you know of an area where it hasn't.

Q All you can do is just say, of course the President would have done this, Ron. That is all you have to say. Certainly the President wouldn't have put up with this horrendous thing that Callaway offers. Certainly the President is just as moral as Bo.

MR. NESSEN: I mean, the fact of the matter is I don't see what purpose is served by playing at the game of "what if." The events did evolve on Saturday, and you know how they evolved on Saturday, and to say what would have happened if they evolved another way I don't think serves any useful purpose.

Q Ron, is it your hope and the hope of the White House that by refusing to answer questions on this matter that it will die and move out of the public's attention as fast as possible?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, it is where it is, which is that the events of Saturday have transpired. Bo has stepped aside, the matter is or will be resolved, and I don't know -- you know, the fact is that nothing has happened between Saturday and today, and that is why I can't provide any more answers than were provided on Saturday, because nothing has happened.

Q A number of the questions, or at least a large number of them, have not dealt with what happened between Saturday and today. They have dealt with what happened on Saturday and before. Could you answer those questions about in between?

MR. NESSEN: I tried to both here today and on Saturday, Jim, and with the statements and with Bo's own little news conference and with the President's various occasions, to answer questions.

Q Ron, Saturday I asked you if Callaway was pushed or jumped, and you said he jumped, is that right?

MR. NESSEN: That is what the statement says. Now, I don't feel this matter lends itself to those kinds of terms, John. As the statement said, Bo offered to step aside until the matter is resolved and the President agreed.

Q Ron, what did the President say when Callaway proposed this course of action? Did he say, "Oh, goody," or "why," or "I don't think you ought to do that"?

MR. NESSEN: As always, Jim, I am not going to reproduce word for word the President's private conversation.

Q Can you give us the gist of his reaction?

MR. NESSEN: I think the gist of his reaction is contained in the statement on Saturday in which the President agreed.

Q Had he been briefed by Cheney on the circumstance of the Callaway situation before he met with Callaway?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, he had.

Q Had Callaway and Cheney talked about it beforehand?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, they had.

Q Can you give us a chronology on that?

MR. NESSEN: I gave the chronology on Saturday. I will give it again, though. As I say, this is nothing new for today. This is a chronology given to reporters on the trip on Saturday.

What I told the reporters on Saturday was that Bo came to Cheney in Chicago late on the afternoon of Friday and explained to him that there were going to be two news stories concerning this matter and Cheney relayed that to the President late on the afternoon or early on the evening of Friday.

Then Cheney talked to Bo again on Saturday morning and Bo talked to the President aboard the plane on Saturday morning. That is the chronology I gave on Saturday to the reporters who were along.

Q Did Cheney talk to the President in the morning before leaving Chicago?

MR. NESSEN: You mean talked to Bo.

Q I see. Cheney talked to Bo when? Saturday before he talked to the President?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q That is before they got on the plane?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, there was a talk between Cheney and Bo before they got on the plane.

Q You also said Cheney talked to the President on Friday?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q Was there another conversation between Cheney and the President before the President talked to Bo?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check that.

Q Didn't Cheney, according to reports -- I think Cheney might have said so himself -- that he offered Callaway several options which did not include resignation?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear about that.

Q You don't know about that?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q That he was offered several options on what to do?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't see that attributed to Cheney.

Q Is that true?

MR. NESSEN: I think I am going to leave it where it is.

Q I heard that also. I did hear that resignation was not one of the options considered. Is that true?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to go into the various private conversations. You know how the matter has been resolved.

Q Ron, at what point in the chronology did Callaway offer to resign? Was it on that Friday night or on the Saturday morning?

MR. NESSEN: Russ, I am not going into the private conversations. The end result of this thing has been thoroughly announced, reported and described. Bo has answered questions, and so has the President.

Q Without going into private conversations, whose idea was it to continue him on full salary?

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

Q Is Callaway now all for that? Is there any explanation of why that should be done?

MR. NESSEN: I assume -- this is an assumption on my part -- that Bo Callaway is an innocent man. Under our laws -- and I assume that is why he was continued on Saturday, but you could check with the PFC.

Q Didn't he ever offer to resign? When did he offer to resign?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I am not going into the private conversations.

Q You said the President agreed with what Bo proposed to do. Would it also be accurate to say among all the possible options in these circumstances, regardless of whether they were presented to Callaway or not, this action is what the President himself thought was the best and most appropriate step to take?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know where we are going with this business, but I am just not going to describe any further what transpired at the private meetings.

Q The President wouldn't have done something he thought was less than the best or most appropriate thing, would he? (Laughter)

Q Ron, could I change the subject just briefly here? A minute ago you wouldn't comment on relations between Egypt and the Soviet Union, but I would like to ask about U.S. relations with Egypt and whether it has not been a long-term foreign policy goal of this country to encourage the expulsion of Soviet influence from Egypt?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think so, not to my knowledge. I think it has been the policy of the United States to encourage Egypt in its moderate course in the Middle East.

Q But not to expel Soviet influence from Egypt?

MR. NESSEN: That is not my understanding of our policy position.

Q Let me call your attention to a statement made by Henry Kissinger to reporters back in the early 1970s when he said, "One of the principal goals of U.S. foreign policy is to expel the Soviets from Egypt."

MR. NESSEN: You got me, Russ. (Laughter)

Q I wonder if the President shares that view?

MR. NESSEN: I will check for you, Russ.

Q On another foreign policy, or at least an international matter, is it your understanding that the Rambouillet agreement prevents or prohibits any intervention by the United States to support the British pound, the Italian lira or the French franc, or is it your understanding that the Rambouillet conference -- also, the Jamaica agreement -- would permit such support by the United States?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know enough about that subject, Jim, to take on that question.

Q Has there been, as reported, some intervention by the Fed to support at least the lira?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't know enough about that subject, Jim.

Q On yet another international matter, has the White House yet seen any of the written report from former President Nixon on his trip to China?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q I would like to ask a Nixon question, also. It stems from the Nixon responses to the Church interrogatories in which at one point the former President says that the sovereign power of the President permits actions which, if taken by other persons, might be construed or considered as illegal.

Does President Ford agree with that definition of the sovereign power of the Presidency?

MR. NESSEN: He answered that question on Saturday, and I will get you the transcript of what he said, Jim. Essentially, the answer was no, the people are sovereign and not the President.

Q I wasn't on that trip. Was that at the last Q and A session?

MR. NESSEN: I think it was at the school.

Q It was NINA.

MR. NESSEN: Was that Wheaton College?

Q No, NINA, the Northern Illinois newspapers.

Q Ron, the President was also asked on Saturday at Guilford College about the report that in Peking he told the Chinese leaders we would reduce our forces on Taiwan within a year. He didn't really answer that question. He talked about the Shanghai Communique and the fact that the gradual reduction in Vietnam caused some.

He never really said what he told the people in Peking. Did he talk about our forces on Taiwan when he was in Peking?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will let his answer stand on that one, John.

Q It really was not responsive.

MR. NESSEN: I think it was. It explained what happened in the past and what he anticipates will happen in the future.

Q Did it happen during the Peking trip?

MR. NESSEN: What is that?

Q The assurances given to the Chinese Government.

MR. NESSEN: I think you ought to look at the long answer.

Q I was there. I heard it. It didn't say whether it happened in Peking and it didn't say why it didn't come out to the press at the end of that trip. I understand no secret agreements were made, according to Kissinger, and so forth.

MR. NESSEN: That is right, no secret agreements were made.

Q All right, did he give these assurances to the Chinese people during his trip to China?

MR. NESSEN: I think I will let his answer to that question stand.

Q You won't answer?

MR. NESSEN: We never talk about private diplomatic exchanges, Helen, except to say there was no secret agreement.

Q Was this a private diplomatic exchange while he was in Peking?

MR. NESSEN: If you look at the answer, you will see the explanation for the troop drawdown on Taiwan.

Q I wasn't asking that. I asked whether he gave assurances to the Chinese officials in Peking during his trip to China.

MR. NESSEN: I will not take the answer beyond what he said the other day to that question.

Q You refuse to say whether he said it at that time?

MR. NESSEN: He was asked the question, and I am happy to stick with his answer.

Q Has the drawdown of the troops on Taiwan under the Shanghai Communique been accelerated?

MR. NESSEN: From what?

Q From what had initially been intended under the Shanghai Communique.

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

Q The President was in Peking approximately the 1st of December. Does the Administration expect by the 1st of this coming December that the number of troops there will be half the number there last December?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. The President said the other day that whatever he said the reduction was going to be is what it is going to be.

Q Two more foreign policy questions. If I could ask a question following up Russ's question, you said you were going to check, although the Kissinger quote seems to be quite explicit, and I think a lot of people in this room remember it.

My question tries to go beyond that. Does the United States learn with satisfaction, or is the United States misled, or whatever, at the action of President Sadat in asking for the abrogation of the Soviet friendship treaty?

MR. NESSEN: I said I wasn't going to comment on relations between two other countries, Jim.

Q A second foreign policy question, if I may. The London Times was carrying a report either this morning or yesterday morning concerning what it says is a NATO report, a report by NATO, that the Warsaw Pact nations could win a war against the NATO nations, an invasion of Western Europe, with conventional military power alone without the use of any nuclear weapons and that this report by NATO has created a great deal of consternation and anxiety or concern in the NATO nations, including the United States.

Is that report correct? Is there such a NATO report? Does it say that?

MR. NESSEN: The first I ever heard of it, Jim, was in your question.

Q Can you check it?

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 1:16 P.M. EST)