

OL REPORT--AIR FORCE ONE--FLORIDA TO ~~XXXXX~~ ANDREWS--FEB. 26, 1975

The President left the Inverrary Country <sup>(Club)</sup> a few minutes before  
chedule; the motorcade was uneventful--no stops. Ford did not workh  
e fence at the airport but shook a few hands~~xxxx~~ of various dignitaries  
fore boarding. Wheels up at 8:58 peyem.

Aboud mid-flight, Nessen came back and read a lengthy statement  
on a piece of paper which the legend "SECRET" stamped on the top  
d bottom. The statement should be attributed to the pres secretary on  
half of the president. The statement reads:

"Recent news accounts have alleged that the nomination of a special  
rade representative is somehow linked to Senator Russell Long's position  
the bill which would delay the oil tariff. Senator Long has indicated  
is position on the oil tariff question to the White House. He was one of  
s senators who supported the President's position in opposition to the  
riff deferral. When the Senate voted on the matter last week, <sup>9</sup> In accordance  
ith trr ition and practice, members of the White House staff at the  
irection of the President worked with Senator Long as chairman of the  
enate Finance Committee and with other members of both parties in the  
enate and House on the question of the nominee for the position of the  
ER. Based on those consultations, a decision has been made to nominate  
~~an individual other than~~ <sup>discussed.</sup> ~~those originally~~  
"Mr. ~~xxxx~~ Silberman's name had previously been discussed for the  
osition, as had others. Deputy Attorney General Silberman is a man for  
whom the President has the utmost respect and admiration and the President  
is hopeful that Mr. Silberman will continue to serve in the Administration  
in a position of major responsibility.

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"To imply a connection between the question of the oil ~~tariff~~ tariff deferral legislation and the nomination of a STR is not accurate, and any misunderstanding could do an injustice to the people involved."

In elaborating, Nessen said the individual to be named STR has been selected but would not divulge same. Neither would he confirm or deny the AP story that the STR would be Secretary of Commerce Frederick Dent. But he did say AP erred in reporting that Willard Rockwell would replace Dent at Commerce. "I have not heard that name for that job," he said.

Nessen did concede that Long--as well as ranking Finance committee Republican Carl Curtis, Nessen claimed--had indeed opposed Silberman's nomination. But he said their opposition was based solely on the belief that Silberman did not possess the requisite <sup>background</sup> ~~technical~~ expertise required for that job. "Larry Silberman is considered by Russell Long and Carl Curtis and others as a man of very high integrity and intelligence," he said. But "they simply felt <sup>he</sup> ~~they~~ did not have the specific <sup>experience</sup> ~~background~~ for that job." ~~But~~ Nessen also said the STR would have to work closely with the committee, implying that the White House felt such cooperation might not be forthcoming with <sup>an individual they did not trust</sup> ~~him~~ in the job.

Nessen added that Silberman nonetheless had "overwhelming support" on the Hill and could have been easily confirmed as STR. "Russell Long has nothing against Larry Silberman except he doesn't have the <sup>background</sup> ~~background~~ Russell Long and others up there believe you ought to have as a special trade representative," he said.

Tomorrow's schedule: a 10 a.m. farewell call by Elliot Richardson; an 11:30 "congressional hour" during which Ford will meet briefly and individually with several congressmen; VP Rockefeller at 2; farewell call at 5:30-5:30 5: 30 by Ambassador to Finland Mark Evans Aasted; farewell call at 5:45 by Fernando Berceleyer, retiring as Peruvian ambassador to the U.S. after 22 years.

DeFrank - Kenpster