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NEWS CONFERENCE #860-A

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH GEORGE CHRISTIAN

9:55 A.M. EDT

JUNE 5, 1967

MONDAY

MR. CHRISTIAN: Some of you have requested a chronology of events here this morning. I will be glad to review that with you. There is not much more that I can add to the statement.

The President was notified of the reports of military action sometime after 4:00 o'clock, between 4:00 and 4:30. At that point developments were rather unclear.

Q Who notified him?

MR. CHRISTIAN: Walt Rostow, who had arrived earlier this morning at the Situation Room, along with his specialist in the Middle East affairs, Harold H. Saunders of the National Security Council.

Q Do we know at what time Rostow arrived in the Situation Room?

MR. CHRISTIAN: It was before 4:00 o'clock. I don't have the exact time.

The President started receiving regular messages on the situation about 6:00, after the events became somewhat clearer.

Q George, may I interrupt there? When the President received the first notification, did he go back to bed?

MR. CHRISTIAN: No, he did not.

Q He stayed up?

MR. CHRISTIAN: Yes.

Q Did he go down to the Situation Room, George?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I will get to that in just a minute.

The President talked with Secretary Rusk and Secretary McNamara early this morning, and talked with Ambassador Goldberg about 7:30.

The President went to the Situation Room shortly after 8:00. There he met with Secretary Rusk and Secretary McNamara, Walt Rostow, and myself.

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We reviewed the cable reports and the Embassy reports, the news reports that were available, and also reviewed the presentation that the two Secretaries were to make on the Hill a short time thereafter.

As you know, the President accompanied the two Secretaries to their cars about 9:25.

Q George, When was your statement prepared?

MR. CHRISTIAN: Between 6:30 and 7:00.

Q Did the President see it?

MR. CHRISTIAN: Yes.

Q You timed that at 7:05, George.

MR. CHRISTIAN: 7:05 was when I released it.

Q Could you tell us who helped in the preparation of it?

MR. CHRISTIAN: Secretary Rusk, Mr. Rostow, and myself.

Q Where is the briefing on the Hill, George?

MR. CHRISTIAN: S-207.

Q George, can you tell us anything about the situation in the Middle East right now? Do we know who started it and where it stands?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I know nothing beyond what we had in the statement, Bob. I will add that throughout this crisis the President has continually stressed to all concerned that the United Nations ought to be the first to attempt to resolve the situation.

The President has felt, and does feel, that it is the duty of all nations to cooperate in this, and to work to that end in the United Nations.

Q Did the President send messages this morning to Messrs. Nasser and Eshkol?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I am not at liberty to get into any exchanges with the other governments at this time.

Q George, are those two leaders of Egypt still coming to Washington to see the President?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I don't have anything on that, Bob.

Q George, the Embassy has asked that the several thousand Americans still in Israel should get out. Several thousand Americans would necessitate some sort of a commercial airlift. Have we done anything to expedite that?

MR. CHRISTIAN: You will have to ask the State Department and the Pentagon what arrangements might be made for that. I am not advised.

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Q You are saying, I gather, that there have been exchanges with other people.

MR. CHRISTIAN: I said I was not at liberty to discuss any exchanges.

Q Aren't you implying, at least, that there are exchanges?

MR. CHRISTIAN: You will have to read into it what you want to.

Q That is what I wanted to read.

Q Could we ask specifically, George, about an AFP report that the President talked to Prime Minister Wilson this morning?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I know nothing about that.

Q When do you plan another briefing?

MR. CHRISTIAN: We will brief as developments warrant. I want to emphasize again that the Security Council is in emergency session this morning, and that, again, is where the attention is at the moment. We will brief as developments warrant.

Q Does the President have any other items on his schedule today?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I will have to give you a schedule later.

Q Are any Ambassadors coming in to see the President today?

MR. CHRISTIAN: None from the governments concerned in this at this point, anyway.

Q George, could you check on whether the Vice President of Egypt is coming to see the President, and let us know?

MR. CHRISTIAN: I will let you know any developments as they happen, Bob.

Q Was the Vice President in on any of these meetings today?

MR. CHRISTIAN: Not this morning; no.

Q Do you know where he is?

MR. CHRISTIAN: No, I don't.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 10:02 A.M. EDT)