

## Credit for Nixon On Arms Pact

### Washington

The White House yesterday gave former President Nixon substantial credit for the new missile-limitation agreement with the Soviet Union.

In an about face from a statement he had made after President Ford returned last week from Vladivostok, White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen described the agreement as the "cul-

mination" of arms limitation efforts made by Mr. Nixon.

After President Ford's announcement of the agreement reached with Soviet Communist party leader Leonid Brezhnev, Nessen said the proposed pact was "something Nixon couldn't do in three years but Ford did it in three months."

Yesterday Nessen described his own comment as "a hasty and oversimplified remark." The White House

press secretary added:

"It's clear to me now looking back that what happened in Vladivostok was kind of a culmination of what had happened over the years."

Along with giving Mr. Nixon credit for the agreement, details of which still have not been announced publicly by Mr. Ford, Nessen said that the White House had briefed the former President on the details of the talks.

The details, including the precise numbers of the missile limitations, were given to former White House press secretary Ron Ziegler yesterday via what Nessen called "a secure communication" channel.

Ziegler was briefed for ten minutes by an unidentified White House staff member with the understanding that he would communicate the conversation to Mr. Nixon.

Nessen said that the briefing was at Mr. Nixon's request. He added that "traditionally former presidents receive briefings of important international developments."

The proposed agreement for "capping" the number of missiles and bombers in the U.S. and Soviet arsenals will reportedly allow both countries to considerably expand their totals of multiple warhead "MIRV" missiles. The MIRV missiles carry a nose cone containing several nuclear warheads each of which can be directed to a separate target.

The totals have been withheld by Mr. Ford, pending an exchange of messages with Brezhnev.

There have been reports that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was highly critical of Nessen's earlier statement giving the Ford administration, rather than Mr. Nixon, the credit for the missile agreement.

Nessen said that Mr. Ford had discussed the matter with him but had not been critical.

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