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[May 1976]

- Q. Boston, more than any other city in the nation, has seen its people divided, its racial tensions increased, its classrooms become centers of conflict, and its streets become battlegrounds because of the forced busing of thousands of its schoolchildren. There is growing agreement among parents, politicians, sociologists and educators that though desegregation of the schools is a desirable end, forced busing is an imperfect and ineffective means to achieve it. You have added your voice to the critics of busing by saying that you oppose it and that there are better alternatives to it. But you have never really spelled out, in specific detail, what these alternatives are and what you propose to do as President to bring them about.

Exactly what do you advocate to bring about integration in the schools and reduce the racial tension in our city--and what actions will you take to achieve those goals?

- A. The first question we must answer is, "What are we really trying to do by busing?" All of us--white, black, every American, in my opinion--want quality education.

Second, let me strongly emphasize that the Supreme Court, in 1954, decided that separate but equal schools were not constitutional. That is the law of the land. As far as my Administration is concerned, the law of the land will be upheld and we are upholding it.

Subsequently, the Federal Court decided that busing is one way to desegregate schools and perhaps improve education at the same time. But there is always more than one answer,

and I have the responsibility to give what I think is a better answer to the achievement of quality education, which is what we all seek.

I believe that quality education can be enhanced by better school facilities, lower pupil-teacher ratios, the improvement of neighborhoods and possibly by other alternatives.

Accordingly, I directed the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, the Attorney General, and members of my staff to develop better methods of achieving quality education within an integrated environment for all children.

The development of these alternatives is going on now.

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
The South Grounds

May 19, 1976

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you reserving the right to review any decision by Mr. Levi on the busing question?

THE PRESIDENT: It is contemplated that some time this week the Attorney General will come in and see me and undoubtedly tell me what his decision is. I think that is a very appropriate thing for him to do and a proper role for me to have, but he will make the decision.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how do you respond to some critics who read into your concern about a review of busing as an effort to play for votes in Kentucky where busing is a major issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the fact that these news stories broke over the past weekend and no decision having been made, and the controversy of busing in Detroit, is an indication that we in the Administration made a major effort to not interject busing into the primary situation. We didn't do any talking about what the Attorney General has been studying and what the Secretary of HEW has been working on.

This came from other sources than ourselves and we were disturbed that the stories did come out. We hope that we can keep this kind of matter away from the emotional involvement of this problem and the primary elections.

We certainly had no part of that, none whatsoever.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you encouraged by the progress that your Administration is making in the search that you ordered last fall for alternative ways to achieve desegregation without forced busing? Are you optimistic? Are you encouraged that you will have found a solution?

THE PRESIDENT: I have had two of the outstanding members of my Cabinet working with others, trying to find any new approach or a combination of several new approaches, and I am encouraged with their progress to date because I think it is a matter we have to settle and settle in a constructive way, and between the Attorney General, Mr. Levi, and the Secretary of HEW, I believe that we may have some ways in which we can achieve the results without the tragedies that have occurred in some of our major metropolitan areas.

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:44 A.M. EDT

MAY 19, 1976

WEDNESDAY

MR. NESSEN: Let me go over the schedule of a couple of things.

Q Is there anything new on the schedule?

MR. NESSEN: Well, there might be.

Q We have seen the schedule. We would like to just have the new stuff so we can get to our questions.

MR. NESSEN: For instance, I don't know whether the meeting with Rog Morton, Stu Spencer and Dick Cheney -- is that on the schedule?

Q What about it?

MR. NESSEN: I am telling you about it now.

Q Who?

MR. NESSEN: Spencer, Cheney and the President. The President meets about twice a week with his political advisers and one of them normally, right after the weekly primaries. That is what this is all about.

Q We should have been told about this.

MR. NESSEN: It is just here on today's version of the schedule. The days' schedules do change.

Other than that, I think the schedule remains pretty much as you have seen it.

Q Can you tell us anything about the meeting?

MR. NESSEN: No, we never talk about the political strategy meetings.

Q What about the National Security Council?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Would you describe it as routine?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it is one of the one or two times a week meetings the President has.

Q Did they applaud?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so.

Q What time did it start?

MR. NESSEN: 11:10.

Q Ron, are we going to see the President today?

MR. NESSEN: I would think there would be an opportunity this afternoon to see the President.

Q For what sort of opportunity?

MR. NESSEN: As far as I remember, every Wednesday the President has managed to appear somehow in your midst, and I think he will today.

Q Do you mean a press conference?

MR. NESSEN: No, not a full-fledged one.

Q Just a friendly encounter?

MR. NESSEN: I think there will be a chance to talk to him.

Q When?

MR. NESSEN: I would be back from lunch at around 2:20.

Q Where will this materialize?

MR. NESSEN: Don't you like surprises?

Q No.

MR. NESSEN: I think there will be an opportunity to talk to the President today.

Q Around 2:30 this afternoon?

MR. NESSEN: Somewhere in that area.

Q After Golda Meir?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to spell it all out for you.

Q Why do you have to be so secret about this?

MR. NESSEN: There is nothing more to tell. I said I think there will be an opportunity to see and talk to the President today.

Q Hasn't it been determined that after he meets with Golda Meir he will come out and talk to us?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is all I am going to say about it.

For the events this evening, I think you know about Mount Vernon. The President and Mrs. Ford are going to go down there to join President and Madam Giscard for the first performance of a sound and light program called The Father of Liberty. This is a gift from the French nation to the American people for the Bicentennial.

The program will be held on the large lawn west of the mansion, called the Bowling Green. There will be a presentation ceremony beginning at 9:00. The two Presidents will participate in that and then there will be the sound and light program, which takes 47 minutes. The sound and light program sort of gives the outline of the life and times of George Washington.

Q Is this something that the public will be able to see after it is unveiled?

MR. NESSEN: Right. Every evening, weather permitting, during the Bicentennial year, this sound and light show will be performed at the same place.

At the conclusion of the 47-minute program, the Presidents and their wives will attend a reception for invited guests in the mansion and on the grounds. There will be open coverage of the presentation ceremony, so you can get there on your own for that, and also open coverage of the sound and light program. Because it would disrupt the program itself, there should not be any flashbulbs or TV lights turned on during the program.

If you are going to cover the event, your cameras and sound equipment should be in place by 7:00 p.m. We will take a travel pool from here. If you are going down there for the open coverage, your White House, Congressional or Metropolitan Police pass will get you in.

The reception part of it -- that is, after the presentation and after the program -- will be covered by a writing pool.

Q How is he going to go down?

MR. NESSEN: He is going down in the car.

Q Is this open to the public?

MR. NESSEN: 600 invited guests tonight, but starting tomorrow it is a regular --

Q Will there be any setup for telephone filing from there?

MR. NESSEN: No, there won't be special phones. They have pay phones there.

Q Will the French President and Mrs. Giscard go down with him?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think they will be there to receive him. It is possible, though, they may ride together in the same motorcade.

I can give you a few details on the weekend trip, if you would like to hear it.

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: It looks to me like the President will leave the White House on Saturday around 9 o'clock. It is not firm yet, but roughly in the 9 o'clock area in the morning. The press would be leaving, say, an hour or so earlier than that.

The first stop will be Medford, Oregon. The President will address a public rally in Medford, Oregon.

Q What time is that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have any times on this, Ralph, or precise locations, either.

Then, from Medford, the President will fly on to Portland and in Portland will address the World Affairs Council on Saturday evening.

I understand the deadline problems, and we will try to have that speech -- if all went wonderfully well, we would get it Friday night, embargoed for Saturday at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time, but the next best plan would be to have it early Saturday morning before you go, and then the next best plan would be to have it on the plane.

Q It is a nighttime speech?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, nighttime, Portland time.

Q What about the Medford speech? Would you expect we would have that the next morning?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't expect that would be an advance text.

Then, the overnight is in Portland.

Q Is this a major foreign policy address?

MR. NESSEN: I never characterize them, Helen.

Q It has been characterized in other places.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know who has. It is a speech on foreign policy to the --

Q Is it a campaign speech?

MR. NESSEN: It is a speech on foreign policy.

Q As opposed to a campaign speech?

MR. NESSEN: I don't understand your question, Ann.

Q I was asking if it was a campaign speech. I assume this is a campaign trip.

MR. NESSEN: It is a foreign policy speech. I don't know exactly what a campaign speech means to the World Affairs Council. (Laughter)

You know, standing out to a rally in Medford, Oregon, yes, it is a campaign speech. This is a speech on foreign affairs to the World Affairs Council of Portland --

Q Ron, will all of this trip, including the speech that night, be charged to the political costs?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, the same rule we followed since January -- if one stop is political, it is all political.

The overnight is in Portland, unfortunately not at the Benson, as far as I can find out.

Q We just want to be where the President is.

MR. NESSEN: Sunday -- moving right along to Sunday, the President will deliver a commencement address at Warner Pacific College in Portland.

Q Is that hyphenated, Ron, do you know?

MR. NESSEN: No, it isn't, on my copy.

Q What is Warner Pacific? I lived out on the West Coast and haven't heard of it.

MR. NESSEN: It is a college but I don't have any details of it.

In the afternoon, the President will go to Pendleton, Oregon, for another public rally. Then, I guess, after that, we go on down to California.

MORE

#495



Q Pendleton first?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. Pendleton, Oregon, and then a Bicentennial event at Mission Viejo.

Q Will he see President Nixon?

MR. NESSEN: No plans to.

Q Do you have any general idea what time he will be going to California?

MR. NESSEN: This isn't put together that tightly yet, Lou, that we can give times.

In the evening, the President will speak at Leisure World, a senior citizens community in Laguna Hills, and overnight in Anaheim.

Q Is that where we will stay, at the Disneyland Hotel?

MR. NESSEN: The press may stay at the Disneyland Hotel.

Q We want to stay wherever the President stays.

MR. NESSEN: On Monday, the President will speak before the California Peace Officers Convention in Anaheim. In the afternoon, we will be in San Diego. I don't have any events.

Q Where in Anaheim?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the location yet, Trudy. I think it is probably at that convention. I don't know. It is in Anaheim, at the Peace Officers Convention.

Then, on to San Diego. I don't have the events to give you in San Diego yet.

Monday night we overnight in Los Angeles. I think it is the Hyatt.

Tuesday is still being worked on. It will be in California in the Los Angeles area, certainly, and perhaps in the San Francisco area, and then come back here, arriving in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

Q What happened to Nevada?

MR. NESSEN: It is still being worked on and I don't have any details.

Q Is there a stop there?

MR. NESSEN: Possibly, but it hasn't been worked out.

Q Would that be on Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: It is still being worked on. I don't know whether we are going or when.

Q Is that the only campaign trip he will make to California before the primary?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything beyond this trip.

Q Do you have the last engagement on Tuesday and the time on that?

MR. NESSEN: No, because Tuesday is still being worked on.

Q Are you saying he might not go to Nevada?

MR. NESSEN: It is still being worked on.

Q You told us the other day he definitely was going.

MR. NESSEN: The Nevada stop, if there is one, is still being worked on.

Q Then it is not definite he is going there?

MR. NESSEN: There is a lot of the trip that is not locked up yet.

Q If he goes to Nevada, would that be Wednesday or on Tuesday?

MR. NESSEN: He will not extend the trip into Wednesday.

Q What time did the President go to bed, what time did he wake up, and what has he done all day?

Q One other thing on the trip, first, on the public rallies. Any Q and A's in any of those?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think they have been locked up that firmly yet as to format.

Q When will he go to San Diego?

MR. NESSEN: The advance team is out there and phoning back as things get locked up, and we will give you that as we get it.

Q I just want to establish, can we say he plans to be in Nevada?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything firm to give you on Nevada, Dick.

Q You did the other day. Should we then say that he is now reconsidering plans to go to Nevada?

MR. NESSEN: You can say it if you would like to, Dick, but the fact is that I don't have anything to give you on Nevada.

Q Let's put it this way: An earlier schedule the White House had sort of had the President in and out of Nevada and California. You had him going over to Nevada and then coming back for the San Diego part of it, and things like that. Is that now true?

MR. NESSEN: The Nevada stop is still being worked on and I don't have anything to give you.

Q Might it be on Monday, as the earlier schedule had it?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I don't have anything to give you on a Nevada stop. I can't tell you when and where if I don't have anything to give you.

Q Are there any indications it has been wiped out?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I don't have anything to give you on a Nevada stop.

Q The fact is, he might not go to Nevada?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have anything to give you on Nevada.

Q Can you tell us how the President feels about California as a possible primary State in which he might win?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. You will have to ask the PFC what the outlook is on that kind of thing. I don't have anything on it.

Q Ron, can you confirm that the President had a meeting with the entire White House staff this morning?

MR. NESSEN: He asked the staff to come over to the State Dining Room, and they did.

Q What time was that?

MR. NESSEN: It was around 9:30.

Q Were you there? Can you tell us what he said?

MR. NESSEN: It was just to thank them for their hard work and that was about it -- to thank them for their hard work --

Q How many people were there?

MR. NESSEN: -- and their loyalty and team work and so forth.

I would guess there were between 200 and 300.

Q How long did he talk to them?

MR. NESSEN: From 9:35 to 9:40 -- five minutes.

Q This doesn't mean the White House staff is involved in the political campaign, does it?

MR. NESSEN: Oh, no, not at all.

Helen asked about a little chronology of events. The pool gave you a report on the President at the French Embassy. Before he went over there, some of the TV networks had already given a report of what their surveys of people coming out of the polls had found and so he had that information. Then, during the evening a couple of times there were results relayed by phone to Terry O'Donnell, who sent a card or note up to the President.

The pool gave you a report on the President coming back here and talking briefly to the pool outside, and then he went up to the Residence. Mrs. Ford was there, Dick Cheney, Terry O'Donnell, Bob Barrett and myself.

I think it was about 11:45 because we watched about half of the TV analyses, which was over at 12:00. Then he placed some phone calls to his headquarters in Michigan and in Maryland. Then he called a few other personal friends, including Senator Griffin and Bill McLaughlin --

Q Milliken?

MR. NESSEN: He couldn't get Milliken. He was in a car between stops and he couldn't reach him.

Also, he called Pete Secchia, Steve Ford called from California, and Red Cavaney, the advance man out in California.

Q Is Steve working for the President in California, to your knowledge?

MR. NESSEN: He is going to school, I think, and living on a ranch. I think he is going to come up and visit his father this weekend.

Q What is the school?

MR. NESSEN: California Poly Tech.

Q In San Luis Obispo?

MR. NESSEN: I think it is in Laguna, but I am not sure.

That went on until about 12:45 or 1 o'clock, and then the President and Mrs. Ford went to bed.

Then, this morning was the regularly scheduled meeting with staff; then, this 9:30 meeting with the whole staff; and the 11 o'clock meeting with Rog and Stu, and back on the regular schedule.

Q Was Attorney General Levi over here this morning, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Levi was here to attend a meeting on the status of antitrust legislation.

Q Did they discuss the Boston case at all?

MR. NESSEN: Not in the course of that meeting. In the course of walking over to the staff meeting I was telling you about -- actually, the President interrupted the meeting on antitrust legislation to walk over to the State Dining Room and give his little message and come back and resume the meeting.

Ed Levi walked over with him to the State Dining Room. In the course of walking over there the President said to him, roughly, paraphrasing, if after you have concluded your consideration of whether Boston is the case, if you want to come in and tell me of your conclusion, I would be happy to see you.

That was about the extent of their conversation.

Q Can you give us anything on the antitrust legislation itself?

MR. NESSEN: Not really. I am not that much of an expert on antitrust. There is a bill before the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is supposed to come to the floor this week. That is in the Senate side. On the House side, there are three separate pieces of legislation being considered. So, it is just a review of the status of the legislation.



Q What are the President's views on the Boston busing case? Would he like to see that court ruling reversed?

MR. NESSEN: This is a matter being left entirely to the Attorney General as to whether that is the proper case on which to ask the court to take another look at busing as a remedy.

Q Just some more basic stuff. Did Levi answer him when he passed this information on to him?

MR. NESSEN: Levi indicated he had not made his decision on whether Boston was the case.

Q And did he say when he was going to do it?

MR. NESSEN: He did not, no.

Q Ron, by your giving us a paraphrasing of the President's remarks to Mr. Levi, you are indicating to us, are you now, that the President is very interested in this case? Is that the thrust of your remarks?

MR. NESSEN: I wouldn't say this case, Phil. This is a suggestion that the President made to Levi, as you know, last November, suggesting that Levi find a case that would give an opportunity that might be proper and appropriate to ask the Supreme Court to take a new, fresh look at busing and whether it is the best remedy and the most equitable remedy.

Levi, as I understand it, ever since last November, has been looking for such a case.

Q Does the President think Mr. Levi is moving too slowly on it, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think he has an opinion about that, Lou. You know periodically Levi and Phil Buchen have talked about it, and Levi has given him a kind of running report on how he is coming. I know he looked very strongly at one particular case earlier in the year.

Q Which was that? Was that Louisville?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q What was it?



MR. NESSEN: Pasadena.

Bork twice has publicly laid out the fact this was underway. Once in February of 1976, when Bork filed a brief with the Supreme Court in the Pasadena case, he said, "The concern about transporting school children to accomplish desegregation is a legitimate one that may call for further attention of the court in an appropriate case."

So, he sort of signaled last February that the Justice Department was looking for a case.

Then in April, in oral arguments before the court, again in the Pasadena case, the Solicitor General said, "The United States thinks in an appropriate case -- and some appear to be on their way to this court -- the proper scope of initial remedy in such a case as this should be re-examined."

So, Bork and Levi have indicated publicly that they are looking for such a case in response to the President's suggestion.

Q Ron, this all took place in the last couple of months. When did November get into it?

MR. NESSEN: This was the initial time that the President suggested to Levi that he look for an appropriate case.

Q I thought there were suggestions or recommendations made and the President sent them back in the last month or so, like in February.

MR. NESSEN: As you know, the President asked both Levi and Mathews to make some recommendations on alternatives to busing, and they did come up with an initial list and he sent them back and they have periodically discussed with both the President and the Domestic Council some ideas, but they haven't come up with any recommendations and he hasn't made any final decisions.

But, it was last November that he initially suggested to Levi that he look for a case.

Q How did he do that?

MR. NESSEN: In the course of a meeting that he was having on the busing matter.

MORE

#495



Q Was he called for specifically that reason? Did the President call him over here specifically to propose that they find a case?

MR. NESSEN: No. Let me check. No, he didn't call him over here specifically to tell him that, but what the purpose of the meeting was, I don't know.

Q Did you announce at the time or did the subject or the fact come out in any way from here that this had been done? I frankly don't remember and I am just trying to find out.

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall that there was any public announcement of that, but there wouldn't be one, I don't think.

Q What I am trying to get clear is the chronology as far as the White House is concerned. Yesterday you used the phrase several times, "As I have said before, the President is opposed to busing," and we all know that. That has been brought out. But prior to the time you were asked about this on Monday, when you were asked if the Attorney General was going to intervene in the Boston case, had you ever told us about these instructions to Levi to find a case and intervene, whether that telling us was in November or whenever it was, had you ever told us that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't recall that I, from this particular podium, have indicated that the President had given that instruction. As I say, Bork has at least twice publicly in appearances before the courts indicated that the Justice Department was looking for such a case.

Q Can you recall now, after the passage of several months, why it was you didn't tell us about this in November?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure it ever came up, Jim.

Q I assume it didn't come up in the briefing, if we didn't know about it.

Q Ron, on February 21 in an interview we had with the President, we asked him about these half dozen remedies and he said at the time he didn't want to discuss it. So, was there a political decision taken to keep the lid on this until Levi found his case?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think there was any political decision made. I don't know. The matter just never came up, and I don't think it would be a matter for public announcement of the President giving a direction to one of his Cabinet members.

The meeting of last November 20 was on the schedule, Larry points out to me, at 2:00 in the afternoon. It should be on the public schedule, a meeting between Levi, Mathews and the President. I would have to look at my transcript of the 20th of November. I am sure we must have described it as a meeting at which the President asked for or discussed his ideas for finding alternative remedies to busing.

Q My earlier question was, was that meeting called specifically for that reason to propose to the Attorney General that he look for a case?

MR. NESSEN: I would have to check my transcript, Tom, but I feel sure it must have been described as a meeting at which the President asked Levi and Mathews to go back and bring in ideas for alternate remedies to busing.

Q I am struck, too, by the curious progression of the President's role in this just between Monday of this week and now, today. Monday we were given the clear impression --

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure what "curious progression" is.

Q Monday, the deliberate impression you gave us, according to my notes and according to my memory, was that the President really had no role in this discussion or in the decision-making process that was going on over at the Justice Department.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct. That was perhaps the impression you got Monday, and it certainly is the impression you should get today, that the President gave the overall policy direction to Levi last November to find a case that was appropriate and proper to raise with the court the entire matter of busing being the correct remedy.

Since then, and to this day and hour, it has been up to Levi to determine if there is such a proper and appropriate case and, if so, to raise it with the courts. That is the impression I meant to give because that is the President's role in this; that is, to give a policy direction and then leave it up to the Attorney General to find the proper and appropriate case, if there is one.

Q Ron, what would the elements be in a proper and appropriate case?

MR. NESSEN: You need to ask Ed Levi.

Q Since he gave that direction in November and he jogs Levi about it today, it sounds like he doesn't think they are getting the job done.

MR. NESSEN: No, I think I mentioned earlier that the Attorney General and Phil Buchen have been in touch periodically over the months as the Attorney General has been looking over cases.

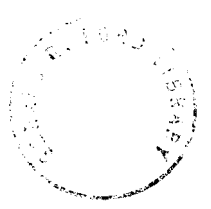
As I mentioned earlier, there was at one point serious consideration given to the Pasadena case; by the Attorney General, not by the White House.

Q Does the fact we are getting the President's views or participation in this today--for what may or may not be the first time, but in some detail--have any connection with the fact there is an important primary in Kentucky next week and busing is a very hot issue in Louisville?

MR. NESSEN: You couldn't resist.

The reason this came out, it seems to me -- the answer to your question is no. To go beyond that a little bit --

MORE



Q No connection?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct. I mean, the direction was given last November, as I say.

Q I understand.

MR. NESSEN: My understanding of why this has come up now is that I got a question the other day -- what day was it, Monday -- about was Ed Levi going to intervene in the busing case. I didn't know very many details at that time. I gave what I could. I checked around and I had more details yesterday, and I checked further and had more details today, but it was not something the White House initiated -- it was something I have been pulling together in response to press queries, if my memory of the whole thing is correct.

Q Ron, as Dave points out, when the President was interviewed for the Boston Globe interview, he didn't want to get into what the course was. What has changed that now he is willing to participate in this way and obviously to have you come out here and make the statements? Has there been anything that has changed his willingness to do that?

MR. NESSEN: Lou, I don't agree with your description of what has happened. The President, since last November right up to this minute, has played no role in the selection of a proper case, if there is a proper case. He gave a policy direction last November.

In response to press questions beginning Monday, I have attempted to find out as many details as I can, which I have presented to you as I found them out. But, the President has no role in selecting the case, if there is a case, and I have not come out here and attempted to volunteer or dump this story on you. I have done it in response to questions which began on Monday.

Q If I can follow-up, up until this week, if that question was put even to the President, let alone to his spokesman, he didn't want to discuss this.

MR. NESSEN: Discuss what?

Q He didn't want to discuss what the White House role was going to be in trying to get an alternative to busing.

MR. NESSEN: But there is not a White House role in selecting a case to have the Court look at. You know the role the White House has played in asking Levi and Mathews to come up with some recommendations.

Q Can we ask the question this way, Ron: Why is it that you are willing to discuss now the policy directive that the President gave in November when you were not willing to discuss that policy directive in November and the President was not willing to discuss it in February?

MR. NESSEN: Well, for one thing, back in November, Larry points out to me, at my briefing on November 22 I was asked about this meeting that appears on the schedule of November 20, "What did they talk about?" If you recall, my answer was, "If you recall, the President said publicly on a couple of occasions that he asked the Attorney General and the HEW Secretary to consider alternatives to busing. They have been doing that and they wanted to discuss their views with the President." In the course of that meeting, the President gave this policy directive.

I didn't come out here and make a public announcement of it.

Q And the President, in February, when he was asked about it, now in response to questions admittedly -- but the fact is, you are now willing to discuss it when you, for whatever reason, didn't discuss it in November and the President didn't discuss it in February. What has changed? Why are you now willing to discuss it?

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I don't think there is any change. The policy direction was given in November. Periodically, Solicitor General Bork has discussed it publicly in the course of arguing these cases.

I got asked about it Monday and, as I said, answered what I knew on Monday. I collected further information and answered further yesterday, and collected further information and answered further today.

What I sense you are suggesting by your questions is that this is some kind of public relations plot, and I submit that it is not, because I have done all this in an effort to be helpful in response to your questions.

Q Ron, I understand what you are saying, but why did it take six months for the Administration to inform the people of this country that the President had decided to go to the Supreme Court to overturn busing?

MR. NESSEN: It didn't, Dave. As I say, I think you have had at least two occasions -- one in February and one in April -- in which the Solicitor General publicly stated that in the course of arguing cases.

Q They are obscure court documents.

MR. NESSEN: They are not obscure court documents. They didn't happen in the White House Press Room but they were public statements.



Q Give us your version of the events, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Okay, let me just say my version of events is what I have made a serious effort to reconstruct and which I believe to be the facts.

Q I understand that and I don't mean to challenge that. What I am asking you is, why, when Senator Brooke called the President on Sunday night, did Senator Brooke then say that the President didn't know anything about the Boston case and told him, "Ed, this was done without my knowledge or consent."? Why did Brooke get that impression?

MR. NESSEN: Here is what happened: Buchen was told last Thursday that the Attorney General had now shifted his attention to the Boston case as a possible one that would fit the proper and appropriate case to raise his question with the Court. That happened, I believe, early in the afternoon on Thursday that Buchen was told that. He did not immediately inform the President that the Attorney General was looking at the Boston case.

Later that same night, Brooke called the President and I don't know what the exact words of the conversation were.

Q This is still Thursday night?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, Thursday night.

But he did raise with the President the question of why was Levi looking at the Boston case and thinking of intervening in it. I don't know precisely what the President said to Brooke except it is the fact that the President did not know at that time that the Attorney General was looking at the Boston case as a possible --

Q Buchen had not told the President?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q When did the President first discuss this with Buchen? What did Buchen say to him? What is the rest of that scenario?

MR. NESSEN: We will have to find out for you. I don't know.

Q I am sure the President took Brooke's question and did something with it. I am trying to find out what did he do. He seems to imply in the answer the Globe ran that he doesn't really think Boston is the best place for it.

MR. NESSEN: I tried to indicate, because it is the fact, that the President is not involved in any way in the selection of the case, if there is a case. And, at the time that Senator Brooke called him last Thursday, he did not know the Attorney General was considering Boston as a possibility for the case.

Now, I will have to track down when Phil talked to the President and informed him that the Attorney General was considering Boston as a case.

Q Could you also find out his view on whether Boston is the proper place?

MR. NESSEN: The President will not have a view on that question.

Q The President has, I think in one of his first press conferences, commented on busing in Boston, and I think very directly. He has been on the record on Boston busing before.

MR. NESSEN: The Attorney General has not selected any case which he feels is proper and appropriate to raise this question with the Court again. I feel relatively sure, that if and when Ed Levi does find such a case, that he would discuss it with the President.

Q Before announcing it publicly?

MR. NESSEN: I would think so.

Q Would he just come over here and say to the President, we have finally settled on a case?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think they will discuss it.

Q Then, in effect, that means the President will have a kind of review authority?

MR. NESSEN: Since Ed Levi has not found such a case, it is just very difficult to figure out what the process will be after he does find a case, if he finds a case.

Q Ron, you began the briefing by saying that the President -- paraphrasing him -- told Levi that once he made his decision, if he wanted to come over, he could tell him.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think you have accurately paraphrased what I said. You have not paraphrased what I paraphrased.

Q "If you want to come to see me, I will be happy to see you."

MR. NESSEN: After you have concluded your consideration of whether Boston is the proper case, if you want to come and tell me of your conclusion, I will be happy to see you.



Q Does that mean the final decision on whether Levi should proceed will depend on the President, or will it be entirely up to Levi?

MR. NESSEN: Tom, it is just not possible to project that far ahead after Levi finds a case, if he finds a case.

Q There isn't any question, Ron, that he is going to find some case.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, it has been six months so far. That is something you have to ask the Attorney General, really.

Q What do you anticipate as the President's role, and how does the President see his role? You have had a discussion --

MR. NESSEN: I can't anticipate the Presidential role right now.

Q You have had a discussion with him, obviously, at some length, about his role in this case now because we have been getting, as I say, more evidence every day about the Presidential role.

MR. NESSEN: In response to questions, Tom, and I don't think you ought to leave the impression that I somehow have doled this out for some ulterior motive. I have gone back and dug out as many answers as I could 100 percent in response to press questions. I don't like the implication I hear from a number of people that I somehow have orchestrated something for some other purpose.

Q Whatever inference you care to draw, you may. The fact is that we have been getting more each day about the President's role in this case.

MR. NESSEN: In response to press questions.

Q But what is it when you talk to the President, then, about his role and you question him about what he said to Levi today and so on? Don't you discuss with him and does he not give you some kind of judgment of what his role will be ultimately in the decision as to whether or not to go ahead?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is possible to project the story that far ahead now, Tom, because Levi has not found a case he considers appropriate and proper. He has not informed the President of his conclusions.

As I say, I anticipate Levi would tell the President and discuss with the President what he concludes. But, I can't answer the question because there isn't an answer at the moment.

Q I am not asking for a judgment on a hypothetical case. I am asking whether the President will reserve for himself the ultimate authority as to whether the Justice Department will proceed on whatever case it picks.

MR. NESSEN: I can't answer the question because it has not arrived at that yet.

Q As a general matter--and I am not asking this just about this White House, but I am asking about all White Houses--in general matters in cases of very considerable and significant importance, doesn't the President always reserve the right to make the final decision?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't want to get into what his role might or might not be at the time Levi does find a case. As I say, I am sure Levi will discuss it with him. Beyond that, I can't answer what the President's role will be.

MORE

#495



Q Ron, in view of the fact that the President so often says this is an open Administration, why was it that on an issue of this importance last November you did not tell us what his directive was?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that we announce all the suggestions that the President makes to his various Cabinet members.

Q Suggestions? Wasn't this a directive?

Q Ron, was the President unhappy that the Senate did not confirm William Springer of the Federal Elections Commission along with the others?

MR. NESSEN: Is he what?

Q Was he unhappy?

MR. NESSEN: He thinks the Senate should confirm Mr. Springer as quickly as possible so the six members can be sworn in and get on with the business of overseeing the election.

Q The law says that --

MR. NESSEN: The law also says that the Commission shall be evenly balanced -- three Democrats and three Republicans. Since the Commission does have a very wide-ranging influence on the conduct of the election, it seems only proper to live up to the Congressional intent of having a balanced and nonpartisan Commission by having the members balanced as Congress said they should be.

So, when the sixth member is confirmed, they will be sworn in.

Q Ron, I would like to go back to this busing thing to go a little further with Fran's question. In most of your replies you referred to this as the President setting the policy. You referred to it as a policy directive. Now, in response to Fran's question you say you don't make it a practice to announce all Presidential suggestions.

MR. NESSEN: Directives or instructions.

Q What was this?

MR. NESSEN: A directive.

Q This was a policy directive?

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q Then you are saying you do not find it necessary on significant policy directives always to tell us when the President has given a policy directive to a Cabinet officer?

MR. NESSEN: I think that is probably right.

Q You do not?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q And you still refer to this as an open Administration and wish it to be known as such, is that right?

MR. NESSEN: That is right.

Q Does your paraphrase of what the President told the Attorney General say, in effect, that he is letting the Attorney General know it is not the Attorney General's final, sole decision?

MR. NESSEN: No, I wouldn't read any more into that little conversation during the walk over. It was just exactly what it appears on the face of --

Q He didn't say it is "entirely up to you," did he?

MR. NESSEN: I honestly wouldn't make what I think you are trying to make of that conversation because that was a walk over, it was really quite a casual remark, and it doesn't indicate any --

Q The reason I am asking is when you read it rapidly the first time, I had the impression he was saying, when you have reached your conclusion -- which I took to mean a decision -- come in and talk to me about it. But, it is your decision, in effect.

Now you said something later that indicates quite the opposite so I didn't know which way to go.

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so. I don't think I have said anything that was quite the opposite. I said from the very beginning the decision on whether there is a case and, if so, which case it is, that is appropriate and proper to raise the busing matter with the court again, that that decision is the Attorney General's decision.

Q Would the President care if Levi went ahead and made this decision without coming over here to see him and without checking with him ultimately on what the decision is?

MR. NESSEN: Levi will make the decision on his own whether there is such an appropriate case.

Q If a decision is made on a case, would the President be upset if Levi then went ahead and proceeded without coming over here to see him or without discussing it with him?

MR. NESSEN: As I said, I am relatively sure Levi will discuss it with him after he has made this decision.

Q Let me ask it another way. Will Levi's decision be binding?

MR. NESSEN: I told Tom I can't project beyond where we stand right now, which is that Levi is considering this, seeing whether there is such a case, and I feel sure he will discuss his conclusion with the President. Beyond that, I can't go.

Q Is the White House apprehensive about Levi's independence?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what that means.

Q Are they worried he is going off on his own?

Q Right. The casual remark you relayed to us, I think it is ridiculous for you to suggest to us it is a casual remark. What you have told us indicates it is not a casual remark.

MR. NESSEN: I can see I am going to get stuck with making some kind of major policy pronouncement when everything I have said today is in response to questions and the amount of research I have done is in anticipation of questions and not in an effort to any other --

Q Just in following up Aldo's question, are you suggesting that the President doesn't know yet how he is going to handle this case after almost seven months?

MR. NESSEN: What case is it?

Q Whatever the case --

MR. NESSEN: -- may be. That is exactly why I can't answer Tom's question.

Q Surely he must have had some idea why when he issued this directive of what role he was going to play in deciding whether they would go forward or not.

MR. NESSEN: Suppose Levi comes in here and says "there is no such proper case, Mr. President"?

Q That is not the kind of hypothetical we have been talking about.

MR. NESSEN: No, but it gives you an example of where you go if you start saying, what if.

Q But the President told him to find a case.

MR. NESSEN: To see if there was a case.

Q But they have not yet found a way out, have they?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what you mean by "way out."

Q I mean an alternative remedy. The President directed them to find an alternative remedy in November and the fact is they have not yet found one.

MR. NESSEN: They have sent in some suggestions and gone back and looked for other suggestions and discussed some of their suggestions with the Domestic Council and with the President.

But, as I said earlier, the President has not made a decision on accepting any of their suggestions or recommendations.

Q The point I was trying to make, maybe I didn't make it clearly, the President is clearly now aware that Mr. Levi is focusing on Boston, he is close to a decision.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that he is close to a decision. I don't have any idea.

Q All the reports there are that he is. In any case, he alluded to the situation this morning and, if I understand you correctly, you are saying that he still doesn't know whether he is going to have the final say or whether Levi is?

MR. NESSEN: It is just not possible for me to answer your question, Dick.

Q Are you saying it is not possible to answer the question or he doesn't know what he is going to do?

MR. NESSEN: It is not possible for me to answer the question.

Q So, he does know what he plans to do?

MR. NESSEN: It is just a matter that hasn't come here for a decision. Levi hasn't picked a case yet. He hasn't told the President whether there is such a case or not, if there is, what it is. It is not possible to answer the question.

Q Ron, as the President's Press Secretary, do you know of any difference between the President's views on busing and the views on busing of Governor Reagan?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to compare the records. I can't do that for you.

Q I could do that, Ron, but having done that, I don't see any difference and I was wondering if you know of any difference?

MR. NESSEN: I will let you reach your own conclusion, Les.

Q The President's directive was to find a test case which would overturn a busing rule?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, Walt, but I wish you would stick to the wording I used yesterday since that was the proper wording.

Q I would like to know, once you find a test case and you take it to the court and you try to overturn a busing ruling, where does the President intend to go beyond there or will he just be satisfied in reversing a busing order?

MR. NESSEN: I am just not prepared to go anywhere near that far, Walt, since where the matter stands now is that the President last November asked the Attorney General where there was an appropriate and proper case to raise with the court the matter of busing as a remedy, and that is where it stands now, and I am not going to speculate on the future.

MORE

#495



Q But presumably at that November meeting, once the President asked for a directive for a test case to overturn a busing order, certainly he had something more in mind than just to repeal busing in that particular city.

MR. NESSEN: I said yesterday and I think if you read the words of yesterday you will see that the purpose of this directive was to find a proper and appropriate case in which you could raise with the court the matter of busing as an equitable remedy. I mean, after all we are dealing here with a complex legal matter, and I think that always ought to be kept in mind. This is a legal matter, and that is why the Attorney General is involved in it, and why the White House is not involved in it and the Solicitor General.

Q Is the President's intent merely to eliminate busing in a city or does he have an alternative plan to continue the progress of school desegregation?

MR. NESSEN: The purpose of asking the Attorney General to see if there were such a case is exactly as I stated it yesterday.

Q But that is a negative purpose. The intent of the law was to desegregate schools.

MR. NESSEN: When you talk about remedies, Walt, that is why I say this is a legal question.

Q Let me ask my question. Is the President out to repeal a busing case or does he have a positive, constructive end in mind? That is what I want to know.

MR. NESSEN: The purpose is exactly what I said it was yesterday.

Q Ron, on another issue, what is the President's reaction to the astonishing victory of Governor Brown in Maryland? Did he have one?

MR. NESSEN: He has made it a practice not to comment on the Democratic situation.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:36 P.M. EDT)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Reference to Domestic Council,
p. 14

Reference to political kickback
p. 15 as consideration in
busing decision.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:52 P.M. EDT

MAY 20, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: This morning the President saw some newspaper reporters and television and radio reporters from Kentucky. Many of them had written in and asked for a chance to talk with the President, so there was a group meeting held. The President did answer their questions for about a half hour. We will have a transcript available tomorrow morning at 9:00.

Q Why can't we have it sooner than that?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, let's not go through this whole thing again.

Q We haven't had a press conference with the President of the United States --

MR. NESSEN: Since yesterday afternoon.

Q You don't call that a press conference, do you?

MR. NESSEN: It was the President answering questions from the press. What is a press conference?

Q We have had one this year, Ron, and that is ridiculous.

MR. NESSEN: Well, there was one yesterday. He has had, I guess, dozens this year, Helen.

Q Ron, on this morning's interview, was there much discussion of the Louisville busing case?

MR. NESSEN: I tell you what. Why don't I go through the rest of the schedule and then return to that, Russ.

You all know about the luncheon today with the economists, I think, don't you?

MORE

#496

see
p. 4

Q Is that called for any particular purpose?

MR. NESSEN: It is part of a series of meetings the President has had with various people from outside the Government to just discuss ideas they may have or he may have.

Q Can we take our Kodaks in there?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Have you put out a participants list?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Did you remove Milton Friedman?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so.

Q Are these the economists of London?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is the economists of the United States.

There will be a chance for some pictures, Tom, if you would like, at the beginning of the lunch.

On the weekend trip, nothing really much in very great detail to add to the kind of rough outline of yesterday. The President will stop in Las Vegas on Monday, and I guess the idea there is to go from southern California to northern California. It is basically a speech around the noon hour in Las Vegas to the International Council on Shopping Centers.

Q What is the speech going to be on that?

MR. NESSEN: I hope we have at least some of the bible for you late tomorrow afternoon.

Q Are we going to get there in a cart?

MR. NESSEN: As I mentioned to you before, the speech for Saturday night, the foreign affairs speech, I am really hopeful of getting it out Friday night or Saturday morning before we leave, and we are working on that.

Q He is not going to northern California until Tuesday, is he? That is the way I understood it yesterday.

MORE

#496



MR. NESSEN: You are right. I guess he goes from the Orange County area to Las Vegas to the Los Angeles area for Monday night.

Q What happens to San Diego?

MR. NESSEN: San Diego is in.

Q Do you have anything on Tuesday's schedule, like when he will be departing?

MR. NESSEN: When he will be departing to come back?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: We will end up in the San Francisco Bay area -- not necessarily San Francisco itself -- the plan is to leave there about 5:30 or 6:00 California time, which will be 8:30 or 9:00 Eastern Time.

Q Ron, when will he be getting to Medford, the first stop? Do you have that approximately?

MR. SPEAKES: He leaves here at noon. It will be 2:00 local time.

MR. NESSEN: Around the noon hour on Saturday.

As you know, the Gross National Product for the first three months of 1975 was revised today, revised upward from 7.5 percent annual growth rate as originally announced to 8.5 percent. This is seasonally adjusted, and is the annual rate and it is with inflation subtracted from it, so the real growth rate was 8.5 percent.

The President's economists feel this revision is consistent with other upward trends and other upward revisions that have been made. This particular revision suggests to the economists that the economy is moving actually ahead faster than the projections made in December and perhaps even faster than later projections made at the end of the first quarter.

Q May I ask a question about that?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q This is just a question more out of curiosity than anything else. This is after GNP deflated, but do they break it down as to how much of this is recovery from the recession and how much of it is additional growth, or is it all recovery from the recession? Do they compartmentalize it that way?

MR. NESSEN: I think you ought to get someone from Greenspan's office to help you with that or the Commerce Department, who puts out the figures. I don't know that much about it.

(Louisville)
Back to Russ' question. Obviously there was some interest in busing, although not very much, really, about a page and a half of transcript is what it came to. The President was, first of all, asked about what the reporter referred to as an "element of skepticism" about why the busing issue should come up now. I could have told the President about that skepticism, if he had asked. (Laughter)

Q Are you suggesting there is skepticism in this room?

MR. NESSEN: Not after yesterday. I know I removed all doubt about the genesis of this.

The President said -- I will paraphrase this for you -- that he has vigorously opposed court ordered forced busing from the very beginning, back in the early sixties, that that is a consistent record of his and not anything that he has just come upon lately. He recalled that last November 20 he had had the meeting with Mathews and Levi to make them aware of his interest in having them prepare alternative means remedying the injustice of school segregation and to find a better answer, as he put it --

Q The injustice?

MR. NESSEN: I am paraphrasing. He didn't use those expressions. What he said is, "I said we have to find a better answer, a better remedy to quality education because court ordered forced busing is not the answer."

Then he points out that periodically since November Levi and Mathews have both been back into the White House to discuss some ideas they are working on and that the Solicitor, Robert Bork, has publicly stated in court that the Administration was looking for a case in which to ask the court to reconsider busing as a remedy.

Q Bork has been back and Bork is the one who first mentioned --

MR. NESSEN: No, I mentioned this yesterday, Mort, at the briefing, that when people said why are you just bringing this up now, I said as far back as February in a court appearance and again in April in a court appearance Bork stated publicly that the Administration was looking for a case to bring before the court to ask that busing be reconsidered as the remedy for desegregation.

Q On November 20, did the President tell the Attorney General to find an appropriate case?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q He told the Secretary of HEW something else.

MR. NESSEN: The purpose of that meeting was, as I mentioned yesterday, to discuss the President's desire that those two Cabinet members bring in recommendations for alternate remedies. In the course of that meeting, the President gave the policy directive to the Attorney General to find a case in which you could bring back to the court the question whether busing was a proper remedy.

Q Ron, a question on corporate corruption --

MR. NESSEN: Why don't I finish answering Russ' question about busing.

He reiterated he is for desegregation but totally opposed to court-ordered forced busing. He said the White House had nothing to do with the current interest in this case, that it has come from the news media over the past three or four days.

Q Would you repeat that?

MR. NESSEN: He said the White House did not release any of this information that has come to the news media over the past three or four days. I think what he meant was that we had nothing to do with initiating it; that it came in response to questions.

Then, he said that if he had wanted to use it for some political purpose, it would have been possible to give public orders to the Attorney General before the Massachusetts primary, for instance, or the Michigan primary, which is the same point I made yesterday.

Q Why don't you release that portion of the transcript?

MR. NESSEN: I can do that.

Q Let me follow-up on just one point. Was there any inquiry about whether Louisville was at one time considered as a proper and appropriate case for the Justice Department?

MR. NESSEN: In the course of discussing this, the President said that he didn't know what case Levi was going to settle on, if any, as a proper and appropriate one to bring this to the court. He said it could be Boston, it could be Louisville. He doesn't know and, as he said yesterday, it is not his decision to pick the case; it is Levi's decision to pick the case.

Q Do you know whether the Attorney General has told the President that Louisville might be the case that he would present?

MR. NESSEN: Not to my knowledge. Now, the Attorney General has asked for an appointment with the President tomorrow but we don't know for what purpose. I mean, presumably -- (Laughter). Wait a second, folks. Presumably he is going to talk about his decision, if he has made one. But, what the decision is, we don't know.

Q The decision is made -- just to get this straight -- to intervene, but the question is the case?

MR. NESSEN: If there is an appropriate and proper case. The President gave the policy direction last November to look for a case that would be proper and appropriate for the Government to raise with the court and ask for a reexamination of whether -- well, I probably ought to -- well, you recall what I said yesterday, day before yesterday, he has asked the Attorney General -- that was at the November 20 meeting -- to look for the appropriate and proper case to ask the court to reexamine busing as a remedy and to explore alternative solutions which are less destructive of the fabric of our community life. That was the directive he gave to Levi last November, and that is what Levi has been doing. The selection of such a case is up to the Attorney General.

Q Ron, does he think it would be appropriate and proper to make Kentucky the case and announce it right before the primary?

MR. NESSEN: What is that, Phil? I didn't hear the question.

Q Does the President think it would be appropriate and proper for Kentucky to be the case and to announce it right before the primary?

MR. NESSEN: I think you have to ask Levi the question. The selection of a case is up to the Attorney General.

Q You made a big point out of it. If the President wanted to make something out of it politically, he could have announced it before Massachusetts, and he didn't.

MR. NESSEN: I tell you, Phil, I don't know. The President doesn't know and nobody at the White House knows what case, if any, that Levi, the Attorney General, the chief law officer, has selected to fill this general directive the President gave him.

As the President said, or the reporter said, I guess--the reporter said there is an element of skepticism. We spent an hour yesterday on my part trying to clear up the element of skepticism, to use the reporter's words. You know, I have really explored this and I am convinced in my own mind that it is exactly what it appears, which is something that came up last November which Bork has mentioned publicly since then, which, you know, if there was an effort to politicize the issue it would have, in my personal opinion, at least, been done before. I really respectfully think that it is wrong to suggest that this has come out in some political maneuver because it came out --

Q Ron, do you happen to know if the President --

MR. NESSEN: Let Phil finish his line of questioning.

Q Then, the answer to my question is, he sees nothing wrong with it?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't hear myself give that answer. What I said was it is up to the Attorney General to select the case.

Q But, the President would see nothing wrong if the Attorney General says Kentucky should be the test case and in announcing it just before the Kentucky primary?

MR. NESSEN: I would not speculate on what case the Attorney General might find appropriate to intervene on.

Q Ron, do you know if the President would accept any decision by the Attorney General, including a decision that there is no appropriate case?

MR. NESSEN: I think, as the President indicated to you more clearly on the lawn yesterday than I did here yesterday, he feels the decision is Levi's, whether or not to intervene, and if to intervene, in which case. Now, as he said, he would expect to be informed but I think he was fairly clear yesterday in what role he expected to play.

Q Ron, is Levi's decision based on legal or policy grounds? If Levi reaches a decision that he doesn't want to intervene in the case, can Levi do that on policy grounds or merely on legal grounds if there is no good case to intervene on?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President's policy direction uses the words "appropriate and proper" case. Now, what the grounds are on which Levi makes that decision, I think you have to talk to Levi about that.

Q Ron, correct me if I am wrong, but up to this point the talk has all been about whether or not there will be intervention in Boston, which is the case pending before the Supreme Court --

MR. NESSEN: Not all the talk you have heard here.

Q The talk we have heard publicly has pointed toward Boston, hasn't it? Isn't this the first time that Louisville has been raised as a possibility?

MR. NESSEN: I mentioned yesterday here to my own personal knowledge I know some attention had been given at one point to Pasadena to see whether that was the appropriate and proper case. I think Levi himself has said that Boston is being considered to see whether it is an appropriate and proper case.

This morning the President said -- well, his words were, "As of now, he hasn't told me whether he will or he won't" -- that is, intervene in any case. "He might do it in Louisville, I don't know. That is a decision I left to the Attorney General to make and I just want to be informed when he does."

Q Doesn't this raise the skepticism when the President himself raises Louisville as a possibility the week before the primary?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think it was in the context of talking to a bunch of reporters from Kentucky about busing.

Q What is pending in the Louisville case? Where is the Louisville case?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the vaguest notion. I don't think the President does, either. The point is -- well, look, I find it hard, really, to persuade you of something that I believe is correct, but I will attempt to try.

But, let me just say this: The point the President was making is that it could be any school busing case that is working its way up to or is before the Supreme Court. He doesn't know what case Levi is going to select, if any.

Q But, the fact is, for the first time he mentioned Louisville in this meeting with a group of reporters from the area?

MR. NESSEN: I am sure Louisville has a great deal of interest to the editors and writers.

Q Ron, the President has been asked on countless occasions before this week about busing. Why didn't he ever announce the fact on any of those occasions that he had given this direction to Mr. Levi?

MR. NESSEN: I think Dave Nyhan asked yesterday a similar question, why, when he was asked by the Boston Globe about the Boston school case, did he say he didn't want to talk about it.

I think there are two very distinct things here, and one is to comment on a specific court case, which he does not want to do and won't do, and the second is he gave a general policy directive last November, which the Attorney General is still looking for a way to carry out.

Q Why didn't he announce it last November or any of countless occasions?

MR. NESSEN: The Solicitor General of the United States has twice announced it, as far as I know.

Q Why didn't he announce it?

MR. NESSEN: I think Jim asked me yesterday, was I standing here and trying to tell you that every policy announcement the President of the United States made is not announced publicly, and I said yes.

Q Don't you think it is something the country ought to be aware of in an open Administration?

MR. NESSEN: I announced it here on Monday.

Q It was six months later.

MR. NESSEN: Many policy directives that the President gives are not announced publicly, as I told Jim yesterday.

Q Ron, here is an easy question.

MR. NESSEN: I don't want an easy question.

Q Ron, was there a discussion first of alternatives, and then the President said let's go in as a friend of the court?

MR. NESSEN: I didn't attend that meeting but I know both matters were discussed at the meeting -- one, alternatives from Levi and Mathews to busing as a remedy; and second, the direction given to Levi to look for a case.

Q Can't we then conclude the President was dissatisfied with any alternative he heard?

MR. NESSEN: I think I have told you this chronology, Sol, that Levi and Mathews did come in with some proposals. They were sent back for further work, elaboration, new ideas and so forth. They have been back and forth several times and a number of them are in the process now of being very seriously considered. The President has not approved of any particular one yet.

Let me take this question.

MORE

#496

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Q Some time ago the President instructed his Secretary of Commerce -- I forget which one it was then -- to make a report on corporate corruption. I have not seen that. Has it showed? I have a reason for asking.

The reason I have for asking is the Chairman of SEC sent a report in to Mr. Proxmire listing 100 cases of corporate corruption, the latest ones being the General Rubber and Tire people, and the Emerson people. Proxmire wants to know where the Secretary of Commerce's report is. That is what I am asking you.

MR. NESSEN: If I recall, it is Elliot Richardson who is heading that committee and, to my knowledge, I think it has been less than a month since that committee has been appointed. It is not to look into specific cases of alleged corruption but rather to look into the broad question of how do multinational corporations operate and what safeguards are needed in a broad sense.

You need to check with Horace Webb, who works for Elliot Richardson. But, I would think it is much too soon for that committee to have considered and sent in recommendations on such a broad question.

Q To follow up, does this relate particularly to the Arab boycott?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think this is another question.

Q Ron, could you tell us if you have a mail or telephone count relating to the busing question?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't checked.

Q Ron, the President's decision on this did not rip up the fabric based on a conclusion on his part that there is no legal segregation being practiced in some of these schools?

MR. NESSEN: This is a point I felt, in thinking back on yesterday, that I didn't make very clearly, although I did, I guess, privately to some people.

We are not talking about a question of whether school segregation should or should not continue to exist because the President said very flatly today, "I am for desegregation."

When the courts find that there is illegal school segregation, they then recommend a remedy to cure it. So, it is not a question -- the President is not arguing about whether there should continue to be segregation. Of course he doesn't favor that. He says flatly, "I am for desegregation." It is the second part, what is the remedy when the court finds there is illegal segregation. That is where the President feels there should be another remedy other than busing.

Q He says there are ways. Can you tell us what he has in mind?

MR. NESSEN: He has talked to you before about that, in terms of the Esch amendment, and he has those suggestions and proposals from Levi --

Q That is, basically busing as a last resort?

MR. NESSEN: There are about six or seven steps you go through beforehand.

Q Does he feel the outcome of this will be that the busing alternatives will be somehow eliminated by the courts? Is that the objective and that all other remedies would be resorted to except busing and not busing?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't think I should talk about this in a theoretical way, Mort. You know his feelings about busing; you know his feelings about seeking alternative remedies. Some remedies are under consideration in the Administration.

Q Ron, you said just now that he has not approved any of these yet. Does he expect to approve the alternative remedies that the Justice Department seek?

MR. NESSEN: You know, there are remedies that will be ordered by the courts in some cases. There are also administrative or legislative remedies and some of these suggestions fall into those categories.

Q Ron, does the President believe that six months from the time he asked this, considering the brilliance of Mr. Levi, I mean this seriously, as well as the size of the Department of Justice, does the President consider that six months is kind of a long time to find such a case or does he feel it is more or less average on a thing of this magnitude?

MR. NESSEN: It is a complex legal question which the Attorney General has been working on.

Q Ron, was there some trouble or something in that interview the President had?

MR. NESSEN: There was something at the very end of which I am not entirely clear, but a photographer apparently felt he was being bumped or pushed by other photographers and he sort of pushed out a little bit. The Secret Service thought he was pushing out a little too aggressively, so they asked him to step out.

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Q Who was it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the name. Maybe Larry does.

Q Was it a major deal, shouting or anything like that?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Was there a hard push by the Secret Service?

MR. NESSEN: No, there wasn't a push at all by the Secret Service. It was a gentle leading away.

Q Where?

MR. NESSEN: In the State Dining Room.

Q Did these Kentucky editors and reporters ask the President how he thought he was going to do in Kentucky and did he give them a reply?

MR. NESSEN: I have to look up the transcript. I think at the very beginning there was some discussion of the outlook in Kentucky, but we have to look up what he said.

Those of you who want to take pictures or go over and observe the beginning of the lunch with the economists should meet out here in the driveway right now.

Q Could I go back to the corporate --

MR. NESSEN: Are we finished with busing?

Q Has the President been told by the Attorney General that the Attorney General's office is also checking out the Louisville case?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check and find out whether he has been told that or not.

Q And any others?

MR. NESSEN: He knows the Pasadena case was looked at at one time.

Q They already argued that. That is water under the bridge.

MR. NESSEN: And it was decided not to intervene in the Pasadena case.

MORE

#496



Q Ron, could I have a question? Does the President feel that if he had informed the public of a policy directive last November that it would have been inflammatory to some of those people in Boston? Was that a possible reason for not announcing a specific directive to look for a case?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know any particular reason for not announcing it, except it was in a private meeting and a lot of private directives given by the President and --

O But this affects the whole country?

MR. NESSEN: All the President's directives affect the whole country, Helen.

Q Can you tell us whether Mr. Levi will see the President in the morning, in the afternoon or evening?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the schedule for tomorrow at this point.

Q I think major policy directives the country should know about as part of an open Administration.

MR. NESSEN: Then when the policy announcements are told about then they are dismissed as nothing but politics. So, it is hard to win in this campaign, Helen.

O Ron, would you anticipate that if there is a case selected tomorrow and --

MR. NESSEN: Or announced tomorrow, if Levi announces a case.

O Is Levi going to announce tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I don't know exactly why Levi has asked for the appointment. I assume it has something to do with this consideration.

Q If your assumption is right, will it be after that meeting that you, or the President, or Levi or some other spokesman will announce --

MR. NESSEN: I didn't have time to talk to Levi about it this morning so I don't know what the plan is for tomorrow. As I say, I don't know exactly why he is coming in.

Q Were any other policy directives issued at this November 20 meeting?

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of, except on asking Levi and Mathews to come up with some alternative suggestions to busing as a remedy.

Q Who was assigned to be working on the legislative recommendations for a remedy?

MR. NESSEN: I guess the Domestic Council has been working on this.

Q When and under what circumstances do you anticipate they will be announced?

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

Q Are they dependent on the court case?

MR. NESSEN: If there are any legislative recommendations, Mort.

Q Are they dependent on the court case? In other words, are they going to wait until the court decides and then issue the legislative recommendations or are you going to act sooner than that?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Let me look into it and see where it stands.

Q Isn't six months kind of slow for you to be looking for administrative or legislative remedies?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think so. I think the people who have asked to do this have been working on it. They have been back and forth several times. Their ideas have been discussed and are being worked on.

Q Wouldn't coming up with legislative recommendations this late in an election year make busing a national campaign issue?

MR. NESSEN: If there are any recommendations, Mort.

Q Ron, in recent weeks, or months, at one time the President said he thought that Humphrey would be --

MR. NESSEN: Is that the end of the busing thing?

Q Let me ask one question. Has there been a discussion at the White House about the public's perception of this whole dispute coming up at this time and what kind of political kick-back it might have on the President?

You have expressed your feeling. I think the President has his, but has there been any effort to evaluate what the public opinion might be?

MR. NESSEN: There has not, Russ. This is something -- it is not something that started on Monday. It is something that started November 20, 1975 that has been mentioned publicly by Administration spokesmen and so forth.

Now, there has been a tremendous amount of interest in this room since Monday, but that doesn't change the fact that it was something that the Administration has been working on since November.

So, in terms of -- and that is why I respectfully say I think it really is a bum rap to suggest this is something that was dumped out on Monday for its political purpose.

MORE

Q I accept that, but the Levi announcement is coming just before the Kentucky primaries?

MR. NESSEN: Maybe not. He may decide Boston is not the right case. I don't know what he is going to announce, if anything.

Q But Louisville is -- he might decide Louisville is, might he not?

MR. NESSEN: He might very well. I suggest you ask him what he has decided since we don't know.

Q Ron, other than the two obscure court document references from the Solicitor General, Mr. Bork, that were filed in court, can you cite any public announcement by an Administration spokesman, going back for the last six months, that told us the President had decided to try and overturn busing in court?

MR. NESSEN: I don't accept your description of Bork's two appearances in court as obscure. I guess it was sort of like when I was at NBC and we had a rule if it didn't happen on NBC, it didn't happen at all. Just because these announcements didn't happen in the White House Briefing Room, they happened. They were things that happened.

The man made the announcement. Whether this group was there or not didn't stop it from being a fact.

Q Were these filings in a court document?

MR. NESSEN: One was in an oral argument and one was in a brief.

Q The NBC rule still holds, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: I suspected it did.

Q Ron, do you recall whether that oral argument was reported anywhere? Did anybody pick it up, or was it an oral argument in regard to something obscure? I mean, they have a good point here. It sounds as though it was obscure.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. Fred Graham made quite a point of it, I thought, last night on CBS, in which he said the Administration seemed to be right in its efforts to convince people that this was not something dreamed up on Monday, and he cited Bork's testimony. So, Fred Graham of CBS at least knew about those two obscure appearances.

Q Ron, in the President's directive to the Attorney General, is he talking about the Attorney General looking to see whether too much busing was ordered in Boston or whether the Supreme Court's basic busing case, the 1971 Swan case, should be totally reviewed?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to ask Levi. I have no idea on what basis he is making those decisions.

Q Wasn't that the Presidential directive?

MR. NESSEN: I told you what the Presidential directive was.

Q Is it your impression that the President wants the court to review totally its current position on busing as a legitimate tool?

MR. NESSEN: I told you what the directive of Levi was and I think I would like to leave it there. What Levi is considering and weighing his judgment, you need to ask him about the decision.

Q May I ask about the Elliot Richardson corporate bribery study? Whenever you get it, are you going to give it to us? Is it your intention to make it public?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Jim. It is a little premature to make that decision.

Q Is this luncheon substantive discussion on the economy?

MR. NESSEN: I have been to a couple of these meetings he has had with just outside groups and people to discuss things of interest to them and to him, and they are wide-ranging and they do deal with substantive issues.

Q Will anybody from your office be there, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: No, it is a private lunch.

Q May I ask a question now?

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, yes, Cliff.

Q Weeks or months ago the President said he thought the Democratic nomination would go to Humphrey. More recently, he indicated it might go to Jimmy Carter.

Following the two primaries this week, has he offered any thought?

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

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:25 P.M. EDT)

#496



Wednesday

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 19, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

THE SOUTH GROUNDS

2:51 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Obviously, it is a great pleasure to have a chance to talk with you on this Wednesday. I say this very emphatically, I don't think Betty and I had a more enjoyable evening than last evening since we have been in the White House. It is wonderful, of course, to get good results in any political campaign, but when you get such an overwhelming and unbelievable vote in your own area -- and I mean in this case the old Congressional district that I had the honor of representing, I think it went 85 percent -- and then, of course, added to the excellent endorsement in the State of Michigan as a whole, plus the very fine vote in Maryland, the whole evening was really a very enjoyable one.

I do want to thank the many, many thousands of people in Michigan who I know made an extra effort, from Governor Milliken on down. There was a total unanimity of determination and spirit and cooperation and we had, likewise, the same effort in the State of Maryland.

So, yesterday was a great day and I think it has restored the momentum that is needed for the remaining 12 primaries and the various convention States, conventions that will be held between now and the Convention in Kansas City.

The momentum has started, we are going to work at keeping it going, and we are optimistic for a good victory in Kansas City.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, how many of the six primary States do you think you will win?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't made any analysis as to the six as a whole, or individually. Our best judgment is we will come out reasonably well when you total the six up altogether.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you are expecting to win in Kansas City, but how do you expect to do in California?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are going out to California, as you know, this week. We think we have a fighting chance in the State of California. We are going to make a big effort there.

I can't tell you just how we stand. We have some surveys being carried out at the present time. Those surveys will be very helpful in where we go and what we do.

On the other hand, the approach that we used in Michigan and the one we used in Tennessee and Kentucky of peace and growing prosperity and trust will undoubtedly be the thrust that we will use during the rest of our campaign.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Mayor Wilson from San Diego says, as far as he knows, you only will campaign for about two full days in California. With that being done in Reagan's own State, a big State, how do you expect to win in a State like that with campaigning only two days?

THE PRESIDENT: We will make another judgment after this trip, but we do have to live within the expenditures of the law and we are going to be very, very certain that that is done, and any further plans after this weekend will have to be coordinated with the availability of funds that are permitted under the law. So, plus the trip, plus the analysis of our funding, we will make some decisions later on.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you reserving the right to review any decision by Mr. Levi on the busing question?

THE PRESIDENT: It is contemplated that some time this week the Attorney General will come in and see me and undoubtedly tell me what his decision is. I think that is a very appropriate thing for him to do and a proper role for me to have, but he will make the decision.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how do you respond to some critics who read into your concern about a review of busing as an effort to play for votes in Kentucky where busing is a major issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the fact that these news stories broke over the past weekend and no decision having been made, and the controversy of busing in Detroit, is an indication that we in the Administration made a major effort to not interject busing into the primary situation. We didn't do any talking about what the Attorney General has been studying and what the Secretary of HEW has been working on.

This came from other sources than ourselves and we were disturbed that the stories did come out. We hope that we can keep this kind of matter away from the emotional involvement of this problem and the primary elections.

We certainly had no part of that, none whatsoever.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you encouraged by the progress that your Administration is making in the search that you ordered last fall for alternative ways to achieve desegregation without forced busing? Are you optimistic? Are you encouraged that you will have found a solution?

THE PRESIDENT: I have had two of the outstanding members of my Cabinet working with others, trying to find any new approach or a combination of several new approaches, and I am encouraged with their progress to date because I think it is a matter we have to settle and settle in a constructive way, and between the Attorney General, Mr. Levi, and the Secretary of HEW, I believe that we may have some ways in which we can achieve the results without the tragedies that have occurred in some of our major metropolitan areas.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us something about your discussions with Mrs. Golda Meir today?

THE PRESIDENT: We just discussed the current situation in the Middle East, which is, of course, a very excellent opportunity for me to get the benefit of one of our era's outstanding stateswomen. It was just a discussion bringing me up to date. She brought some messages to me from the Prime Minister and we discussed related matters concerning the Middle East as a whole.

QUESTION: Mr. President, concerning the great strength both you and Governor Reagan have shown in gathering delegates thus far, do you think it is still possible for either of you to get a first ballot nomination and avoid a floor fight?

THE PRESIDENT: We are optimistic that we can get a first ballot victory in Kansas City.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can I ask you a question that you were a little reluctant to answer in Michigan, prior to the vote? I think we asked you, could your campaign survive with a defeat in Michigan? I wonder if you could tell us your thoughts prior to the vote in Michigan? Do you think you could have survived a defeat in Michigan?

THE PRESIDENT: Wally, I repeatedly told you and anybody else who asked that question that we didn't contemplate a loss in Michigan. I had good reason to feel we would win, and when you have that feeling why worry about the thing that is not going to happen? Why don't you plan on what you will do when the good things happen? And that is what happened.

QUESTION: You had that feeling all along?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, of course.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 2:59 P.M. EDT)

May 20, 1976

Thursday

INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT
BY
REPRESENTATIVES FROM KENTUCKY NEWSPAPERS,
AND TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS

THE STATE DINING ROOM

10:49 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Let me reiterate what I think I said to most of you, or all of you, that we welcome you in the White House and the State Dining Room. It was a pleasure to meet each of you individually.

I had hoped that I could have gotten down to Kentucky on more occasions than I have, but I think you recognize and I hope the people in Kentucky recognize that the job of being President is a pretty full-time operation so we have had to moderate our visits. We have had to try and coordinate the job of being President and the campaign effort so that I get both jobs done.

I am delighted to see all of you from the news media of Kentucky and I look forward and welcome the opportunity to respond to your questions. So, why don't we just get started.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Mr. President, there are reports in Kentucky that you have written off the State as a loss in next Tuesday's primary. May I ask why, and how do you feel about this next primary?

THE PRESIDENT: Those rumors are totally unfounded. After talking with Congressman Tim Lee Carter and Ambassador John Sherman Cooper and others who are helping in my campaign, I am convinced that it is going to be a very close contest, and we think we have a good fighting chance to prevail. So those rumors, I think, are spread by others and not by any of my people.

So, we are going to make as big an effort as we possibly can, including the responsibilities of running the Oval Office and being President.



QUESTION: Mr. President, there is a report today that one of your key strategists said you will be lucky if you win two of the six primaries on Tuesday. Do you share his pessimism?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. I have already discussed that with some of the people who told me that one of my strategists said we would win maybe two out of the six. I am an optimist. I think the momentum that we gained from the overwhelming victory in Michigan and the good victory that we had in Maryland will have a beneficial impact in the six States that are holding primaries on next Tuesday.

You know, the nice thing about the Michigan victory was in my old Congressional District I got 85 percent of the votes. What does that mean? It means that the people who know you best, who I have worked with and worked for for 20-some years in the Congress really went out there and wanted to show that they fully support me, whether they were Democrats, independents or Republicans. So, I am a bit more optimistic than some of my aides are.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Tell us about your concern on inflation, Mr. President, and how you view what is going on in the economy and what the prospects are in the next few months.

THE PRESIDENT: On August 8, 1974, when I was sworn-in as President, the rate of inflation was over 12 percent a year. I decided then this was one of the major problems I had to face up to, that I had to overcome. So, our economic policies were aimed at reducing it as rapidly as possible without increasing the unemployment figures beyond a reasonable limit.

So everything we have done -- vetoing 49 bills sent to me by the Congress, 42 of them being sustained, and in the process saving the taxpayer \$13 billion, and other things I have done internally -- the net result is that we, for the first three months of this year -- the rate of inflation on an annual basis is slightly under 3 percent. So, we have gone from 12 percent when I became President to slightly under 3 percent for 1976, so far.

What does this mean? It means that we have made a 75 percent reduction in the rate of inflation in the 21 months that I have been President and we are going to keep the pressure on, and if Congress sends down any more of those budget-busting bills, as they have in the past, which are really at the root of inflation, I will veto them again and again and again, because the American people, whether they are working or whether they are unemployed -- inflation is the most serious problem we face.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, last year you vetoed the tobacco price support bill that some people say doomed the chances of the Republican -- doomed the rural candidate in the election.

If there is an effort to increase the tobacco support prices again in the next Congress, will you again veto the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: At the time I vetoed that bill I looked at the price of tobacco and, if my memory is correct, in 1974 tobacco prices were at an all-time high, or near that level. The same was true in 1975. The tobacco price support level is still at a reasonably high level. If it had gone any higher, all of my advisers convinced me that we would have priced American tobacco out of the international market, and the international market for American tobacco is about a billion dollars a year.

So, I had to take the action because we want to preserve that international market, which brings in about a billion dollars a year. I am told that prices in 1976 are holding up reasonably well.

At the same time we preserved the international market, we haven't priced tobacco out of the domestic market, so on balance I am convinced what I did was right and I would be very, very hesitant to sign any bill that would destroy international or domestic markets in the future.

QUESTION: Have you hurt your political chances in Kentucky?

THE PRESIDENT: I am told a good many of the tobacco producers or farmers have heard a good many of the points I have made and are supportive of the fact they want international markets, they want domestic markets, they don't want to be priced out of the markets for their product and, therefore, even some of the producers -- how many I can't judge -- are supportive of what I did.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there is an element of skepticism about your initiative on the busing issue. Why are you doing this now, and will you continue busing? If so, how would that affect a city like Louisville?

THE PRESIDENT: First, let me say this: I have vigorously opposed court-ordered forced busing to achieve racial balance from the very beginning, and that goes back to about 1964 and 1965. I have a consistent record that court-ordered forced busing is not the way to achieve racial balance.

Last November, I got the Attorney General and the Secretary of HEW, David Mathews, together, and I said we have to find a better answer, a better remedy to quality education, because court-ordered forced busing is not the answer.

So, as far back as November I have been working with those two Cabinet offices and they have met with me, submitted option papers to me over that period of time.

Several months ago, the Attorney General told me that he and his Solicitor, Mr. Robert Bork, were looking for a case where the Federal Government might intervene. I didn't decide which case and I am not sure which case today that they might intervene, in order to try and get the court to take a slightly different viewpoint or a viewpoint that is different from the court decisions up to date.

I am for desegregation, but I am totally opposed to court-ordered forced busing.

Now, the White House didn't release any of this information that has come to the news media over the last three or four days. If I had wanted to, for political purposes, I could have gotten the Attorney General, perhaps before the Massachusetts primary, to intervene, or he might have decided to intervene prior to the Michigan primary.



As of now, he hasn't told me whether he will or he won't. He might do so in Louisville, I don't know. That is a decision that I left to the Attorney General to make and I just want to be informed if and when he does,

QUESTION: Is your Administration going to offer an alternative to busing or is he just asking the court to back away from what they have done?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there are two answers to that. One, there is a possibility that the Attorney General may intervene in one of the court cases that are now in the Federal courts. That is one possibility.

Number two, as I indicated, I have asked the Attorney General and the Secretary of HEW to find some other alternatives that would be far preferable to court-ordered forced busing.

QUESTION: Have they commented?

THE PRESIDENT: And they have submitted to me three alternatives that I will pass judgment on, probably within the next few weeks. They appear to be constructive and I hope would be effective.

QUESTION: Can you tell us what they are?

THE PRESIDENT: I would rather wait until I have made the final decision, but we are in the process right now.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what type of profile are you going to maintain for the upcoming primaries? Are you going to let your office speak or are you going to deal with the issues as your opponents bring them back to you in the coming weeks?

THE PRESIDENT: In the Michigan primary and the other primaries in the latter part of this campaign, I have made the following my theme and I believe it is the right theme: The maintenance of peace that we achieved; number two, increased prosperity, which the Ford Administration can take credit for; and three, the restoration of confidence and trust of the American people in the White House -- peace, prosperity and trust. That is the thrust of my campaign in the future and it has been in Michigan and some of the more recent primaries.

QUESTION: Will you, when the Attorney General intervenes in the Boston case, as is reported, offer to the Supreme Court a definite alternate plan to busing?

THE PRESIDENT: It is not yet decided by the Attorney General; at least, he has not told me what his decision is going to be. I can't tell you until I meet with him, and I am meeting with him tomorrow. It is on my schedule. At that time I will get his recommendation as to the action he intends to take. But, until I meet with him tomorrow, which is Friday, it certainly is premature for me to make any comments.

QUESTION: You can't say whether you will submit an alternative plan?

THE PRESIDENT: He will submit it to me tomorrow, I assume, because he asked to see me at that time.

QUESTION: Mr. President, as you know, there has been a vacancy on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board for over a year now. Since this is of some interest to Kentucky, can you tell us, is it true you are considering Thomas Longshore for this position and, if not, who and when will you name someone?

THE PRESIDENT: We have several very good potential nominees. There has been no final decision. Mr. Longshore is one among several that is being actively considered.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can the U.S. Postal Service be made to operate in the black without curtailing further services, or will it have to be subsidized by the Federal Government?

THE PRESIDENT: We now subsidize, and have for the last four or five years, the Post Office Department to the extent of about \$900 million a year in what is a so-called public service contribution by the Federal Government. The Office of Management and Budget, OMB, is working with the Congress trying to find an answer as to what the future in the Postal Service will be.

I think there is a possibility that the Congress and the President will agree on a comprehensive study as to whether it needs more contributions from the Federal Treasury, whether the need is for higher rates, or whether the problem is a curtailment of services. That study, we hope, will be undertaken and concluded in a reasonably prompt period of time.



This, I think, is the best way to approach a very serious matter and I hope this compromise with the Congress can be agreed to in the near future,

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ambassador John Sherman Cooper this week announced in Somerset, Kentucky, that he would resign in October. Have you thought about a successor, and will you assess Senator Cooper's service?

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Cooper, of course, has been one of my close and very dear friends for a number of years. I thought he was an outstanding Senator, he did a superb job in India, he is doing a tremendously effective job in East Germany at the present time. I would hope he wouldn't resign because he is one of those very outstanding people. But, since I hope he doesn't resign, I haven't thought about his successor.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is it true that your Administration has been active in supporting demonstration programs that had led advancements in coal conversion plants at the same time you have supported legislation that would lead to loan guarantees for constructing commercial coal gasification plants? Is this policy to continue and, if so, what are the chances it will be accelerated?

THE PRESIDENT: We have been working with the Congress trying to get a \$6 billion program that would be helpful in the risky commercial undertakings. The Congress thus far hasn't responded to my request and the program that I recommended, but we are going to continue to try and I hope the Congress will come up with this \$6 billion program.

In addition, we are recommending, as I am sure you know, the \$100 billion Energy Independence Authority. If we get both of them, then we can really move in a massive way in getting commercial production of these gasification plants and various other energy producing facilities. If the Congress will respond and cooperate with us, I am optimistic.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a Kentucky farmer told me the other day he thought Secretary Butz was the best Agriculture Secretary we have ever had, but he is concerned about the grain embargo and he said a lot of Kentucky farmers have become despondent about this action by the Administration. Can you explain the rationale for that?

THE PRESIDENT: I agree with your farmer friend. Earl Butz is certainly one of the best Secretaries of Agriculture this country has ever had. As I think you probably know, I appointed Secretary Butz about two months ago to head up a Cabinet level Agricultural Policy Committee. I am meeting with them tomorrow on a number of matters, including our policy as to exports and related matters for the forthcoming year.

We imposed the 2-1/2-month embargo because that was a way for us to insure that the farmers of America would have an assured export market with the Soviet Union over a long period of time, and in that embargo period we negotiated a 6 million-ton guarantee of wheat and grain for the next five years. This assured minimum purchase by the Soviet Union is a good insurance policy, a good guarantee that as farmers produce more corn and wheat and soybeans that there will be this very good market in the Soviet Union. And if the Soviet Union wants to buy more than the 6 million, of course that is an option they can exercise.

But we have a guaranteed market so the 2-1/2-month embargo was a real benefit to the American farmer over a five-year period, and 6 million tons per year guaranteed is the best insurance I know for the future well-being of our grain producers in this country.



QUESTION: Mr. President, some Kentucky municipalities are now drawing up their budgets for the coming year and despondent over the absence of any revenue sharing funds. Will you enlighten us as to what your Administration is doing about this?

THE PRESIDENT: A year ago I recommended that Congress extend the present revenue sharing program for five and three-quarter years. I am very upset that the Congress has not extended the general revenue sharing program. Congress has been negligent in sitting on its hands and doing nothing in this area. It hasn't come to the floor of the House yet.

We finally got some committee action, but if general revenue sharing is not passed, every state and 39,000 municipalities over the country will be in very serious circumstances because they will lose about \$6.5 billion a year, including the year beginning January 1.

Now, if States and 39,000 municipalities throughout the country don't have the money from general revenue sharing, the blame falls right on the Congress because we have pressured the Congress, we have tried to persuade the Congress. This Administration recognizes that it is a good policy to give money to States and local units of Government so that local people, elected people as well as the public, generally can make better decisions on how that money will be spent rather than some bureaucrat making the decisions here in Washington, D.C.

I might say in passing that my opponent in his so-called \$90 billion reduction in Federal expenditures is opposed to general revenue sharing. If that were done, if that policy of my opponent were pursued, it would mean that local communities and States would either have to increase taxes on the one hand or reduce services on the other.

Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if Congress sends you a bill guaranteeing black lung benefits to miners with 25 or 30 years experience, will you sign it?



THE PRESIDENT: When I was in the Congress I supported the original black lung legislation. I think it has been proven to be a good piece of legislation. I know there has been a backlog that has disturbed a good many people who feel that they should have gotten quicker decisions. The House passed a new version. The Senate has not acted. I don't like to make a commitment prior to the legislation getting down to the White House, but I do want to re-emphasize that I supported the original legislation about five years ago.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the idea of guaranteed benefits to miners?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a matter that I have to study when the precise language comes down to see me. There is controversy in some areas, but for me to make a premature decision in this area I think would be a mistake at this time. I reiterate my original support for the basic legislation.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, there was a convention held recently in Kentucky of Federal coal mine safety inspectors. Those Federal inspectors said they were prevented from doing their job. In some cases the mine owners would not permit them on the property. In other cases they were physically and verbally abused.

Are you planning any steps to protect Federal coal mine safety inspectors and do you have any plans to restrict mining safety legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: The matter that you mention has not been called to my attention. I will find out the facts as soon as we get an opportunity today. If coal operators did unlawfully prevent mine inspectors from going to a mine to inspect it as to safety conditions, certainly the appropriate authority should take action.

But, I don't want to prejudge it until I have had an opportunity to get the facts as the Department of Labor can give me.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Mr. President, the energy needs have had a peculiar effect upon northern Kentucky's shore line of the Ohio River down to Louisville in that there has been a proliferation of power plants, nuclear and coal burning. I believe in the coal mining sectors such as Cincinnati and Louisville there are not any developed, under construction or planned.

Many of these have been opposed bitterly by local citizens, but that has not had an effect on the option of whether or not the power plant has been built, planned, et cetera. In one case at least a power plant was constructed without the appropriate Federal permits and statements.

Do you feel there is enough input from the Federal Government to agencies like the Corps of Engineers, EPA, and do you feel there is enough chance for local citizens to have input into whether or not there should be a power plant built locally through the public hearings?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly in the case of a nuclear plant, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has full control and jurisdiction, and any initiation of construction premature to the approval by the NRC ought to be stopped. This is a responsibility of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In the EPA there is a procedure where those who object have an opportunity to make their views known, whether they are local citizens or whether they are local authorities or whether they are the proponent. There is an established procedure for EPA and those procedures must be followed regardless of whether you are for or against a particular plant. The same would hold true with the Army Corps of Engineers.

If there is a bypassing of any proper procedure, it certainly would present the opportunity for the opponents to take the matter to the courts because the law stipulates or sets out the procedures, the steps that must be taken.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Mr. President, some are saying that you will have an uphill struggle in the rest of the primaries and there are polls showing you may lose to Jimmy Carter in the November election. What is it about your performance in office or your Administration's policies that make you the underdog?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is anything wrong with our policies. When you look at how we have turned the economy around, we have added 3,300,000 gainfully employed, more jobs in the last 12 months. We have been very successful in attacking the problems of inflation. We have achieved the peace in the last year. We have maintained the peace and because of our military capabilities and our diplomatic skills, we are going to keep the peace for the next four years and certainly we have restored confidence and trust in the White House in the last 21 months. So, our policies are sound and are successful.

We have won a good share of the primaries so far. We have lost some. I think we will do well in the primaries coming up across the board. So, when I look at where we were-- and some people in January said we were going to lose in New Hampshire, we were going to lose Florida--that didn't happen. I think we are going to Kansas City, and we are going to win, and I think we will win in November.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Kentucky has its first Presidential primary Tuesday. There are some reports of voter apathy in Kentucky. Have you heard of this? Have you gotten any reports from your organization?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope there is no voter apathy in Kentucky because the selection of a nominee of a political party is a very important decision. In many ways it is almost as important as the final election in November so I hope that there will be a massive turnout of voters in Kentucky so that the decision as to the nominee will be the vote of a good cross-section of the voters in Kentucky.

That is what happened in Michigan. In the Michigan primary I got 672,000 votes. I got more votes than all the Democratic candidates put together. That is the first time that has happened in the State of Michigan. We got a massive turnout in Michigan, and the net result was I did very well. I hope that takes place in Kentucky.

QUESTION: Mr. President, it has been announced recently that the National Park Service is in the final review stages of the implementation of a master plan for Mammoth Cave National Park, which will eventually close the park to easy access except for those going in on buses controlled by the Park Service.

Now, this plan was opposed by the Governor of the State, opposed by the vast majority of people who attended the hearings, it was opposed by Congressmen, and yet the National Park Service is proceeding inexorably with the same program.

The people in south central Kentucky feel helpless. What can they do, and what can you do, if anything, to aid the people in their reaction to this sort of bureaucratic action against them?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not familiar with the details of that particular hearing or process or procedure. The Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Kleppe, is a very able person. I can assure you and those that you are speaking for that I will find out what the facts are, and I will consult with Secretary Kleppe and we will try to get an answer so that there is first a fair and proper hearing and a good decision made.

Mr. Kleppe, I am sure, will take into consideration the circumstances that you have described.

QUESTION: Mr. President, yesterday Congressman Morris Udall said the worst thing you have done in his opinion since pardoning President Nixon was to continue to delay the release of the Federal matching funds. Why won't you go on and do that?

THE PRESIDENT: In the first place, Mr. Udall, who is a Member of Congress, should have been pressuring the Congress when they delayed better than 90 days acting on the necessary legislation. If he had used his influence to set the leadership in the Congress to get the legislation down to me, we wouldn't have had a 90-plus day delay.

So, I take Mr. Udall's criticism with a grain of salt, so to speak. I have submitted six names for the Commission. The Senate has approved five of them. We ought to have a full Commission, not five-sixths of a Commission. So, if the Senate will act on former Congressman Springer's nomination, we could swear in all six of them tomorrow. They are holding it up because I want a full Commission, not five-sixths of a Commission.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Mr. President, what preparation did you make in backgrounding yourself for this session, and what did your advisers indicate were important issues in Kentucky?

THE PRESIDENT: I had a briefing book about that thick. (Laughter) I looked it over. Of course, many of the issues were national in character -- the inflation, the economy, the international affairs and so forth. But they did give me some information concerning local matters, the black lung problem. They did give me information on some of the other more local problems and issues, and I spent several hours trying to familiarize myself with both national as well as local problems.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there is a great deal of concern generally, specifically in Louisville, about nuclear power plants. One is to be built about 30 miles upstream from Louisville on the Ohio River. Are you satisfied that there is no danger from nuclear power plants, and if not, what do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has the responsibility to decide whether to approve or disapprove a nuclear power plant application. It is a very expert commission. If they indicate that a particular design in a particular place is appropriate from safety and from construction and from operation, I am going to rely on their judgment.

Now, the actual safety record of nuclear power is a very excellent one. It is probably as good, if not better than, coal power plants or oil power plants. So, the safety record in the past is an excellent one. But, I am not going to pass judgment on any individual particular plant, nuclear in character. I am a believer in nuclear power, and I think it is important for this country to develop better, safer, more economical nuclear power. For that reason, I recommended a substantial increase in research and development in my budget for fiscal year 1977.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Your good friend and our good friend, our great Senator and Ambassador Cooper is here.

THE PRESIDENT: It is nice to see you here, John Sherman. As I said earlier, he has been one of my very best friends over the years that we served together in the Congress, and I appreciate the fine job he did as Ambassador to India and the superior job he is doing as Ambassador in East Germany. It is nice to see you, John.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, two reactions from the black people in my community. My black cook yesterday told me to go to Washington because she was going to vote for you because she was tired of working as an old woman and was tired of seeing people getting the giveaway programs she thought you were against.

But, a young black woman who works in my newspaper office tells me the \$15 a month project she had, where she paid for her child in the daycare center, has ended and she is now going to have to pay \$15 a week. Therefore, she wanted to know about the daycare chances.

What are you going to do with the daycare program?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that a daycare center program is important, particularly for working mothers. It has permitted mothers who have a job to put their children in the proper facilities with proper supervision.

The problem that arose that your friend brought up is that Congress on a national basis established certain rigid guidelines imposing those guidelines on every State and every community as to the number of teachers or individuals who were with children.

I think a State, rather than the Federal Government, ought to make that kind of a decision. I don't think you have to have rigid Federal control over the number of people that are working with children in daycare centers around the country. I think the State of Kentucky, I believe the State of Michigan, can act responsibly. So, the conflict is between Congress that wants to impose the heavy hand of the Federal Government on daycare centers, which I oppose, or the alternative, which I believe in, that the State of Kentucky can do it as well, if not far, far better, than some bureaucrat in Washington, D.C.

Somebody who hasn't asked one yet.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you ever foresee this country having a balanced budget, and is it ever realistic?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely, and the budget that I submitted in January of this year, where I cut the rate of growth in Federal spending by 50 percent and where I recommended that the Congress give to the American people on July 1 another \$10 billion tax reduction and said to the Congress, if you support me in cutting the rate of growth of Federal spending by 50 percent and give to the American people the kind of tax reduction I have recommended, including increasing the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 per person, that by 1979 we will have a balanced budget and that the American taxpayer will have more opportunity to spend more of his own money and the Federal Government will have relatively less to spend.

I am convinced that the budget I submitted will give us a balanced budget and, at the same time, give tax relief to the American people.

QUESTION: Sir, Kentucky is an ERA State, but it is still a very emotional issue and a special legislation session may put it back on the agenda. Reagan and Carter both do not support the ERA. Do you?

THE PRESIDENT: When I was in the Congress I voted for the Constitutional amendment which is now before the respective States. It is my understanding that when my Republican opponent was Governor of his State he signed legislation which in effect gave equal rights to women in his State.

QUESTION: He changed his mind, he said.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the prerogative of any individual, but I think it is a matter of record that he did sign that legislation. I believe in it. How can a person say that a woman ought not to have equal rights? Just like I think we have to in the case of other segments of our society, minorities ought to have their rights protected. If you believe in the concept, I don't think you can do it in one case and not do it in the other.

Yes.



QUESTION: Mr. President, if Mr. Kissinger quits, as he says he will, have you thought about his successor?

THE PRESIDENT: I repeated many times that I think our foreign policy has been successful. We achieved the peace, we have maintained it, and we have the military capability and the diplomatic skill to keep the peace in the future. If a man does a good job -- and I think Secretary Kissinger has done a good job -- I think it is unwise to say you are going to fire him.

I have always adopted the policy involving my Cabinet, when a person does a good job I want him on the team. So, as far as I am concerned, Secretary Kissinger can be on that team for a long, long time.

Somebody who hasn't asked one. Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, getting back to busing for a second, you say you have three alternatives on your desk. Can you tell us, would they ask to end busing? As a tool for desegregation, would they modify busing?

THE PRESIDENT: I feel that it is premature for me to make any decision here because these are long thought about, well structured proposals and, when the decision is made we will announce them, but it is just premature for me to make any comment today.

I reiterate, however, I have consistently opposed court-ordered forced busing as the way to achieve quality education. There is a better remedy and I hope that the court itself will recognize that some of the decisions they have made at the local level have been unwise. They haven't achieved quality education on the one hand and they have torn up the fabric of the community on the other.

So, possibly the court will find a better way to end segregation and, at the same time, protect the constitutional rights of individuals, but, more importantly, give to the young people of this country an opportunity for a quality education.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the past 13 months over 20,000 people have been killed in Lebanon. It is a concern in Kentucky as I guess it is to everybody in the world. Do you ever foresee a time when the United States will have to intervene in a way more than it has so far?

THE PRESIDENT: First, I can say that the United States in a very proper way has been trying to help the various elements in Lebanon to end their feuding, end their fighting. I sent, personally, Ambassador Dean Brown over and he was there about a month working with the various forces.

We have made some progress. We are continuing to make progress there. I see no prospect at all for the United States to intervene militarily. There is a better way for us to make a contribution.

We are working with the elements in Lebanon. We are working with the surrounding states. We are working with other nations in order to try and end the fighting through a cease-fire, establish a central government. We will continue to contribute in that way. But I foresee no U.S. military involvement.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: One more.

QUESTION: Do you believe that they can solve the problem themselves? 400 or 500 people were killed this week.

THE PRESIDENT: I think they can. It is a tragedy and we are maximizing our effort and I think we have made some progress. But, we have to get the cooperation of people within Lebanon, the Christians, the Muslims, the various other political leaders, as well as the cooperation of Syria, the cooperation of Israel, the cooperation of other countries.

We are working on it and I am spending a lot of time personally on it.

One more and then we will go.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in Lexington, the Army has announced it is eliminating 2,600 jobs at the Blue Grass Army Depot. These are being transferred to other Army installations around the country in the interest of saving money. Even though the Army has admitted that the Lexington operation is by far and away the most efficiently operated facility in the country, how can this be justified?

THE PRESIDENT: The decisions that were announced several months ago involving the Army, Navy and Air Force are tentative decisions, and the Department of Defense in the interim is conducting economic impact statements, is reviewing in depth with local people -- and the point you make will, of course, be considered in any final decision that is made. There will be ample opportunity for local people, as well as others, to have an input in the final decision to be made by the Department of Defense.

QUESTION: This was announced in the fall of 1974 and it has been tied up in court ever since.

THE PRESIDENT: That, of course, is a different situation from the ones that were announced several months ago. I will take a look at it, but this is a decision that has to be made, of course, by the Defense Department in the final analysis.

On that point, let me just present the overall. Two months ago, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines all made some tentative decisions to close a number of bases or to modify them, including one in Michigan, a SAC base in the Northern Peninsula in a county where there is about 20 percent unemployment, and this would involve 3,000 or 4,000 civilian employees. So I can assure you it wasn't a decision made on any preferential basis.

But, here it is a practical problem. Five years ago the Department of Defense had 3,500,000 people on active duty. Today, we have 2,100,000. We have reduced the size of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines, by 1,400,000. The war in Vietnam ended. The military today has 1,400,000 less people on active duty.

Number two, the Congress last year cut my defense budget by \$7 billion. Over the last 10 years, the Congress has reduced the defense budget by \$50 billion. So, we have fewer people. We have \$50 billion less money, including \$7 billion less money last year.



Now, I don't think the American people want us as a whole -- and I am not relating to any individual installation or base -- to have an inefficient, uneconomical Department of Defense. You can't have the same number of bases and have 1,400,000 less people. You can't have the same number of bases and have \$7 billion taken out of your defense budget. Somebody has to give. And I am not relating it to the installation you are talking about. I am just talking about the general problem.

QUESTION: You say you will look into the situation?

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly will.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very, very much. It is a privilege and a pleasure to be here with you all.

END (AT 11:33 A.M. EDT)