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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 16, 1976

RECOMMENDED TELEPHONE CALL

*7/16/76
4:30 P.M.*

TO: Attorney General Levi.

DATE: Immediately.

RECOMMENDED BY: Dick Cheney, Jim Connor, Jim Cavanaugh.

PURPOSE: To respond to Attorney General Levi's report on the California bus disappearance.

BACKGROUND: Dick Cheney has briefed you on the 26 school children and bus driver who have disappeared in California. Earlier today Ron Nessen described you as "quite concerned" for the safety of the 26 children and indicated that you had asked the FBI for a written report on the situation and that you be kept personally informed.

A copy of Attorney General Levi's memo transmitting the first FBI report is at Tab A for your review.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Ed, I've just reviewed the FBI report on the missing children in California.
2. I want this matter to receive the highest priority consideration, and I want the Department and Bureau to take every possible action to assure the earliest possible resolution of this case.
3. Any resources you need throughout the federal government will be made available to you.
4. I want to be kept informed of any significant developments. I'm going to Baltimore this evening, so let Jim Cavanaugh know if there are any developments.



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

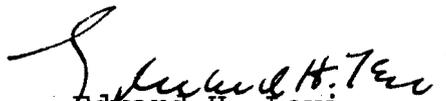
July 16, 1976

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

There is attached a memorandum prepared by the Federal Bureau of Investigation setting forth details as known to date regarding the disappearance of the school bus occupied by 26 children and the bus driver from the Dairyland Union School District, Chowchilla, Madera County, California, July 15, 1976.

Respectfully,


Edward H. Levi
Attorney General

Enclosure



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20535

July 16, 1976

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
 MISSING SCHOOL BUS
 OCCUPIED BY 26 STUDENTS
 AND DRIVER
 DAIRYLAND UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
 CHOWCHILLA, MADERA COUNTY,
 CALIFORNIA
 JULY 15, 1976

At approximately 3:30 p.m., Pacific Daylight Time (PDT), on July 15, 1976, a school bus departed the Dairyland School in Chowchilla, Madera County, California, at the conclusion of summer school activities. This bus was occupied by 29 students ranging from Kindergarten to the Eighth Grade and the driver, a long time employee of the school system.

Between 4:30 p.m., PDT, and 5:00 p.m., PDT, the school and local law enforcement agencies began receiving telephone calls from parents concerned that their children had not arrived home. The Madera County Sheriff's Office instituted an investigation and determined that three children who had departed the school on the bus had been dropped off at their homes, the last one at approximately 4:10 p.m., PDT. At approximately 7:15 p.m., PDT, the Sheriff's Office's airplane spotted the missing school bus in a dry canal near the town. The bus was not visible from the nearby roadway and had been covered by brush in an apparent effort to conceal its location. The bus was empty and had been driven into the area without any apparent damage. Two sets of tire tracks were visible over the bus tracks. There has been no contact with the bus driver or any of the children since the last child was dropped off.

Since an abduction is apparent, the FBI has instituted an investigation to determine if a Federal Kidnaping violation has occurred. Assistant Director Robert E. Gebhardt has been designated to take charge of the investigation at the scene and there are currently eight Agents on the scene. Twenty-six Agents from neighboring offices, three Identification and Laboratory personnel and two dog handlers and their animals are en route. Other necessary personnel have

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS; MISSING SCHOOL BUS

been placed in an alert status to report immediately in the event they are needed. Terrain search, detailed neighborhood investigation, aerial survey, and alerting of surrounding local authorities are all underway.

This investigation is being afforded priority consideration and every possible action is being undertaken to insure the earliest possible resolution to this case.