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NEWS CONFERENCE

#498

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 11:43 A.M. EDT

MAY 27, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: As you probably know by now, the President will sign the peaceful nuclear explosion agreement tomorrow at 10:00. At the moment, the ceremony is planned for the East Room, although that may move, depending on the size of the group that will attend. There will be some guests invited.

There will be a simultaneous ceremony in Moscow. President Ford will sign for the United States and General Secretary Brezhnev will sign for the Soviet Union. Ambassador Stoessel will attend the ceremonies in Moscow, participating as an observer, and Ambassador Dobrynin will participate here in Washington as an observer.

We expect to have a text of the treaty, which runs about 20 to 30 pages, later this afternoon and fact sheets later this afternoon, and then tomorrow morning at 8:30 in the morning, in Room 450 of the EOB, there will be a briefing on the treaty.

The chief briefer will be the President's Deputy NSC Director, Bill Hyland, and he will be assisted there by some of the technical experts from the Defense Department and the State Department and the Energy Research and Development Administration. That is 8:30 tomorrow in Room 450 of the EOB.

We are just now making the arrangements for that, and we will have more details for you later. But, that basically is what the plan for tomorrow is.

Q Ron, excuse me one minute. Just to back-track for one minute, on the documents that you said would be made available this afternoon, that presumably is all embargoed, is that right?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct. The paper that we put out today is embargoed for 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Q But it can move on the wires?

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MR. NESSEN: With an embargo on it, yes.

We have had a couple of questions this morning about what kind of coverage is allowed at this ceremony and so forth. As far as I am concerned, you are free to give whatever coverage you want in terms of live broadcast, if there is any interest in that at all. Somebody asked about satellite, ABC somehow, so there is no problem as far as we are concerned.

Q How about the briefing?

MR. NESSEN: No, the briefing will be only for writers because it is likely to be very technical and probably not worthwhile to set cameras up in there.

Q Where is the ceremony going to be?

MR. NESSEN: Bob, at the moment it is for the East Room, but that depends somewhat on the size of the crowd that is coming. It could be moved to the State Dining Room or another room in the Residence.

Q Ron, will the President and Mr. Brezhnev exchange any remarks by satellite?

MR. NESSEN: That is not planned at the moment. The President will have remarks on the signing, but I don't know of any plans to talk back and forth at the ceremony.

Q Who is being invited?

MR. NESSEN: Members of Congress, members of the Executive Branch and people who over the years have been involved in the arms control negotiations.

Q What I want to know, first, when are we going to get the text and fact sheets, and secondly, where will it be held if it isn't held in the East Room?

MR. NESSEN: It could be the State Dining Room, the Blue Room, and so forth, depending on how many people attend.

The fact sheet and the copy of the treaty, we are looking for late this afternoon.

Q How and when was it decided it would be tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. It was mutually agreed with the Soviets, but I don't know what the exact exchanges were, within the past couple of days.

Let me make sure I don't have any other announcements to make.

Q Ron, did you have an opportunity today to ask the President about that statement he made yesterday evening on Brown versus the Board of Education?

MR. NESSEN: I did, Phil, and I think it would be fair to say the President's reference to the Brown case -- I think the exact reference had to do with the Justice Department entering as a friend of the court, a proceeding before the Supreme Court, to see if the court would review its decision in the Brown case. That really was an incorrect reference.

The President, I think you know, repeatedly in the news conference last night and over the years, really, has repeatedly and firmly stated that he supports the Brown decision. Last night specifically and repeatedly he said he is opposed to segregation and he intends to uphold constitutional rights.

Q Could you slow down a little just so that we can get this?

MR. NESSEN: Basically, the reference to the Brown case was not correct. Over the years the President has consistently and firmly stated that he supports the Brown decision and in the news conference itself last night a number of times he said that he is opposed to segregation in schools and intends to uphold constitutional rights in school cases.

What he was referring to, Phil, in that remark was some of the more recent court cases since Brown that have ordered forced busing to achieve desegregation.

Q What cases, Ron? What specific cases?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have the specific reference for you, Dave.

Q Can you tell us if he has talked with the Attorney General or intends to talk with him today or tomorrow?

MR. NESSEN: There is the possibility that the Attorney General will come in this afternoon to work on another matter, to attend a meeting with Secretary Butz, the President and members of the Domestic Council, to discuss the case that has been filed in the food stamp reform matter.

The President wants to tell both the Attorney General and the Agriculture Secretary that he wants them to forcefully defend the food stamp reforms of the Administration and that meeting, it is possible that that meeting will be held here today, although it is not definitely scheduled at the moment.

Now, if it is held, I think it is possible that at the end of that the Attorney General may stay over and discuss busing, but that is only a hypothesis at the moment.

Q Last week, Ron, the President indicated that he expected a decision from Levi by the end of last week and now this week the people who have been following it closely say they think it will be this week. In view of the fact that the President ordered Levi to find a case six months ago, on November 20, 1975, why is it taking Levi this long to make up his mind?

MR. NESSEN: I guess you have to ask the Attorney General, Dave.

Q He won't answer such queries.

Q Ron, Senator Baker is seeing the President at 2:30. One, what is he seeing him about; two, will Baker come out in the press area following the appointment?

MR. NESSEN: That has to do with the clean air amendments. He is the ranking Republican on the Senate Public Works Committee, and he wants to discuss sections of the Clean Air Act that relate to auto emissions and other items.

Q How about politics?

MR. NESSEN: It is not planned that it would have anything to do with politics.

Q Not even a thank you?

MR. NESSEN: It is not the purpose of the meeting, Helen.

Q Ron, what was the President's reaction to the controversy arising over the hiring of a certain clerk for the House Administration Committee?

MR. NESSEN: I think the President answered that last night, Les.

Q I am sorry. I wasn't there.

MR. NESSEN: We will get you a transcript.

Q When will that be available, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: Would you get Les a transcript of last night's news conference, please?

Q I would like one, too.

Q Ron, is the President surprised at the amount of opposition to the new food stamp regulations?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't heard him comment one way or another. I know he feels Congress has refused and delayed. Even though a lot of Members of Congress agree that reforms are necessary, there has been no action up there. As the President said at the time that the Administration reforms were ordered, Congress has had all this time and has not done anything and so he believes very strongly that these reforms are needed. If the meeting is held today with Butz and Levi, the purpose of it will be to tell them that he believes very strongly that these reforms are needed and that he wants them to do their best to have them upheld.

Q I believe the U.S. Conference of Mayors is a participant in this. Before he announced the regulations, did he discuss these with the mayors?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to check, Russ. I am not sure.

Q What are the President's campaign plans between now and June 8?

MR. NESSEN: I believe Stu Spencer told the pool last night -- I can get you a copy of the pool report -- at this moment there are no plans for any additional travel.

Q Ron, in terms of the busing, you are saying the President made a mistake in mentioning Brown in the news conference?

MR. NESSEN: The reference to Brown was incorrect, that is correct.

Q Does he think that he ought to declare a moratorium for himself in discussing it because it seems to be injected more and more into the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I think you know that the President has been asked that question a lot over the last few days and, in fact, we have talked about it privately and obviously the President has volunteered nothing on busing. Every single remark of his and mine have come about as a result of press questions, I think you know that.

Q But he had been admonished by the Attorney General not to speak out on matters pending in the court. He said so himself.

MR. NESSEN: He has not referred to any specific case.

Q It is not just that he speaks about busing. It is the manner in which he speaks about busing I think that we are raising, Ron. It is the raising of Louisville as a possible test case. The confusion still exists in my mind this morning, despite his response to my questions last night, about the status of the alternatives to busing.

MR. NESSEN: I can tell you about the status of the alternatives, Tom. I think you will have to concede that the President in no speech, in no statement, nor in any other form has volunteered a remark about busing.

I think you know the chronology on this. There was a leak somewhere along the line -- not from the Administration, I don't think -- that Levi was considering intervening in the Boston case, and ever since then this question has been asked of me a great deal and of the President a great deal, so I don't think you can say fairly that the President has pushed or volunteered or hyped or anything this issue. It has been entirely in response to press questions.

Q That is my very point. It is not that he has not responded to our questions, it is the manner in which he responds to the questions.

MR. NESSEN: You mean the answers themselves?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Well, the answers themselves, Tom--

Q How far is he willing to go, for instance? The raising of the Louisville case as a possibility when it was not even under consideration at the Justice Department?

MR. NESSEN: It had been and, as the Justice Department said, it may be again.

Q It has not, has it, in fact ever been under consideration, the Louisville case?

MR. NESSEN: I told you at the time, Mort, he said it could be Louisville in the sense that it could be any case that works its way up to the Supreme Court on busing.

Q I have the transcript here of the Columbus press conference.

MR. NESSEN: It is on page 14, somewhere toward the bottom of the page.

Q Is the President confused about American history or what? This is not the first time that the President has implied -- he did it at Dallas at the Women's Republican Federation -- that busing was ordered in 1954. Then a couple of weeks later he specifically denied that he had meant to imply that he didn't agree with the 1954 decision. Now he makes the same mistake again. What is the problem there?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that there is a problem, Mort. I have corrected what was a misstatement last night. I haven't reviewed the record.

Q He keeps going back to 1954 when he says he has consistently opposed busing. I don't know if that came out as a remedy in 1954. Is there any way we can find out what he said in 1954 when the Brown decision was handed down, or if he said anything?

MR. NESSEN: You have a morgue.

Q There is some confusion. This use of "quality education" constantly instead of saying integrated schools. It is synonomous.

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I think if you read last night's transcript, you will see how many times he repeated his opposition to segregated schools and how many times he reconfirmed his determination to uphold the constitutional rights.

Q But he uses the term "quality education" and he has never defined what quality education is. Is that integrated --

MR. NESSEN: I think you asked him that last night.

Q But he didn't answer it, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I am not going to go beyond his answer, Helen.

Q Then that leaves it up in the air.

Q Ron, is it true that the President is considering the proposal from Secretary Mathews of HEW to create a nine-member Domestic Council?

MR. NESSEN: All right, this goes back to Tom's second question, which I really did fail to answer. I think you know the chronology that I gave you last week, which went back to last fall, and the President asked both Levi and Mathews to come up with alternatives to forced busing.

The President received a memo in February, I think, with about eight or nine suggestions on it. He sent it back, saying that four of them particularly should be pursued. Then last week, I guess, in a memo from the Domestic Council on a number of subjects, the President was told that three alternatives to forced busing were being looked at and the Domestic Council is now asking Mathews, as well as others in the Government, to provide further information and refinements of those alternatives and perhaps others, and Levi is also part of that process. So, that is really where it stands now.

Q But at HEW they say Mathews only gave one recommendation, not three and not four, but he just had the one. Is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure where all the alternatives have come from. The last Domestic Council memo to the President listed three alternatives. I think I read you that or showed you that last week.

Q You didn't tell us the alternatives.

MR. NESSEN: That is right. The President has indicated that when he makes his decision, he will announce it.

Q This is an alternative to busing?

MR. NESSEN: To forced busing, that is right.

Q It would be a way to integrated schools without busing?

MR. NESSEN: I forget what the exact description was. Let's see if I have that memo still here.

As I told you last week--I mean, this is not new--the way the three alternatives were presented to the President was -- and I did mention this last week -- the Domestic Council in a memo told him, "We are working on three possible approaches to help a community avoid a court order to bus." Then it lists the three alternatives.

Q But you won't tell us the three alternatives?

MR. NESSEN: The President has indicated he prefers not until he has made his choices.

Q But is there anything positive in the seeking of the options in terms of how to help integrate --

MR. NESSEN: Let me just go back to the basic points that sometimes we forget in this busing discussion; that is, we are not talking about whether or not segregation should continue in the public schools. We are talking about remedies to cure court findings of illegal segregation.



Q Are those the alternatives he is speaking of?

MR. NESSEN: These are three alternatives, right. I said these are being refined and further pursued and possibly others added to the list.

Q To desegregate schools?

MR. NESSEN: To help a community avoid a court order to bus.

Q But it is the same thing, isn't it?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, I read you this last week and I hope you are not trying to build a new story today out of something I read you last week.

Q I am trying to build a new story, Ron.

MR. NESSEN: I know that.

Q I don't feel that I fully understand how the President made his mistake last night. You have said that it was an incorrect reference. But you haven't explained how it was an incorrect reference. Now, you are saying that these alternatives are designed to help a community avoid a court order to bus. That has nothing to do with alternatives to desegregation.

MR. NESSEN: You are correct. It certainly doesn't. We are not talking about alternatives to desegregation, and the President told you that last night and has said that repeatedly over the years.

Q If I said that, I didn't mean that. I said alternatives to busing to accomplish desegregation.

MR. NESSEN: That is correct.

Q Now, you said those are alternatives to help a community avoid a court order to bus.

MR. NESSEN: Correct.

Q That doesn't seem -- it sounds like they are trying to figure out a way to help a community avoid a court order to bus, not necessarily to achieve desegregation by other methods.

MR. NESSEN: Dick, I have said over and over again, and the President has said over and over again, that in none of these discussions about busing are we trying to find a way to avoid desegregation. We are talking about the remedies for segregation.

Q All these options he is considering, would they lead to integration?

MR. NESSEN: Helen, I really don't want to go any further on this.

Q It is very much in the air.

MR. NESSEN: It shouldn't be any further in the air because we went through the whole list last week and I read you that sentence last week, and it should come as no news today.

Q It is a negative statement, I will tell you.

Q Ron, without telling us the specific alternatives, can you tell us whether it has been researched that any of these alternatives have been considered by courts throughout the country --

MR. NESSEN: Saul, this is --

Q -- as a step prior to an order for busing?

MR. NESSEN: I can't tell you. I can't answer that question. These three alternatives, as I said, are in the works in terms of being considered and reconsidered and refined by both Mathews and others in the Government and Levi, and there may be others added to this list.

Q Can you tell us who else from the Government is involved in it?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly. The Domestic Council and Levi and several other members of the Cabinet.

Q Is Secretary Coleman being consulted on this?

MR. NESSEN: I would rather not give you the complete list.

The answer is yes, of course.

Q I don't mean to belabor this question, but I just want to be sure I understand, when you talk about alternatives to help a community avoid a court order to bus, is that the same thing as saying alternatives to help the community achieve desegregation by methods other than busing?

MR. NESSEN: Dick, you are trying to create something where nothing exists. From the very beginning of this discussion we have never talked about alternatives to desegregation. We have talked about remedies to illegal segregation, which do not include forced busing because the President opposes forced busing as a remedy.

So, we are talking about remedies and we are not talking about whether to keep segregation. That has been the case all along, and I have said that all along, and the President has said it very forcefully last night, I thought.

Q Joe Biden of Delaware talked to the Attorney General to use the Wilmington case as the Supreme Court case. Is the President aware of that?

MR. NESSEN: I think he read that in the paper, yes.

Q Ron, in view of the fact that the top black in the Republican Party and the top black in the Cabinet--the only black in the Cabinet--Mr. Coleman, oppose intervention in Boston, will you cite to us one example of a Presidential action or directive that would demonstrate to the black community in this country the President's commitment to civil rights? Can you name one thing?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to take that question, Dave. I am just not going to take that question.

Q But you can.

MR. NESSEN: I can, but I am not.

Q Ron, has the President had a strategy meeting today on the campaign?

MR. NESSEN: He met with Rog Morton this morning, that is correct.

Q What can you tell us about it?

MR. NESSEN: Nothing.

Q Is there anything on for this weekend?

MR. NESSEN: For guidance, I would say that the President is probably going to spend Saturday morning cleaning up an enormous pile of paperwork that he has got. Then, if the weather is all right, he could possibly -- this is all for guidance -- play some golf Saturday afternoon and then may go to Camp David Saturday evening and stay up there Saturday night and Sunday night and come back Monday morning in time for the Arlington Cemetery ceremony.

Q Ron, thank you very much for getting this transcript. One thing in it, when he was asked about reservations about Mr. Reagan as a man who should sit in the Oval Office, his answer was, "I expect to get the nomination, but I have traditionally supported the Republican nominee," which certainly appears that the President realistically faces the possibility, however remote, that he might not get the nomination.

If he does not get the nomination, will he retire from public life or possibly, if Reagan wants him, to run as Vice President, or what? The President has acknowledged the possibility he might not get the nomination. I know what the stock answer is, Ron, but maybe you could give us a really enlightened answer rather than the stock answer.

Q That would be a hell of a news story, too.  
(Laughter)

Q What would he do?

MR. NESSEN: He expects to win the nomination and the election.

Q In the event that he doesn't, Ron, that was my question.

MR. NESSEN: He expects to win the nomination and the election.

On the question of what has the President done, I think you said to advance -- I forget the exact nature of your question.

Q To demonstrate his commitment to civil rights, one act that he has taken that he could show the black leaders and say I am not against you, I am for you, can you name one thing?

MR. NESSEN: I can, and I would be happy to sit down and talk to you about it.

Q Talk to all of us, Ron. We are all interested in it.

MR. NESSEN: If you know his record, you know what he has done.

Q Why would he ask -- that is an intelligent reporter -- why would he ask if he knows?

Q I don't want it to be an issue, but could you clarify his feelings with regard to Brown?

MR. NESSEN: Did you just come in a couple of minutes ago?

Q No, I have been here. I am asking you if there would be --

MR. NESSEN: I said the President's reference to Brown was incorrect.

Q I understand that, but I heard the gentleman over here mention the fact that the President has done that in the past, and I am wondering if once and for all we could get a clarified statement for all of us?

MR. NESSEN: I think if you read his news conference last night and his repeated declarations of his opposition to segregated schools and his commitment to upholding constitutional rights, you will have a pretty good statement of his views on that subject.

Q Ron, how did he make that statement? I don't think you have really explained that. Was he referring to something else? You said later decisions, but then when you were asked you said --

MR. NESSEN: I don't want to go into the specific court citations.

Q How did the President make this error? Did he confuse these things?

MR. NESSEN: I can't explore his mind, Dick. I am just saying he was incorrect in his reference to --

Q Why was he incorrect?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know, Dick.

Q What was incorrect about it? I don't think it is a laughing matter. What was incorrect about this reference?

MR. NESSEN: Do you have a transcript? I left mine back on my desk.

Page 14, near the bottom, he said that "the Attorney General is looking himself to see whether there is a proper record in a case that would justify the Department of Justice entering as an amicus curiae proceeding before the Supreme Court to see if the court would review the decision in the Brown case." It is incorrect to say that the Justice Department or that the Attorney General is doing that because he is not doing that."

Q Did the Attorney General call it to his attention?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Or did you simply inquire on the basis of questions?

MR. NESSEN: I think a number of us called it to his attention.

Q That was the second question of Tom's, was it not?

MR. NESSEN: That is my view, but Dick I think probably feels that there is some deeper motive.

Q You should have said that at 8:30 last night. It should have been corrected then.

Q Ron, are you saying in effect the President does not think there need be any reconsideration or review of Brown versus the Board of Education?

MR. NESSEN: As I have said before, he has stated consistently and firmly over the years that he supports the Brown decision.

Q Has the President taken any notice of the possibility raised by someone within the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department that the continued speculation about Levi deciding whether to appeal Boston or not could possibly trigger some new violence or new rounds of opposition in that city? Has this been brought to his attention?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't seen anything like that myself, Dave.

Q Can you tell us at what meeting, at what time Levi cautioned the President, as the President indicated, not to talk too much about what he wanted the judges to do?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what that refers to.

Q The President said a few days ago that Levi, you know, told him not to -- I don't remember the exact words -- he said that he had been admonished by the Attorney General.

MR. NESSEN: I will check and find out when that occurred.

Q I wonder, does the White House have any thought regarding this meeting that is now going on in Bali with the OPEC oil ministers to consider another oil price hike?

MR. NESSEN: I think the feeling is that the market conditions for world oil don't warrant any further increase in the price of oil.

Q The consensus among the observers seems to be they are probably going to recommend a 5 percent hike. Does the White House think that would be an acceptable range or have any thoughts about it?

MR. NESSEN: As I say, the market conditions don't warrant any further increase in the price of oil.

Q Ron, has the White House decided to begin campaigning for the repeal of the Byrd amendment on June 9?

MR. NESSEN: I don't get the thrust of that question, Les.

Q The day after the California primary?

MR. NESSEN: What would that have to do with the Byrd amendment?

Q I don't know. I just wondered, is there any truth to this at all? Have they started it already or are they waiting until after the California primary?

MR. NESSEN: The President has been on record in opposition to the Byrd amendment and in favor of its repeal for quite some time, and that has --

Q I know, but when does the campaign start?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I think it has long gone, Les.

Q I just asked because you did say, I think, something about the fact that it had not been put together, didn't you?

MR. NESSEN: That is a matter, of course, that originates in Congress.

Q I see.

Q Ron, how did there get to be an enormous file of paperwork, as you put it, on the President's desk?

MR. NESSEN: These are not so much official papers and so forth because he was working on that all along the way on the trip. But these are largely personal letters and so forth.

Q Ron, did they talk about at the meeting -- was there any talk about going back to California, or going to Ohio?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I think what Stu said last night still holds, which is that at the moment there have not been any plans made to go back to those states or to New Jersey, but it is a subject that will be considered over the next few days.

Q They didn't talk about that this morning?

MR. NESSEN: Not really, just in a very passing way.

Q Do you know of any movement in the White House or in the campaign staff to challenge the "winner take all" formula in California?

MR. NESSEN: The President indicated that the first he had ever heard of that was when he read it in the L. A. Times yesterday.

Q What is the Rockefeller meeting today?

MR. NESSEN: It is his regular weekly meeting.

Q Ron, did you say -- I am sorry, but in the dialogue between you and the good Reverend there, I missed something.

Did you say that the matter of the Byrd amendment being changed, quote, "As a matter of course that originates in Congress."

MR. NESSEN: I think the repeal of an amendment would, Bob. In fact I think there is a rove --

Q I was under the impression that the Secretary of State indicated the Administration was going to do it.



MR. NESSEN: Well, I will have to check on that. I mean, the opposition to the Byrd Amendment and the support of its repeal is a long-standing Administration policy and I believe there is legislation already at some stage up there moving through.

Isn't that correct? Wasn't it passed the House or the Senate, or one side or the other?

There is legislation already there, Bob, and Kissinger, I am told, testified in favor of the repeal within recent weeks.

Q Ron, isn't that the meeting at which members of the Senate questioned whether the President was as fully committed to repeal as Kissinger was and is the President in some fashion going to demonstrate a commitment equal to Kissinger?

MR. NESSEN: I never attended a meeting where anybody questioned the President's commitment to repeal of the Byrd Amendment.

Q It was a hearing where members of the Senate questioned Kissinger on that point. Does the President have any plans to satisfy those members who questioned it?

MR. NESSEN: Well, all I am going to say is the President since he came to the White House has favored repeal of the Byrd Amendment, and still does.

Q Ron, there have been some reports on the Hill that the President is considering diplomatic relations be resumed with China and dropping its support of Taiwan, is that correct?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know of anything new on that subject, Fran.

Q Ron, can we go back to a question I asked originally and I don't believe you answered it.

Is the President considering a recommendation for Mathews to create a nine-member national advisory council to help people stay out of court with a budget of \$2 million?

MR. NESSEN: Well, I am not going to discourse on what the three, or possibly more, alternatives are that are under consideration and will be presented to the President for his approval, disapproval, or modification. When he has approved a set of alternatives, we will announce them, or an alternative.

Q Ron, can you give us a timetable on that?

MR. NESSEN: No, I can't.

Q Has the President indicated to you yesterday or today who he thinks will get the Democratic nomination?

MR. NESSEN: I think he talked about that publicly in the last couple of days.

Q I am talking about since the primary.

MR. NESSEN: He has talked about it since the primary, also.

Q What did he say?

MR. NESSEN: I will have to look it up in the transcript and get the exact words of how he worded it.

Q Ron, on one occasion Mr. Nixon surprised everyone by going commercial to California, I think you remember that. Now, is there a remote possibility that in order not to exceed the FEC limit that President Ford might turn up on a commercial airline and be picked up by the Secret Service in California and thus save money? Has he given that some thought?

MR. NESSEN: I haven't heard it discussed, Les.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

END (AT 12:15 P.M. EDT) #498

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 4:48 P.M. EDT

MAY 27, 1976

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: Really, I have only two things to tell you. The President is pleased that he is naming Elly M. Peterson to be Deputy Chairman of his campaign committee, with the special job of organizing special voter groups.

These releases really should come from the PFC, but for your convenience I have had some sent over here from the PFC.

Q Is this a paid job?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to check with the PFC.

Q Excuse me. We have to check with the PFC?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. She is Deputy Chairman of his campaign committee, the PFC, the President Ford Committee.

Q This is the number two job in the organization?

MR. NESSEN: Yes. One of the number two jobs, isn't it?

Q What is one of the number two jobs? How does this put her in --

MR. NESSEN: You have to call over there, Dick. I don't know enough about the organization over there. Mrs. Peterson is available now at 833-5354 and tonight she can be reached at area code 517-543-4685, and then tomorrow she will be available to meet the press in person at the President Ford Committee from 2:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon.

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Q Is she giving up her ERA job?

MR. NESSEN: You will have to ask her.

Q Is that a local number?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, she is in town this afternoon but leaving very shortly.

Q What are special voter groups -- Californians?

MR. NESSEN: Women's groups, ethnic groups, minority groups.

Q Is this an effort to win their votes?

MR. NESSEN: This is the same sort of work she did, as you probably remember Fran, when she was Vice Chairman of the Republican Committee, the same sort of thing as when she was in Michigan. What was her title in Michigan? She did the same sort of work for the Republican Party in Michigan -- the Michigan State Chairman.

Q Was she an ambassador somewhere? Is this the first job she has been named to by the President?

MR. NESSEN: I am not really sure of her complete biography, Bob.

Q Has this been announced over there?

MR. NESSEN: It is being announced over there, but I had these brought over for your convenience and because the President is especially pleased by the appointment and wanted you to know about it here.

Q Then he didn't make it, did he?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, it is his committee.

The other thing that I want to tell you is at 5:00 we will have copies of the PNE treaty and two different fact sheets, two fact sheets embargoed for 10:00 a.m. release, and we are on the track for an 8:30 briefing tomorrow at Room 450 of the EOB, led by Bill Hyland and Fred. Ikle and other technical experts from Defense and from ERDA. The signing ceremony itself will be at 10:00.

Q Ron, can you tell us anything about the Attorney General's meeting with the President?

MR. NESSEN: The food stamp meeting?

Q I would like to know, did they mention busing?

MR. NESSEN: John Carlson sat in on the food stamps part of it and will have to talk to you about that. Whether any other subjects were discussed, I have to check.

Q Is that meeting still going on?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know.

Q You don't know whether they talked about busing?

MR. NESSEN: I do not.

Q Can John come out and talk to us?

MR. NESSEN: About food stamps?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 4:52 P.M. EDT)