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N E W S C O N F E R E N C E

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 12:10 P.M. EDT

JUNE 1, 1976

TUESDAY

MR. NESSEN: I think you have a list of bills that the President signed over the weekend. It is on a couple of sheets of paper, and it was handed out about 10:30 this morning.

There will be a bill signing this afternoon. If any of you need the details of that, of what is contained in this second supplemental -- primarily, it is the money for the Italian earthquake relief-- Margaret Earl can supply you with additional information after the briefing.

Q How much is it?

MR. NESSEN: \$25 million.

Q Ron, can you recall for us the last time a President ceremoniously signed a Supplemental Appropriations Act?

MR. NESSEN: I cannot recall for you the last time there was such a disastrous earthquake in Italy, either, Jim, for which the United States is providing help.

Q Isn't there more money for defense in there, Ron, than anything else? Isn't that the major item?

MR. NESSEN: I have to look up the full contents of the bill. That is why I say --

Q What is the total, \$11 billion?

MR. NESSEN: Margaret is going to pull together a paper of what is in the bill.

Q Isn't the overall figure \$13 billion or something like that, and the Italian earthquake relief is \$25 million.

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MR. NESSEN: I am going to hopefully get a paper from Margaret with a breakdown of what else is in the bill. It does have a fair amount of money for things like education, health, energy research, veterans' benefits and the contribution to the Food and Agricultural Development Fund, which came out of the Rome Food Conference.

Margaret is preparing a more detailed fact sheet, which you will get before the signing ceremony.

Q Seriously, is the reason for this ceremony an occasion to impress the Italians because of the fact the Communists are getting more power there or is it to impress the Italian voters in Ohio and New Jersey or what is it?

MR. NESSEN: Can I say none of the above? (Laughter) Are those my only two choices? (Laughter)

Q I would like to know what the reason is for making a ceremony out of this.

MR. NESSEN: There are other elements in the bill which are important aspects, which I will have for you. The fact is, there was a disastrous earthquake in Italy. Vice President Rockefeller and Daniel Parker went there and recommended an American contribution to help, and that help is contained in this bill.

Q Will we be able to ask the President questions at this ceremony?

MR. NESSEN: I would not think so.

Today, as you know, is the primary election in three States. The plan is to handle this as it has been on other Tuesdays, except the one Tuesday when we were out of town; that is, that there will be a small Press Office staff here. I understand that the PFC will be open and that Rog Morton will be there to help you with the political questions. I will be here to probably give a report later in the evening on the President's activities tonight.

Q Have you any expectations --

MR. NESSEN: -- on the three States?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: I think the President feels that his chances are good in Rhode Island. He thinks he will do well in South Dakota. I understand that there is not a delegate selection in Montana. That is kind of an advisory primary. I don't understand the full ground-rules of that primary, but Rog Morton could help you with it.

There is going to be one last bit of primary travel this weekend; namely, Sunday and Monday. On Sunday the President will campaign in New Jersey and on Monday in Ohio. I don't have the exact schedule or even the exact cities at this point. It looks as if Sunday night will be spent in Ohio, overnight there, and then campaign during the day on Monday in Ohio and return to Washington relatively early on the evening of Monday.

Q Can you rule out a whistle stop in Ohio?

MR. NESSEN: It is just not far enough along to really talk about, but I don't know of any plans for a whistle stop in Ohio.

Q How about a motorcade for five cities?

MR. NESSEN: The schedule is being worked on, John, and I don't have anything further to give you at the moment.

Q Would you rule out California, a return to California?

MR. NESSEN: It does not look like it is going to be possible because of the President's schedule here in Washington. As you know, the King and Queen are coming from Spain, and other business in Washington. He has been to California twice, I think, in the last month or last six weeks. Mrs. Ford and either two or three of the children will be campaigning there, as well as other persons speaking on the President's behalf. The President is running in California on his record, and he feels that his record as President is well known there.

Finally, I think most of you know that the PFC is bumping up against the ceiling under the Federal election law of what it is allowed to spend during the primary season, leaving out some money to be used at the convention.

So, for those various reasons, the President -- as much as he would like to go to California -- is not able to.

Q How does he foresee at this point the result in California?

MR. NESSEN: He feels that he has been and, in fact, still is running behind, but that he has closed the gap and believes he will continue to close the gap in the week remaining before the election there. He is not making any prediction on the outcome, but he is hopeful in California.

Q The gap, as reported, Ron, shows a 10 percent difference. What report do you get here?

MR. NESSEN: I am not going to go into numbers, Cliff.

Q Does the PFC pay for trips of Mrs. Ford and the Ford youngsters?

MR. NESSEN: Of course.

Q Where will he go in Ohio and New Jersey?

MR. NESSEN: I can't give you that yet because it is frankly not arranged yet.

Q Is there any reason not to go on Saturday instead of Sunday or does he have a busy day Saturday? Sunday is sort of a strange day.

MR. NESSEN: The whole trip started off as the response to a very strong urging of Governor Rhodes of Ohio to appear at an event in Ohio Sunday night. Having accepted that, the rest of the trip was built around that.

Q What is the event in Ohio Sunday night?

MR. NESSEN: I would rather wait until we have the whole trip organized.

Q You say the President is running on his record in California, that his record is well known, and that the President thinks he is behind there right now?

MR. NESSEN: Right.

Q What in that record makes him behind? Why is he having trouble?

MR. NESSEN: I don't think it is the record that puts him behind, Phil. Reagan was Governor of that State for eight years. He has the ability to campaign full-time. He does not have the responsibility of the Presidency. He has a well-financed campaign. For those reasons the President has --

Q The President does not have a well-financed campaign?

MR. NESSEN: As you know, by this stage in the primary campaign the PFC is bumping up against its ceiling.

Q Ron, what evidence do you have that President Ford is closing the gap?

MR. NESSEN: Reports from PFC people in California.

Q That doesn't jibe with Lou Cannon, does it?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what Lou Cannon said about closing the gap.

Q Ron, I am puzzled about the expenses. It is cheaper for the PFC to have Mrs. Ford and three children go out than it is to have the President go out?

MR. NESSEN: That is correct, yes. They don't travel with the same entourage that the President does and require the same expenses and accommodations and so forth. Motorcades, for instance, are very much longer. This is not the exact comparison you want, but it is about three times more expensive to go to California than it is to go to Ohio and New Jersey.

Q What are the numbers, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: I don't have them, Bob. The PFC can provide them for you.

Q Ron, do you have any more details today for us on this upcoming international economic summit conference?

MR. NESSEN: Only to say the discussions are well along on another international economic meeting. The discussions are not completed, but I would say that I do expect to have something else later in the week. I would look for the meeting to take place sometime in late June.

Q Late June, did you say?

MR. NESSEN: Yes.

Q The 26th and 27th?

MR. NESSEN: I just don't have anything further on that today.

Q Where do we get the "early August"?

MR. NESSEN: Don't ask me. I am not going to reveal your sources, Jim.

Q I mean, the White House, I thought, said it was going to be early August.

MR. NESSEN: I have not talked to anybody all weekend about this.

Q Ron, is it likely to be on American soil?

Q Or Rockefeller soil? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Give me a couple of options and maybe I can point you in the right direction.

Q The Virgin Islands?

MR. NESSEN: Wrong.

Q Puerto Rico?

MR. NESSEN: That is not a bad guess.

Q Ron, speaking of Rockefeller, since the President has ruled out Ronald Reagan as Vice Presidential running mate --

MR. NESSEN: What happened there is the President, has, when asked that question, pointed to Reagan's statement indicating Reagan was not interested,

Q Will he do the same thing for Rockefeller? Does he rule out Rockefeller?

MR. NESSEN: I think he said the same thing, that the Vice President sent in a letter indicating he did not want to be considered.

Q What did he say in all these interviews today that we are going to get smacked on?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. I listened to the first part of the California Bureau Chiefs interview.

Q Ron, to go back to this international meeting, can you say what has been the responses of the various chiefs of Government of States contacted so far? Have you had acceptances from all the six, at least, guests?

MR. NESSEN: I think, as I said, we expect to have something later in the week. The discussions are well along, but not quite completed, so I would rather leave it there for the time being.

Q Ron, is George Shultz conducting these arrangements for the United States?

MR. NESSEN: I would not say he is conducting the arrangements, but as with the other summit in Rambouillet, he was involved in the early stages as a private citizen.

Q Who?

MR. NESSEN: George Shultz.

Q The State Department and White House people involved were saying Shultz was primary responsible for setting up the meeting, the agenda representing the United States. I was wondering if he was fulfilling that same role this time?

MR. NESSEN: Do you mean in Rambouillet I?

Q Yes.

MR. NESSEN: He was involved in early stages of it, and I think he may have been involved in the early stages of this. I will have to check more thoroughly on his role. Actually, the initiatives as far as recommending it to the President were from Alan Greenspan in the case of this meeting that is coming up, back in March, March 25, to be precise.

Q Ron, Shultz has been head of one of the largest multinational corporations of business in every one of these countries that are participating. Is there any concern here there might be a possible conflict of interests between Shultz' role --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what role he had, if any, in setting up this meeting. I know, if you recall the history of Rambouillet I, the idea of it came from -- one of the advocates of such a meeting was President Giscard and if I am not mistaken -- I could try to recall all this history -- but it seems to me that Giscard suggested that a group of private individuals from the countries discuss the possibility.

I have to look that up, but it was at that stage of Rambouillet I that Shultz was involved. Now, whether he had any involvement in this, I don't know.

Q Ron, are we asking the other nations to go to this second round?

MR. NESSEN: The initiative came from the United States, that is correct.

Q Why?

MR. NESSEN: Because of a number of reasons. When this matter was first raised with the President by Alan Greenspan in March, he cited two reasons. One, the economic recovery was beginning to accelerate in a number of these countries faster than had been expected, and he felt there was the need for a meeting to discuss the implications of that.

Secondly, Alan felt that there were a number of economic matters in individual countries, among these countries, that also should be the subject of discussion.

Finally, if you recall, at the end of Rambouillet there was a reference there -- in fact, there was a discussion at Rambouillet of when the leaders should meet again and they would stay in touch with each other on another meeting and that the timing of the other meeting would be based on world economic conditions.

Secretary Kissinger, on the flight home from there, in briefing the press, said that he expected there would be another meeting during the course of the following year, and this is it.

Q What are the countries involved?

Q The same ones as before?

MR. NESSEN: Plus Canada, yes.

Q Ron, if they were not invited to the Rambouillet meeting, does the President feel that given the fact that this meeting will be held in the Western Hemisphere, that it will be an insult for neighbors not to be invited?

MR. NESSEN: I think we are moving awfully far ahead on a meeting that has not even been announced yet. I think when all the arrangements are made, there will be proper explanations for these points you raise.

Q Ron, what are the nations you mentioned in ones that have accelerated their recovery --

MR. NESSEN: -- faster than anticipated. Certainly the United States is one. I have not briefed myself as thoroughly on this enough to answer your question.

Q Would you expect bilateral meetings as well as the group meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I think we are really getting ahead of ourselves here since we have not announced the meetings.

Q Let me follow Sarah's question for a minute. You were asked which of the countries' economic recoveries have gone faster than expected, and you listed the United States.

MR. NESSEN: And others, but I am not enough of an expert to --

Q Since Greenspan suggested the meeting does this indicate a concern on Greenspan's part of a resurgence of inflation in the United States?

MR. NESSEN: No, I would not say it demonstrates concern on his part about inflation in the United States. I would say that, to fall back on the language used at the end of the first Rambouillet conference, that they would meet again, the leaders agreed to meet again when world conditions necessitated it and with a speedier recovery than anticipated in some of these countries, there are a number of factors that grow out of that that seem to Alan to require a meeting at this time.

Q Including inflation?

MR. NESSEN: I would say certainly the possibility of renewed inflation is one of the factors that needs to be discussed.

Q Ron, what domestic moves is Mr. Greenspan recommending if he is concerned about resurgence of inflation?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know that that question directly follows, Jim, but I think each time the cost of living figures have come out. For instance, the President has indicated he feels that the battle against inflation is by no means won, and one way to be on guard against a renewed inflation is to make sure that Congress does not run up an excessive deficit.

Q Ron, since you have been so precise about when Greenspan suggested this second meeting, can you also tell us when the invitations went to the other six heads of Government?

MR. NESSEN: I did not follow the timetable all the way through, Jim, because I thought it would be the initiation that you would be most interested in. It has been in the works about two and a half or three months.

Q At the initiative of the host country.

MR. NESSEN: The meeting would be at the initiative of the United States.

Q Ron, I think if it has gone, certainly gone all that long, we need to know here what is the President briefing himself on for this meeting. What are the matters that will be discussed here that Greenspan wants to have discussed, exactly what areas of the United States industry or business or geographic areas might be involved, might be affected?

MR. NESSEN: I agree with you and when we announce the meeting we will begin to provide the agenda and so forth.

Q Look, you already threw it out. You don't have to wait for some formal method. We need to know before the thing goes any further. We need to know what this is all about.

MR. NESSEN: I agree with you. For today, however, I would like to leave it with the fact that the meeting grew out of two factors in Alan Greenspan's mind. One, the recovery that was preceding faster than expected in some countries and the effects of that and, secondly, economic matters within individual countries that needed to be discussed.

Q I think we need to know these. When will you have the briefing on this?

MR. NESSEN: When we announce the meeting would be the possible first time.

Q Let me ask you about the second point, the economic problems within several of the countries. Are the continued and steady decline in the pound and the lire among the economic problems that will be talked about?

MR. NESSEN: Exchange rates were discussed at the first Rambouillet meeting and I would expect they would be at this meeting.

Q Have those two currencies fallen in such a fashion or at such a rate that there is any consideration being given by the United States to amending or getting away from the so-called floating, going back to support --

MR. NESSEN: Jim, I think that is a little too far ahead until we announce the meeting and put out the agenda and some of the things Sarah is asking about.

Q Ron, was the invitation to Italy -- was consideration given to making it conditional on the results of the elections this month in Italy?

MR. NESSEN: What do you mean conditional?

Q To have a government that we might disapprove of as an ally.

MR. NESSEN: Not that I know of.

Q To put it another way, Ron, the elections in Italy are being held on June 20. It is expected that the government will be in place in Rome at the time of this meeting which is at the end of June. It would be a tight agenda.

MR. NESSEN: As far as I know. I know of no reason to think there won't be.

Q Speaking of governments in place, was there any thought given to postponing this until after the election so it would not get tangled up in domestic American politics.

MR. NESSEN: Congratulations. We had a bet on who would be the first to raise that question and you won the prize.

I have given you the timetable of how this meeting came about and the fact that a follow up meeting was agreed upon by the leaders at Rambouillet. The President feels that this is the appropriate time to have a follow up economic meeting. He believes the first meeting was successful, and the President feels that he needs to pursue a foreign policy and international economic policy without any consideration being given to domestic politics.

Q Ron, isn't it a fact you didn't want to schedule it during the Democratic or Republican Conventions?

MR. NESSEN: The real reason, John, if you know anything about the living style in Europe, July and August are the months when Europeans don't conduct much official business.

Q Ron, do you know of any other travel plans?

MR. NESSEN: I know of none.

Q What are the security considerations of the President in going to Puerto Rico? The Puerto Rican Nationalist movement has been extremely active and there have been many instances of violence both in Puerto Rico and in the American Virgin Islands due east. Is it considered a prudent thing for the President to go to Puerto Rico considering the current political situation in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands?

MR. NESSEN: I have not gotten into that subject, Jim.

Q Why was it Puerto Rico? Why not Washington?

MR. NESSEN: As you know, Helen, Washington right now happens to be crowded with Bicentennial visitors and to try to clear out that much hotel space for seven countries' delegations toward the end of June was considered to be a disruption that was really not proper.

Q There is no place in the United States where they could gather?

MR. NESSEN: Well --

Q Ron, could we clear up this business at the end of June? Are you saying it will be after the elections in Italy or before?

MR. NESSEN: I am not ready to announce the date yet, Jim. If I were you, I would expect it to be after.

Q Ron, the Evening Bulletin reported on Page 1 over the weekend that that city government has drafted an appeal to the President for 15,000 Federal troops to keep order on July 4th in view of threatened demonstrations. In view of this, what is the Ford Administration going to do to guarantee the safety of the public here in Washington on that weekend, in view of permits given to the American Nazis in Lafayette Square on July 3rd and a march on the Capitol on the 4th of July?

MR. NESSEN: The last time I checked I could not find anybody who received a request for troops.

Q No, no. They reported it had been drafted and will be sent.

MR. NESSEN: And I have not looked into the Washington matter.

Q Would it be possible for you to inquire on this? In view of the fact of the large numbers of people that will be here and there are threats, repeated threats, I just wonder what security measures are being taken.

MR. NESSEN: I will look into it.

Q Ron, is the President doing anything in a personal way to nail down uncommitted delegates and as part of that strategy is he asking Rockefeller to work on uncommitteds in New York and New England?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know what the specifics are but there will be certainly an effort made to win over all the uncommitted delegates possible and that will be conducted mostly by others, but I would say that the President probably will have some role in it himself.

Q None to date that you know of, phone calls to people who have declared themselves?

MR. NESSEN: I don't know enough of the details, John.

Q What was the President's reaction to Tom Curtis' endorsing Ronald Reagan. As I understand it, Mr. Curtis is a long time close friend of the President. What was his reaction to his announcing this?

MR. NESSEN: I did not know that Tom Curtis had done that, so I did not ask the President.

Q It was in this morning's paper.

Q Could you check on that?

Q When the President was in Congress, I am trying to remember, did he recommend, abide by, a code of moral ethics or standards while he was a Congressman, and does he have anything to say about a code of standards for Members of Congress today?

MR. NESSEN: I think he has indicated that in terms of now that he is the head of the Executive Branch that these matters are for Congress to decide. His own record in Congress I think was very thoroughly examined at the time of his confirmation hearings, and there was very extensive investigation made.

Q We have some Executive agencies that need a little thorough combing for their morals and sex actions, too, and does he have any --

MR. NESSEN: What are they? I am working in the wrong place. (Laughter)

Q I am in the right pew, now, in the right church. Does he have anything he wants to say about moral standards of bureaucrats? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: Does that grow out of anything specific?

Q It grows out of specific and general. I think it is time --

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, I think you know the President's own standards.

Q Yes, I do, but I think it is time -- the people in the country I think are very much interested in this thing and I think it is time -- could you ask the President if he would like to give us a statement on what he thinks should be the conduct in office of men who work for the Federal Government in the Executive Branch?

Q How about women?

Q Men and women.

MR. NESSEN: Persons.

Q Will you do that, Ron, because -- don't let somebody --

MR. NESSEN: Sarah, I --

Q I am asking a question.

MR. NESSEN: I know you are.

Q Will you ask him, please, if he would like to make a statement? The people are interested in this. We have examples of such conduct in the Executive Branch, as well as the Congress.

MR. NESSEN: I will discuss it.

Q Does the White House still consider the Syrian role in Lebanon to be constructive?

MR. NESSEN: The Syrians have played a constructive role in mediating between the parties in Lebanon in search of a political settlement.

Q In light of the increased activity by the Syrians in Lebanon, do you still consider them to be playing a constructive role?

MR. NESSEN: We cannot confirm the reports that there has been an increase in the number of Syrian regulars.

Q To go back to Phil Jones' question, I think as a general rule you said all Presidential travel in the United States after January would be considered political and, therefore, would be paid for by the PFC. Does the trip to Puerto Rico fall under those guidelines?

MR. NESSEN: Certainly not, Tom.

Q Just for the record, when this thing comes about, why don't you see if you can't find out how much it costs? That has always been a question a lot of us wanted answered.

MR. NESSEN: For which is that?

Q How much the summits cost? I am sure you would have the thanks of all of us here if you would give us a figure.

MR. NESSEN: I will make the effort.

Q I gather that Ohio and New Jersey would be the last primary campaign trip.

MR. NESSEN: The last primary campaign travel, right.

Q Will he travel before the convention to some of the final State conventions?

MR. NESSEN: It is possible.

Q Getting back to Sarah's question, it is reported that Mrs. Ford made the statement that she feels that Congressman Hays is a very fine gentleman and this happened when he was not married. Does the President agree with that?

MR. NESSEN: I would have to see what Mrs. Ford said first.

Q Would you do that, Ron, because she said it several days ago.

MR. NESSEN: I think you know the President never tries to second guess or comment upon Mrs. Ford's statements.

Q Ron, when will the President meet with the Attorney General and Mathews of HEW on busing alternatives?

MR. NESSEN: A day this week, but I don't have the day for you.

Q Was there any significance in the change of wording applied to the President's statement over the weekend about busing, where after Levi made his decision you put out a statement, the President said he wanted to minimize forced busing? Previously he has been quoted as saying he was unalterably opposed to forced busing. Did the Justice Department ask him to soften his opposition?

MR. NESSEN: No, I think that has always been the position. The President has always cited, for instance, the Esch Amendment, which lists seven or eight ways to improve the quality of education and meet the standards of equal educational rights. As you know, busing is the last of those, sort of the last resort, so there really has been no change.

Q Is the President disappointed in the way Levi ruled?

MR. NESSEN: I think the statement said he -- I forget what the word was -- respects the answer and directed Levi to continue his search.

Q The reason I ask, it has been six and a half months now and does he think maybe he would like to find one of these cases pretty soon?

MR. NESSEN: It is a legal matter, Dave, that is in the hands of the Attorney General to make on legal grounds.

Q Ron, may I ask again a question I previously asked in which in recent weeks you have made no direct response; that is, whether under appropriate circumstances the President accepts busing as an equitable remedy.

MR. NESSEN: I think my answer to Dave just now was the answer. The President has always cited the Esch Amendment as a guideline the court ought to follow -- maybe that is not a good choice of words -- and it lists a number of alternatives for accomplishing quality education and also upholding the Constitutional rights of lack of discrimination, and the last of those is busing. As Dave points out, the statement the other day indicated what the President was looking for was a method in which the standard of a quality education, of a non-discriminatory education could be met with a minimum of busing, if any.

Q Is that why he is opposed to a Constitutional Amendment to outlaw busing, because in some circumstances it might be appropriate?

MR. NESSEN: No, I don't think so. The reason is that, first of all, he feels that a more appropriate remedy is through legislative means and through judicial rules rather than putting it in the Constitution.

Q Does the White House feel that the leak that Boston was under consideration tipped Levi's decision by alerting opponents so they could lobby him in the two weeks it took to --

MR. NESSEN: I don't know. You would have to ask Levi what went into his decision. I don't know.

Q As you might not know, we have not been able to ask Levi any question for the last two weeks, so this is why I am asking you.

MR. NESSEN: I don't know the answer.

Q You indicated previously, Ron, that you felt it was not anybody in the Justice Department or in the White House who leaked that story. Do you have any feeling who it might have been?

MR. NESSEN: Yes, I do.

Q Do you think it was an opponent of intervention?

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

Q Ron, is it correct to paraphrase your previous answer by saying that it is the President's position that when the remedies suggested in the Esch Amendment and previously applied by courts in other busing cases had been exhausted to the frustration of courts, it is appropriate and acceptable to the President that the court order busing as the ultimate remedy?

MR. NESSEN: You have to do what you have to do, Larry. My own view is that the President has always and repeatedly talked about the Esch Amendment. You know what the Esch Amendment says. To my own knowledge, I am not saying anything new here today. I have the feeling you think I am.

Q No, I am trying to get you to say something new, frankly. (Laughter) To get you to respond affirmatively to my question, which is whether or not -- under appropriate circumstances -- after all, other remedies have been exhausted, the President now accepts that a court may find it necessary to achieve its purposes to order busing?

MR. NESSEN: I would rather put it in my own words, Larry; that is, the President has always favored the provision of the Esch Amendment. You know what they are, and you know what the last of the recourses are.

Secondly, as the statement said the other day -- and it really was a reiteration of the President's policy all along -- it is that he does plan to introduce legislation which would minimize the extent of busing.

Q On Friday, Ron, I asked the question about what appears to be a conflict between what you are saying and what the Ford campaign people are saying. You say busing is not being pursued by the President as an issue and Stu Spencer last week told some reporters that busing is a major part of their strategy to defeat Ronald Reagan. Would you like to elaborate on that? You said you did not know about it on Friday.

MR. NESSEN: I didn't, and I still don't.

Q Would you make any effort to confirm that Mr. Spencer said that -- because he did -- and to clear up what is quite obviously a very major contradiction between the White House statements and the statements of the Ford campaign committee?

MR. NESSEN: I have not, Jim.

Q May I ask another question about Levi's conversations with the President? In addition to informing the President that he was not going to intervene in the Boston case, did the Attorney General also inform the President that up to now he has found no case in which it would be appropriate to intervene?

MR. NESSEN: I did not attend that meeting so I don't know what the conversation was. In fact, at the meeting on Friday, Levi told the President he was sort of tilting toward a decision not to intervene in Boston. On Saturday he called Phil Buchen and told Phil he was about to announce that as his decision. Phil told the President, so there wasn't a direct conversation between the President and Levi in which Levi said, "Here is my decision."

Q Then I wonder, since Phil Buchen has been the contact man with the Attorney General, as I understand it, throughout the process, would you ask Mr. Buchen if it is not correct that up to now the Attorney General's examination of all the busing cases have turned up no busing case at all anywhere in the country in which the decision was weak or the remedy decided on by the judges was inappropriate in which the judge did not take into account all the other possibilities outlined in the Esch amendment?

The fact of the matter is -- ask Mr. Buchen, if you would -- that the Attorney General, in other words, has run up against a blank wall. The judges have made good law and there is nothing he can do about it. Would you ask Mr. Buchen if that is the case?

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MR. NESSEN: Okay, I will.

Q When you get the answer, will you give it to all of us?

MR. NESSEN: Absolutely.

Q Was there any retribution against the person who leaked the information that the American people ought to be in on a dialogue of what is happening at the Justice Department in terms of court cases?

MR. NESSEN: No, there was no retribution.

Q Ron, did the Attorney General explain to the President in some way, either in conversation or written paper, why he decided not to --

MR. NESSEN: As I say, when he made his decision, he relayed it to the President through Phil Buchen. But, some of the meetings over the past week, Larry, have been for the purpose of outlining to the President what the considerations were and so I am sure that during the course of that the President understood what matters Levi was weighing as he approved that decision.

Q Is it clear to you that those considerations in the Attorney General's mind, at least, were not purely legal; that is to say, there were also sociological considerations in whether or not to intervene?

MR. NESSEN: I think what the Attorney General said on Saturday was since this case is still before the courts, that he did not want to say anything or spell out his reasons for reaching his conclusions publicly because that would possibly have an effect on the remainder of the judicial process.

Q That is not my question. The question is, you have said --

MR. NESSEN: Oh, did he make it on purely legal grounds? I don't know, because I have not talked to him about that.

Q Ron, hasn't that been true all along, of all these cases that are pending before the courts, as well as the fish decision out on the West Coast? We are playing here with the courts both after the fact and before the fact.

MR. NESSEN: Aldo?

Q Has this been true that the President has been muddying the waters with court decisions that have not been made and court decisions that have been made?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, on Thursday and Friday, did you go into any detail about the scolding the President said he took from the Attorney General for talking about court cases? He suggested before the Press Club in Los Angeles, I think, on Tuesday of last week -- I forget his exact words -- admonished --

MR. NESSEN: I have not tracked down exactly where all that took place, Aldo.

Q Ron, this afternoon a lady who is said to be the President's new Deputy Campaign Director is holding briefings with members of the press.

MR. NESSEN: Elly Peterson.

Q Is that an indication that Stu Spencer has been replaced? (Laughter)

MR. NESSEN: No, it is an indication that another person has been added to the PFC. There are a number of Deputy Directors over there. Stu is, Elly Peterson, Clark and I think Roy Hughes all have the title of Deputy Director.

Q Has the President formally offered the services of the FBI to the Democrats on clearing prospective Vice Presidential candidates?

MR. NESSEN: Not really, John. The way that came up -- Saul probably can tell you -- is this was an idea Saul has had for some time, apparently, and the President had never heard of it or thought about it before. I think if you read the transcript you will see the President said, "I never thought of that, but let me think out loud for a minute." He said, "I guess if the Democrats requested it and the subject approved in writing and if it was not against the law, it sounds like it might be something to think about."

Q Ron, in view of the fact that the last time the President met with Levi and Mathews to discuss busing alternatives, it was held in secret and we did not learn about it for six months --

MR. NESSEN: I am sorry, that is not true, David. I don't mean to contradict you, but about the day after that meeting --

O You are correct we did learn the meeting took place afterwards, but it took us six months to find out there was a directive to intervene in a court case. Would you let us know what happens in this meeting?

MR. NESSEN: I have a feeling that you will make sure that I do.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Ron.

END (AT 12:55 P.M. EDT)