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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

EYES ONLY

April 26, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN
FROM: CHARLES COLSON *mc*
SUBJECT: Attached Lou Harris Comments

Attached is a transcript of my conversation with Lou Harris today. I have already mentioned this to you, but I send it along for two reasons. First, it would be unfortunate if the President got the impression from Ehrlichman that busing is not a cutting issue and if the President thought that Harris held that point of view, since from time to time the President seems to think Harris' opinions are good, **if** John has told the President the same thing John announced at the 8:15 meeting this morning, you and the President should be aware that it is a phony.

Secondly, I am getting on beautifully with John. He is very easy to work with and program. It is occasionally frustrating because the facts move around like shifting sands, but nonetheless we are getting things done for a change. I don't think the problem is John on the substantive issues so much as it is the Harper-Morey-Michel cabal -- John's systems analysis group which I have now concluded is ideologically very much out of tune with the President. It is evident from the attached that Morey called Harris to get Harris to tell Morey things that would confirm Morey's own feelings. Note particularly the second paragraph underlined.

Conversation with Lou Harris, April 26, 1972

C: Lou, at the 8:15 meeting this morning we were talking about busing, that's our regular staff meeting, and John Ehrlichman said that he had information from Lou Harris to the effect that busing was not a good national issue and was not helping the President. I thought, "Jesus, that doesn't sound correct to me. In my conversations with Harris he has..."

H: No, this guy Morey called me yesterday and said to me, "Gee, something the Republican national Committee put out that said you thought busing was a major issue along with Vietnam and the economy." and that was that last column I had. And I said, no, it was one of the issues being discussed and they were looking at the implications of it. I didn't put a priority on it. He said, "Good, because I've been saying the busing issue is not that dominant" and I just had the feeling, frankly, the guy is sort of an academic type character. Morey is. He may have passed something on to Ehrlichman.

C: Well, as you indication to me on the phone, you thought it was strengthening the President's support.

H: There's no question that busing has firmed up the President's position -- absolutely down the middle and I think it's defused the issue to a large degree but at the same time it's helped the President in the border states and I think... put it this way, it hasn't disenchanting the Northern suburban, college-educated people.

C: No and it hasn't hurt us with the Negroes.

H: It's gained votes there.

C: The significant thing is that it is an issue that we can exploit and use to our advantage while on the Democratic side it cuts them up the middle.

H: Absolutely destroys the Democrats. It helps Wallace, but that's nothing. Wallace is ahead in the Deep South now, but God if you wanted to trade off, I would rather keep the suburbs of all the big states in the North and if you've got to lose Alabama and Mississippi... I mean Jesus, if there's anything expendable in the 1972 election, it's Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. I think Georgia... my guess is you've got Georgia. But, those three I'd never base anything on at all.

C: Well, you and I discussed about half of the Democratic supporters are pro-busing and about half are anti-busing. To the extent that we are able to continue to develop the issue it is to the President's advantage. We make it... we put the Democrats over the rack in terms of where they come out.

H: Absolutely. I'll give you some results on Friday which are fascinating on busing where I think it's whose position do you agree with most? I think it's Nixon 30, Wallace 22 and HHH 14. We tested every Democrat on that and you see the Democrats with no more than 14% with a view on busing.

C: Which means that we have a two to one margin on that issue.

H: Wallace is up stronger on it.

C: Well, you have to analyse it on the basis that it has them over a barrel and it has thus far only served to solidify our support because our supporters are probably 100% anti-busing. I don't think there are any pro-busing people who are supporting Nixon. Isn't that the way your last analysis shows? Well, okay. I wanted to button down that one point, because I thought I was hearing things.

H: No. No. I get quoted in vain, I'm afraid, a lot.

C: We all do. I'm very familiar with the feeling.

H: You know, the publishers yesterday... I told them they were part of the establishment....

C: I saw that. You got a hell of a good ride.

H: God they loved it. Senator Bill Knowland came up to me after it and said I want a copy of that speech. It's very impressive.

C: A hell of a good speech. I'd like to have a copy. See you Friday.