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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 30, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR DICK CHENEY
 THROUGH: KEN COLE
 FROM: MIKE DUVAL
 SUBJECT: DEHYDRATED POTATOES

Congressman Harding proposes that the Federal Government orchestrate a scheme whereby dehydrated potatoes would be used to feed the hungry people in such countries as India. He proposes that one of the oil-producing countries pick up the \$25 million tab, the Defense Department provide transportation and Agriculture supervise the purchasing. In his view, this will aid the depressed U.S. potato industry (especially in Idaho) and also serve humanitarian purposes.

This proposal was carefully considered back in November by the White House, Agriculture and the State Department. Harding received a reply from the State Department.

Our principal objections to the program are:

- Countries, even where severe food shortages exist, generally don't want potatoes.
- The State Department will not approach an oil-producing nation on a bilateral basis to cut this deal. They will help Harding make contact as a private citizen, and they are working on multilateral agreements to feed the hungry.
- Essentially, this program is designed to solve an economic problem in the United States and should be handled by the private sector with very limited government involvement.

The Harding proposal has been effectively rejected by all the departments and agencies involved and this appears to us to be the right course of action. A remaining question which should receive attention, is whether or not potatoes in some form might be used in the P.L. 480 donated food program. A special committee at Agriculture is carefully looking into this issue. Attached is a more detailed report prepared by Norm Ross. We plan to reply in behalf of the President to former Congressman Harding, laying out the above and telling him that Agriculture will follow up on the P.L. 480 idea.