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FEB 14 1975

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN  
WASHINGTON

February 13, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DON RUMSFELD

FROM: RON NESSEN RHN

I and others in the Press Office have received a very strong negative feedback from reporters on the President's visit with John Connally in Houston. This has come from serious, responsible reporters such as Carroll Kilpatrick and Don Irwin, as well as from the other kind.

These reporters all acknowledge that Connally is legally innocent pending his trial, that he is an old friend of the President's, that he does have a special knowledge of energy and economic matters, and that he is a force in Republican Texas politics.

But they make the point strongly that the visit simply did not LOOK right. It reminded them of the bad old days of Watergate and connected President Ford with that era.

Dick Cheney tells me that he has had similar conversations with reporters.

The Connally episode casts light on an interesting development in the press corps. There is beginning to blossom a feeling among reporters at the White House that the President is a decent, honest man of complete integrity who is working hard and effectively at his job, and may have the right answers. There is the nebulous beginning of a feeling in the White House press corps that the reporters hope the President succeeds.

The serious and thoughtful reporters tell me that the Connally visit caused so much commotion because it disappointed those reporters who are hoping that the President succeeds.

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SENSITIVE -- TREATED AS HANDWRITING --

NO BLUE CARD MADE.