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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 14, 1975

FOR: THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: THE STAFF SECRETARY

FROM: ROLAND L. ELLIOTT

SUBJECT: INCOMING PRESIDENTIAL
MAIL FOR THE WEEK OF
FEBRUARY 10-14, 1975

Presidential mail averaged 4,700 pieces per day for a total of about 28,000 this week. This is a slight downturn in volume from the past few weeks which averaged about 30,000 - 35,000. The economy and energy accounted for 22% of the incoming. There was special emphasis on the oil tariffs proposal which, by itself, accounted for 2,600 pieces this week.

The bulk of the tariff criticism is from those identifying themselves as "middle class." They argue that their economic base has already been seriously eroded by inflation over the past year and that further price increases from tariffs would wipe them out. Even more than gasoline prices, there is an expressed fear of rising home heating and electric costs. Many writers include price comparisons between 1973 and 1974, where fuel bills have risen upwards of 100%. There is a growing sense that utilities are insensitive to the public. Few of these writers see proposed tax reductions as materially improving their own economic situation.

The second most dominant concern is inflation. These writers appear to fall more within the upper-middle class and business ranks. Less affected in their personal standard of living by inflation, they nevertheless point to its long-term ruinous effects and call for sharply reduced government spending. This attitude has been

somewhat reinforced in the general economic mail, and is the basic theme in the current mail on the 1976 Federal budget. This mail continues light with only 336 pieces:

Pro	21
Con	254
Comment	61

Mixed in with the budget mail is criticism of "official" government spending, mainly targeted at Congress. Particular comments and news clippings focus on Congressional salaries, expense accounts and vacations, and junkets. Also mentioned is the "style of living" of federal officials (singled out for special mention are the Postmaster General, the Secretary of Agriculture's new dining room, and the Vice President's new official residence).

Opposition to any further aid to Vietnam continues strong. Almost 90% who oppose such aid further add that they are against limiting Social Security increases and raising the price of food stamps.

Pro	46
Con	1,010

Also, as a result of an interview with economist Eliot Janeway on the February 13th Tomorrow Show, we have received about 1,800, almost identically-worded, telegrams urging that "America use its power to force down Arab oil prices."

There have also been 75 telegrams protesting the Vinnell Corporation's training of the Saudis. On the subject of making military commissaries self-supporting, we have received 745 letters, all in protest, primarily from active and retired military personnel.