

This Copy For _____

NEWS CONFERENCE

#377

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 9:07 A.M. EST

NOVEMBER 20, 1975

THURSDAY

MR. NESSEN: First of all, I have about three or four things to give you.

One is a statement by the President on the death of General Franco.

Q Are you going to release that?

MR. NESSEN: It is here to be passed out, as soon as somebody comes along and passes it out.

Q How long have you had this?

MR. NESSEN: It has just been prepared since his death. You know that.

I also want to give you a letter that the President wrote last night to Chairman Pike. This letter is intended to be a detailed explanation of the President's views on the subpoenas issued by the Pike Committee and on the contempt citations by the Pike Committee.

As you will see, the overall purpose of it is to suggest that the committee and the White House work together to resolve this in a way that does not result in a confrontation. I think the letter speaks for itself, and Carol will hand that out now.

No filing until we are finished.

The President also sent a letter this morning to Senator Scott, Senator Mansfield and Senator Eastland, with copies going to Church, Tower, Griffin and Byrd. It is a rather short letter, three short paragraphs, in which the President reiterates his opposition to the publication of the Church Committee's report on assassination allegations, and he refers back to his original letter of October 31 to Senator Church, in which he spells out in detail his reasons for opposing publication.

MORE

#377

If you recall, in that original letter he said that the committee and the Justice Department have every responsibility for investigating and legislating and, if found appropriate, prosecuting, but that the President's opposition is to publication where it could harm American foreign policy, national interests and possibly endanger the lives of people.

Now, I don't have any copies made of these letters, but if you would like them, we can have them Xeroxed. These are today's letters.

Q Yes, we need it.

MR. NESSEN: All right. They really only refer back to the original letter.

Finally, just a very small matter. I notice in some of the New York City stories concerning our statement of yesterday there was an implication or suggestion that the President was saying that New York State, the legislature, must raise taxes before he would do this review next week,

I think we have made clear that the President has no particular plan or method that he is endorsing or embracing, recommending, pushing or anything like that. As he says in his statement of yesterday, they are finally now accepting their primary responsibility in New York City and New York State.

How they assume that responsibility, by what method, he has no role in, and will make no recommendation or no demands. It is up to them to decide. So, it would be inaccurate to say that he is demanding a tax increase as a prior condition for reviewing the situation and considering whether any Federal assistance is needed, as he said.

That is all I have. Do you want to go ahead and file?

Q Do you have any idea of who might go to Franco's funeral or the investiture or what have you?

MR. NESSEN: Frank, it just has not been put together yet. It is being worked on, though.

Fred, did you get everything you need?

Q I don't know. I will ask you.

Q This letter that we have to Mansfield, it is the same one that went to all the people, is that right?

MR. NESSEN: Mansfield, Scott and Eastland, with copies to Church, Tower, Griffin and Byrd.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 9:15 A.M. EST)