

The original documents are located in Box 300, folder “National Press Club Study” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Questions Asked by National Press Club study

Current number of Presidential press conferences, along with a breakdown of the formats : TAB A

Do you have records of other post-World War II Presidents for comparison? No

Number of media interviews the President has granted and the number of persons involved. We'd like a breakdown of the number of interviews from newspapers, magazines, radio and television and a list of those people: TAB B

How many are still on the waiting list? Changes constantly, as requests come in and others are granted.

How many people work for the White House Press office and related activities: 36

What is the budget: Incorporated into White House budget - no separate amount

How many considered press officers, how many clerical, how many in other categories? TAB C

Figures on personnel totals and budgets in past White House press offices. Don't have that information available



PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCES

1974

No. 1	August 28, 1974	2:30 - 2:59 pm	East Room	Televised
No. 2	September 16, 1974	8:00 - 8:30 pm	East Room	Televised
No. 3	October 9, 1974	2:31 - 2:59 pm	Rose Garden	Televised
No. 4	October 29, 1974	10:56 - 11:30 am	Briefing Room	
No. 5	December 2, 1974	7:31 - 8:10 pm	450 EOB	Televised

1975

No. 6	January 21, 1975	2:04 - 2:42 pm	450 EOB	Televised
No. 7	February 4, 1975	2:35 - 3:10 pm	Phoenix, Arizona	Televised regionally
No. 8	February 11, 1975	7:03 - 7:36 pm	Topeka, Kansas	Televised regionally
No. 9	February 26, 1975	11:05 - 11:35 am	Hollywood, Florida	Televised regionally
No. 10	March 6, 1975	7:31 - 8:02 pm	450 EOB	Televised
No. 11	March 17, 1975	6:03 - 6:30 pm	South Bend, Indiana	Televised regionally
No. 12	April 3, 1975	12:01 - 12:45 pm	San Diego, California	Televised
No. 13	May 6, 1975	7:31 - 8:05 pm	450 EOB	Televised
No. 14	May 30, 1975	7:29 - 7:48 pm	Brussels, Belgium	
No. 15	June 9, 1975	7:30 - 8:01 pm	Rose Garden	Televised



No. 16	June 25, 1975	5:00 - 5:30 pm	South Grounds	Televised
No. 17	July 12, 1975	11:30 am - 12:01 pm	Chicago, Illinois	Televised regionally
No. 18	September 16, 1975	11:40 am - 12:12 pm	Oval Office	
No. 19	October 9, 1975	8:01 - 8:30 pm	450 EOB	Televised
No. 20	October 10, 1975	4:15 - 5:05 pm	Detroit, Michigan	Televised regionally
No. 21	November 3, 1975	7:30 - 8:03 pm	East Room	Televised



PRESIDENTIAL INTERVIEWS

1974

October 25, 1974	Saul Pett	Associated Press	Air Force One	
October 26, 1974	Harry Reasoner	American Broadcasting Co.	Camp David	Televised Nov. 17, 197
November 11, 1974	Howard Flieger Marvin Stone Les Tanzer Paul Martin John Mashek	U. S. News and World Report	Oval Office	
November 27, 1974	Mel Elfin Osborne Elliott Edward Kosner	Newsweek	Oval Office	
December 17, 1974	Joseph Alsop	Los Angeles Times/ Washington Post Syndicate	The Residence	Lunch and interview
December 26, 1974	Helen Thomas	United Press International	Vail, Colorado	



1975

Page 2

January 8, 1975

Harry Rosenfeld
Carroll Kilpatrick
Haynes Johnson
Lou Cannon

Washington Post

Oval Office

January 10, 1975

Hugh Sidey
Dean Fischer
Bonnie Angelo
Henry Grunwald
Murray Gart

Time Magazine

Oval Office

January 23, 1975

Tom Brokaw
John Chancellor

NBC

Family Living Quarters Televised

February 6, 1975

Aldo Beckman
Clayton Kirkpatrick
Jim Squires
William Neikirk

Chicago Tribune

Oval Office

February 7, 1975

John Mashek

US News and World Report

Oval Office

For photo story

February 7, 1975

Ruth Winter

Family Circle

Oval Office

February 7, 1975

John Hersey

New York Times Magazine

The Residence

February 14, 1975

Jack Germond
Norman Kempster
Fred Barnes
John Bowden

Washington Star-News

Oval Office



March 11, 1975	Robert Lubar Hedley Donovan Daniel Seligman William Bowen James Reichley	Fortune Magazine	Oval Office	
March 21, 1975	Jack Nelson Robert Donovan Dennis Britton Rudy Abramson Paul Steiger	Los Angeles Times	Oval Office	
March 24, 1975	Bill Theis William Hearst Jr. Bob Considine Joseph Kingsbury-Smith	Hearst Newspapers	Oval Office	
April 21, 1975	Walter Cronkite Eric Sevareid Bob Shieffer	CBS	Blue Room	Televised
May 9, 1975	Malcolm Forbes Sr. Malcolm Forbes Jr.	Forbes Magazine	Oval Office	
May 19, 1975	Jerry Green James Wieghart Paul Healy	New York Daily News	Oval Office	



May 23, 1975	Robert MacNeil Henry Brandon Adalbert deSegonzac Jan Reifenberg Marino deMedici	British Broadcasting Co. London Sunday Times France Soir Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Il Tempo	Diplomatic Reception Room	Televised
May 27, 1975	Rowland Evans Robert Novak	Chicago Tun-Time Syndicate	Oval Office	
June 2, 1975	Ali Hamdi Al Gammal Mohsen Mohammad Moussa Sabri Abdel Sitar El Tawil	Chief Editor-Ahram Chief Editor - Gumhurriyya Chief Editor - Akhbar Chief Editor - Rose El Yossef	Salzburg, Austria	
June 9, 1975	Pierre Salinger	L'Express	Oval Office	
June 18, 1975	Richard Wilson	Des Moines Register	Oval Office	
June 23, 1975	Roy Rowan	Time Magazine	Oval Office	For book on Mayaguez inci
June 30, 1975	David Broder Marquis Childs Carl Rowan	Washington Post United Features Syndicate Field Newspapers	Oval Office	
July 7, 1975	Joseph Kraft	Field Newspaper Syndicate	Oval Office	For New York Times Magazi piece



July 13, 1975	Lou Cannon	Washington Post	Oval Office	Book on Washington press
July 15, 1975	Hedley Donovan	Time Magazine	Oval Office	
July 15, 1975	Jack Anderson	Washington Merry-Go-Round	Map Room	Video taped
July 21, 1975	Godfrey Sperling William Anderson George F. Will	Christian Science Monitor Chicago Tribune Press Service Washington Post Writer's Group	Oval Office	
July 22, 1975	Howard Flieger Marvin Stone John H. Adams Les Tanzer Paul Martin John Mashek	US News and World Report	Oval Office	
July 23, 1975	Clifton Daniels James Naughton Phil Shabecoff Bernard Gwertzman Marjorie Hunter	New York Times	Oval Office	
July 24, 1975	Peter Goldman Hal Bruno Tom DeFrank	Newsweek Magazine	Oval Office	
August 7, 1975	Martin Agroneky Paul Duke	Public Broadcasting	Solarium	Televised



August 8, 1975	Frank Cormier Helen Thomas Ralph Harris	Associated Press United Press International Reuters	Oval Office
August 21, 1975	Maury DeJong	Grand Rapids Press	Vail, Colorado
August 25, 1975	Irv Kupcinec	WMAQ-TV and Public TV; and syndicated columnist	Chicago, Illinois
August 25, 1975	John McCullough Ron Scott Carl Zimmerman	WTMJ-TV - Milwaukee WISN-TV WITI-TV	Milwaukee, Wisconsin Televised
August 30, 1975	Arthur Albert Sarah Wye Jack Cavanaugh	WJAR-TV - Newport	Newport, Rhode Island Televised
September 5, 1975	Joseph Benti	KNXT-TV - Los Angeles	Sacramento, California Televised
September 11, 1975	Dave Goblaskas	WSCV and WSLE-FM Peterborough, New Hamp.	Amherst, New Hampshire
September 12, 1975	Julius Hunter Robert Hardy Richard Dudman John Flack	KMOX - St. Louis KMOX St. Louis Post Dispatch St. Louis Globe Democrat	St. Louis, Missouri Televised
September 15, 1975	Tom Ross Morton Kondracke Charles Bartlett	Chicago Sun Times	Oval Office



September 20, 1975	Otis Chandler William F. Thomas Anthony Day Frank P. Haven Edwin Guthman Robert Gibson George Cotlair Mark Murphy Jean Sharley Taylor Louis B. Fleming Robert Erbury Jack Nelson	Los Angeles Times Editorial Board	Los Angeles, California	
September 20, 1975	Bob Abernathy Jess Marlow Warren Olney	KNBC - TV - Los Angeles	Los Angeles, California	Televised
September 22, 1975	Sid Davis Stan Borman Belva David Jenny Crimm Lynn Joiner	Westinghouse Broadcasting KPIX (Westinghouse) KPIX KPIX KPIX	San Francisco, California	Videotaped
October 1, 1975	Terry Forsberg Steve Murphy Joel Fowler Mary Jane O'Dell Sam Stewart Howard Silber	KMTV WOW-TV Nebraska PBS Iowa PBS KETV Omaha World Herald	Omaha, Nebraska	Televised
October 2, 1975	Peter Lisagor	Chicago Daily News	Oval Office	

October 7, 1975

Juanita Glenn
Lois Thomas
Randy Prewitt
Carl Williams
Sam Brown
Hop Edwards

Knoxville Journal
Knoxville News-Sentinel
WTVK-TV
WBIR-TV
WATE-TV
PBS

Knoxville, Tennessee

Televised

October 17, 1975

David Kraslow
Eugene Risher
Andrew Glass
Jean Heller

Cox Newspapers

Oval Office

October 30, 1975

Herb Klein
Ken Jones
Larry Moore
Gabe Pressman
Alan Smith
Gil Amundson

Metromedia
KTTV-Los Angeles
KMBC-Kansas City
WNEW-New York
WTTG-Washington DC
WTCM-Minneapolis-St. Paul

Los Angeles, California

Televised



PRESS OFFICE PERSONNEL

	<u>Press Officers</u>	<u>Clerical</u>	<u>Other categories</u>
<u>Press Office:</u>	6	8	1
<u>Communications:</u>		3	4
<u>News Summary:</u>		2	5
<u>Advance:</u>		1	3
<u>Television:</u>		1	2



Set up next week

THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

November 3, 1975

Dear Ron,

Here are some questions we would like your thoughts on. Most of them were raised by more than 35 interviews with Washington reporters, most of them White House regulars, by members of our committee.

Because of speeches scheduled Wednesday by President Sadat and Mayor Beame, we have shifted our committee meeting to consider the White House press relations report to Friday. So we would like to see you by Thursday at the latest.

If you prefer, it certainly would be acceptable to us for you to provide written answers to these questions, although we still want to see you to discuss our project.

Best,

Jack Kole

John W. Kole



In your speech to Sigma Delta Chi last March you spoke of a "mood of hostility and suspicion and distrust" between the press corps and the White House because of Vietnam and Watergate. In late June, you complained about the "poisonous atmosphere" in the White House press room? Have things improved?

While our interviews give your operation high marks for considerably more efficiency--for example, the punctual regular briefings--there are numerous complaints about the quality of the information, with many complaining that too often you are not adequately prepared. What do you think?

There was considerable feeling that you are not being given as much information as you should have. The chief suspect for this situation is Don Rumsfeld. How do you feel about the problem?

You have conceded that you have a continuing problem because of Henry Kissinger's secretive ways in dealing with foreign affairs. Have you made any progress in dealing with this?

One suggestion to improve the briefing is to hold an afternoon session to answer questions raised in the morning that were not answered then. Is this feasible? Or is your work day so clogged that it would be impossible to handle? Would it be possible to have government experts in more often to handle briefings on complicated subjects? Do you have some other ideas about the briefing?

We have complaints from some who do not cover the White House regularly that they get short shrift when they call in for help. Do you recognize this as a problem and, if you do, what are you doing about it?

What are your thoughts on the presidential press conference? Several of the reporters we interviewed felt that, while the followup question is an improvement, it often is abused, reducing the chances for other queries. Could press conferences be expanded to an hour to permit more detailed questioning and broader participation?

There are widespread complaints about the lack of accessibility of White House officials, especially for comment and explanation on breaking news when time is of the essence. Can this situation be improved or are reporters asking for an impossible standard?

What are your complaints about the performance of the White House press corps? What kind of a job is the media doing covering the Ford administration?



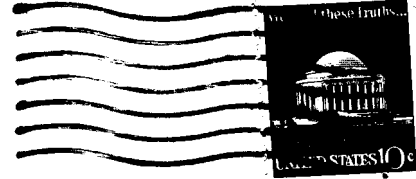
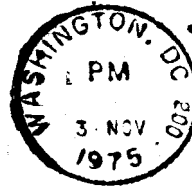
THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

WASHINGTON BUREAU

734 National Press Building

Washington, D. C. 20004

Kole



Mr. Ron Nessen
Press Office
The White House
Washington, D. C.

THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

Questions Asked by National Press Club study

Current number of Presidential press conferences, along with a breakdown of the formats : TAB A

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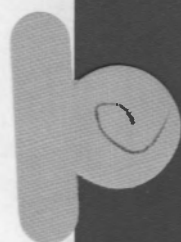


A



B





*Ron
Jack to me
about this
cy*

THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

October 27, 1975

Dear Ron,

Connie told me late last week that because of the Sadat visit you would be unable to meet with us today.

Realizing that you will be in California and Milwaukee on Wednesday and Thursday, we would like to see you about our project either Tuesday, Friday or early next week.

That is because the Professional Relations Committee is meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 5, to consider a draft report on our study of White House press relations. We would like to discuss with you some of the points that have been raised in our interviews.

I also discussed briefly with Connie last week our need for some basic facts and figures on on President Ford's press operation. Here is what I would like:

--The current number of presidential press conferences, along with a breakdown of the formats (for example, those in Washington and outside; those televised and nontelevised). And do you have records of other post-World War II presidents for comparison?

--The number of media interviews the president has granted and the number of persons involved. We'd like a breakdown of the number of interviewers from newspapers, magazines, radio and television and a list of those people. How many are still on the waiting list?

--How many people work for the White House press office and related activities and what is the budget? We would like a breakdown of how many are considered press officers, how many clerical and how many in other categories. And we'd like figures on personnel totals and budgets in past White House press offices.

If possible, we'd like to get this information by the end of the week. Perhaps Connie can contact me whenever you can see us.

Best,

Jack Kole
John W. Kole



THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

October 22, 1975

Dear Ron,

We are starting to put together our study of White House press relations conducted by members of the Professional Relations Committee of the National Press Club.

Jim McCartney and I would like to come in to talk to you about it, possibly on Monday before the California trip.

Could we come in early Monday morning or late afternoon, perhaps at 5 or after?

I'll call Connie late in the week to check on the possibility of an appointment.

Thanks again.

Best,

Jack Kole
John W. Kole

*O.K. for 5pm
Mon or Tue.
X No, because I'm*

*Totally tied up
with Satat, Paris
planning, China planning
etc. etc.*

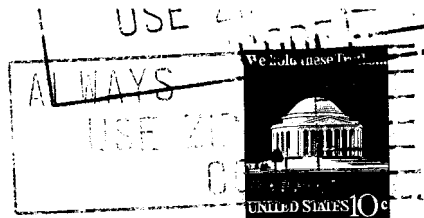
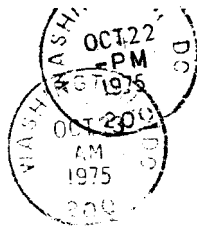
RAN

737-2985

late



THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL



Mr. Ron Nessen
Press Office
The White House
Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON BUREAU
734 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20004

16

34.

IMMEDIATE OFFICE

1. Ron Nessen
2. Bill Greener
3. Jack Hushen
4. Larry Speakes
5. Bill Roberts
6. John Carlson
7. Thym Smith
8. Connie Gerrard
9. Patty Presock
10. Pat Coyle
11. Jan Barberia
12. Judy O'Neil
13. Gay Pirozzi
14. Carol Montague
15. Connie Thumma

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

16. Margita White
17. Randy Woods
18. Margaret Earl
19. Sandra Wisniewski
20. Carolyn Wimmer
21. Gail Campbell
- 22.. Liz O'Neill.

NEWS SUMMARY OFFICE

23. Jim Shuman
24. Susan Mercantelli
25. Melanie Berney
26. Megan Williams
27. Kathy Tucker
28. Ann Reilly
29. Rex Marshall



ADVANCE OFFICE

- 30. Eric Rosenberger
- 31. Pappy Noel
- 32. David Wendell
- 33. Joy Chiles

TELEVISION OFFICE

- 34. Bob Mead
- 35. Helen Collins
- 36. Ann Grier



SALARY TOTAL OF THE PRESS OFFICE:

\$416,540
- 34,500

\$382,040

Press Office
Tom DeCair's salary

\$94,485
+ 36,000

\$130,485

Communications Office
Randy Woods

\$127,067
- 18,500

\$108,567

News Summary
Jon Hoornstra

\$69,679

Advance

\$71,628

Television

33,297

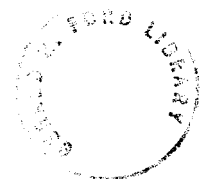
Lib

905,696

\$772,399

TOTAL

x5% pay raise



October 14, 1975

--- Briefing by the President - Roosevelt Room
Tax Cut

September 26

--- Private meeting with Peter Agiris - OO
11:30 a.m. (Hellenic Chronicle of Boston)

✓ October 17, 1975

--- Cox Newspapers - Oval Office - 2:00 p.m.
David Kraslow - Wash. Bu. Chief
Gene Risher - White House Correspondent
Andrew Glass - Economic & Political rptr
Jean Heller - Investigative & energy

October 7

Margita to
handle this

--- Knoxville Press People - Knoxville, Tenn
Juanita Glenn, Knoxville Journal
Lois Thomas, Knoxville News-Sentinel
Randy Prewitt, WTVK - TV
Carl Williams, WBIR-TV
Sam Brown, WATE-TV
Hop Edwards, PBS

October 2, 1975

--- Chicago Daily News - Oval Office - 4:00pm
Peter Lizagor

October 1, 1975

Margita to
handle this

--- Omaha Television/Newspaper interview
Omaha, Nebraska
Terry Forsberg - KMTV
Steve Murphy - WOW-TV
Joel Fowler - Nebraska PBS
Mary Jane O'Dell - Iowa PBS
Sam Stewart - KETV
Howard Silber - Omaha World Herald

September 20

Margita to
handle this

--- Los Angeles Times Editorial Board
Los Angeles, Calif 5:40 p.m. (Century Plaza
Otis Chandler, Publisher Hotel)
William F. Thomas, Editor
Anthony (tony) Day, Editor of Editorial Page
Frank P. Haven, Managing Editor
Edwin Guthman, Natl. Editor
Robert Gibson, Foreign Editor
George Cotliar, Sr. Assistant Managing Editor
Mark Murphy, Metropolitan Editor
Jean Sharley Taylor, Associate Editor
Louis B. Fleming, Chief Editorial Writer
Robert Erbury, President, Times/Mirror co
Jack Nelson, Wash. Bu. Chief



September 22 - Westinghouse Broadcasting Co. - St. Francis Hotel
San Francisco, California 3:00
Margita to handle this Sid Davis, Wash. Bu. Chief
Stan Borman - moderator - KPIX
Belva Davis - anchors KPIX
Jenny Crimm - co anchor KPIX
Lynn Joiner - KPIX - anchorwoman -

September 20 - KNBC News Conference Century Plaza Hotel
Los Angeles, California
Margita to handle this Bob Abernethy - moderator
Jess Marlow - anchorman
Warren Olney - anchorman

✓ September 15 - Chicago Sun Times - Oval Office 2 p.m.
Tom Ross, Wash. Bureau Chief
Mort Kondracke - W/H Correspondent
Charles Bartlett - syndicated columnist

September 12 - St. Louis Post Dispatch & St. Louis Globe Democrat
KMOX Radio - Gateway Tower Building, St. Louis, MO.
Margita to handle this Julius Hunter, News Anchorman - KMOX Radio
Robert Hardy, Host - KMOX Radio
John Flack - Political Editor - St. Louis Globe
Richard Dudman - St. Louis Post Dispatch / (Demo. /

✓ September 11 - The Washington Post - Aboard Air Force 1
7:15 pm - during flight fr New Hampshire to DC
Carroll Kilpatrick

September 11 - WSCV & WSLE - Peterborough, New Hampshire
Dave Goblaskas - WSCV & WSLE-FM
Margita to handle

September 2 - KNXT-TV (CBS) television interview
Sacramento, California
Margita to handle Joseph Benti

August 30 - WJAR-TV - Newport, Rhode Island - Sheraton-
Islander Inn - 6:00 p.m.
Arthur Albert - Ex. News Dir.
Sarah Wye - Correspondent
Jack Cavanaugh - correspondent



✓ August 27

- Cleveland Plain Dealer - 12:45 00
Thomas Vail, Publisher

August 25

(Margita to
handle)

- Irv Kupcinec Show - The Palmer House
Chicago, Illinois
Irving Kupcinec

August 25

(Margita to
handle)

- WTMJ-TV/WISN-TV/WITI-TV -
Milwaukee, Wisconsin - Pfister Hotel
3 p.m.
John McCullough - WTMJ
Ron Scott - WISN-TV
Carl Zimmerman - WITI-TV

✓ August 21

- Grand Rapids Press - Vail Colorado
10:12
Maury DeJonge

✓ August 8

- Wire Service Reporters Interview
11:35 a.m.
Frank Cormier - AP
Helen Thomas, UPI
Ralph Harris - Reuters

✓ August 7

- Paul Duke & Martin Agronsky - for
Public Broadcasting System
10:30 a.m. - The Solarium
Paul Duke
Martin Agronsky

✓ July 23

- The New York Times
The Oval Office - 11:30 a.m.
Clifton Daniels
James Naughton
Phil Shabecoff
Bernard Gwertzman
Marjorie Hunter



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George Beveridge

White House and the badgers



as Science for the People protested that this research could prejudice parents against boys identified as XYY cases, and perhaps produce in such children the same behavior that is circumstantially associated with the defect. MIT biologist Jonathan King, a member of Science for the People, noted that some pregnant women whose male fetuses were found by amniocentesis to possess the XYY syndrome had become so alarmed when they were told that they were considering abortions, even though no conclusive evidence has emerged to link the defect with abnormal behavior.

Activist critics such as Science for the People saw the NIMH's involvement in the study as a political invasion of science. Supporters of the experiments argued that it was the critics who were really politicizing the issue—and pointed out that the treatable genetic ailment phenylketonuria is now routinely identified by similar screening studies. Despite these arguments, the pressure forced Walzer and Gerald to halt the program prematurely last May.

Concern: Many scientists fear that similar political pressure is about to be applied from Washington. "I'm afraid that what Kennedy is thinking about is legislation to control the kinds of experimentation that can be done," says Baltimore. "This is extremely dangerous because it may stop all sorts of things that are both safe and beneficial in the process of stopping what is, at the moment, a very theoretical danger." Berg echoes that sentiment. "You don't stop basic research for fear that the information it will generate will be misapplied," he argues. "The concern should come at the point at which that information is ready to be applied to humans."

The researchers' critics insist that they have no intention at the moment of writing new laws that control research. What they are asking is whether the public, which stands to be affected by any accidents in genetic experiments, should have some say in just what experiments are conducted. "Scientific research by its very nature has outside implications," says Harvard geneticist Richard C. Lewontin, "and consequently there is no inherent right to do anything a scientist damn well pleases."

The issue really boils down to one of deciding when the risk of any piece of research outweighs the benefit. That sort of analysis will be a major focus of a forthcoming conference of scientists and laymen that is being organized at the behest of Kennedy and New York's Sen. Jacob Javits, the ranking Republican on the Senate health subcommittee. What seems clear already, though, is that biomedical researchers, thanks in part to their very achievements, face a future in which they themselves—and perhaps public officials too—will have to devote more attention to the eventual consequences of their work.

—PETER GWYNNE with STEPHEN G. MICHAUD in Washington, WILLIAM J. COOK in San Francisco and bureau reports

Nessen's Report Card

To White House press secretary Ron Nessen, it seemed "the most unconscionable misrepresentation of a President." Once again, Gerald Ford had been pictured in the media suffering one of his chronic tumbles—this time on the ski slopes at Vail, Colo.—and the quick-tempered Nessen rose to his defense. "This President is healthy," he protested. "He is graceful, and he is by far the most athletic President within memory." But if Ford's performance on the slippery slopes was pardonable, Nessen's seemed less so. "To sensible people," editorialized The Wall Street Journal, "the whole idea of a Presidential press secretary bragging about his boss's gracefulness makes the whole team look comic."

nadir" with perhaps the most inept performance in modern times" by a press secretary overseas. The report concluded: "It is difficult to see how Nessen can be the Presidential spokesman abroad unless he finds some way to improve on this kind of disastrous non-performance."

Those harsh words were prompted by the fact that on the China trip Nessen kept himself even less available to the press than the Chinese liaison officials. Then, on the Air Force One flight to Indonesia, he let his long-standing feud with Henry Kissinger pop into the open when he angrily called reporters "patsies" for changing a pool report at the Secretary of State's urging. After the trip, The New Republic's John Osborne wrote: "It is intolerable that Ron Nessen should be kept by the President." In fact,



Nessen meets the press: High marks for Presidential access, low marks for China

It was not the first time Nessen had managed to seem maladroit in his boss's behalf. The former NBC newsman took over as the President's spokesman with a promise to be candid and fair, but after fifteen months on the job, Nessen's low standing with the press corps has become a serious political issue in its own right. Last week, a six-man committee of the National Press Club, including three White House correspondents, handed Nessen an embarrassing report card, based on an eight-month study of White House press relations. While the study gave Nessen some points for efficiency and openness—especially in comparison with the stonewalling Nixon press office—it cited reporters' complaints of his "arrogance" and "irascibility." And on the recent Presidential visit to China, it said, Nessen "plunged to his

some of Ford's closest advisers—notably Melvin Laird—are known to believe that Nessen should be fired. And Ford's chief of staff, Richard Cheney, is said to be deeply concerned about the situation. Some critics think that Ford's faltering political image is largely the fault of his chief image maker.

Sandbagged: In fairness, Nessen's failings are not all self-inflicted. As the Press Club study notes, he has at times been sandbagged by his superiors. Both Kissinger and former chief of staff Donald Rumsfeld have kept him shut off from key policy information, so that often he has appeared evasive and unprepared in news briefings. On other occasions, he was stuck with the loyal servant's chore of official dissembling—insisting, for example, that Ford's position on aid to New York City had not changed when report-

A18

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1976

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

F.Y.I.