

The original documents are located in Box 45, folder “1/5/1976 - Regional Newspaper Editors, St. Louis, Mo” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING BOOK

REGIONAL NEWSPAPER EDITORS

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 1976



REGIONAL NEWSPAPER EDITORS
ST. LOUIS, MO.
Monday, January 5, 1976

From: Jim Shuman

I. PURPOSE

This informal meeting is part of a series to enable you to discuss issues of interest to some 20 newspaper editors from Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Southern Illinois. It will enable you to hear the concerns of community leaders in an important section of the Midwest and to set forth both your views and policies and the personal qualities, background and depth of knowledge that make you suited to be President of the United States.

II. BACKGROUND

This will be your tenth meeting with regional news executives. Only newspaper executives (mostly editors and a few publishers) will be represented. Some of those attending -- executives from the largest papers -- were at similar meetings with you in Minneapolis and in South Bend. For all the editors from Kansas and for the vast majority from the other states, however, this will be their first meeting with you.

The editors have been invited to a 1:00 p.m. luncheon/briefing with Ron Nessen, Dick Cheney, Alan Greenspan, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs Richard E. Bell, and Margita White. You are scheduled to arrive at 2:30, answer questions, and leave after half an hour or forty-five minutes.

The meeting is on-the-record for participating news executives but not open for coverage. There will be White House official photographs.



III. PARTICIPANTS

A list of participants and editorial profiles of the key papers represented have been submitted separately. Full biographical material on the participants is not available.

IV. OPENING REMARKS

Brief opening remarks are recommended and should be determined by preceding events of the day and your own sense of appropriateness. They could be simply those suggested by Margita White in her Briefing Paper: "I appreciate this opportunity to meet with newspaper executives from this region. As you know, we have had similar meetings with your colleagues in most other areas of the country. I have found these very valuable discussions on the issues and believe they assist us in carrying out our joint responsibility of keeping the public fully informed. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and also welcome your comments and views."

Or they could be slightly more personal and more extensive.

V. AREAS OF QUESTIONING

The participants have not been limited in the areas they may inquire into. Preliminary information indicates they are particularly interested in farm policy, grain sales to the Soviet Union, Big Government, and Federal Spending. Neither Max Friedersdorf nor Stuart Spencer indicate you will be asked any pressing political questions beyond those you have answered elsewhere, such as your opinion of Ronald Reagan's proposed \$90 billion cut in federal spending.

VI. AREAS TO BE AWARE OF

Rep. Keith G. Sebelius, (R. of Norton, Kansas) in a letter to Max Friedersdorf on November 3, 1975, warned that many people in his district felt the number one national issue was your export policies. A copy of that letter follows.



November 3, 1975

Mr. Max Freidersdorf
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Max:

I have just finished up a listening tour of 18 of my counties. Along with my 39 county visit in August, this means we have been in every county of my district over the past few months. I want to share with you what we found.

The average turnout was between 50 and 100 people. We held public meetings in county courthouses. Two years ago, we were fortunate to have 25 folks show up. There is no question but what people are concerned and frustrated.

The number one issue continued to be the Ford Administration's export policies. The Russian grain agreement has not alleviated this concern; in fact it has made it worse. The farmer, and those who depend on his income, believes President Ford broke faith, has made the farmer a pawn for international relations and singled him out for discriminatory controls. It is generally believed the President sold out to George Meany for political gain. This feeling is almost set in concrete.

The second most mentioned issue was total opposition to bailing out New York City and tied directly to that, the need to reduce spending and big government in Washington. I made every effort to tote water for the President here but he is not getting the credit he deserves.

More to the point, my administrative assistant and our Republican District Chairman visited five counties adjacent to our largest community, Salina, just prior to a fundraiser we had October 25. They met and visited at length with members of the Republican Central Committees of each county. If anything, these folks are more concerned than the folks who were at the courthouses; they are taking the heat.

We posed the question, who would carry your county if a primary were held next month between President Ford and Governor Reagan? Virtually all agreed Reagan would win.



Mr. Max Friedersdorf - 2
November 3, 1975

However, followup questions clearly showed no great support for Reagan; simply frustration for the Ford export policy, big government, a lack of leadership and little or no understanding of rural problems in Washington. These folks did not know what Governor Reagan's farm policy would be but at this stage his radio programs and a simple statement to get the government and big labor out of agriculture would suffice.

It is our understanding several key people in Kansas are about to announce the formation of a Reagan Committee. I expect these developments to present a problem for our Party in that the Governor is not acceptable to our moderate wing. Max, I believe while the President's stock is very low in Kansas, the situation is salvageable. I have three recommendations:

-- Can some consideration be given to issuing a "White Paper" to put the Russian grain agreement in perspective? There has been absolutely no publicity in our country given to the considerations the President had to face in making this decision or to any comprehensive positive benefits that will result over the long term. All we hear is the President sold out to George Meany.

-- I would hope there could be some way for the President to understand, sympathize with and perhaps apologize to the farmer for interfering with his market price contrary to his word.

-- Finally, there must be some way we can dispel the belief that the President sold out to George Meany at the farmer's expense.

As I mentioned, we held a fundraiser October 25 in Salina. We were fortunate to have my good friend, "Vinegar Bend" Mizell speak in my behalf. Getting folks to come and contribute was like pulling teeth. However, we do think the dinner was a success and we did make some money. When we have another in the spring, I hope we can come out swinging for the President. We can't now.

With every best wish,

Sincerely yours,

Keith G. Sebelius



KGS:aa

cc: Bo Callaway
Wilmer Mizell
Jack Calkins
McDill Boyd
Marvnell Reece

bcc: Cal James, Bette Jo Roberts,
San Evans

Bill Smiley, Cliff Hope, Ida Mae,
Gene Eastin and Kansas GOP



ST. LOUIS AIRPORT

- Q. What steps is the Administration taking to resolve the issue on the need for and location of a new St. Louis Airport?
- A. As you know, there has been considerable debate on the St. Louis Airport question over the past several months. There has been discussion both in terms of the need for this type of airport expansion, as well as discussion on the most appropriate location. This matter is currently before Secretary of Transportation William Coleman. Secretary Coleman has recently met with Congressional delegations of Illinois and Missouri to discuss the issues surrounding the airport question. In addition, the Secretary has scheduled a public hearing in St. Louis on January 13 to provide additional opportunities for those of you most closely involved in this issue to express your opinions. Prior to the conclusion of that public hearing and assimilation of the facts, it would be inappropriate for me to comment any further other than to say that I think there is an adequate process underway through which input on this decision can be received and evaluated.

Note for the President:

Additional background material on the airport issue along with some additional Q & A's is attached.

SGM
1/2/76



ST. LOUIS AIRPORT ISSUE

Issue

In early 1972, the St. Louis Metropolitan Area Authority filed an application with DOT for preliminary funding of a new airport. The proposal is to locate the airport at Columbia-Waterloo, Illinois, which is 15 miles south of East St. Louis. Strenuous opposition to this proposed airport has been raised largely by the Missouri side of the St. Louis area.

Background

St. Louis is currently served by the Lambert-St. Louis Airport. Since this airport is bounded by industrial and residential areas, its capacity to serve the St. Louis area is limited. During the early 1970s, when traffic projections were at their peak, it was predicted that the airport would reach capacity by the early 1980s. Alternative sites were studied and Columbia-Waterloo was selected by the Bi-State Authority and the application for development was filed. Since strong opposition was voiced immediately, neither Secretaries Volpe nor Brinegar acted on the application.

Subsequently, air carrier traffic projections have declined and the issue now revolves around the allegation that the current airport can accommodate air traffic into the year 2000. To do so, the airport would need major improvements.

Secretary Coleman pledged that he would evaluate the situation and make a decision on the application by early 1976.

Implications of Approval/Disapproval

If the grant is approved, land acquisition for a major new airport will begin. During the next decade, an estimated \$450 million will be expended on its development. The objective is to make St. Louis a major hub for airport traffic and thereby generate much needed economic development. In all likelihood, the Lambert field would not undergo major improvements during the decade and would continue to operate after 1985 as a general aviation airport.



If the grant is disapproved, it is likely that the Lambert/St. Louis Airport Authority will apply for an airport development grant for upgrading the current facility. Costs are estimated to be about \$150 to \$200 million. It is now expected that after improvement, Lambert would reach capacity some time after the year 2000. It is argued that Lambert would not provide the same economic stimulus to the area. Illinois may still attempt to purchase the Waterloo land in the hopes of future reversal of the decision (land-banking).

Agenda

Secretary Coleman will hold a public hearing in St. Louis on this issue on January 13. (This hearing was originally scheduled for December.) He expects to make a decision by late February.

Political Sensitivity

Political support and opposition is consistent with State representation. Governor Walker and Senators Percy and Stevenson are for the new airport; Governor Bond and Senators Symington and Eagleton are against.

Possible Questions

1. Q: Will the White House be involved in Secretary Coleman's decision?

A: There is a local perception that Bond has applied pressure to the White House. Coleman has indicated that the decision will be his and he will make it based upon the recommendation of his staff after the public hearing. He has also indicated that there is no obvious "political" answer to the problem given the public officials involved (Percy-Bond).



2. Q: Why would the Federal Government even consider spending money on a new airport when Lambert will serve the needs and is wanted by the people around it?

A: There is a legitimate question of the capacity of the Lambert airport and the effect of increased operation on the surrounding area. (There are many variations on this theme which can all be answered by indicating Secretary Coleman will be interested in hearing these concerns during his public hearing and will address them before a decision is made).

3. Q: Why did Secretary Coleman cancel his hearing in December? Does this mean a decision has been made? Isn't it just another successful delay tactic on the part of Governor Bond?

A. Coleman was involved in railroad legislation and did not feel he could leave town. This was the only reason for the cancellation and he rescheduled it as early as practicable for the parties involved.



FEDERAL HIGHWAY LEGISLATION

- Q. What is the status of the current Federal Highway Legislation?
- A. Early in 1975, I submitted to the Congress new legislation to restructure our Federal highway program. In this legislation, I asked for such changes as consolidation of the many separate programs that currently exist, for expanded flexibility to allow States and localities to apply highway funds to their priorities, and I asked that a special priority be given to the completion of key links in our interstate system. Both the House and the Senate have passed their versions of highway legislation and we will have to await the results of the conference committee to determine precisely what the final Congressional version will be; but in both cases they represent extensions of our current highway programs. As a result, I do not believe they adequately meet the long-term issues that face our Federal highway.

SGM
1/2/76



RAILROAD LEGISLATION

- Q. What is the status of current railroad legislation, and, specifically, what do you propose to do to assist the railroads of the Midwest.
- A. Passage of railroad legislation has been a major objective of my Administration. Under separate messages, I have sent to the Congress proposals for reforming the current Federal regulations, endorsed a Final System Plan for the restructuring of the bankrupt Northeast railroad freight system, and finally proposed a plan for assistance for Northeast Corridor passenger service. Both the House and the Senate have combined these individual pieces of legislation into an OMNIBUS rail bill. As currently passed by both Houses, I've indicated that the bill is unacceptable because its price tag is too high, because it does not distribute the Federal funding appropriately, and finally because it does not allow for proper safeguards of the public investment. Members of my Administration and the Department of Transportation are currently working with the House and the Senate to attempt to reach a settlement on this key legislation. I am hopeful that acceptable legislation can be reached. With regard to the assistance offered to the Midwestern railroads, legislation does include for rehabilitation assistance to help in the improvement of the existing rail systems, as well as to streamline freight lines that have over-time become used or unnecessary.

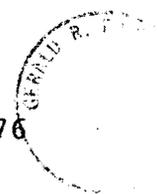
SGM
1/2/76



REGULATORY REFORM

- Q. Mr. President, you have submitted to Congress legislation to reform the current regulations affecting railroad, airline and truck transportation in this Country. What would be the effect of this legislation, particularly on the less densely populated areas in the Midwest?
- A. I have submitted legislation to reform current regulation because I believe that our transportation system today suffers from excessive regulation that has over the years hampered effective competition and efficient operation. As a result, our current system does not provide the full range of services that the marketplace seeks, and, in some cases, charges rates above what the competitive market would establish. The legislation I have put forth does not eliminate Federal regulation totally, but reforms the current structure. It is my belief that we need to speed up the regulatory process in this Country, as well as to allow greater flexibility in the types of service, the markets that are served and the fees that are charged for rail, air and truck service. The changes we have proposed would take place over a five-year period in order to minimize the disruption that might occur to current operations. In terms of the impact in smaller areas, such as those you have in the Midwest, I believe that services would improve because the goods and passenger service that does exist in this area would become more attractive to the private sector transportation carriers.

SGM
1/2/76



WATERWAY USER CHARGES

- Q. What is the status of the proposed placement of user charges on inland waterways?
- A. As you know, the question of waterway user charges has been discussed in Secretary Coleman's "A Statement of National Transportation Policy" issued in September of 1975. The question at hand is whether the major users of transportation facilities should assume a portion of the cost of construction and operation. Currently, users of the inland waterways do not pay a special charge for the use of facilities. At the same time, competing modes of transportation such as airlines, railroads and trucks do pay some kind of tax or fee for the use of their facilities. Therefore, we must decide whether, for purposes of equity and competition, waterways should assume some of the cost presented. I recognize that there is strong opposition to these charges, and I assure you that before a final decision is made we will take these comments into account as well as the impact that user charges may have on barge companies and the general public.



SGM
1/2/76

SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE(SERI)

Question

Has the location for the Solar Energy Research Institute(SERI) already been decided, or is there a chance that we can compete successfully for it in our area?

Answer

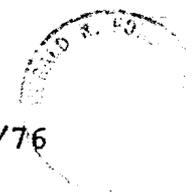
No conclusion has been reached on the location or locations for a Solar Energy Research Institute(SERI). The Energy R&D Administration(ERDA) has work underway to determine how such an institute can best contribute to our objectives of assisting in the development of economical solar energy applications.

In the very near future(probably February), ERDA will issue criteria that guide decisions about the proposed Institute. ERDA then expects to receive proposals from the many areas that have an interest and then to make a decision about the proposed institute.

Background only

- . ERDA has been very slow in developing an acceptable statement of what kind of an "institute" is really needed to support solar energy objectives. Until the real needs are identified, meaningful decisions about the size, organization and location or locations of the institute are virtually impossible. An ERDA statement is now expected before the end of January.
- . Meanwhile, dozens of groups located in almost every state are developing proposals in the hope of capturing the prize.

GRS 1/2/76



PROPANE PRICES

Question

What are you doing about the high prices for propane?

Answer

Propane prices are currently subject to price controls set by the Federal Energy Administration and Frank Zarb has told me that prices have been set at the minimum levels that FEA has found necessary to assure the required production.

Also, as a near term measure, FEA has used its allocation authorities to limit the diversion of propane supplies from the traditional users -- such as agricultural uses (e.g., crop drying) and rural residential heating -- to industrial and utility purposes.

For the longer term, the answer is to bring forth enough natural gas and alternative fuels so that the undue pressure on propane supplies can be relieved. We are awaiting action by the Congress on the deregulation of new natural gas prices, which will be a major step in the right direction.

GRS 1/2/76



ADEQUATE FUEL FOR AGRICULTURE

Question

When you signed the compromise energy bill (Energy Policy and Conservation Act, S. 622) on December 22nd, you indicated that you will begin immediately to remove all current price and allocation regulations except those on crude oil prices.

Does this mean that we can expect higher retail prices and reemergence of shortages that plagued agriculture before the allocation and price control systems were put in place?

Answer

I do not expect serious shortages or rapid price increases as a result of removing allocation and price regulations on the petroleum industry. (Retail petroleum prices may go down as much as 1¢ per gallon as a result of new crude oil price controls.)

Over the past few months, supplies have been more than adequate for most petroleum products (with the possible exception of propane). In fact supplies have been sufficient so that competition for customers has held down retail price levels for petroleum products in many areas -- below the price control levels set by the Government.

We must move ahead rapidly with the removal of unnecessary price and allocation regulations because those controls have created distortions and inefficiencies that have hampered efforts to increase domestic energy production. We must end this government interference if we are to solve our nation's energy problem.

We will move carefully to minimize problems that could come from rapid removal of regulations.



GRS 1/2/76

GASOLINE PRICES

Question

Now that you have signed the compromise energy bill, what will happen to retail gasoline prices

Answer

Because of the new price controls on domestic crude oil, retail gasoline prices may go down by as much as 1¢ per gallon. Without the new controls, these prices may have gone up about 3¢ per gallon.

For the longer run, the bill Congress gave us will permit crude oil prices to rise gradually so that there will be an incentive to increase domestic petroleum production. This means, of course, that retail prices will also go up over the next few years.



ERDA SELECTION OF A SITE NEAR NEW ATHENS, ILLIONOIS (NOT FAR FROM ST. LOUIS) FOR ITS FIRST COAL CONVERSION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT - COALCON.

- . On November 17, 1975, ERDA Administrator Bob Seamans announced the selection of a site near New Athens, Illinois for the construction of the first major coal conversion demonstration project.
- . The selection of the New Athens site has been received very well in the area.
- . The project involves a facility - currently estimated to cost \$237 million - which will conver 2600 tons of sulfur bearing coal per day into 3900 barrels of low-sulfur boiler fuel and 22 million cubic feet per day of synthetic natural gas.
- . The Coalcon Company of New York is the prime contractor for the project and will contribute one half of the cost of constructing and operating the demonstration plant. ERDA will pay the other half of construction and operating costs. ERDA pays all design costs. Coalcon's share is about \$100 million.
- .. Coalcon is committed to purchase the Government share of the plant upon completion of approximately 3 years' operational testing. The plant is designed for a 20 year life.
- . If the project is successful, Coalcon expects to build a full scale plant at the site.



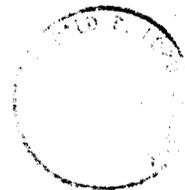
MERRIMAC PARK RESERVOIR

- Q. Are you going to continue the Merrimac Park Reservoir project of the Corps of Engineers?
- A. This is an on-going project designed to afford flood control and recreational facilities. Since this decision has major budget implications, I would prefer to reserve any announcement of a decision until I make my final budget recommendations later this month.

Background

The Merrimac River project of the Corps of Engineers would dam the river and create a large water recreation area, while providing water storage for release during periods of low-flow to improve water quality, along with basic flood control advantages. Environmentalists argue that:

1. Recreation is just as well served by a free-flowing river.
2. Water quality needs would be met by enforcing P.L. 92-500 requiring industrial and municipal treatment facilities.
3. Creation of an artificial lake removes valuable lands and animal habitats, including the home of the Indiana Bat, a species nearing inclusion as an endangered species.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER DEVELOPMENT

Question

Do you support such Mississippi River development projects as the replacement of the Alton Lock and Dam 26 on the Mississippi? (This project is favored by business interests but opposed by environmentalists and the railroads, which feel it will give river transportation a competitive price advantage).

Answer

I am aware of the need for repair of the Lock and Dam, and I am told that the size of the present Lock creates a traffic bottleneck. I am also aware that any project of this type does have the potential of adverse environmental impact.

At the present time, the Secretary of the Army is preparing a detailed study of the project, along with an expanded Environmental Impact Statement, and will shortly make his recommendations to the Congress for their action.

I am confident that the Secretary's recommendation will give proper attention to the environmental effects of the project as well as to the economic considerations involved.

Background

The question of the replacement of the Alton Lock and Dam 26 is a very important one. The present facility needs major repairs, and the Lock is too small for existing river traffic as well as for projected requirements.

Under 1909 legislation, the Secretary of the Army authorized a replacement and enlargement project. In a court suit brought by environmental and railroad interests, an injunction was obtained and the judge raised two major points:



1. The Environmental Impact Statement was deficient and must be expanded.
2. The Secretary exceeded his authority; the Congress should appropriately make the decision on replacement.

Without conceding that he had acted beyond his authority, the Secretary ordered that a new Environmental Impact Statement and a complete survey of the project be prepared. This is currently being done. Upon completion of the studies, the Secretary will submit them to the Congress, along with his recommendations, thus allowing them to make the decision.



CONCERN ABOUT FARMERS

- Q. Does your Administration really care about farmers?
- A. Yes, we care deeply. Not only are farm and rural people the foundation on which our national prosperity depends, but they are a vital reservoir of the values that we celebrate in this Bicentennial year. Hard work, thrift, honesty and neighborliness mean as much today as they did in 1776, and our farm policy is aimed at encouraging those virtues and at freeing farmers from unnecessary government interference.



GRAIN AND ANGOLA

- Q. Do you have plans to link grain sales to the Soviet to a peaceful settlement of the Angola situation?
- A. As I said in my speech this morning, it is a mistaken notion to assume that linking our exports of grain to the situation in Angola would serve any useful purpose. In fact, there would be no gain in diplomatic leverage. Our grain, while important to the USSR, is not vital to them. The Soviet Union has survived most of its nearly sixty years, even through periods of total Western economic embargo, without American grain. There is not the slightest doubt that if we baldly tried to use grain for leverage, the Soviets would both get along without American grain and ignore what we were attempting to get them to do, just as they did with the provisions of the U.S. Trade Act on Soviet emigration.

Such linkage could only mean disruption and hardships for farmers. It would increase tensions between the world's two superpowers, and it would have no result on events in Angola.

U.S.-Soviet competition in peripheral areas around the world has not stopped; this is no revelation. But the answer is to take the limited measures necessary to block -- and stop -- Soviet actions that we believe unacceptable.



NO FOOD POLICY

- Q. Mr. President, many people in the midwest feel your Administration has no food policy. Is that correct?
- A. No, it is not. Our food policy is so good that the Communist countries are buying from us, not vice versa. A strong food policy is not based on central planning and government manipulation. It is based first and foremost on a strong and prosperous agriculture, on farmers who own their own farms and who have the opportunity to make a profit in return for creating the raw wealth that is the backbone of our national economy.

I guess it is hard for some people to realize that freeing farmers from government controls is a policy. They seem to think that only government control -- of anything -- is policy. But all you have to do to see how wrong they are is to look at the productivity of the American farmer -- who feeds 50 other people by his labor. That's all the proof anyone should need.



BETRAYAL OF FARMERS

- Q. Mr. President, there is widespread feeling in the midwest that your Administration has betrayed farmers. First, you asked for and got all-out production without government controls or help. Then, when export markets in Russia and East Europe looked strong, you imposed a de facto embargo, which acted as a form of domestic price controls, and which some people believe led to a softening of U.S. grain prices.
- A. I believe anyone who thinks our farm policies have been a betrayal of the farmer is dead wrong.

Our goal in those negotiations was to get a long-term agreement that was in our best interests. There was a lot of the good old Yankee trader in our actions, and we got what we wanted.

And what we wanted benefitted not only the American farmer. It also benefitted the consumer and the entire nation. And it didn't have that much effect on domestic prices, because the price of grain is set in world markets -- and those markets determine prices on the basis of worldwide conditions of supply and demand. Our prices are affected just as much when the Soviets purchase from the Canadians or the Australians as when they purchase directly from the United States.

Our policies are to help the farmer both by freeing him from government restrictions on how much he can plant and by developing markets for him abroad. Our farmers are the best in the world, and we are doing everything we can to help them.



PACKER BONDING

Q. Is your Administration doing anything to institute packer bonding?

A. I told Congressman Grassley of Iowa last summer that the Administration would work with the Agriculture Committee on this legislation. That still goes.



DISTORTED INFORMATION ON FARM BILLS

- Q. Many of your critics have charged the farm bill, which you have vetoed, would not cost as much as you claimed and would have increased production.
- A. The critics who said that bill was necessary to increase production were wrong. Production in 1975, without that bill, set an all-time record.



DOMESTIC - GENERAL



DRUGS

Q. Recent reports indicate that federal efforts to stop the importation and distribution of illegal drugs have not been successful, and have been marked by bitter squabbling and policy disagreement among agencies. What do you plan to do?

A. I am deeply concerned about the problem of drug abuse, particularly in light of recent reports which suggest that the problem is again worsening. In response to these reports, last May I directed the Domestic Council to undertake a comprehensive review of our entire effort to control drug abuse. The end product of that review, the White Paper on Drug Abuse which I released in October, not only contains a frank assessment of where we stand but makes many sound recommendations for improving our response to this critical problem.

The members of my Cabinet responsible for the Federal drug abuse control program have submitted uniformly supportive responses to the White Paper. We are making considerable progress in implementing its many detailed recommendations. I intend to follow up to ensure that the pace of implementation is rapid. Moreover, I have personally discussed mutual drug control problems with President Echeverria of Mexico, President Lopez of Colombia, and Prime Minister Demeril of Turkey in an effort to strengthen cooperation in our mutual effort to eliminate drug trafficking. I have instructed the Secretary of State to give international narcotics control high priority on his agenda. Finally, I have recently met with a group of concerned Members of the Congress to hear from them their ideas on how we might improve our narcotics control efforts.

My Administration will not relax its efforts to interrupt illicit drug trafficking or to help those who have been afflicted by the illness of drug abuse.



DRUG ABUSE: BUDGET

QUESTION:

You have indicated that, in your FY 1977 budget, you will request funds to implement all major recommendations contained in the White Paper on Drug Abuse. What specifically does this include?

ANSWER:

In line with White Paper recommendations, the budget I will submit in January will request additional funds for:

- 7,000 new community treatment slots;
- treatment demonstrations for abusers of amphetamines and barbiturates;
- a joint HEW/Labor program to increase employment opportunities for ex-addicts;
- strengthened regulatory and compliance activities to address the problem of diversion of amphetamines and barbiturates from licit production; and
- additional intelligence analysis to help target law enforcement resources.

In addition, existing resources are being retargeted to focus law enforcement efforts on high-level drug traffickers and to ensure that treatment is provided to those individuals suffering most from drug abuse. Other actions should ensure improved application of our vocational rehabilitation services to drug users, greater utilization of existing community mental health institutions for drug users, and increased interface between providers of treatment and criminal justice systems to assure that apprehended drug abusers receive treatment.



DRUG ABUSE: MEXICO

QUESTION:

What is being done about the problem of drugs from Mexico?

ANSWER:

Both the United States and Mexico are deeply concerned about the increasing flow of drugs across the Southwest border. In response, the Mexican government has recently begun a vastly expanded opium poppy eradication campaign -- in duration and geographic coverage and, for the first time, using chemicals to kill the poppy plant. We are supporting this effort with helicopters and other materiel.

In addition, I have directed the Domestic Council's Drug Abuse Task Force, which prepared the White Paper on Drug Abuse, to develop recommendations for improving our ability to deal with the problem on this side of the border. The Task Force has established a work group and plans to deliver detailed recommendations for my consideration by mid-February.



DRUG ABUSE: MARIHUANA

QUESTION:

The White Paper on Drug Abuse, which you have endorsed, calls for down-grading marihuana in Federal law enforcement and treatment efforts. Do you intend to recommend decriminalization of simple possession of marihuana, as has been done in several States?

ANSWER:

Some press reporting has misinterpreted the White Paper's statements concerning marihuana. While the White Paper suggests giving priority to heroin, amphetamines and barbiturates, it specifically states that this does not mean giving no attention to other drugs of abuse. It says that marihuana use "should be strongly discouraged as a matter of national policy," and recommends that vigorous law enforcement be aimed at major traffickers in all drugs, including marihuana.

This Administration does not support decriminalization of simple possession and use, although it does support reduced Federal penalties for simple possession. For example, we support the Criminal Justice Reform Act now before the Congress which reduces penalties to a maximum of 30 days.

While the Federal law is rarely used in the prosecution of simple possession cases, we are concerned that any abrupt change in it -- such as decriminalization -- would be misinterpreted by potential users and by other nations as a signal that the United States government no longer discourages marihuana use.



White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals

Q. The Executive Director of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals has criticized the Conference saying that the budget is inadequate, the time to plan too short and the general public awareness insufficient. He is requesting that the time of the conference be changed.

A. The President made public his full support of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals when he announced the Conference on November 22. As he said at that time "The time has come for a coordinated undertaking to address the concerns of this Nation's 35 million handicapped citizens to respond to their abilities as well as their disabilities."

The Administration has been working since early this year to plan and initiate the Conference within the limits of the authorizing legislation which mandated that the Conference take place by December 1976 and which authorized \$3.4 million. The planning and budgeting process has been proceeding. The National Planning and Advisory Council has been appointed, and a working staff for the Conference has been established.

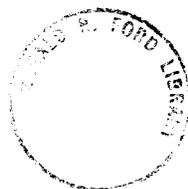
December 1976 is not far away, but we believe it can be done and will work forward achieving a successful Conference in December. We are certainly willing, however to discuss this with those that are concerned and if the Congress passes a resolution suggesting that the Conference be held in 1977, we will certainly give full consideration.

As I have said, we are fully behind this Conference and will continue to work for its success.

SCM
12/31/75



FOREIGN AFFAIRS



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Before I answer your specific questions, I would like to make a few remarks to put some of the current issues into the broader context of our foreign policy goals and objectives, because too often I think they are lost sight of in the heat of debate on specific issues.

The foreign policy of my Administration is based on the conviction that our security and prosperity are indivisible from the peace and stability of the rest of the world and, as such, a continuing strong American role is indispensable. We are, not by choice or design, leaders in the world community and we will accept that leadership role as long as I am President. We must help shape the international structure by reducing levels of tension and confrontation and by stimulating the cooperation among nations that our inescapable interdependence dictates.

Our national policy must therefore ensure our security through a strong national defense. We must maintain the solidarity of our alliances in Western Europe and Japan, which have been a cornerstone of peace for three decades. And we must continue to pursue reduction of tensions with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and other nations whose philosophies differ from our own, despite these ideological differences. Recognizing that the alternatives to such a



policy are grave and unacceptable, we will, nevertheless, meet any attempts at aggression firmly and at the same time seek peaceful solutions and methods to diffuse potential conflicts as they develop.

The leadership role and the effective foreign policy we have pursued for three decades should make all Americans proud. Just as we worked to pursue peace and stimulate economic recovery in the wake of World War II we must now work to cope with a new international environment marked by struggles for economic development and progress, a technological explosion, and increasing interaction of old and new political philosophies and structures. In this new environment, the world still looks to American leadership for inspiration. I reaffirm my intention to continue that essential role.



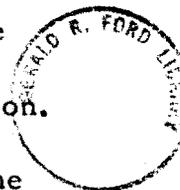
DETENTE

Q. What is our national interest in terms of detente? Is detente working in our favor or the Russians?

A. In recent months there has been a tendency to look at Soviet-American relations very narrowly, to focus on the continuing differences between us, to oversimplify a complex relationship and to overlook what has been achieved. In my view, a proper understanding of this Government's policy toward the Soviet Union requires that it be seen in the context of our broader and determined effort to create a more peaceful and more stable world.

The advancement of U. S. interests and the safeguarding of this nation's security form the bedrock of U. S. foreign policy. We implement this foreign policy in concert with our allies. Since taking office, I have pursued these objectives through close and continuing consultations with our friends and Allies -- at the NATO summit and through scores of summit meetings here and abroad -- and through negotiations with our competitors. My policy is aimed at safeguarding and advancing the interests of all Americans.

In recent years, the United States and its colleagues, particularly in Europe, have engaged the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on an important range of issues aimed at lessening the chances for war and improving the opportunities for cooperation. This effort to achieve a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union expresses the continuing desire of the vast majority



of the American people for easing international tensions while at the same time safeguarding our vital interests and our security. Such an improved relationship is in our real national interest.

We have no illusions in this process. The suspicions and rivalries of more than a generation cannot be swept away with documents or summit meetings. Political rivalries and military competition between us continue.

In light of these realities, a strong defense is the only sure foundation for peace and America, in concert with its allies, must maintain a defense second to none. We must and shall firmly defend our own vital interests and those of our friends. At the same time, through a combination of firmness and flexibility, we have laid the basis for a more stable relationship with the USSR based on mutual interest and mutual restraint. We have made important progress -- for example, the Berlin Agreement of 1971, the Vladivostok accords of 1974. I believe the agreements reached so far represent a historic and positive change in the nature of the competition between our systems -- a competition that certainly will continue.

We have reached a new plateau in our relationship. If the pace in some areas has slowed, we must bear in mind what has already been achieved and acknowledge that the issues now are becoming more complex and their implications more significant.



The state of Soviet-American relations can no longer be arithmetically gauged by the number of agreements reached or by the frequency of summits. It is essential that we and the Soviet leaders understand each other's positions clearly. The United States cannot be indifferent to Soviet actions on the international scene that are destabilizing and inconsistent with the principles of coexistence signed in 1972. This is the case in Angola. Continuation of the Soviet intervention there would have to be taken into account in our own policy.

Because we are ideological competitors, the contacts inherent in our current relationship with the Soviet Union permit frank discussions on international issues where our views do not coincide. While we do not agree, we each come away from these exchanges with a clearer understanding of the other side's views and therefore a greater chance of avoiding miscalculation or misunderstanding.



CONGRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Q: How do you feel about the intrusion of Congress into foreign policy making, an area traditionally and constitutionally associated with the Executive Branch?

A: The question is not whether the Congress has a legitimate and important role to play in the formulation of foreign policy. It clearly does. The real question is whether a body of 535 members can or should attempt a role in the conduct and execution of specific policy issues on virtually a day to day basis.

While the framers of the Constitution designed the separation of powers to protect our individual liberties, they wisely left the President wide latitude in foreign policy making to provide the continuity, decisiveness and flexibility necessary to protect our nation's freedom and security.

After a decade of national turmoil, Congress, not unexpectedly, sought a more active role in foreign policy, an interest I welcomed. As President, I have worked to increase the degree of consultation and interaction with the Congress on major national security issues. I meet frequently with the bipartisan leadership and with other Congressional groups. Members of my Administration as standard practice have briefed relevant Congressional Committees on national security and foreign policy issues as they developed



and have attempted to be responsive to the Committees' needs for specific information.

There is no question the Congress shares responsibility for fundamental decisions about our foreign policy, and both branches must be accountable for their actions and the consequences of their decisions. Unfortunately, when Congress has attempted to dictate the tactics of specific U. S. policies the results have been disturbing, with long range implications for our future. Over the past two years for example,

-- An attempt to pressure Soviet emigration disrupted progress in our economic relations and drastically reduced the flow of Soviet Jews from the USSR.

-- The arms embargo on Turkey has seriously undermined our relations with a key NATO ally and has actually forestalled a solution to the Cyprus problem.

-- In Angola, the Senate voted to prevent effective action by the United States to assist people who were trying to resist domination by outside powers.

-- Investigations of our intelligence agencies resulted in leaks of sensitive information damaging to us and to our allies and demoralized our vital intelligence services.



We must define more clearly the proper role Congress can and should play in the conduct of our foreign policy. I intend to continue to consult closely with the Congress, and I am hopeful that in the new year we can work to achieve a more constructive and effective partnership, as we must, in strengthening the United States' position in the world.



WORLD'S CONFIDENCE IN US INSTITUTIONS

Q: The world has changed rapidly in the last year. And with this change some confidence in America and its institutions seems to have been lost. Is this loss of confidence serious and can we regain it?

A: Some people would argue that the resilience of our institutions must be a source of confidence itself. We have come through the tragedies of Vietnam and Watergate not only with our democratic system more vigorous than ever, but with our capacity for world leadership intact. Within four months of the tragedy of Indochina, the US was helping to negotiate a breakthrough agreement in the Middle East and taking the initiative at the UN General Assembly Special Session on economic development.

So the world still looks to us for leadership. We have had a setback in Southeast Asia but despite those problems our relationship with Japan and our Western European allies is better than at any time in the last twenty or thirty years. We have assured countries in the Pacific area and throughout the world that the United States will continue to stand for freedom, independence and interdependence and for leadership toward peace and progress in the world.



US INFLUENCE

Q: If the United States is as strong or stronger than it ever was, is its influence still as strong? Are we still capable of exerting our will in the world as much as we used to?

A: The United States is the strongest country in the world. We may not have the overwhelming predominance we had after World War II, but we are still the world's principal power -- and the principal force for stability and progress. Our military forces -- strategic and conventional -- are technically superior, and I intend to maintain that strength. This gives us the basis for leadership in constructive measures of arms control. Our economic strength is also unquestioned -- and this is becoming more and more important in the modern era, in relations among allies, with the Communist countries, and with the developing world. Our technology and our agricultural abundance will be increasingly important assets in our world role -- assets we can use to strengthen peace and progress for developed and developing nations alike.

Finally, I would say that the US can and should, by its moral example, continue to set a standard for human rights and freedoms which can serve as an example to other nations. At Helsinki I stressed that security and cooperation in Europe would



depend on the conditions of human life, as well as on military and economic conditions. Within the context of global cooperation and interdependence we can and we will use our technological and economic advantages, our political and military power, and our moral example to influence international events for peace and progress.



LIMITED WAR

Q: After our withdrawal from Vietnam, many voiced the opinion that this country has had enough of limited war on foreign soil and some are now saying we should pull out of South Korea to avoid any more confrontations. There is also concern about the American commitment in the Sinai. Would the American people support another limited war?

A: The object of foreign policy is to avoid wars. The object of all our policies for peace -- diplomatic initiatives, arms control, strengthening constructive ties with adversaries -- is to make clear our goal of peace, so that any military measure we undertake will be clearly and unmistakably a last resort. Commitments of American personnel -- such as in Europe and Korea, where we have treaty commitments -- have been supported by the public and Congress on their merits. The American people understand what a strong and effective foreign policy requires, and support it, because it is the only way to maintain peace.

More important in the current debate, however, is the need to understand that the full range of options of foreign policy is absolutely indispensable to help us shape events so as to avoid direct involvement in wars. Economic and military support to allies and friends, for example -- and I would add covert actions in some special instances -- are ways of influencing events in our



interest, with limited risk, so as to prevent more dangerous situations which could threaten war. I think the American people appreciate and understand that a strong foreign policy requires a full range of options to protect and strengthen our interests. They recognize that the diplomatic process is complex and would support the choices -- however difficult -- if they perceived them to be in our national interests.



ANGOLA

Q. Mr. President, the Senate recently voted to cut off funds for use in the Angolan conflict. You have said that your hands are tied and have called the Senate action a serious mistake. What can you realistically do now and what would you have us do in Angola barring any restrictions?

A. First, let me say that we have no exploitative interests in Angola nor do we seek any privileged status there. Our hope for Angola is to allow the Angolan people an opportunity to decide their own fate and establish their own government unimpeded by efforts from outside the continent to subvert that freedom of choice. We have consistently supported the efforts of the Organization of African Unity calling for a ceasefire and seeking an African solution to an African problem.

In the wake of the Senate action the Soviet Union and Cuba continue to send men and materiel to Angola, with fewer incentives, I might add, to discuss alternative diplomatic solutions to the conflict there. Clearly these aggressive actions are destabilizing in Africa and have serious implications for overall US-Soviet relations as well.

For our part, we have and we will continue to pursue diplomatic alternatives both with the Soviets and with OAU member nations, but we would be in a vastly stronger position if the Senate had not taken its misguided steps on assistance to Angola.



To the extent we can, we will pursue the objective of a peaceful solution to this African conflict. We do not want to see the African continent subjected to externally sponsored subversion, and, as President I, will resist such efforts as strongly as I can.



NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

Q: There seems to be no way to prevent other countries from getting the nuclear bomb if they want it. How can we control the spread of these nuclear devices?

A: I believe that this is one of the most serious foreign policy problems we face today, and, in the long term, may pose a greater threat to civilization as we know it than the Great Power tensions we have worked so long to defuse. Since I have assumed this office we have launched a series of initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

These include:

-- An effort to gain the agreement of the other nuclear suppliers to require new and stricter safeguards on nuclear exports, particularly on those items, such as enrichment and reprocessing technology, which involve the production or handling of materials which could be directly used in nuclear weapons.

[FYI: We are near agreement on this measure and only a formal exchange of notes between governments remains; this will not close the door on all such exports, but we are hopeful that it will tend to strongly inhibit them.]

-- An effort to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which has the primary responsibility for carrying out the inspections called for in both IAEA and Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards.



-- An effort to achieve a new international regime on physical security of both critical nuclear materials and nuclear weapons to guard against seizure by terrorist groups or other unauthorized parties.

-- We are working to increase adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty which carries with it the pledge for non-nuclear weapon states that they will not develop nuclear explosive devices for any purpose. In exchange for this pledge, of course, we must continue to stand ready to provide these countries the peaceful benefits of nuclear technology under appropriate safeguard.

I intend to maintain our vital security assurances in both Western Europe and the Pacific to assure those countries that they do not need to develop nuclear weapons to be secure. Furthermore, I am encouraged by a high level of concern among the other nuclear suppliers on the dangers of nuclear proliferation and I am optimistic that the measures I have mentioned will significantly raise the barriers to nuclear proliferation.

