

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 6, 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL GOODPASTER

FROM Max Rabb

I have been looking into the situation with reference to the letters addressed to the President in connection with the recent racial violence in some parts of the South and the Emmitt Till case. There are approximately 3000 letters, wires and cards on the matter. In addition, there are about 11,000 names and addresses on petitions.

It seems to me that we might be "missing the boat" if we don't take advantage of the opportunity given us by the President's statement in the State of the Union Message to make a constructive reply on these. It would only be necessary to respond to the letters and wires; I don't believe we should try to answer the petitions. I would estimate that perhaps 10% of the letters will be unanswerable -- due to illegibility of writing or lack of address. However, we might respond to the others quite simply by having a form letter printed up, somewhat along the lines of the attached sample. It might even be possible to eliminate the necessity to sign these by having a facsimile signature reproduced.

What are your thoughts on this?

