

White House Newsmen's Group Affirms 'Backgrounder' Rules

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 3 (AP) —In an implied rebuke to The Washington Post, the White House Correspondents Association called upon its members today to abide by the rules of anonymous briefings.

The statement of principles was put out by the executive committee, speaking for the association.

Without mentioning The Post, the statement said, "There is absolutely no question but that any news organization which accepts information on a 'background' basis, either directly or from a report from a group of reporters . . . must abide by the rules under which the information was obtained."

A controversy over such "backgrounders" erupted last month after Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security affairs, talked with reporters on the Presidential jet returning from the Azores, where Mr. Nixon met with President Pompidou of France.

Expressing White House displeasure with the Soviet role in the India-Pakistan war, Mr.

Kissinger raised the possibility that the President's pending visit to Russia might be reconsidered.

The session with Mr. Kissinger was a briefing in which newsmen could report what they were told but were not permitted to identify the source either by name or even as "a White House official."

In accordance with established procedure, reporters on the Presidential jet gave a detailed report of the Kissinger briefing to the rest of the White House press corps.

But The Post, which did not have a reporter on the Presidential jet, identified the source as Mr. Kissinger. Benjamin Bradlee, executive editor of The Post, said the newspaper did not feel bound by the rules for such briefings because it obtained identity of the briefer independently.

Mr. Bradlee, who contends that "by accepting unattributed information we are allowing ourselves to be used by the Government," declined to comment on the association statement.