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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN... *df*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 1, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: DONALD RUMSFELD

For your information.

GRF

4-23-75

San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

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Editorials

The President Meets the Press

IT WAS QUITE PLEASANT this week to find the White House once more on friendly speaking terms with the media.

It was something of a relief to find one journalist, with full permission, dogging the President's footsteps and watching his every move for a solid week; and it was even more agreeable to see and hear three other journalists fire unplanted and frequently blunt questions at him and get frank, candid answers through an entire hour of TV time.

Through such departures from the quite recent past, President Ford is manifesting a desire and intent to keep the public informed of what has been done, is being done, and may be done at the apex of the federal government.

FOR OUR PART, we took great comfort in the knowledge that no longer does the White House frown upon the press as an enemy to be evaded and denounced, to be harassed by the Internal Revenue Service, to have its phones bugged by surveillance agencies.

President Ford had informed his three TV inquisitors that he was "looking forward" to the hour-long interview and proceeded to prove it. Freely and openly he fielded all questions, and with reassuring confidence discussed Vietnam, his relations with Congress, the two-ply job of Secretary Kissinger, the Middle East, the economy, Vice President Rockefeller, and even John Connally. He closed the history-making hour with simple eloquence saying: "I think the United States has the potential, the responsibility ... to make this a better place in which to live. And I think, as long as I am President, I am going to make a maximum effort in that way, diplomatically, economically, in every way that I can conceive."

If the interview fell short of sincerity and candor at any point, it was in the President's failure to explain just why he persistently sought a further appropriation of \$700 million for military aid for South Vietnam at a time when billions of dollars worth of U.S. equipment was being abandoned to the enemy.

MR. FORD HAS DEMONSTRATED a genuine desire and intent to heal the breach between the White House and the press which in the recent past has contributed to a decline of public confidence in high governmental offices, and we think the public will join us in saying, Thank you, Mr. President: