

The original documents are located in Box 21, folder “President - Report on First Year in Office (1)” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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FORD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A FRESH START

1. Calmed the nation.
2. Opened up the Governmnt
3. Signed the Pension Law.
4. Signed the Housing & Community Development Act.
5. Withdrew the troops from Vietnam.
6. Showed America remains strong -- Mayaguez.
7. Slowed inflation, Started recovery.
8. Refused to take the easy way out --33 vetoes ..NY Financial Crisis
9. Set the stage for the future with proposals on

Banking Reform
Tax Reform
Energy Independence
Renewal of Revenue Sharing
Mid East Policy Review
Regulatory Reform.
Crime Control.

Trade Reform
Rail Revitalization Act
Food Stamp Improvements

5% "cap" on pay.

Uranium Enrichment Plan.

Clean Air Act Amendments

Higher Education Act Amdts

Amend Antitrust laws.

Repeal Fair Trade laws.

Extend unemployment Ins.
Highway Trust Fund changes

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 15, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: Jim Connor

FROM: Ron Nessen *RHN*

SUBJECT: Requested personal reflections on the President's first year in office

It is not possible to assess properly where the Ford Administration stands today without first remembering the situation when the President took office a year ago.

The nation was in shock. The people's faith in and respect for the Presidency was severely undermined. The people's belief in the probity and candor of their elected leaders, which is essential in a democratic system, was shaken.

This damage to our society has not been completely repaired and will not be for a long time. But the healing process has begun and is proceeding faster than many thought possible. This is largely because of the personal qualities of President Ford. He has displayed the right qualities for this moment of our national history.

Just a year ago President Ford's qualities were not widely known. Now he is known, liked, trusted, and perceived to be up to the job.

Incidentally, I sense that the President's forcefulness and assurance as a leader are growing day by day as a result of the public acceptance and of his own increasing mastery and confidence in the job.

The Ford Administration's success in reviving the nation's spirit and restoring faith in the Presidency during this first year was just as important as any success in matters of policy and substance.

Another point to remember in assessing the first year is that a good deal of time was consumed cleaning up left-over problems. These included the status of Former President Nixon, his expenses, his papers, and his White House advisors; the Indo-China war; the inflationary and recessionary economic difficulties; and the whole range of domestic and international problems which had been allowed to drift without proper attention.

Despite the amount of time that had to be spent on these left-over problems, a good start was made toward creating a new Ford agenda for the nation:

- A plan to achieve independence from foreign sources of energy.
- A plan to reform the cumbersome, time-consuming, expensive, and often anti-consumer machinery of the regulatory agencies.
- A plan to restore the health of the economy without reigniting inflation.
- A plan to protect law abiding citizens from criminals.
- A plan to create a transportation system for the future, including a revision of the highway trust fund.

All these initiatives on the domestic front have a consistency that reflects the President's personal philosophy of opposition to ever-growing government and ever-growing tax bills. I sense that more and more of the public is coming to share this philosophy.

The public and press also seem to understand and appreciate the President's commitment to avoiding short term, politically popular solutions to problems in favor of longer range, more fundamental solutions which are not always immediately popular. This is in keeping with his method of telling the people the straight truth and hard facts.

One success which has been largely overlooked by the press and public was the selection of a really outstanding group of Cabinet members.

In foreign affairs, the end of America's involvement in Indo-China was the major event of the year. The President handled the end of the war in a way that saved the Americans who were there, and as many Indo-Chinese as possible, and did not further divide Americans or alienate Congress.

There were successes in foreign policy this year, notably the SALT Agreement and the Mayaguez rescue, as well as the reassertion of America's determination to play a leading role in the world. But again, the President's own personality and the favorable impression he made on foreign leaders, both friends and adversaries, perhaps outweighed any specific success.

As the second year of the Ford Administration begins, I see two matters that need attention:

1. The need to improve the internal workings of the White House so that problems can be anticipated and dealt with in a thoughtful way with a full range of advice from the President's staff prior to a decision. Too often we are forced to react hurriedly to problems that have turned into crises. The Solzhenitsyn affair is an example of this.

I have the feeling that too much of the President's time is taken up with short and relatively unimportant meetings, not leaving enough time to anticipate and consider the major problems before they get out of hand.

2. The need to answer the complaint which often appears in print and in conversation that the President is a nice and competent man who is doing a good job, but who lacks compassion for less fortunate Americans.

It seems to me the President can overcome this image of lacking compassion without violating his own philosophy on the economy and the proper role of government.

July 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DON RUMSFELD

FROM:

RON NESSEN

Attached find my draft of a paper on President Ford's first year. This has been worked over a number of times and this is the final draft from the Press Office.

Also attached is a far more voluminous set of fact sheets and catalogues listing in detail the accomplishments of the first year.

Aside from filling in a few last minute figures where missing, this is complete as far as the Press Office can make it.

My proposal would be to issue this material to White House staff members and other top officials of the Executive Branch and perhaps to Republican leaders of Congress for their use as background materials for speeches and interviews. Margita White suggests that the President prepare a very short cover note to go with the material.

I recommend that this material not be distributed to the press. They have their own files and their own assessments from which they will write their stories.

Attachments

RN/pp



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DRAFT

Ron Nessen

July 16, 1975

PRESIDENT FORD: THE FIRST YEAR

Gerald Ford devoted his first year as President to restoring the American people's faith in their government, cleaning up inherited problems, and embarking on an agenda for the future. Thrust ^{INTO} in the office in the midst of national crises, President Ford faced unprecedented problems: a nation shaken by scandal and doubt, an economy plagued by runaway inflation and deepening recession, a lingering war in Indo-China, and the threat of a new war in the Middle East.

The President saw his first task to be the restoration of confidence in ^{the} government. If the people do not trust their elected representatives, and, conversely, ^{if} their elected representatives do not trust the collective wisdom of the people, then the American system of government cannot work.

The American people saw President Ford as a down-to-earth, self-assured, reassuring and honest man. ~~and~~ ^T these personal qualities helped rebuild the nation's confidence.

"In all my public and private acts as your President," he told the American people the day he was sworn into office, "I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor."



These instincts led the President to make the White House and himself more accessible to the citizens he serves. He held hundreds of hours of meetings with elected officials, representatives of various interest groups, foreign leaders, journalists, and people from all walks of life. In an effort to free the Presidency from the isolation of the White House, the President traveled tens of thousands of miles to talk to, and more important^{L76} to listen to, the American people.

Restoration of faith in the government, however, required more than candor and openness. It required attention to the nation's problems.

No problem received more attention from President Ford than the economy. In his efforts to restore and create jobs for the unemployed, revive the lagging economy, and reduce the vicious hidden tax of inflation, President Ford remained true to his convictions by resisting ~~popular~~^{popular} short-term moves in favor of truly effective, longer-term solutions.

Knowing that a superficial "quick economic fix" could lead to ~~new~~ worse inflation and deeper recession, the President set realistic economic goals. He urged Congress to help him reach those goals by holding the line on excessive and ~~ill-~~advised government spending.

In order to keep the country on a ~~sure~~ and steady economic course, the President vetoed 33 Congressional bills. The Congress itself recognized the wisdom



of the President's policy. Not only did Congress sustain almost all the vetoes, but it passed new, more responsible legislation containing many of the provisions the President had originally proposed to help the jobless defeat inflation and revive the economy.

There are clear signs that the President's economic policies are working. Inflation has been cut in half. While unemployment is still unacceptably high, it is expected to start down soon and already hundreds of thousands of people are finding jobs each month. The economy seems to have hit bottom and is starting upward.

Closely linked to the nation's economic troubles was the problem of energy. Before President Ford took office, the oil producing nations, in a move which contributed to ^{both} recession and inflation, had drastically raised the price of oil. To meet this threat, President Ford proposed an energy policy which would make the United States independent of foreign oil producers, and of their power to control the price and supply of the petroleum America needs.

During this first year of the Ford Administration, the long war in Indo-China came to a ^{swift} ~~swift~~ conclusion. When the President was unable to persuade Congress to approve the money needed to help the South Vietnamese and Cambodian people continue their struggle for independence, he safely evacuated the Americans from those countries and granted refuge to more than 100,000 Indo-Chinese who chose freedom over conquest.



Following the withdrawal from Indo-China, some of America's allies openly questioned whether the United States could be relied on. President Ford set those doubts to rest through his personal assurances to foreign leaders, including America's partners in the Atlantic Alliance.

When Cambodian gunboats seized the American freighter Mayaguez, the President directed American forces to rescue the ship and its crew. In doing so, he demonstrated his ^{determination} ~~intent~~ to defend and support American interests.

Throughout the first year, President Ford played a central role in efforts to bring permanent peace to the volatile Middle East. ^{As settlement is still elusive.} But at least the American efforts have prevented any new outbreak of fighting, which would have serious consequences not only ^{FOR} ~~the~~ countries directly involved but also ~~FOR~~ ^{FOR} the United States and for the cause of world peace.

The President pursued a policy of attempting to reduce tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in those areas where progress was possible on a mutually beneficial basis. During a visit to Vladivostok the President negotiated with General Secretary Brezhnev an agreement to set a ceiling on the number of strategic nuclear weapons and multi-headed missiles which each country may possess. ^{holding} This was a significant development in reducing tensions, ^{holding} the dangerous and costly arms race, and setting the stage for a ~~reduction~~ reduction of nuclear weapons in the future.

While President Ford spent considerable time leading the nation out of the troubles of the past, he also began to present his agenda for the future:



- Selection of an outstanding group of Cabinet officers and other top government officials.
- Reform of ~~the~~ cumbersome, time-consuming, expensive, and often anti-consumer federal regulations.
- Revision of the federal crime laws to protect the victim from the criminal.
- Development of an efficient national transportation system, including steps to expand urban mass transportation.
- Extension of federal revenue sharing so that states and cities will have the money to make their own decisions on how best to deal with their own problems.
- Tax revision to create the jobs, energy plants, and industry America needs for an expanding future, and to remove from the hard-working middle class an unduly heavy tax burden.

The program President Ford began to outline during this first year was aimed at achieving ~~to achieve~~ his vision of a prosperous and free America in the years ahead.

"Our third century," the President said at Ft. McHenry on July 4, "should be an era of individual freedom."

As the problems President Ford inherited began to fade, he turned his attention to the future and to developing a society in which each American is free to develop his or her fullest potential.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN

FROM: MARGITA E. WHITE *mw*

SUBJECT: Introduction to First-Year Report

Although Shuman's draft narrative is good and should be used internally, I think you will agree it is too partisan an approach for use as a cover to a factual summary of accomplishments intended for distribution to the press.

Another approach would be to use a cover statement by the President, using as a basis the attached Q&A from Jim's briefing book. I envision a 2 to 3 page statement along the following lines:

"August 9 marks the end of my first year in office and the beginning of a new year for my Administration. Anniversaries are a time to take stock and to look ahead and it seems appropriate that I review briefly what I believe has been accomplished during the past year--how we have acted to achieve our goals and where we go from here...."

The President would then summarize his goals and highlights of the past year and then briefly point to the future agenda for the nation in the coming bicentennial year. It could be a very eloquent statement with emphasis both on tone and substance.

This approach would enable me to mail the document to editors, for example, saying I am enclosing a statement by the President plus a factual summary of first-year action by the Ford Administration. (I think we should stay away from the word "accomplishments" in the report itself.) A statement by the President also has the added benefit of being eminently quotable.



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PRESIDENT FORD'S FIRST YEAR

Gerald Ford devoted his first year as President to *Restoring the People's faith in Our Government,* ~~restoring the people's faith in Our Government,~~ cleaning up inherited problems, and *embarking on an agenda* ~~creating a vision~~ for the future.

Thrust into office in the midst of national crisis, ~~his qualities of leadership and personality largely unknown,~~ President Ford faced unprecedented problems: A nation shaken by scandal and doubt, an economy plagued by run-away inflation and *deepening* ~~severe~~ recession, a *finger* ~~war~~ in IndoChina and the threat of a *new* war in the Middle East.

The ~~new~~ President saw his first task to be the restoration of confidence in government. If the people do not trust their elected representatives and, conversely, if their elected representatives do not trust the collective wisdom of the people, then the American system of government *cannot work,* ~~is impossible.~~ *restoring that quality of*

Ford moved quickly to rebuild confidence. "In all my public and private acts as your President," he told the nation the morning he was sworn into office, "I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor..."

These instincts led him to increase outside accessibility to his own office and to the entire White House. He held hundreds of hours of meetings with elected officials, journalists, representatives of various interest groups, foreign leaders and with people in non-official positions. In an effort to bring the Presidency out of the confines of the White House, he traveled tens of thousands of miles to talk to and listen to the American people.

Restoration of faith in the government, however, required more than candor and openness. It required answers to the nation's problems. No problem received more attention from President Ford than the economy. In pursuing the cure for economic difficulties, President Ford remained true to his convictions by resisting popular, short-term moves in favor of truly effective, longer-term solutions.

Knowing that the "quick economic fix" and the superficial appearance of action could lead to new, worse inflation and eventual deeper recession, he set realistic economic goals, and he urged Congress to help him reach those goals by holding the line on excessive government spending.

In doing so, the President had to veto thirty-three bills, many of them containing such popular titles as "The Jobs Bill." But the wisdom of his course was upheld by the Congress. Not only did Congress sustain his vetoes, it later passed legislation containing the provisions he had initially requested, but without the additional, politically-popular features originally included.

← inflation down
Economy turning up.
Jobs: and to jobs.

Closely linked to the nation's economic troubles was the problem of energy. Before President Ford took office, the oil producing nations, in a move which contributed to both recession and inflation, had drastically raised the price of crude oil.

To meet this threat, President Ford proposed an energy policy which would make the United States independent of all foreign oil producers, and of their power to control the price and supply of the petroleum America needs. Hold price rises to minimum; control prices ourselves.

There were other international problems, too. The long war in IndoChina came to a swift conclusion. When the President was unable to persuade Congress to vote the money needed to help South Vietnam and Cambodia continue their struggle for independence, he safely evacuated the Americans from those countries and granted refuge to more than 100,000 IndoChinese who fled to freedom.

Following the withdrawal from IndoChina, some of America's allies openly questioned whether the United States could be relied upon.

President Ford set those doubts to rest through his personal assurances to foreign leaders ^{NATO} and, when Cambodian gunboats seized the American freighter Mayaguez, he swiftly and decisively directed American forces to rescue the ship and its crew. In so doing, he demonstrated his intent to defend and support American interests.

The Mayaguez incident marked a turn in the President's fortunes. His popularity, which the Harris Poll had registered as hovering near the 40 percent mark, began a sharp upward climb, reaching more than 50 percent by mid-July.

This climb was aided by a successful trip to Europe to discuss problems of common defense with NATO leaders, and by the nation's continued economic recovery under the President's policies.

While President Ford was leading the nation out of the troubles of the past, he was not neglecting the future. There were, first, specific programs:

- * Selection of an outstanding group of cabinet officers.
- * Reform of the cumbersome, time-consuming, expensive and often anti-consumer regulatory agencies.

← Middle East
Return O/S ACT.

- * Revision of federal crime laws to help protect the innocent from crime.
- * Development of an efficient national transportation system, a plan which included revision of the highway trust fund to permit spending part of its revenue on urban mass transportation.

Revenue sharing, etc. amendments.
These specific proposals were part of an overall strategy aimed at future development of the United States.

"Our third century," the President said in a Bicentennial speech on July 4th at Fort McHenry, "should be an era of individual freedom."

And as the inherited problems began to fade, President Ford and his Administration began to tackle the problems of developing such a society, one in which each individual could develop to his or her fullest potential.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 15, 1975

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1. The need to improve the internal workings of the White House so that problems can be anticipated and dealt with in a thoughtful way with a full range of advice from the President's staff prior to a decision. Too often we are forced to react hurriedly to problems that have turned into crises. The Solzhenitsyn affair is an example of this.

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2. The need to answer the complaint which often appears in print and in conversation that the President is a nice and competent man who is doing a good job, but who lacks compassion for less fortunate Americans.

It seems to me the President can overcome this image of lacking compassion without violating his own philosophy on the economy and the proper role of government.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Q: You have just announced your intention to run for the Presidency. Would you care to review what you have accomplished during the past 11 months and why you think people should vote for you?
- A. (Note: Because this question requires a detailed answer, I've presented it in outline form to make it easier to scan the major points.)
- A. Major goal: restore confidence in Presidency and create a more open government.
 - a. Successful, to judge by newspaper columnists, editorials and other reactions.
 - B. Other goals: deal with major problems.
 - a. Creating a healthy economy
 - 1. Inflation major problem when I took office. Set out to attack it, then had to walk difficult line when it became clear that we also were being hit by a serious recession.
 - a) Now feel we have nation on right path; we are making progress in our efforts to keep the hardships to our people and the burden to our economy at a minimum.
 - 2. Tackled unemployment by working for programs that would provide proper solutions, not slogan solutions.
 - a) And Congress supported vetoes and then wrote the effective kinds of legislation requested.
 - b. Establishing an energy program
 - 1. So we would eventually be independent of foreign suppliers.
 - 2. So price increased would be held to a minimum.

Accomplishments (cont.)

Page Two

c. Resolved international tensions

1. Handled Vietnam withdrawal in as good a way as I think was feasible.
2. Demonstrated U.S. resoluteness with Mayaguez incident.
3. Worked to strengthen NATO.
4. Worked for peace in Middle East.
5. Continued detente' with the Soviet Union one milestone of which was the Vladavostock Agreement on Arms Limitation

C. Achieved, at least, a start on a wide variety of matters of great importance. Among them:

- a. Crime Control
- b. Regulatory Reform
- c. Renewal of Revenue Sharing
- d. Tax Amendments
- c. Revision of Unemployment Insurance

D. Proposals aimed at making federal government work more effectively, and to further major aim of this Administration: development of the individual. (As stated in Ft. McHenry speech)

JBS 7/10/75

PRESIDENT FORD'S FIRST YEAR

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The new President saw his first task to be the restoration of confidence in government. If the people do not trust their elected representatives and, conversely, if their elected representatives do not trust the collective wisdom of the people, then the American system of government is impossible.

Ford moved quickly to rebuild confidence. "In all my public and private acts as your President," he told the nation the morning he was sworn into office, "I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor..."

These instincts led him to increase outside accessibility to his own office and to the entire White House. He held hundreds of hours of meetings with elected officials, journalists, representatives of various interest groups, foreign leaders and with people in non-official positions. In an effort to bring the Presidency out of the confines of the White House, he traveled tens of thousands of miles to talk to and listen to the American people.

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Partial draft

15 July 1975

Gile

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PROPERLY ASSESS WHERE THE FORD ADMINISTRATION STANDS TODAY, ~~NEARLY ONE YEAR IN OFFICE~~ WITHOUT FIRST ~~REMEMBERING~~

~~REMEMBERING~~ REMEMBERING THE SITUATION WHEN THE PRESIDENT TOOK OFFICE NEARLY A YEAR AGO. THE NATION WAS IN SHOCK, THE PEOPLE'S FAITH IN ~~THEIR PRESIDENT~~ ~~AND RESPECT FOR THE PRESIDENCY~~ UNDERMINED.

WAS SEVERLY ~~IMPACTED BY THE PROBITY AND CANDOR OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS~~

~~THE~~ ~~THE PEOPLE'S BELIEF IN THE PROBITY AND CANDOR OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS~~

PEOPLE'S BELIEF IN THE PROBITY AND CANDOR OF ~~GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS~~ WAS SHAKEN.

*what is needed for a demo system
their ledged ~~representatives~~ leader!*

~~THIS~~ THIS DAMAGE TO OUR SOCIETY HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY REPAIRED

AND WILL NOT BE FOR A LONG TIME. BUT THE HEALING PROCESS HAS BEGUN AND IS

PROCEEDING FASTER THAN MANY THOUGHT POSSIBLE. THIS IS LARGELY BECAUSE OF

THE ~~PERSONAL~~ PERSONAL QUALITIES OF ~~THE~~ PRESIDENT FORD. ~~HE IS HONEST, OPEN,~~

~~OPEN, EVEN-TEMPERED, DOWN-TO-EARTH, HARD-WORKING, SELF-ASSURED, AND DETERMINED.~~

THESE ARE THE RIGHT QUALITIES FOR THIS MOMENT OF OUR NATIONAL HISTORY.

BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL QUALITIES HAVE ~~CONTRIBUTED~~ SO MUCH TO THE NATIONAL

HEALING. ~~I BELIEVE THAT THE FORD ADMINISTRATION'S SUCCESS IN~~ ~~RESTORING~~ THE NATION'S

~~NATIONAL SPIRIT~~ DURING THIS FIRST YEAR IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE SUCCESSES

IN ~~IMPORTANT~~ MATTERS OF POLICY AND SUBSTANCE.

restoring the nation's spirit.
~~INCIDENTALLY, I SENSE THAT THE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT AND HIS OWN GROWING CONFIDENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN THE JOB HAVE~~

ANOTHER POINT TO REMEMBER IN ASSESSING THE FIRST YEAR IS THAT

A GOOD DEAL OF ~~TIME~~ TIME WAS CONSUMED CLEANING UP LEFT-OVER PROBLEMS.

THESE INCLUDED THE STATUS OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON, HIS EXPENSES, HIS PAPERS,

AND HIS WHITE HOUSE ADVISERS; THE INDOCHINA WAR; ~~THE INFLATIONARY~~ THE INFLATIONARY

AND RECESSIONARY ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES; AND THE WHOLE RANGE OF DOMESTIC AND INTER-

NATIONAL PROBLEMS WHICH HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO DRIFT WITHOUT PROPER ATTENTION.

insert

*Unknown Quantity. How
from legal, fiscal and foreign
to be completed.*

ASSURANCE

**INCIDENTALLY, I SENSE THAT THE PRESIDENT'S FORCEFULNESS AND ~~EFFICIENCY~~ AS A
LEADER**

IS GROWING DAY BY DAY AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC RESPONSE AND HIS OWN INCREASING

COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE IN THE JOB.

devoted to
~~amount of~~ DEALING WITH
DESPITE THE TIME ~~AND~~ THESE LEFT-OVER PROBLEMS, A GOOD START HAS

BEEN MADE ~~IN~~ TOWARD OUTLINING A FORD AGENDA FOR THE NATION;
new

--A PLAN TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE FROM FOREIGN SOURCES OF ENERGY.

--A PLAN TO REFORM THE CUMBERSOME, TIME-CONSUMING, EXPENSIVE AND OFTEN ANTI-CONSUMER MACHINERY OF THE REGULATORY AGENCIES.

--A PLAN TO ~~RENEW~~ RESTORE THE HEALTH OF THE ECONOMY WITHOUT REIGNITING ~~DESTRUCTIVE~~ INFLATION.

--A PLAN TO PROTECT LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS FROM CRIMINALS.

-- A PLAN ~~TO~~ ^{TO} ~~CREATE~~ A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ~~TO~~ MEET THE NEEDS OF THE FUTURE, INCLUDING A REVISION OF THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND.

ALL THESE INITIATIVES ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT HAVE A CONSISTANCE ~~WITH~~ ^{They} REFLECT

~~THE~~ THE PRESIDENT'S ~~OWN~~ PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF ~~RESISTING~~ ^{opposition to} THE EVER-GROWING TENDENCY

~~OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO~~ ~~DRAIN ON THE TAXPAYERS FOR~~ ~~THE SOLUTIONS.~~ ^{to}

~~THE~~ ^{and ever growing tax bill} ~~GOVERNMENT FOR THE SOLUTION OF EVERY PROBLEM~~ AND THE EVER GROWING

~~DRAIN ON THE TAXPAYERS FOR~~ THE SOLUTIONS. I SENSE THAT ~~MORE AND MORE~~ OF THE

PUBLIC M ~~INDIVIDUALS~~ IS COMING TO SHARE THIS PHILOSOPHY. ~~IN THE FOREIGN FIELD THERE HAVE~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

FINAL DRAFT

Ron Nessen

July 16, 1975

PRESIDENT FORD: THE FIRST YEAR

Gerald Ford devoted his first year as President to restoring the American people's faith in their government, clearing up inherited problems, and embarking on an agenda for the future. Thrust into the office in the midst of national crises, President Ford faced unprecedented problems: a Nation shaken by scandal and doubt, an economy plagued by runaway inflation and deepening recession, a lingering war in Indo-China, and the threat of a new war in the Middle East.

The President saw his first task to be the restoration of confidence in the Government. If the people do not trust their elected representatives, and, conversely if their elected representatives do not trust the collective wisdom of the people, then the American system of Government cannot work.

The American people saw President Ford as a down-to-earth, self-assured, reassuring and honest man. These personal qualities helped rebuild the Nation's confidence.

"In all my public and private acts as your President," he told the American people the day he was sworn into office, "I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor."

These instincts led the President to make the White House and himself more accessible to the citizens he serves. He held hundreds of hours of meetings with elected officials, representatives of various interest groups, foreign leaders, journalists, and people from all walks of life. In an effort to free the Presidency from the isolation of the White House, the President traveled tens of thousands of miles to talk to, and more importantly, to listen to, the American people.

Restoration of faith in the Government, however, required more than candor and openness. It required attention to the Nation's problems.

No problem received more attention from President Ford than the economy. In his efforts to restore and create jobs for the unemployed, revive the lagging economy, and reduce the vicious hidden tax of inflation, President Ford remained true to his convictions by resisting popular short-term moves in favor of truly effective, longer-term solutions.

Knowing that a superficial "quick economic fix" could lead to worse inflation and deeper recession, the President set realistic economic goals. He urged Congress to help him reach those goals by holding the line on excessive and ill-advised Government spending.

In order to keep the Country on a sure and steady economic course, the President vetoed 33 Congressional bills. The Congress itself recognized the wisdom of the President's policy. Not only did Congress sustain almost all the vetoes, but it passed new, more responsible legislation containing many of the provisions the President had originally proposed to help the jobless, defeat inflation and revive the economy.

There are clear signs that the President's economic policies are working. Inflation has been cut in half. While unemployment is still unacceptably high, it is expected to start down soon and already hundreds of thousands of people are finding jobs each month. The economy seems to have hit bottom and is starting upward.

Closely linked to the Nation's economic troubles was the problem of energy. Before President Ford took office, the oil producing nations, in a move which contributed to both recession and inflation, had drastically raised the price of oil. To meet this threat, President Ford proposed an energy policy which would make the United States independent of foreign oil producers, and of their power to control the price and supply of the petroleum America needs.

During the first year of the Ford Administration, the long war in Indo-China came to a swift conclusion. When the President was unable to persuade Congress to approve the money needed to help the South Vietnamese and Cambodian people continue their struggle for independence, he safely evacuated the Americans from those countries and granted refuge to more than 100,000 Indo-Chinese who chose freedom over conquest.

Following the withdrawal from Indo-China, some of America's allies openly questioned whether the United States could be relied on. President Ford set those doubts to rest through his personal assurances to foreign leaders, including America's partners in the Atlantic Alliance.

When Cambodian gunboats seized the American freighter Mayaguez, the President directed American forces to rescue the ship and its crew. In doing so, he demonstrated his determination to defend and support American interests.

Throughout the first year, President Ford played a central role in efforts to bring permanent peace to the volatile Middle East. A settlement is still elusive. But at least the American efforts have prevented any new outbreak of fighting, which would have serious consequences not only for the countries directly involved but also for the United States and for the cause of world peace.

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While President Ford spent considerable time leading the Nation out of the troubles of the past, he also began to present his agenda for the future:

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Page 7

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July 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DON RUMSFELD

FROM: RON NESSEN

Here is my final selection of photos to be distributed to newspapers and magazines for use in connection with the first anniversary of the Ford Administration. As you see, one is in color, the rest in black and white. Ignore the fact that the pictures are in two sizes. They will all be issued as 8 x 10 prints.

Please review one more time and delete any you consider inappropriate.

If you will return the packet of final selections to me I will take care of having them reproduced and distributed.

RN/cg

PHOTOS ATTACHED: 5454-3A(color)
7FE75A3154-06 - 31546
14MA75A4540-17
19DE74A2541-03A - 2541-3A
A5373-20
1SE74A449-17 - 449-17
7SE74A610-27 - A610-27
16AP75A4070-13A - A4080-13A - 16 Apr 75
29SE74A1110-28A - A 1110-28A
19NO74A2046-15A - 2046-15A
23JA74A2932-16
11JU75A5450-05
21DE74A2567-06
18SE74A0879-08A
18AG74A0181-07
20MY75A4646-24
14MY75A4541-28A



ITEM TRANSFER REFERENCE FORM

The item described below has been removed.

New File Location: AV Collection

Document Description: 2 copies each of 17 8"x10" photographs (1 color - others black+white) All ~~are~~ W.H. photographs printed for distribution to the media. See list of photograph numbers attached.

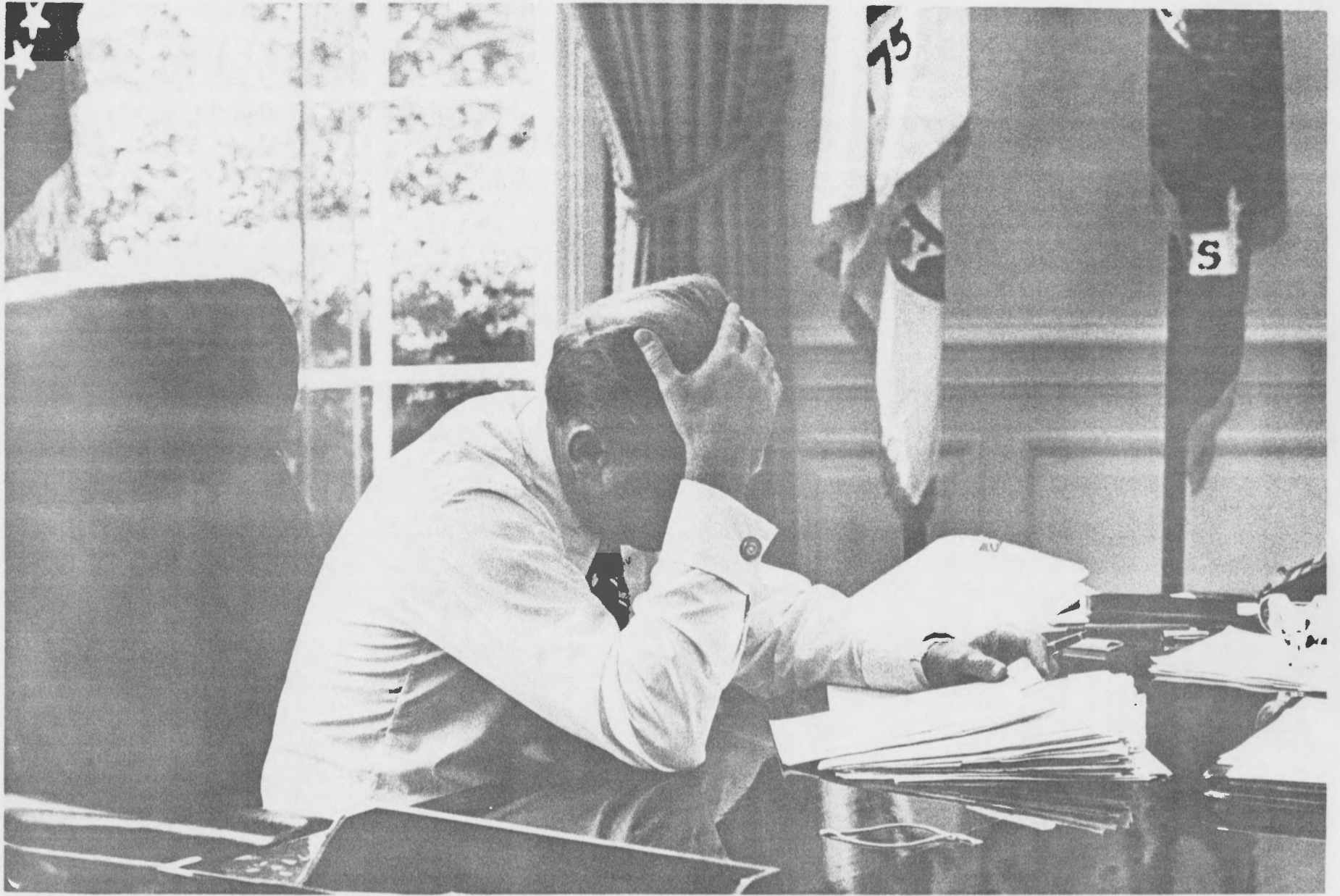
Old File Location: Nessen Papers
General Subject File
President - Report on First Year
in Office (1)

By W.H.M. Date 8/7/84



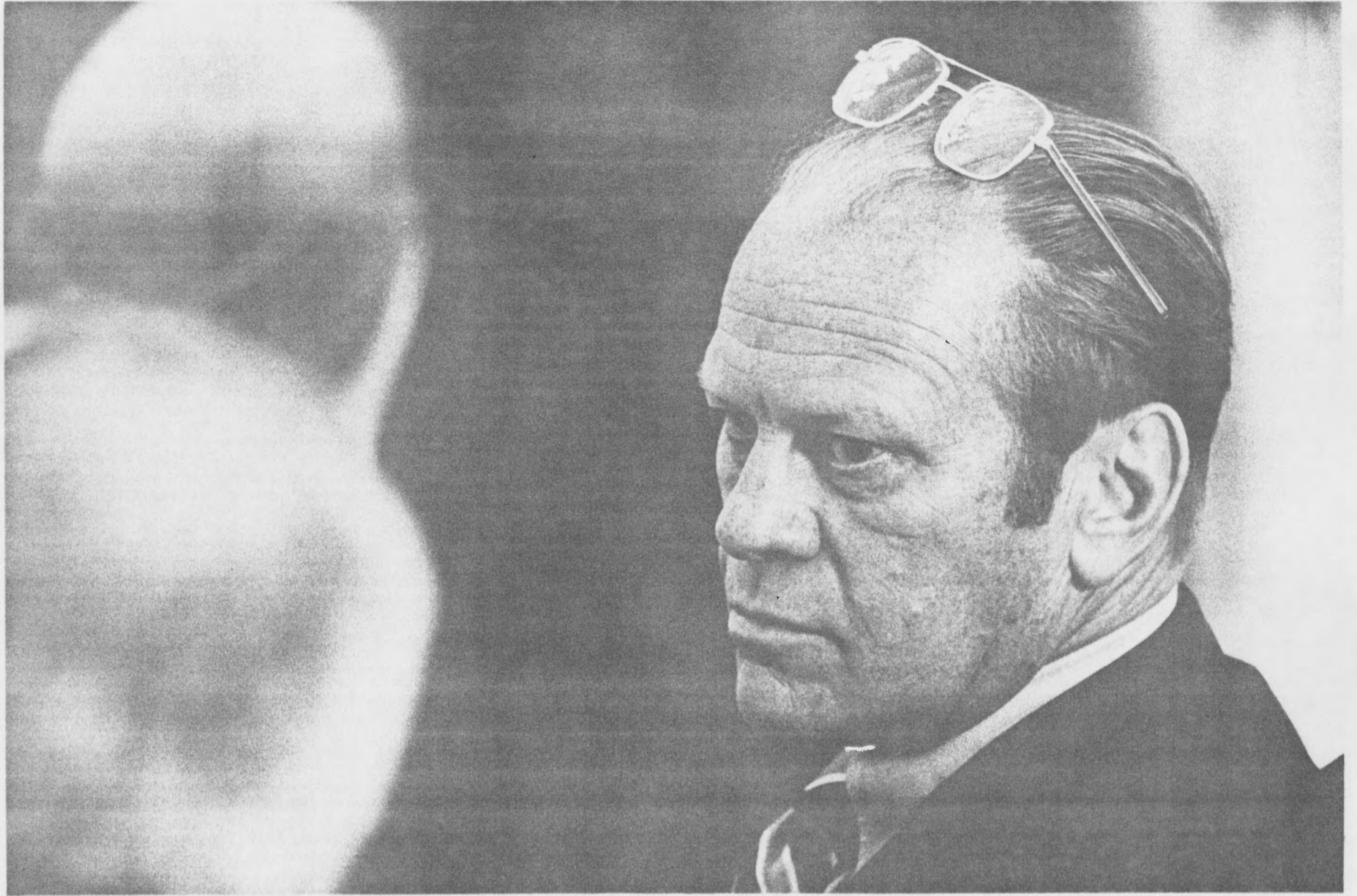


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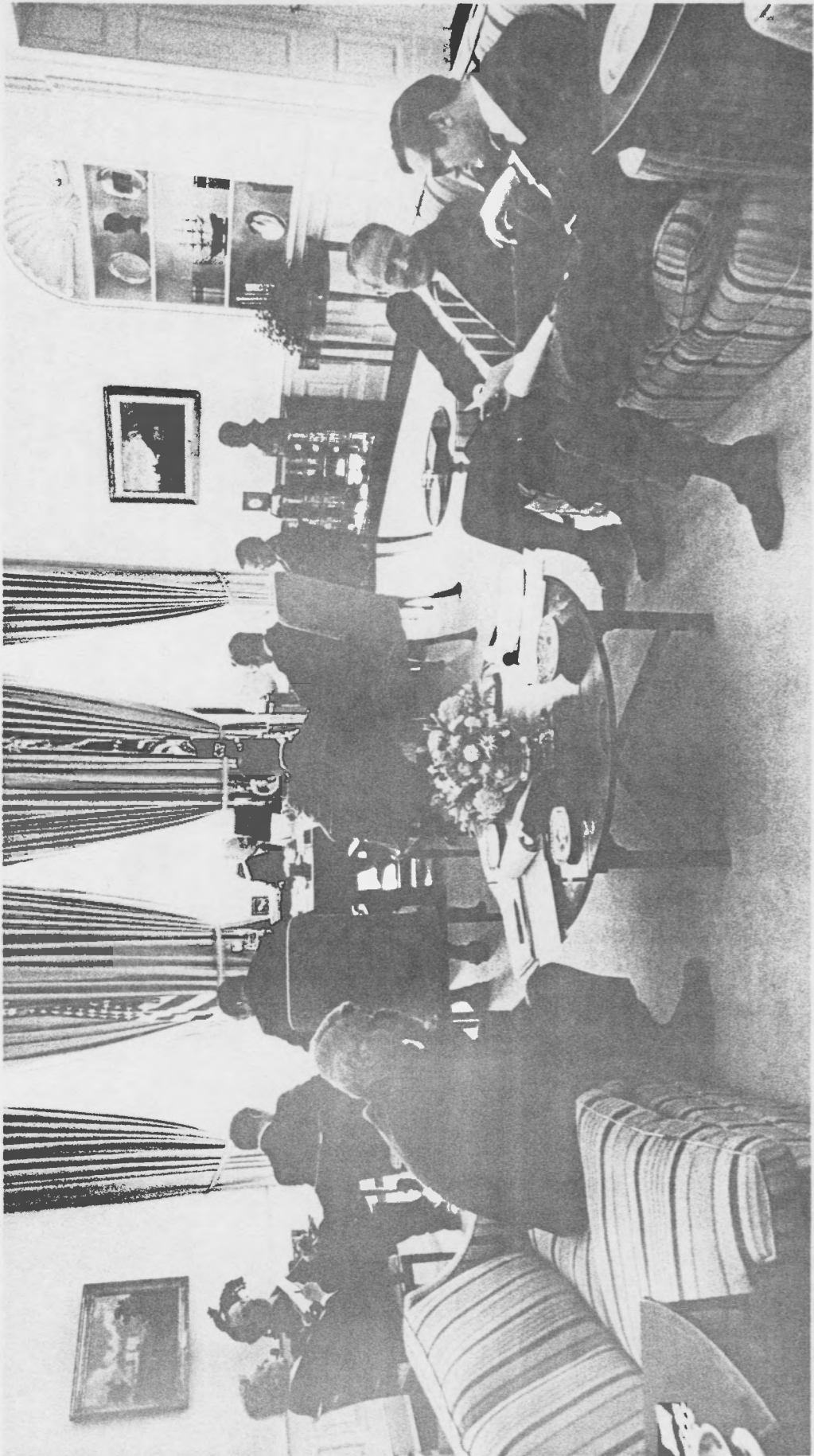


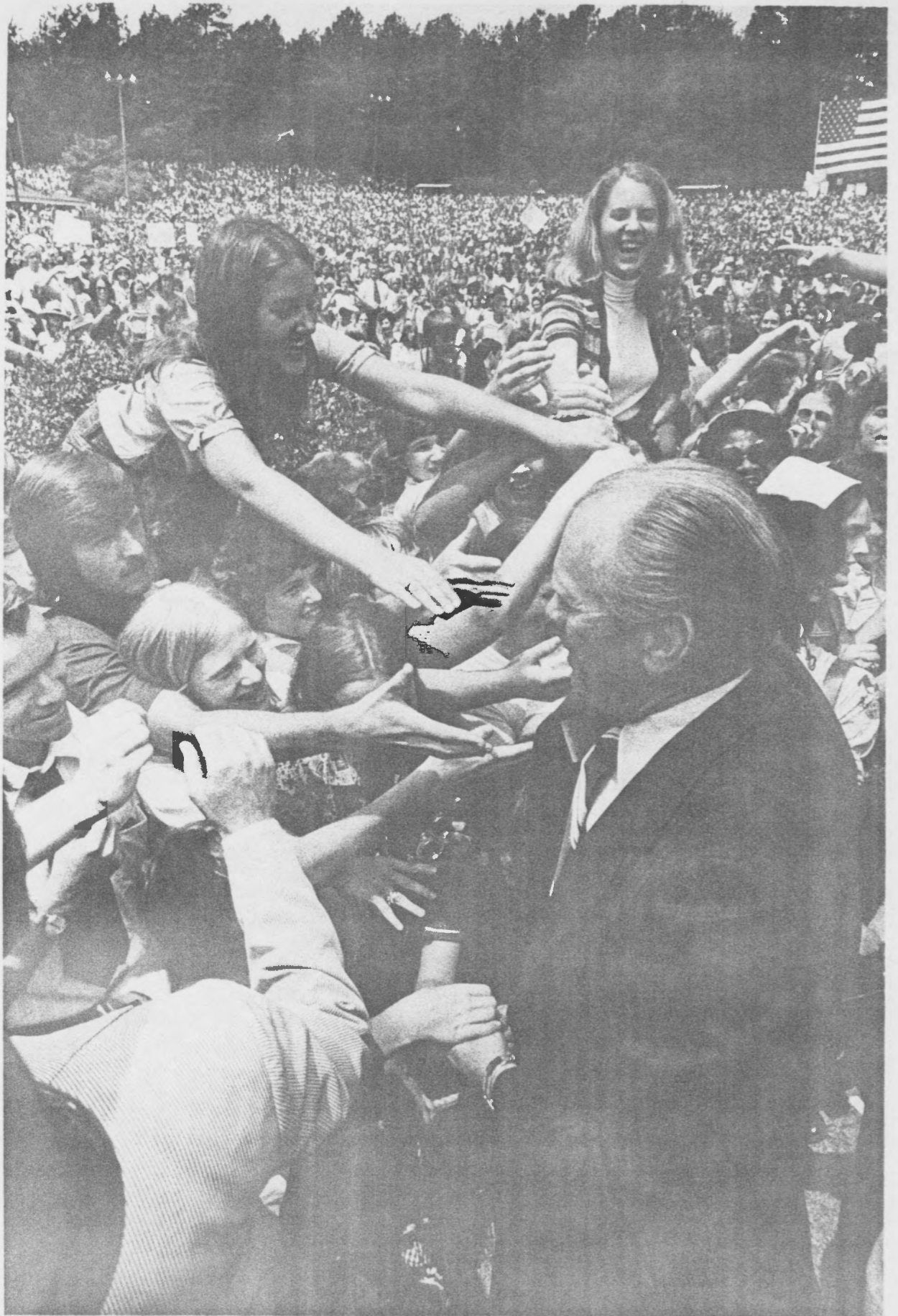






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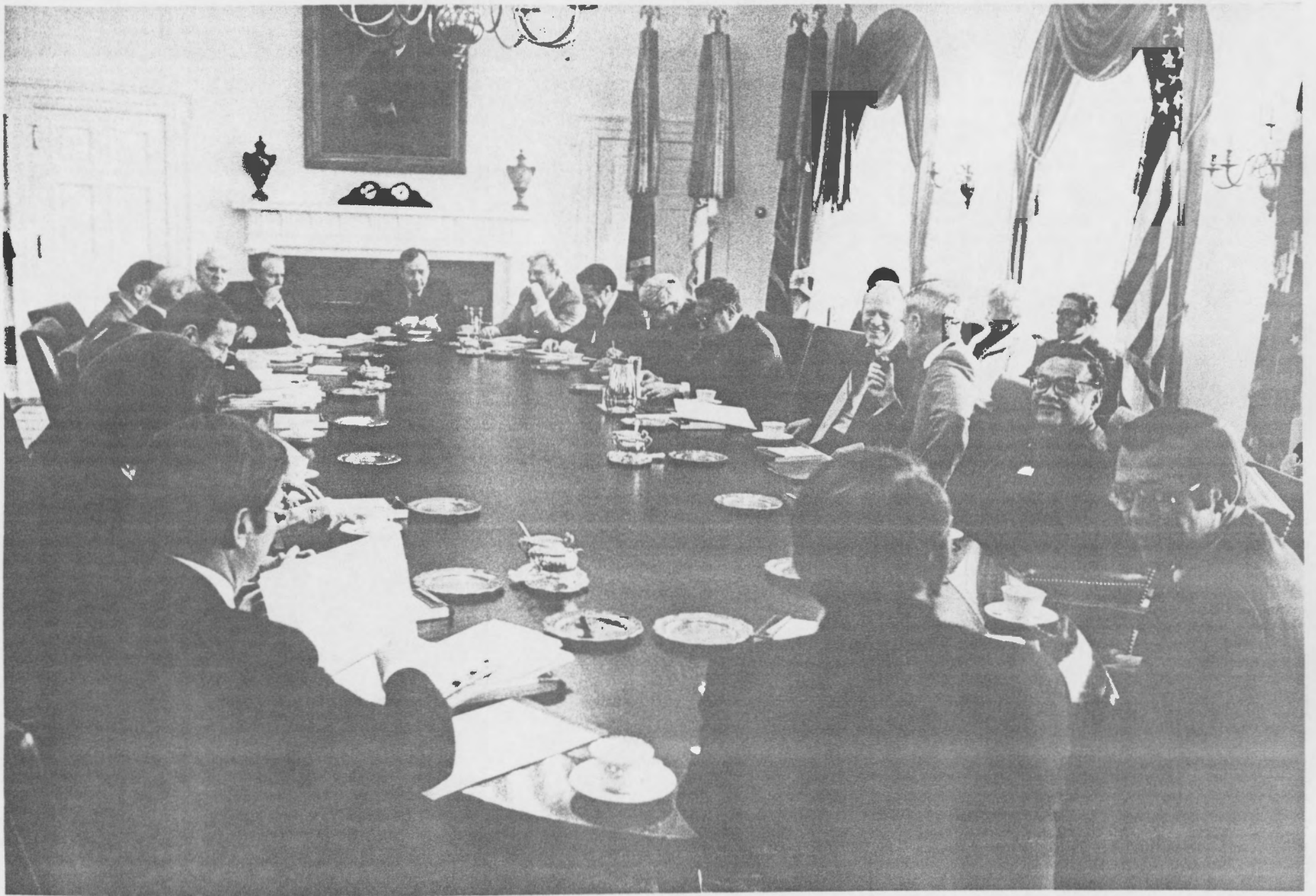
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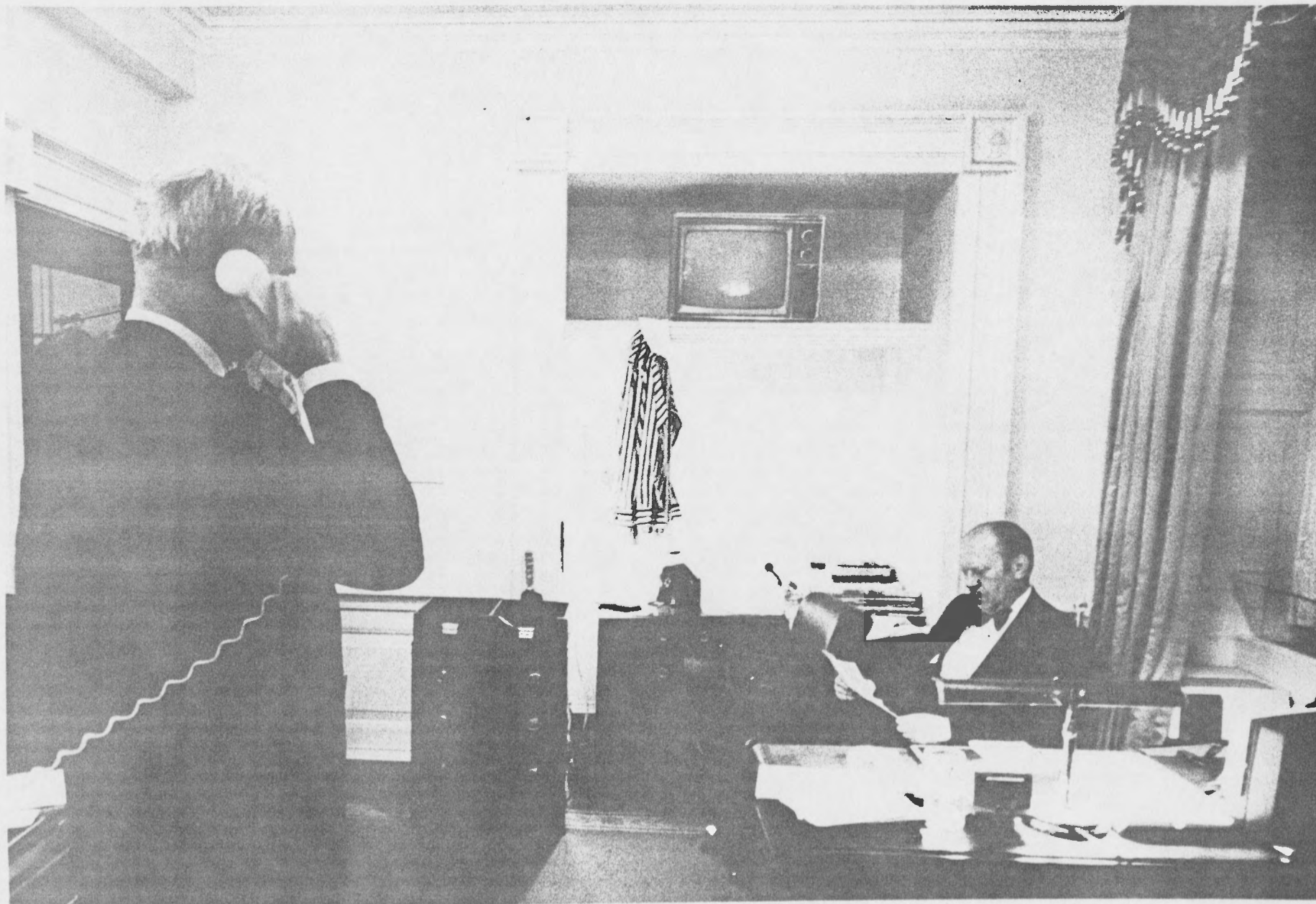
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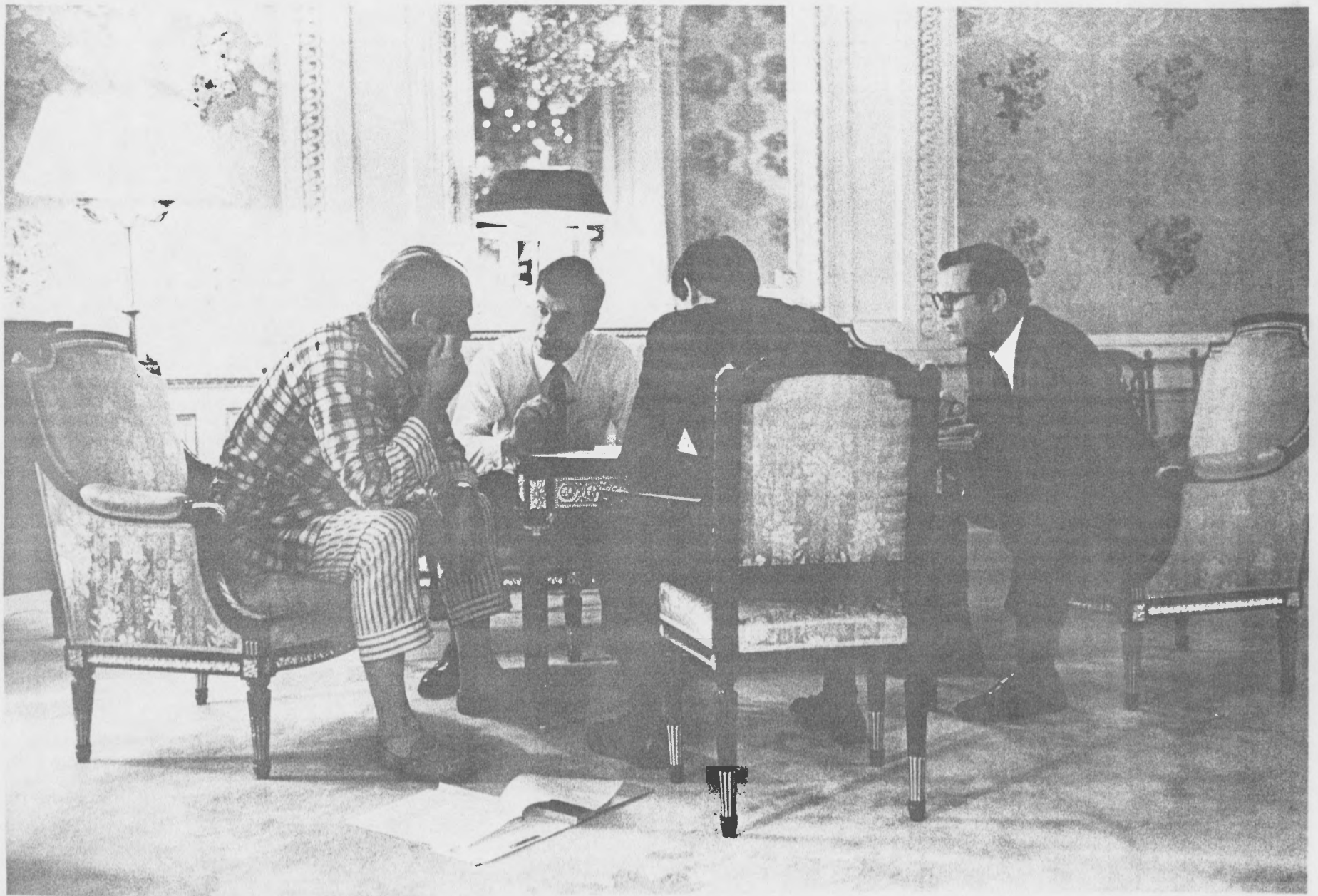




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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 23, 1975

Mr. President:

You may want to refresh your memory by glancing through this review of your first year prepared by the Press Office, before you talk to the New York Times reporters.

Ron Nessen

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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