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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 5, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
NELSON ROCKEFELLER
THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

THE CABINET ROOM

11:05 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

It would be nice if I could say I appreciate the warm applause, and because of the voice, I am not going to make a big speech, but I do want to thank you and say I appreciate the quality of the job you have done, the high quality of the people who sit at this table and the results that I think we have achieved.

I strongly think in this two-year period we have made very significant progress, and a great deal of that is the result of what all of you have done and the people associated with you. We lost the election, but we have no apologies, and I am very grateful for the 48 or 49 percent that supported us, and until January 20 we are going to be working at the job.

I thank everybody very, very much, and I am proud that all of you were working with me and doing a fine job.

Thank you very much.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Mr. President, I would say that I think history is going to show that during the most difficult crisis this country faced you rose to the highest office of the land. As President, you took us out of a period of crisis and disillusionment and discouragement. Where the economy was going downhill, you turned it around. You restored faith in America, faith in the White House, and respect. The economy is on the upswing, our position in the world is clear and it is thanks to you, and as a citizen I would like to say thank you.

END

(AT 11:08 A.M. EST)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 18, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

RON NESSEN *RAN*

SUBJECT:

Press Coverage of Carter Visit

Terry O'Donnell, Mike Duval and I recommend the following press plan for the visit of President-Elect and Mrs. Carter to the White House next Monday:

The Carters would arrive by auto on the South Grounds at the walkway leading to the Oval Office.

They would be greeted there by you and Mrs. Ford.

There would be no press coverage of this initial greeting.

You and Carter would go into the Oval Office. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Carter would go into the Residence.

There would be a press photo in the Oval Office, with you seated behind the desk and Carter beside the desk.

There would be a separate press photo of Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Carter in one of the state rooms, preferably the Blue Room.

At the conclusion of the meetings you and Mrs. Ford would escort President-Elect and Mrs. Carter down the walkway from the Oval Office to their car on the South Driveway.

There would be press coverage of this departure.

There would be an optional microphone in case you and President-Elect Carter care to say anything to the assembled press.

PRESS GUIDANCE FOR MEETING WITH GOVERNOR CARTER

November 22, 1976

Governor and Mrs. Carter will visit the White House this afternoon at 3:30. The President and Governor Carter will meet privately in the Oval Office and Mrs. Ford will meet with Mrs. Carter in the Residence. This will be the first meeting between the President and Mrs. Ford and Governor and Mrs. Carter since the election.

(GUIDANCE: THERE IS NO AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR CARTER. THE PRESIDENT PREFERS AN UNSTRUCTURED MEETING *on general subjects.* THERE WILL BE A PRESS PHOTOGRAPH UPON ARRIVAL, IN THE OVAL OFFICE AND UPON DEPARTURE. THERE MAY BE BRIEF REMARKS UPON DEPARTURE.)

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND PRESIDENT-ELECT JIMMY CARTER
FOLLOWING A MEETING IN THE OVAL OFFICE

SOUTH DRIVE

AT 4:45 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT. Mr. Carter and myself have had about an hour's discussion. I reemphasized to Governor Carter that my Administration would cooperate 100 percent in making certain that the transition from my Administration to his Administration would be carried out in the best interests of the American people. That is my obligation and the obligation of those who work with me, because we are all interested in what is best for the United States. It is my judgment that the transition is working smoothly, but we will continue to maximize our efforts to continue that and it has been a real pleasure and a privilege for Mrs. Ford and myself to have Governor Carter and Mrs. Carter as our guests on this occasion.

GOVERNOR CARTER. There cannot have been a better demonstration of unity and friendship and good will than has been shown to me by President Ford since the election. I believe that this year's debates and the election itself has reached a conclusion which leaves our Nation unified and I have expressed many times in the last few weeks my deep appreciation to President Ford for the gracious way in which he has welcomed me to meet with his heads of departments to teach me about the future responsibilities which I will assume. It is very reassuring to me and I hope to the Nation and other nations in the world to realize that the transition period will be handled in a way that is conducive to unity, to harnessing the tremendous economic and political and human strength of our country and I believe that the transition will be one which will be conducive to peace in our own Nation and peace around the world.

I would like to again express my thanks to President Ford and to Mrs. Ford for being so good to us. My wife and Mrs. Ford have had a chance to visit this afternoon. Rosalynn is going back to Georgia and I will be staying up here until tomorrow. But I do thank you again, President Ford, for making it possible for me to learn in this way and for being so hospitable to me and my wife.

END

(AT 4:48 P.M. EST)

November 22, 1976

P O O L R E P O R T

ARRIVAL OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER

3:55 P.M. EST

WALT RODGERS (AP RADIO): The two men were sitting in the traditional Oval Office photo position in the orange brocade, high wing-back chairs, sitting somewhat across from each other. The President was wearing a blue pin-stripe suit and Mr. Carter was wearing a blue suit.

When we were ushered in with the photographers they were already engaged in a conversation. It was difficult to hear Mr. Carter because he was speaking with his back to us and Mr. Carter speaks in low tones. The President was talking in our direction, so his quotes are somewhat more complete.

The first thing we heard the President say was, "We are within reachable agreement, but we still have some agency differences here to some extent." That is the end of the quote. We think that they were talking about the budget.

Then Mr. Carter asked the President a question about Congress, and we could not hear anything that we can give you a substantive quote on in that area, but Carter did ask the President a question about the Congress.

Q Why do you think they were talking about the budget?

WALT RODGERS: Because that is what the President has been working on all week. Again, this is what we felt. We have some substantive stuff we can give you. We are just giving the surmise on the quote.

The first substantive quote is Carter asking the President, "How would you feel about another economic meeting like the one you had in Puerto Rico?" We heard the President say, "It might be desirable. . ." Carter then said, "It would give me a chance to meet some foreign leaders."

As you may or may not know, there is an economic summit conference tentatively on track for February or March in Tokyo, or at least this is the general understanding. This would be Rombouillet III, following Puerto Rico II, and so on.

Then the discussion. Again, there were a lot of camera shutters clicking, and there was a discussion of the President's meeting in NATO and there was a discussion of the meeting of the NATO Ministers in Brussels.

ANNE COMPTON (ABC): After this, President Ford said, "It will give you a chance to meet some foreign leaders."

WALT RODGERS: A photographer asked them to turn and look at them for a minute, so he paused. Then he started again, "It might be better for you to have" -- I think this is an exact quote -- "a meeting with Ministers of NATO and perhaps heads of government." Then he called that very, very beneficial.

MORE

Q He, Ford?

WALT RODGERS: He, Ford; very, very beneficial.

Then the President said something again to the effect there are continuing negotiations. Carter then asked the President about the worth of an economic summit conference, like Puerto Rico, and the President said, "It was extremely beneficial. I found the meeting extremely beneficial." The President then mentioned that he brought Kissinger and Simon and other top advisors, and that the heads of government also brought their foreign ministers and finance ministers.

Carter then asked an interesting question, that is to say, one would have thought he would have been aware of this, but perhaps it was a rhetorical question or small talk. He asked the President, "Did you go to the one in France?" meaning Rombouillet I, and the President, of course, said yes. That is what we got when we were ushered out.

o0o

Walt Rodgers (AP Radio)
Tom DeFrank (Newsweek)
Anne Compton (ABC)
Bob Jamieson (NBC)

DEPARTURE FROM BLAIR HOUSE

DON IRWIN (L.A. TIMES). They set out in a 9-car motorcade, if you count the police cars in the front and in the rear. You saw their arrival here.

Before that, after most of you had left, Secretary Simon came out. These are pretty fragmentary notes because there were so many cameras in front of me I could only hear part of this.

Simon said it was a very good, fruitful meeting. "I had a very good fruitful meeting with Governor Carter to brief him on all of the issues pertaining to the Treasury Department." He listed a number of the issues. I only got some of them. He said he delivered to Governor Carter some briefing books on these various questions.

A question was asked, "Does Governor Carter see any need for action on New York City now?"

And the answer I have is, "Yes, I do." Then he said that is why Bob Girard is in New York City now.

He was asked if there should be action before the takeover. He gave a long and complicated answer, the burden of which was that he couldn't say now but he would not hesitate to act if it became necessary. He was asked how the question came up about New York City and he said that Governor Carter asked questions about it. Speaking of New York, he said they are on target. They have done all of what their plan called for and he believes they will remain on target.

There was a question about the IMF loan to the United Kingdom. Simon said he had given the Governor a complete update on it.

Another question: Will he support the loan?

Answer: A decision on that will undoubtedly come before January 20th.

He said that Carter appeared to be satisfied with the way negotiations between the IMF and the United Kingdom were being conducted.

He was asked about the problem of the sterling balance and he said he had discussed it with the Governor without going into detail.

He was asked if there was any discussion of a modification of the US position on the loan terms. Simon said he was not aware that the United States had a position and that we are not a party directly to the IMF negotiations, but that he will participate as a Board member.

He was asked whether they had discussed a tax cut and he said they had discussed tax policy and simplification and that he is submitting a report of his views on this question to Governor Carter which he said the Governor was looking forward to.

MORE

He said he had discussed his own efforts to slow spending. In replying to a question he said that he was always for a permanent cut rather than a one shot.

He said that they did not discuss a stimulative cut; they discussed a permanent cut or he was discussing a permanent cut. Incidentally, Simon had under his arm a note, a pad which was covered with longhand notes, it looked like several pages of it.

Question: Did he ask you to take any steps in relation to New York City?

Answer: He did not.

Question: Were you in agreement on New York City?

He said the Governor did not express an opinion on that subject. He said they are working out details on New York and in the interim they will continue to advance the loan funds. He said President-elect Carter did not express an opinion on that subject. He said they are working out details on New York and in the interim they will continue to advance the loan funds, the ones that they are presently extending periodically and then he jumped into his car.

Q John, you said Simon said he wouldn't hesitate to do something on New York City. By takeover, you mean of the Carter takeover?

DON IRWIN. No, that if action is required, the Ford Administration would not hesitate to act. He did not specify what action or what the emergency would be.

END

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH RON NESSEN

AT 5:00 P.M. EST

NOVEMBER 22, 1976

MONDAY

MR. NESSEN: The President and President-elect Carter met alone from the time that they first went into the Oval Office and after the pool photograph was over, until 4:25, at which time they asked that they be joined by Dick Cheney, Jack Marsh and Jack Watson. Those three gentlemen met with them for 15 minutes, from 4:25 to 4:40, at which time they left, and the President and President-elect met alone again for another four or five minutes, I would say, until the time that you saw them walk out the door of the Oval Office and walk down the walkway.

Just to switch over to the meeting between Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Carter, as you saw after the greeting at the South Diplomatic Entrance, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Carter went into the ground floor of the White House, and before going upstairs Mrs. Ford showed Mrs. Carter several of the rooms on the ground floor, including the room where there is an exhibit of china used by various First Families.

They then took the elevator up to the second floor where they had tea in the Yellow Oval Room. During the tea, various members of the household staff came into the room and were introduced by Mrs. Ford to Mrs. Carter.

At the same time, Mrs. Ford presented to Mrs. Carter some albums of color photos. These albums of color photos depict the furnishings and floor plans, and so forth, of all the rooms in the White House from the ground floor up through the state floor, the second floor living quarters, and the third floor living quarters.

Q You say there are photos of the floor plan?

MR. NESSEN: Color photos, and what each of the walls look like in each of the rooms, and a floor plan of each.

While there on the second floor, Mrs. Ford also showed Mrs. Carter some of the rooms, including the Lincoln bedroom and the Queen's room.

As you know, Mrs. Carter left a bit before Governor Carter because she was going to the airport to catch a plane to go back to Georgia.

I would say that you could describe the meeting between Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Carter as a friendly visit. I don't know if I made it clear, but Mrs. Carter was given the color photo albums to take with her so that she could study them and think about any changes she might want to make in the White House.

Q There is a station wagon from an Atlanta decorating firm parked outside. Were any furnishings brought in?

MR. NESSEN: No.

Q Ron, is he a decorator who has had a long-time contract here?

MR. NESSEN: Sheila, you had better come up here. I am getting in over my head.

Q This fellow Brown from Atlanta, isn't he a long-time contractor with the White House?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: I believe so.

Q He has been here before?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: That is right.

MR. NESSEN: Sarah says the gentleman who is the decorator, or identified as a decorator, is someone who has worked before at the White House.

Q Ron, can you tell us anything about what the President and President-elect discussed, the subject matter?

MR. NESSEN: Beyond what they said themselves outside, Phil, I think the meeting is going to have to remain private.

Q Are they going to meet again?

MR. NESSEN: At the moment there are no plans for a further meeting.

Q Ron, they seemed to go into the other office. Did they go into both the other offices? We could see through the window. They vanished back there.

MR. NESSEN: I will check with Terry to see whether they went into the other office.

Q Were you able to ascertain if this was the first such meeting between the President and President-elect since Williamsburg?

MR. NESSEN: They have not met since they met at Williamsburg on the third debate.

Q I didn't mean between these two persons, but between the President, a President and a President-elect.

MR. NESSEN. I have not done that historic research. I am sorry, Ted.

Q Ron, had either one of the Carters been at the White House before?

MR. NESSEN. Shiela, do you know if the Carters have been here before? We will have to look into that, Maggie. I don't know.

Q Ron, the pool reporters gave some fragments of conversation in which apparently the President was recommending that the President-elect first see the NATO ministers and heads of government before going into an international economic meeting. Can you clarify whether that was what he was saying because we only got a fragment of it?

MR. NESSEN. I couldn't get close enough. All the poolers were in the way, Bill. I think it would be fair to say that certainly a portion of the meeting was taken up with a discussion of foreign policy. But I don't want to go into any more detail than that.

Q Ron, can you tell us about some plans that your Administration will have some sort of economic meeting early next year?

MR. NESSEN. I don't know anything beyond what was said at the time of the Puerto Rico meeting, Sarah, which is that the leaders of the industrial nations had rough plans to meet on a periodic basis and it had turned out to be in about 6- or 7-month intervals.

Q Will there be an early transcript of the remarks outside?

MR. NESSEN. We will get the Reynolds folks to work on it as quickly as possible. Do you want to give a time estimate, Bill?

MR. ROBERTS. I should think we could have it in half an hour.

Q Has the pool report appeared yet?

MR. NESSEN. What pool report? You mean the transcript of the verbal pool report?

Yes.

Q Ron, did Mr. Ford plan to give him any advice?

MR. NESSEN. Sarah, I am not going to talk about what was said at the private meeting other than what the two chose to say themselves when they came out.

Q If the President made some policy about arms or initiative in SALT, or economic matters between now and January, will he expect Mr. Carter to remain silent on the issue?

MR. NESSEN: I think you can see yourself realistically that the SALT talks, the technical level talks at Geneva have recessed pending the new Administration taking office and the other part of it really is also hypothetical.

Q Ron, can you give us any discussion between Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Carter, dialogue?

MR. NESSEN: Again, the two of them were there alone except for the occasions when the staff came in to be introduced. Perhaps Sheila could give you some more detail.

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Mrs. Ford said Mrs. Carter was very curious, had a number of questions. When I asked Mrs. Ford about that, she said Mrs. Carter was very curious, had a number of questions to ask ranging from entertainment at the White House, both on an official and unofficial basis, the East Wing staff, how it was set up. They had discussed different rooms in the House. As Ron pointed out, Mrs. Ford presented her with an album of pictures and layouts of all four floors in the White House. That would be the ground floor, the State floor, the Residence, which is the second and third floors. So she thumbed through that quickly and glanced at it and had a few questions. Mrs. Ford said if there are any other questions, call. She asked about uses of different kinds of rooms, such as the Yellow Oval Room, the room they were in. It was really a very friendly, nice conversation.

Q Did they walk into any other room except the oval room? Did they go anywhere else?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: They went into the Lincoln bedroom and the Queen's bedroom.

Q Did they go to the private quarters?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No, they did not.

Q What kind of questions did Mrs. Carter ask?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Such questions as did Mrs. Ford entertain much in the Yellow Oval Room and Mrs. Ford answered that saying only officially because it was too formal, that kind of conversation, that kind of question.

Q Were there any personal questions asked about how to deal with living in the White House?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Not really.

Q Sheila, the staff who were introduced by Mrs. Ford to Mrs. Carter, are they more or less career, permanent?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Yes, they are the chef, maitre d', people who are serving, who are the household staff.

Q Chef?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: The chef was downstairs.

Q How many people were introduced?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: I would say there were four or five.

Q Did Mrs. Carter make any statements about her opinion of the current style of decorating?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No. She wants to study the book first.

Q Do you have any comments?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No. I think she is going to go through. Then the questions will come.

Q Did Mrs. Ford have any specific advice?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: I asked her that question. She said she really didn't need any advice. She has been in a similar position as wife of a Governor.

Q Who said that?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Mrs. Ford.

Q Said that to you?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Said that to me when I asked her about any specific advice. She has been in a position that is somewhat comparable as the wife of a Governor, but Mrs. Ford told Mrs. Carter not to hesitate to call if there are any questions that come to mind.

Q Did they go into any rooms on the third floor?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No, they did not. That is all in the book.

Q Did they talk any about the cost of upkeep, the budget?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No. Just basically the kind of entertaining, square versus round tables.

Q What was the verdict?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: Mrs. Ford prefers the round tables. Mrs. Carter will have to make that determination.

Q Did they say anything about inauguration?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No.

Q Were the press secretaries with them?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: No. I was with the press secretary.

Q What did you talk about? Did you have any advice for the press secretaries?

Q Ron, could you explain why it is that the Carters were not invited to dinner? Was there some problem they had to go, she had to go back early? What was the reason?

MR. NESSEN. Because Mrs. Carter has to be in Georgia. She had to leave early to catch her plane to Georgia. She has a commitment.

Q That is the reason?

MRS. WEIDENFELD: That is right. I know she had that commitment.

Q Ron, was there an agreement between the President and the President-elect not to give a readout? Is that something they usually agreed was necessary?

MR. NESSEN: No. I think they each decided what they were going to say.

Q Ron, you say that they met alone. From the time the photo session ended until 4:25, what time --

MR. NESSEN. I would roughly say probably -- and we can get this from Nell's log -- but just estimating, I would say probably from about a quarter of four until 4:25. That is a guess.

I think we are going to put a lid on for the day. I appreciate your coping with our unusually crowded schedule today.

END

(AT 5:10 P.M. EST)

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS BETWEEN
THE PRESIDENT,
VICE PRESIDENT NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER,
AND
GOVERNOR JOHN B. CONNALLY

THE BRIEFING ROOM

5:25 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: The Vice President and Governor Connally and myself have agreed to come out here to indicate the context of the meeting. You had an opportunity to see and to question Governor Reagan. The four of us met because I felt that it would be highly desirable for the four of us to sit and try to see what could be done to make certain that we have a viable two-party system in this country. We think it is absolutely essential for the political health of the United States that there be competition in the political arena and the best way to do it is through a strong Republican Party competing against the Democrats.

We really decided three things: Number one, that we would continue to meet and we tentatively agreed to meet the first week in January. We agreed that there should be formed a coordinating committee type of organization similar to the one that was put together in 1965 following the 1964 election. We agreed that there were five or six potential Republican National Committee chairmen that were all experienced, that all had assets and opportunity. We would not pick or choose as a group any one of the individuals. That was the responsibility of the Republican National Committee.

So with those observations, the Vice President, Governor Connally and myself will be glad to respond to any questions.

Q Mr. President, is Governor Connally one of those five or six who you think is on the list to be national chairman?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Governor ought to respond to that.

GOVERNOR CONNALLY. I think I made it abundantly clear as I tried to do the other day at the meeting of the Republican Governors that I am really not available. I don't foresee any circumstances under which I would be.

Q Governor, we got exactly the opposite impression from what you said the other day. We thought you were available.

MORE

GOVERNOR CONNALLY: Sarah, I can't interpret for you. I tried to say that I have never been a candidate. As I recall what I said then, I said I have never been a candidate, I am not now a candidate, I never will be a candidate. There have to be two conditions precedent before I would even seriously think about it. That would be that I would have to be publicly endorsed by the President, by the Vice President, by Governor Rockefeller and that I would be asked to take it on the basis of not taking it as a full time job which flies in the face of the rules that now exist. I thought that in itself was a sufficient answer to indicate that I laid down two conditions, neither of which probably would be met. But I want to make it stronger today to be sure there is not any misunderstanding that I do not foresee any circumstances under which I would be available.

Q Mr. President, what do you think of Mrs. Smith's description of Governor Reagan as being part of the far right?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that Governor Reagan answered that question and I would let his words speak for themselves.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us who the five or six qualified chairmen are that you all have agreed on, one, and, two, would you and the Vice President endorse Governor Connally for chairman as he has given that as a qualification?

THE PRESIDENT: First, let me say I would hesitate to list those individuals. The names have been bandied around, but I don't think we should say here today that this is the only particular group. There may be another candidate or two that might appear. And, therefore, if I mentioned five, it would be unfair to those that might emerge in the future.

Q Mr. President, what role do you see for yourself in party affairs after January 20th with particular reference to the coordinating committee you speak of?

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly intend to be involved in Republican politics. I would hope to be a member of the coordinating committee. I think it worked in 1965 and 1966 and I am confident that it can be a very effective organization in 1977 and in 1978.

Q Mr. President, do you see any problems of ideological differences afterwards in attempting party unity?

THE PRESIDENT: One of the major purposes of this gathering was to achieve party unity, recognizing that in some areas each of us may have a difference from the other. But I think the Republican tent is big enough and broad enough to encompass the four individuals who met here this afternoon. I was impressed with the degree of unity that was expressed by each of us to one another. We recognize those differences, but we have a common objective, a strong two-party system and I think it will be healthy and beneficial to the country.

MORE

Q Mr. President, is it possible that perhaps what the Republican Party needs is a lot of new broad and fresh faces, none of which were in that room?

THE PRESIDENT: We are not king makers, Wally. We are simply deeply concerned about a political system where you have competition and we are not excluding anybody from the Republican ranks who are there now or anybody who wants to join the Republican Party. So we have to start someplace. This seemed like a very logical place for me to use whatever influence I have to get the ball rolling for what we have to do between now and 1978 and 1980.

Q Could we go back to the second part of my question, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you had forgotten it.
(Laughter)

Q About whether you and the Vice President --

GOVERNOR CONNALLY. Let me inject here that I think this is not a germane question at this point, because I said earlier in the day in Chicago that I made a stronger statement, it is not a Shermanese statement, but it nevertheless is a stronger statement that I see. I can see no circumstances under which I would be available.

Q Mr. President, did you agree among yourselves that if the RNC selects one of these five or six individuals that you spoke of today that that selection would have the unanimous support of all of you?

THE PRESIDENT: I think there was a consensus that the names we discussed would be acceptable. I also believe that we might have an individual preference, but none of those would be unacceptable.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned that this group would meet again. Did the four of you see yourselves as kind of a council of elders of the Republican Party?

THE PRESIDENT: I won't use those words, Phil, because we don't think of ourselves as elders. I think we have a lot of life left in our political bones and we will be using a little influence from time to time. But it was a practical way to get leaders in the party together and to represent geographically and otherwise the Republican Party. We will work with others, but we don't intend to be king makers, if that is what you mean by elders.

Q Mr. President, what would you envision that the four of you would do at this next meeting and where would that be and do you have any idea what you would be talking about?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will be talking about the prospective national chairman because the Republican National Committee meets January 14th and 15th, but we will also perhaps be finalizing some recommendations to the new national chairman as to the format or the organization of this committee that I mentioned earlier.

MORE

Q Do you want to be the Chairman of this committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not want to preempt any position at the present time. I want to be a participant.

Q Mr. President, when you look at the November 2 results ---

THE PRESIDENT: I have looked at them. (Laughter)

Q The greatest deficiency that your Party showed was among black and minority voters. Did that come up today and do any of the three gentlemen including the Vice President have any suggested remedies about how to bring black people into your party where it seems you just got skunked on November 2nd?

THE PRESIDENT: We hope to broaden the base of the party and there is every reason in the world why members of the black community in the United States ought to support the Republican Party because we offer them jobs, whereas the opposition in effect offers them welfare. I think that is an attractive appeal that the Republican Party would have to the black community because they are interested in jobs rather than welfare. But this is a personal observation.

Q Mr. Vice President, Newsweek Magazine reported among other things that the President was not very fond of the President-elect. Are you? How do you feel about that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I love this country and I will do anything I can to help the President-Elect and the Vice President-elect to carry out their responsibilities.

Q Mr. Vice President, do you share or do you have the hope of serving on this coordinating committee as the President does?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I served on the last one. I am interested in seeing the Party have the broadest possible base, appeal for the broadest national support and I think that committee needs to have that kind of representation. If I can add something, I am delighted. If not, I will just like to see the committee function effectively.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer the question. I think that it would be constructive to have all four of the group that met this afternoon on the committee, but they would not necessarily numerically dominate the group because if you go back to the format of 1965, there were roughly as I recall 30 members.

So I think the four of us could contribute to the work of the committee, but I don't think we should numerically be in the majority.

MORE

Q Mr. President, why doesn't the Republican Party have a broader base than it does? The 18 percent figure must be terribly alarming to you.

THE PRESIDENT: Wally, I think you can turn it around. We got 48-plus percent of the vote. So we must have had some appeal beyond the 18 percent who were registered Republicans. We came awfully close. So we do have a relatively broad base and we ought to make sure that that 48-plus percent will follow the Republican Party in the elections in 1978.

Q How can you do that?

THE PRESIDENT: By the kind of program and the kind of campaign we ran in 1976.

Q Mr. President, could you spell out in any detail at all what it is you envision this coordinating committee actually doing and how many members it might have?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is premature to get into specifics there. If you use the format and the record of the coordinating committee in 1965, it covered issues, it covered programs. I think the best way for you to envision what might be a part of the contemplated one is to go back and read the history of the one in 1965 and 1966.

Q Mr. President, will you run for office again?

THE PRESIDENT: Sarah, do you want me to? (Laughter)

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 5:37 P.M. EDT)