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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF

DONALD H. RUMSFELD  
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

THE BRIEFING ROOM

2:40 P.M. EST

MR. NESSEN: The briefing this afternoon is by Donald Rumsfeld on the White House organization. You have all the printed material and probably have had a chance to read it. This is available for filming and taping but there should be no filing until Don has concluded his briefing.

MR. RUMSFELD: A little over two months ago, I met with this distinguished group and we talked about the White House staff a bit and there were a number of questions about what might happen and I allowed as how we would have to see how things evolved.

A lot has evolved in the intervening weeks. Today, what I would like to do is comment on what exists and/or what will exist within the next month or so.

I would like to make a couple of cautionary remarks. What this amounts to is sort of a snapshot of where we are. It will continue to evolve in the coming months as the President moves through his term of office. It is not a static situation. But because there was such an interest in the White House, it struck me that it would be useful to come back and visit a bit about it. I will be happy to respond to questions after I have made several comments.

As I have indicated, what I will be talking about has evolved since August 9th. The President feels that his approach and working style is reflected in this organization. Hopefully, it will help to implement his concept of leadership and management of the Executive Branch of the Government.

It is designed, really, with several objectives in mind, as we have indicated in the statement. First, to provide Cabinet Officers and agency heads and Members of Congress and senior staff members with an opportunity to deal with the President as is necessary; to try to limit the functions performed in the White House to those functions that necessarily must be performed within the White House and to rely wherever possible on Cabinet heads and agency heads for those functions that they can best perform; to try to achieve a more clearly defined White House organization -- although I must say it is very difficult to put a set of very complex relationships down on a piece of paper.

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So, if the briefing today, and the pieces of paper that have been handed out, are taken as an effort to communicate and develop a better understanding of how it works, I think that is much better than trying to dot every "i" and cross every "t" and analyze each little thing. That is probably not useful.

Also, our efforts have been designed to try to assure high ethical standards and behavior and also to see that the White House, itself, is an effective working part of the Government and does not get separated -- either the individuals or the institutions -- from either the rest of the Executive Branch or the Congress or the country.

If you will first let me just mention the things that have been handed out.

There is a general statement. There is an organization chart which, as I say, is probably imperfect in terms of the complex multiplicity of relationships that exist in an organization such as this.

There is a fact sheet that tries to set forth the principal functions of each of the major offices. There is a list of the individuals who will be commissioned as White House staff members. There is a brief layout of the floor space in the West Wing of the White House, the first floor and the second floor.

The only reason that is being passed out is because there have been so many stories written about the subject that have not been completely correct that it struck me that it might be useful for everyone to be working off the same piece of paper.

Also, by popular demand, we are releasing a White House telephone book. This is something that has been a source of a good deal of discussion in this room, I am told, over a period of time. Again, the telephone book is probably accurate today. I cannot swear to that but I think it is probably accurate today. It will probably be inaccurate tomorrow.

I think you will find the people that you call on the numbers indicated will be exactly the same people you would get through the White House central number, but since there was such a desire and appetite for the telephone book, we provided it.

Looking at the organization chart, I think it is probably useful just to go down through it very briefly.

There have been a number of articles about the floaters, or something. Just to correct that misunderstanding, if you look at the box on the left underneath the President, you will see Cabinet-rank advisers. There are four individuals and there certainly will be others who will fill this role, but for the sake of a chart, those individuals obviously will consult with the President on a broad range of subjects that may or may not have anything

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whatsoever to do with the specific responsibilities that those individuals happen to be performing, as you will see as we go further down the chart.

So, there is that separate responsibility that those four individuals do have, the coordination function the President described when I was asked to assume these responsibilities.

Moving on down the chart, you will notice that there is the very necessary management and budget function. There is the Economic Policy Board function. There is the Domestic Council function, the National Security Council function, the normal function of the White House operations and the pieces that fit in that administrative area.

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The Counsellor to the President, John Marsh, as you will see, has general organizational and supervisory responsibility for two very important areas. The Office of Congressional Relations, where Max Friedersdorf is a full Assistant to the President, of course, will be dealing with Congressional relations, and Mr. Bill Baroody, also Assistant to the President, dealing with public liaison.

The Office of the Press Secretary you know more about than I do.

The Office of Counsellor Hartmann includes not just the Editorial Office but also an Executive Assistant to the Counsellor who has not been announced, and that area will involve substantial responsibilities with respect to political advice and counsel.

The final box you will see is the Office of The Counsel.

There are, of course, other staff members who will be working directly with the President. They include the Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, Max Friedersdorf; the Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, Bill Baroody, as well as the Special Assistant to the President for Minority Affairs; the Special Assistants for Human Resources, for Hispanic Affairs, for Consumer Affairs, and for Women, among others.

Fourth, I would mention this concept of the Deputy. We felt that it would be desirable if the principal people on the staff did in fact have a deputy in every sense. That is to say, an individual who was personally used to working with the President, and with whom the President was used to working. An individual who, when a meeting was called, in the event the principal in that office was not available to be there could fill in so that the work of the Government could go on.

It is working; it has been working now for better than a month. I think it is a healthy thing. I personally have never subscribed to the idea that people ought to feel indispensable or be seen by others as being indispensable. I doubt that this is achievable, but, hopefully, some of the people who work in this building will be able to avoid separating themselves from their families and their neighbors and lead something approximating a somewhat reasonably normal life, because it seems to me it is healthier for them to be able to do so.

We have also addressed the question of the titles of the people working in the White House. This is not a major matter, but the President felt it would be desirable to have individuals have titles that reasonably reflected, in fact, what they were doing, rather than titles that were general and applied to most everybody. So, you will notice some of the titles have been changed.

The White House staff is being reduced by approximately 10 percent in size. Most of that has already been accomplished. The remainder will be accomplished in the coming few weeks.

The support service, obviously, will be reduced as appropriate to reflect the staff size.

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Q What were the numbers involved in support figures for the last Administration?

MR. RUMSFELD: What I would like to do is make sure when we talk about numbers that we all don't get confused. There is a certain set of numbers that can be put out which includes detailees and others that do not include the detailees. Some that include consultants. Some that do not include consultants. Some that include the various parts of the Executive Office of the President that have separate statutory authorization and get separate budgets from the Congress.

The figure that I am using is a figure, if I am not mistaken, that was 540 on August 1st, and will be down in the neighborhood of slightly under 500 within a month or so.

Let me just continue a second here.

Q What figures are these of the choices you just gave us? Do these include the detailees?

MR. RUMSFELD: They include detailees and consultants. My recollection is it does include detailees, and it does include consultants.

Q It does not include OMB?

MR. RUMSFELD: Not OMB, and not National Security Council which are separate statutory organizations.

Q It does not include NSC. It does not include NSC staff.

MR. RUMSFELD: It includes a few NSC staff. The ones on the White House payroll as opposed to NSC payroll. We can give you the specifics.

It does include consultants and detailees. That figure is what I described. It does include detailees. It does include consultants. It does not include those organizations in the Executive Office of the President that have a separate statutory appropriation.

Q What is a detailee?

MR. RUMSFELD: A person who is on the rolls of a department or agency elsewhere in the Government and was brought in to the White House for the purpose of working in the White House.

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And as I recall the rule now is that we should not have detailees here for more than six months. That is to say, if a person is really going to be working in the White House he should be put on the White House rolls, otherwise he ought to be detailed back to the place from which he was detailed.

As you will recall, the numbers in the White House are difficult because over the years at various times there have been a substantial number of people who have been actually on another agency's rolls but were brought in for the purpose of working in the White House.

We are trying to reduce down the number of individuals who are, so to speak, detailed into the White House. There will always be some.

For example, if a new function begins in the White House, you do not have an authorization or an appropriation or the people, you frequently detail from other departments and agencies where they have competence in that particular area, bring them in, get the thing started, and then go up to the Hill for an appropriation for that function.

For example, that is the way the Wage-Price Council has begun its work -- Al Rees' operation -- using detailees.

There are one or two areas where you leave detailees. For example, the President's Advisory Board on Foreign Intelligence I believe has two permanent detailees, because they are permanent employees of the Department of State.

Well, in any event, what we have indicated here in the organization chart and in the principal functions is an effort to have what the President wanted, and that is to say to assure that there are multiple sources of information for the President, to assure that he is in a position to deal with Cabinet Officers, and agency heads, and the Congress, as well as the White House staff. To assure that while even though information to the President comes up from multiple sources that nonetheless the Presidential decision-making process will be orderly.

I think, in fact, that the President has put his house in order, from an organizational standpoint. And as I have indicated, much of what has been presented here has in fact already been put in place.

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I will be happy to respond to questions.

Q Can you tell us whose authority has been enhanced, and whose authority has been diminished under this arrangement?

MR. RUMSFELD: Yes, the President's authority is enhanced.

Q Don, can I ask how this differs from past White House organization as you know it, and how much you borrowed from the recent past in making this new organization?

MR. RUMSFELD: It seems to me, number one, the first question that what we have here is not something that raises or lowers somebody at somebody else's expense. What we have here is an organizational arrangement that the President feels he will be comfortable with and feels will provide an orderly Presidential decision making process, and one that will work.

As far as comparing it with the past, it seems to me, Peter, that that is difficult to do. First of all, I am not an expert on each of the previous Administrations. The first thing you would have to say is that the principal things that the White House does are not terribly different in this organization chart, although I do not know that other organization charts have been put out, but obviously there has to be the budget function, the domestic function, the economic function, and the national security function.

The budget is obvious. The last three have as their role attempting to bring in and harmonize and make more coherent the material and information and proposals that are coming in from Cabinet departments that are dealing with subjects in compartments that the real world does not have them in. That is to say, the real world is not neatly compartmentalized the way our Government structure is.

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Obviously you have always had a Press Secretary function. I would mention these things; it seems to me the things that are different -- number one, the President is different. This is an individual who arrived here with a background and set of experiences and approach that is distinctive to him.

A number of the people are different that are involved in this organization. The reporting relationships, it strikes me, are somewhat different. But most of all, it is a matter of emphasis. It is a matter of his philosophy -- of how he wants to operate -- his decision that he wants as much as possible done through the departments and agencies, the principal statutory agencies and departments.

I think it also reflects his desire to assure himself that he, in fact, is receiving information from more than one or two or three or four sources, and so you see an organization that enables that.

Let's be honest; this has been in place, portions of it, for a month and one half; portions for a month, portions for a week and the remainder in the next week or so. As I say, it will change and evolve as we go along.

Q Mr. Rumsfeld, I see your name in more boxes than anybody else's. Does this mean you are the chief aide, that you are the first among equals?

MR. RUMSFELD: No, it means exactly what the President said when I was announced. He wanted me to be in charge of the administrative part, and he also wanted me to serve in a coordinating responsibility to the extent he does, and he does a good deal of the coordinating himself. That which he does not do, that needs to be done, that does not take care of itself, I assist with. But I think the announcement of my position is the most accurate reflection of what the President intends.

It also happens he asked me to be in the Cabinet, so I am in the other box.

Q Could I follow up on that? You are familiar with the operation of the Nixon White House?

MR. RUMSFELD: Not from this vantage point, but certainly familiar with it.

Q Do you think you have more authority now in the Ford White House than Mr. Haldeman had in the Nixon White House, or less?

MR. RUMSFELD: As I have answered, Peter, I am not in a position to start making judgments as between different -- I think, probably each White House during a given Administration evolved and changed during the course of that Administration. I think the important point here is that this is an original arrangement that the President wants, that he desires to have, that puts him in a position to conduct the business of government in the way that

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he wishes. I think that there is a little bit of tendency in this town to kind of over play White House assistants as great powerful people and all this business, and maybe that is not quite the way it is.

It seems so to me what is important is the quality of the advice or the quality of the work that ultimately tells.

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Q Mr. Rumsfeld, I am wondering, in your announcement here you say this organization should do all of these things. The reports says, "To assure a high ethical standard behavior by his staff." What, in this organization, assures that?

MR. RUMSFELD: I think the lead paragraph before the colon says that the President had these objectives in mind and his hope was that by -- we have done several things: one, he feels by having people organizationally responsible to somebody who is dealing directly with him on a regular basis that his views and his concerns and his hopes and aspirations for the White House and for the country will be reflected down there through respective organizations and each of these individuals does have a management-leadership responsibility with respect to the people under him.

Secondly, we have, in fact, communicated extensively with people in the White House as to what the ethical requirements are. We have communicated with them directly on paper. We are in the process of communicating with them in various meetings so that there is an understanding of what the President desires in that area.

Obviously, an organization chart does not insure anything. All it does is try to portray a set of relationships but this is something that has been on his mind and something we feel we made some progress on.

Q What are the requirements you mentioned, Mr. Rumsfeld, in that sentence "everyone has been told what their requirements are." What are the requirements? What are those things?

MR. RUMSFELD: There is a package of materials about laws and everything else and Ron Nessen can make it available to you. We will be happy to give it to you.

Q Mr. Rumsfeld, what about the role of the Vice President? He is on our chart here but you have not said a word about him.

MR. RUMSFELD: You are correct, I have not. It is due, really, to two principal things. One is the Vice President, I think correctly, felt that prior to the time he was confirmed his efforts should be aimed toward getting confirmed and he has been not doing things that would lead people to believe that he was presuming his confirmation as an accomplished fact.

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For that reason, he has not been deeply involved in that question with the President or with the White House Staff.

The President does have ideas. The President will be meeting with the Vice President later this week after he is sworn in.

The second principal reason is it seems to me that is something for the President and the Vice President and I am not in a position to get into it.

Q Can't you give us some idea of what his role is going to be?

MR. RUMSFELD: No, I cannot.

Q Well, two questions about that.

MR. RUMSFELD: The President has thoughts. He will be meeting with the Vice President and it seems to me that is something for them to discuss and not something for a member of the White House staff to inject himself into.

Q Mr. Rumsfeld, why would Robert Hartmann move to a new office?

MR. RUMSFELD: The answer is, I think, fairly simple. The President decided he would like to have an office next to his office, which happened to be the one Bob was in, where he could have it as a study, and a more relaxed environment than the Oval Office. If people are trying to read things into that, don't.

Q What happened to the other little office in between there? Who is occupying that?

MR. RUMSFELD: The little tiny one?

Q Yes.

MR. RUMSFELD: It is still there. In other words, there is a very little, small office right between the Oval Office and Mr. Hartmann's.

Q Would you then call it a hideaway office, a second office?

MR. RUMSFELD: Helen, I don't use adjectives like that. I would call it exactly what I called it, namely, a place where the President --

Q Is it a second office in the White House for the President?

MR. RUMSFELD: -- where the President can have an office that is a bit less formal than the Oval Office.

Q Don, two questions now about the Vice President, two related questions. One, Ken Cole, of course, has resigned and the organizational chart, the various papers here, show that position vacant. Is that position being kept vacant in order that the person selected for it will be a person acceptable to and a person who can work with the Vice President?

MR. RUMSFELD: Before I answer it, just to explain the telephone book and the chart in some cases, they put down the names of the individuals who are presently in them. In some cases, just for better understanding, they have left it blank, in the instances where the individual has already announced his resignation.

Now, in answer to the question --

Q What is the question?

MR. RUMSFELD: The question was, is there some reason for not filling the Domestic Council, that is to say, not announcing a person to succeed Ken Cole by this date because the President wished to discuss that with the Vice Presidential nominee after he becomes Vice President. Not to my knowledge. He just has not made a decision on it but it may very well be something he will discuss, but I have not heard that particular reason. That is not to say it might not be the case. I have not heard anyone say that so not to my knowledge is the answer.

Q I had a related question. In the list of your functions -- White House Operations Office -- this lists a whole batch of them -- "new Appointments..Secretary, Personnel Office" -- and so forth and so on. Hasn't one been omitted? Woh't you be in charge of liaison with the Vice President?

MR. RUMSFELD: The President has not discussed that with me and I would think the President would be dealing with the Vice President.

Q I mean, you know, just on a staff basis, somebody coordinating the operations of the White House staff with the Vice President's staff.

MR. RUMSFELD: The answer to the question is the specific arrangements with respect to the Vice President have not been formalized because the Vice Presidential nominee has not been confirmed and at his request, he did not want to presume confirmation.

Q To the extent there have been conversations about the sizes of the Vice President's staff, the composition of the Vice President's staff, would he have as large a staff as Mr. Ford had when he was Vice President? Aren't you handling those conversations? Isn't your office handling that?

MR. RUMSFELD: At this point, the President will be handling them with the Vice President at some point. The answer to your question, I think, is: it evolves over a period of time. The President and the Vice Presidential staff will end up interacting with most of the people on this chart.

Q At the present time, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget is also a Presidential Assistant and he has a White House office. Will that continue or will he not be a Presidential Assistant?

MR. RUMSFELD: I think he will be a Presidential Assistant and I think he probably will be located with the Office of Management and Budget employees and Deputy Director and the remainder of the economic team in the Executive Office of the President.

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Q Mr. Rumsfeld, can you tell us under this reorganizational chart who will be responsible for keeping contact with San Clemente and former President Nixon?

MR. RUMSFELD: I can. At the present time Counsellor to the President Jack Marsh is dealing with that array of questions with respect to liaison with the former President, with the exception of specific legal questions which are being handled in the Counsel's Office.

I would imagine at some point in the period ahead an individual will be named with a specific responsibility for liaison with the former President other than Counsellor Marsh, but we do not have any announcement of that.

Q Do you have any idea what rank this person would hold?

MR. RUMSFELD: I really don't.

Q Mr. Rumsfeld, does the President have anything against the women? There surely is a dearth of not only top level but all the way down to the lower echelon of women. Is there any reason why?

MR. RUMSFELD: He certainly does not, Helen.

Q Does he think we do not have any abilities or talents to fill these?

MR. RUMSFELD: Obviously not. That would be a very incorrect assumption. There are women shown here. There are women in high positions in the Government, in the departments and agencies, and there is no question but as the President continues to bring additional people into Government that women are certainly being very, very carefully considered for those positions.

Q There has been a lot of criticism certainly in the press about the decision making processes at the White House. Can you tell us whether the President was dissatisfied with the way things were going beforehand and whether there are any specific changes, or even general ones, that are being announced today which are designed to counter those problems?

MR. RUMSFELD: I think the first question probably is better directed to the President at his next press conference.

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Q Which will be when?

MR. RUMSFELD: Which will be when he announces it.

I can say this about the decision-making process here in the White House. I am personally satisfied, as of today, that on any given issue the President either will have the advice of his principal advisors with respect to a particular problem in a reasonable orderly way, or he will know that he does not have it with respect to one or more of those advisors.

That is to say that there are times when for various reasons an individual might want to make a judgment or a decision based on something less than full consultation among the various people in the Government who have competence in that area.

What is important to me is that that be done only when he decides it should be done. So there have been instances where that occurs, but in each instance that I am aware of, he was aware that that was the case and felt that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

I think that avoids having him blindsided in some ways, and thus far I feel that that is presently the case. I cannot speak for the period before.

Q Don, isn't decision-making basically an untidy process, and aren't you trying to compress and to pigeonhole this business of how the President comes by making a decision?

MR. RUMSFELD: Of course, in our country you lead by consent, not by command, and that means that during the period of decision making if you decide that consent requires consultation, which it almost always does, that means that you have to begin to test those ideas in a marketplace of some sort, and it may involve extensive consultations within the bureaucracy. It may involve extensive consultations with Congress. It may indeed in some instances, such as the economic summit, involve rather extensive consultations in a fairly public way as you move towards your judgments, because your judgments may in some instances depend not only on what you might think in a vacuum but also what you might think would be achievable in the event that the accomplishment of what you are trying to move toward requires the full cooperation of some other sector of the society, or some other branch of the Government.

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So your point is right. There is no formula for how a Presidential decision gets made. There cannot be. There should not be.

And the organization chart, however, Peter, does not try to do what you suggested, namely compress Presidential decision-making into a certain pattern. The only thing I would say about that is what I said, namely in my judgment the President of the United States either ought to know, one, that he does in fact have the advice of the principal people dealing with the subject. Now, any given issue -- that might be, oh, the energy, international-economic, domestic-economic, legal, Congressional, and a couple of other people. Or if he does not have that he ought to know that he does not and make the conscious decision that he is willing to deal with that issue because of the advantages that are gained absent a full, lengthy consultation process.

Q Could you tell us of the slightly less than 500 people who will be on the staff how many were here prior to August 9th?

MR. RUMSFELD: I cannot. If you take professional people, I think the figure is something in the neighborhood of 112 permanent professional people. Don't take that number and compare it with the 500 because you will get mixed up. There are some non-permanent people who count in that figure.

But I think out of 112 since August 9th, something in the neighborhood of 70-plus who were here are not here, have departed, and I think there have been something in the neighborhood of 50-plus additions. So that is about what the turnover has been, which I would guess is fairly normal during a change in the Presidency.

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Q Could you elaborate a bit on point five? How are you going to keep the White House not unduly separated from the rest of the Government, and the reason for the question is an obvious one? The last White House did somehow get insulated, and could you elaborate on how you will go about doing that?

MR. RUMSFELD: I don't know whether I wrote that or said it, but the thought in my head was that it is probably desirable, that, to the extent possible, the White House not be separated not only from the rest of the Government -- but meaning the Executive Branch -- but it also probably ought not to be separated -- whatever that word means, "separated" -- from the Congress and from the public and from the press, and I think there are a whole host of things one could say: the President's frequent interaction with the Congress, the President's more frequent press conferences, the concept of having a deputy.

Quite honestly, I think, it is probably healthier for people to be able to sustain their work with good judgments over a period of several years if they do not completely cut themselves off from their families. That is to say, I think people ought to be able to go home once in a while and maybe have a weekend with their children, maybe see some neighbors and maybe even shop and find out what the prices of things are.

So, the idea of a deputy -- and we are fortunate that this President is willing to work with other than simply a small number of individuals -- has been functioning. That is to say, if the President needs a meeting on a certain subject and the principal happens not to be there at that moment and his deputy does, his deputy goes in and the President is perfectly willing to deal with him, just as are other senior staff members.

Now, will it actually work? I don't know, but we are making an effort to see that it works, and certainly, the goal is to see that people are not exhausted to the point where they might make something less than perfect judgments, or even something less than the best judgments they are capable of.

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Q Would you call it a Ford White House now?

MR. RUMSFELD: It is.

Q What is the question?

MR. RUMSFELD: Is it President Ford's White House and indeed it is. Now, she said.

Q Is it his Cabinet yet?

MR. RUMSFELD: I have got a practice of not getting into that, kind of just like the Vice Presidential question. It seems to me that is very personal to him and he is addressing those questions and I do not have any announcements to make with respect to that subject.

Q Do you decide who sees the President and who does not?

MR. RUMSFELD: Let me expand on my answer to the Cabinet. The reason I feel that way is it seems to me those are very difficult jobs, running a Cabinet, department or a major agency. They are difficult enough that they do not need people in the White House commenting on them and cutting their legs out from under them, making their management tasks more difficult, and it seems to me people in those positions need to be supported.

To the extent the President makes any judgments that he wants to visit with them with respect to their future plans, that is his prerogative and his business.

Q To expand the question a little bit, because my question included --

MR. RUMSFELD: I was finishing that one. Refresh me.

Q Is there one person -- is it you who decides who sees the President and who does not?

MR. RUMSFELD: No, it is not. I said I did not intend to become the doorkeeper and I have not become one. The way it works varies, but the President may get a phone call from a Member of Congress saying he would like to see him and the President will say, "Fine," or there may be a letter that comes in or a request from a staff member and in the morning formally, and then again in the evening and if necessary, in the middle of the day I will visit with him and tell him, there are the people who are anxious to see him, and what the subject is to the extent I am aware of it.

To the extent I am not, I just tell him they want to see him. He then makes the judgments as to what his schedule will be.

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Q Mr. Rumsfeld, now, you brought this reorganization this far. Do you plan to stay here awhile?

MR. RUMSFELD: John -- first, I have tried to use the word "organization" rather than "reorganization" because I think it is a little more accurate. It is kind of an indication of where we are.

Secondly, I have no other plans.

Q I wonder if I could expand on my Cabinet question without going into personalities because that is what you indicated you did not want to talk about, the individual Cabinet Members. Can you give us any feeling you may have as to how rapidly or not this process may proceed without going into personalities?

MR. RUMSFELD: No.

Q You said you would prefer to call it organization rather than reorganization. Is this essentially a little more than a rearrangement, perhaps, of bureaucratic titles and positions and if not, can you point to any one thing here that you think is more significant than the rest of them?

MR. RUMSFELD: First, this is no big announcement. In other words, we are not up here today saying this is a great announcement. But we are here because there have been a lot of questions about the White House. People have asked for a phone book. Stories get printed about who sits where and who fits where and the goal has been to try to provide some more effective communication so that there will be a somewhat better understanding of exactly the way it is working.

Q We are very glad to have it, too.

MR. RUMSFELD: It will continue to evolve and it seems to me that is understandable and I think it would be a mistake to read every detail about it.

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Q Is there any one particular thing that is really different from the way it was being done a year ago, recently?

MR. RUMSFELD: You are looking for hot news within the last two weeks?

Q I just am under the impression -- we were told there is going to be an announcement about organization at the White House. Now I just want to make sure --

MR. RUMSFELD: I have thought you were being told there would be a briefing on the subject of organizational arrangements in the White House, and that is what I have given you, not an announcement. The biggest change that has taken place, it seems to me -- and this is not in the last two weeks -- the biggest change is the President himself. He is a different individual, and he behaves in a way that suits him. And his approach to the job, his dealings with the staff, his sessions with the people from the departments and agencies that are wrestling with questions on budget or economy, or energy, or whatever are pure Jerry Ford, and it seems to me that -- really you know you can have varying organizational arrangements.

I think this does accurately reflect what exists in the White House today. But the most important thing is the interaction between the President and the people on the staff and all of the people here within the departments and agencies.

Q Don, one or more senior staff members to the President have spoken from time to time of the so-called peek-in status. Those who had it could just sort of look in, and if the President was not otherwise occupied could go in and talk to him.

These nine senior staff with their specific responsibilities that are outlined here, will all nine of them have so-called peek-in status, or what is the status of that status?

MR. RUMSFELD: I think rather than answering your phraseology I would like to state it positively. Certainly the people listed across there, plus several others, have the ability of calling the President or asking Nell or the people right outside of his door, whoever happens to be there, if he is busy, and if he is not busy, opening the door and saying, "I would like to see you."

MORE

Q Who are the others besides the nine?

MR. RUMSFELD: I mentioned a list of others in my statement who deal with the President directly and then obviously there are still others. It varies with the individual. It may vary with an individual from time to time. But it is up to the individual how he feels about doing that. If he is working on a project for the President that is continuous, it may be that for a period of six months he may do that. It may be six months later it might not be appropriate because the President is not deeply engaged in that particular project at that time, and I think it would be wrong to try and finish a specific, hard list of who does whatever it is you said some people do.

Q Don, how soon would you expect a clarification of the Vice President's Domestic Council responsibilities? He is being sworn in tomorrow. He is Vice Chairman of the Council by statutory designation. Do you have any idea whether this is coming in the next few days?

MR. RUMSFELD: I have no idea what the President and Vice President will discuss in this specific, and I certainly would not want to put a time limit on.

Let's make this the last question.

Q You said several times here this afternoon the big thing is the President is different. I assume you mean he is different from former President Nixon?

MR. RUMSFELD: He is different from every President.

Q How is he different in his organization than former President Nixon?

MR. RUMSFELD: It seems to me that that is for you to worry about and what I can do is describe President Ford and President Ford is an individual who is used to dealing with a variety of people with a variety of different views. He is very comfortable in situations where ideas are competing and conflicting and in participating in a process of sorting them out.

Certainly, 25 years, or however long it was, in the House of Representatives is pretty good training grounds for that. So, you see an individual who is willing to meet with larger groups, willing to listen to points debated and discussed, and perfectly capable of sifting and sorting through them and making judgments.

MORE

MR. NESSEN: I have one other announcement and one other piece of material to give you.

You raised a question about point four which is to assure high ethical standards and behavior by his staff. We have a memorandum by Don Rumsfeld and one by Phil Buchen to the staffs spelling this out, which are here, and we also have in this plain, brown wrapper these standards of conduct for the White House as distributed to the entire White House with the applicable laws, and so forth. They are available here.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 3:25 P.M. EST)