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NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JERRY TERHORST

AT 3:26 P.M. EDT

AUGUST 9, 1974

FRIDAY

MR. TER HORST: I am sure you pretty much have the schedule up to date so far, starting with this morning's activities.

You may not have known that the President and Secretary of State Kissinger met this morning before President Ford said farewell to President Nixon. They met at 8:15 for roughly an hour.

Q Which President met with Kissinger, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: That was Vice President Ford this morning, meeting with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Q What did they talk about?

MR. TER HORST: They reviewed generally the foreign policy situation as it faces the country in this hour of transition.

Q Are you taking questions now, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: I would just as soon wait, if I may, until I get through some of the preliminary announcements and then I will try to take your questions.

The President has asked a group of prominent citizens and Government officials to assist him in bringing about an orderly transition in the Government. He has precisely asked four individuals -- Donald Rumsfeld, Rogers C. B. Morton, John O. Marsh, Jr. and William W. Scranton -- to be members of this transition team, and he has sought and asked and is getting their advice on the best ways to build an effective White House organization.

The transition staff will provide liaison with members of Mr. Ford's Vice Presidential staff, the existing White House staff and the Cabinet and heads of agencies. We have biographical material on these four men.

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The President also asked me to announce the appointment of Robert T. Hartmann, who was chief of the Vice Presidential staff. He will become a Counsellor to the President.

After the swearing-in ceremony in the East Room and brief appearance here in the briefing room, President Ford met with the senior White House staff for about 20 minutes, a group brought together at President Ford's request and brought together by General Haig. The meeting took place in the Roosevelt Room.

At the meeting, the President told the members of the senior White House staff that he would not request their pro forma resignations and that he hoped that many of them would stay on to assist in this transitional period. General Haig, responding for the group, assured him that they would be willing to do that, and told President Ford that the same loyalty which they had given to President Nixon would now be President Ford's as far as the senior White House staff is concerned, as General Haig put it, "in our hour of common cause."

Later this afternoon, as you probably know, the President met with a group of economic advisers in the Cabinet Room. Attending the meeting were Chairman Arthur Burns of the Federal Reserve Board, the Secretary of the Treasury, William Simon, Counsellor Kenneth Rush, Herbert Stein, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, and his successor-designate, Alan Greenspan; Budget Director Ash, and also sitting in on that meeting were Robert Hartmann, William Seidman and Governor Scranton.

As you know, starting later this afternoon, the President has commenced a series of meetings with Ambassadors of various countries, and that will continue until early this evening.

He also met with a group of NATO Ambassadors and with a group of Latin American Ambassadors and the Vietnamese Ambassador. We will post a complete schedule of these meetings and the full list of the names of those who were there.

I might say in connection with the Ambassadorial meetings that the President, along with Secretary Kissinger, underlined the continuity of bipartisan American foreign policy as conducted in the national interest, and as reflected in President Ford's comments last evening, that he can say with no hesitation or reservation that the policy that has achieved peace and built blocks for the future will be continued.

In his talks with the NATO Ambassadors, the President and Secretary of State also underlined the fact that NATO is the central element in our foreign policy and that the evolution begun with the NATO Declaration of Principles, which President Nixon signed in Brussels on his recent trip, will continue.

As for the President's schedule tomorrow, we have one item of interest to you.

The President will meet with the Cabinet at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, and as later events come on the schedule, I will get them out to you.

Q Did any decisions come out of the economic meeting?

MR. TER HORST: In the economic meeting, the President underlined to the participants his determination and resolve to attempt a solution of our economic problems and the continuing problem of inflation as a high and first priority of business of the Ford Administration.

He sought the views of the various participants, and received them.

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Q Has he asked Greenspan to take the job as scheduled?

MR. TER HORST: Yes. Mr. Greenspan will succeed Herbert Stein as previously indicated.

Q Is Ambassador Rumsfeld leaving the post in Italy to join the transition?

MR. TER HORST: At this point, Ambassador Rumsfeld is coming aboard as a member of the transitional team and that, of course, by definition is a temporary assignment. It would not be possible for me to say at this moment precisely how long Ambassador Rumsfeld, or any of the others, will be required to continue in this transitional team.

Q Will he be replaced in Brussels?

MR. TER HORST: If Mr. Rumsfeld's assignment here continues for a length of time, I am certain that the NATO post will not go unattended.

Q Do you expect to be announcing more names this weekend?

MR. TER HORST: Of what?

Q Names of Administration people, new appointees, temporary and permanent?

MR. TER HORST: That is possible. I don't have any hard guidance to give to you except for President Ford's obvious and declared intention that he does want to get on with this transition process and complete his Administration as quickly as he can.

Q Jerry, what about the timing for naming a new Vice Presidential nominee?

MR. TER HORST: The President has uppermost on his mind his constitutional responsibility to pick a successor to himself as Vice President. As you know, the Constitution does not provide a stated deadline; no specific date is mentioned. However, he wants to do that as rapidly as he can and in his meeting today with the Congressional leaders following the swearing-in ceremony, President Ford assured the Congressional leaders that he was proceeding as promptly as he could and he hoped he would have the name of a nominee for Vice President to submit to the Congress possibly within a week or ten days.

Q Did he ask for suggestions, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: The President has been combing a lot of his friends and getting a lot of advice on whom he should choose as the next Vice President and I don't think he is without any dearth of suggestions along that line.

Q Would you rule out an announcement at the Joint Session Monday night?

MR. TER HORST: I can help you with that. At least tentatively, the Joint Session to which the President was invited by Speaker Albert and the President pro tempore of the Senate is set for 9 o'clock. We do not yet know how long the President will address the Congress.

My informal guidance to you would be to expect something in the nature of 15 or 20 minutes.

Q Were there any particular actions agreed upon or discussed at the economic meeting?

MR. TER HORST: No, there were no particular actions or decisions made at the economic meeting. Obviously, it was a very preliminary discussion, the first opportunity the President has had as President to meet with the Quadriad and the expanded list that I mentioned.

Q Is General Haig staying on as Chief of Staff?

MR. TER HORST: In the meeting with the White House senior staff, the President asked General Haig to stay on as part of his transitional team and General Haig said he would be happy to do so, and will indeed.

Q To follow that, you are saying just for the transitional team; that he won't be part of the permanent White House staff?

MR. TER HORST: I cannot, Marty, look that far into the future. I do know that the President is counting heavily on General Haig to, as he said in the senior staff meeting, help provide continuity and stability to the process of transferring from the Nixon Administration to the Ford Administration and General Haig has agreed to stay on as long as President Ford wants him to.

Q Jerry, does Leon Jaworski remain as Special Prosecutor?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, Leon Jaworski will remain as Special Prosecutor.

Q Did former President Nixon sign a pardon for himself prior to leaving office?

MR. TER HORST: Well, I am not here to speak for anyone but President Ford. I have no way of answering that question.

Q Let me ask you another one: Will the subpoenaed materials be handed over to the House Judiciary Committee and does President Ford have any views on a grant of immunity to former President Nixon?

MR. TER HORST: The subpoenaed materials, as you know, were subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor's Office and the court and by the House Judiciary Committee. It is my presumption that this question would have to be answered by the President's legal office and I am not prepared to give you a firm answer on that.

Q And on the question of immunity?

MR. TER HORST: Will you repeat that question again?

Q Yes. Does President Ford have any views on a grant of immunity to former President Nixon?

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MR. TER HORST: President Ford's position on the question of immunity for President Nixon, I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, was expressed by him in the hearings during his nomination on the Hill. I may be wrong in that, but it seems to me that question did come up.

In any event, President Ford has not expressed to me any views on that subject, so I am unable to directly help you.

Q What did he say on the Hill?

MR. TER HORST: It was my understanding on the Hill he was negative on that question.

Q What has happened to President Nixon's tapes? Did he take them with him or are they still in the White House?

MR. TER HORST: Those tapes are still in the White House.

Q Under whose control?

MR. TER HORST: Well, they are at the present time in the custody of the President's Office of Legal Counsel and Mr. St. Clair.

Q Is that President Ford's Office of Legal Counsel?

MR. TER HORST: Well, at this point, yes, it would be President Ford's Office of Legal Counsel because he has not changed those who have been there.

Q Is Special Counsel St. Clair going to stay on for the time being to wrap up that part of the affairs?

MR. TER HORST: I can't speak with authority for Mr. St. Clair, but it would be my assumption that he is at least staying on for the time being.

Q Do you plan to tape all the other meetings? Will tapes be used?

MR. TER HORST: No, tapes will not be used in the Ford Administration.

Q Was St. Clair at the meeting with the senior staff this morning?

MR. TER HORST: No, he was not.

Q Could you tell us who was, unless it is incredibly long?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, I can give you an idea of who was at the senior staff meeting.

Q These would be, am I correct, the people he has asked to stay on?

MR. TER HORST: Yes. I don't have the list with me but present at the senior White House staff meeting at which President Ford spoke briefly were, of course, General Haig, Budget Director Ash, Brent Scowcroft, Bill Timmons; Secretary of State Kissinger was there in his role as the National Security Council Director; Ken Cole of the Domestic Council, Leonard Garment, and Fred Buzhardt.

Q Anne Armstrong?

MR. TER HORST: Anne Armstrong is ill. She was not there, but she would have been had she been well.

Q Dean Burch?

MR. TER HORST: Dean Burch was there, yes.

Q Is he going to stay on during the transition period?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, the President asked and was promised by all of these individuals that they would be happy to stay on.

Q Is he going to ask the Cabinet to stay entirely, or what?

MR. TER HORST: The President has asked the members of the Cabinet, as he is asking others in the Administration during this transition, to stay aboard, and it is my understanding that the members of the Cabinet have agreed to do that.

Q How long will the transition take? How long does he expect it to take?

MR. TER HORST: I am not sure that President Ford can say. I know he hopes it will be as short a period as possible.

Q Will Secretary Kissinger be wearing two hats as before?

MR. TER HORST: He will continue in both roles, yes.

Q Was Ken Clawson there this morning?

MR. TER HORST: Ken Clawson was there this morning, yes.



Q Can you tell us a little more about how the transitional four will work? Will they work as a group, go out individually and interview people to get the liaison between others outgoing and incoming?

MR. The transitional group is going to meet with President Ford later today, about 5:30, and this will be in effect in their first meeting together, at which I presume they will want to set down some orderly methods of proceeding. I really can't give you a good answer.

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Q Does the President plan to meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff any time in the near future?

MR. TER HORST: I presume he does. I am not aware of anything scheduled at the moment, but I am certain he does.

Q When will the Fords be moving into the White House, Jerry?

MR. TER HORST: As you know, the Nixons left this morning and it takes a little time to pack everything and make it possible for the Ford family to move in. The Ford family will not be in the White House tonight. They will be home in their home in Alexandria. And it may not be possible for them to move in until after the weekend, either. But as soon as that decision is made and as soon as I can find out how quickly it can be done, I will let you know.

Q Jerry, I am not sure I understood the reason why you didn't answer the question about whether President Nixon had signed a pardon for himself before he left. Do you know whether or not he did and if not, can you find out for us? The White House should know what sort of Presidential pardons have been signed.

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware of President Nixon having signed any document of immunity or pardon or clemency for himself, or whatever you may care to characterize it. I will endeavor to find out.

Q Or for anyone else?

MR. TER HORST: Or for anyone else. I will endeavor to get an answer to the broad question for you. You have to understand that President Nixon is no longer here, and I am speaking for President Ford, so I can't really provide you with information about President Nixon.

Q Are there any other resignations that you know of?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware of them.

Q What about Ziegler?

MR. TER HORST: Ziegler has left, yes.

Q Was Kenneth Rush at the senior staff meeting?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, Mr. Rush was there. In that list of senior White House staff, I am not trying to be exclusive and I hope I haven't missed any names I should have mentioned. I did not bring a full list, but it was a group that was brought together by General Haig.

Q Is this transitional team involving itself immediately in the search for a Vice Presidential nominee or is that outside their --

MR. TER HORST: Bill, I frankly can't tell you what parameters the President is putting on the work of the transitional team. Hopefully, some of that will be clarified after they have this first meeting today.

Q What will the President's attitude be toward press conferences and when will he have the first one?

MR. TER HORST: Well, as you know, President Ford is a believer in press conferences and so am I. As soon as it is possible for President Ford to hold a news conference, he will hold one.

Q You are going to redesign this briefing room, right?

MR. TER HORST: President Ford suggested earlier today he might like to have it back as a swimming pool.

Q Was he serious?

MR. TER HORST: No, I think he was not serious. I think he would like to have been serious. (Laughter)

Q Jerry, the origins of his speech, when he began work on it and who helped him write it?

MR. TER HORST: This is the swearing-in speech? Is that what you are referring to?

Q Yes.

MR. TER HORST: Well, as you know, the President, when he was Vice President, had a couple of able speech-writers on his staff, Robert Hartmann and Milton Friedman, and he worked over that speech considerably last evening at home himself.

Q Jerry, did you help him at all with the speech?

MR. TER HORST: No, sir, I did not.

Q Jerry, will you have copies of the Joint Session speech out early? This has been a real problem for those who can't get to the White House to pick them up.

MR. TER HORST: Having been on the other side of the podium here for a long time, I know how important it is to get advances out. We will do our darnedest to get advances out when we can, but I obviously can't pass them out until I get them in my own hands. We will do our best.

Q Has the President had a conversation with former Governor Rockefeller, either directly or through Dr. Kissinger?

MR. TER HORST: I am not aware of any direct contact between President Ford and Governor Rockefeller.

Q How about indirect.

MR. TER HORST: Or indirect.

Q Jerry, does the presence of Governor Scranton at the economic meeting mean that he is going to handle that phase of the transition?

MR. TER HORST: No, I think I would look at Governor Scranton's presence, along with all the others, as four individuals to whom President Ford is going to give considerable responsibility for making recommendations to him on organizing a strong, stable and ongoing White House operation.

Q Will they report directly to him?

MR. TER HORST: They will report directly to the President.

Q Will Mr. Rush be staying on as primary economic Counsellor?

MR. TER HORST: At the present time, all the members of the President's staff have been asked to stay on and have agreed to do that.

Q You told us Mr. Ziegler left. Is there anyone else? Did Steve Bull resign, Rose Mary Woods?

MR. TER HORST: I am unable to give you hard answers to that because they were members of President Nixon's staff. But it is my understanding that Miss Woods would go with President Nixon.

Q Will you brief tomorrow?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, we will probably brief tomorrow after the Cabinet meeting; maybe sometime along about noon or so.

Also, I have been advised that President Nixon did not sign a pardon or any form of immunity for himself or anyone before he left office.

Q To follow up on that part of it, can you check for us as to if President Ford's position is still as he stated on the Hill, that he is not in favor of immunity?

MR. TER HORST: Yes, I can assure you of that.

Q He is not in favor of immunity?

MR. TER HORST: I can assure you of that.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Press Secretary.

END (AT 3:52 P.M. EDT)