

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 15, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE

OF

JOHN O. MARSH, JR.

COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT

THE BRIEFING ROOM

12:47 P.M. EDT

MR. ROBERTS: At the swearing-in ceremony for Mr. Marsh, there was the President, Mr. Marsh, and his son held the Bible. His name is John O. Marsh, III. His nickname is Rob, and the person who did the swearing-in was Executive Clerk John J. Ratchford.

Mr. Marsh is now here for a picture opportunity for those who expressed an interest in it, and while he does have another appointment, he will be glad to take a few of your questions.

Q Mr. Marsh, can you tell us when the Vice President might be named?

MR. MARSH: I am not involved in the Vice Presidential selection, the procedure of it, and I don't know what the time frame is, and I am not familiar at what stage it is now.

Q Mr. Marsh, can you tell us what your own thoughts are on the White House staff, on the size of it and somewhat on the personnel?

MR. MARSH: I think this will be a matter that will be more fully discussed when the transition committee makes its report, which I think will be sometime early next week, and at that time, I believe that would be a more appropriate question to direct to the coordinator, Don Rumsfeld.

Q What is your area of responsibility now?

MR. MARSH: Ron, I think what the President has done is the designation of a Counsellorship to Bob Hartmann, who was designated, as you recall, last Saturday, and a designation of me today in a more general way.

MORE

15

He has defined the duties, as far as I am concerned -- Congressional relations will be a part of some of the duties that I might be assigned -- but to undertake such tasks as he may from time to time direct.

Q What tasks are you doing now?

MR. MARSH: At the present time, I am a member of the transition team and have been working with them.

Q What becomes of Mr. Timmons?

MR. MARSH: I can't respond to that. I think the President is very satisfied with his relationship with Bill Timmons. It is an old one. He has a very high regard for him, and I think in the past we have had people here like Bryce Harlow who also worked in that area with those in Congressional relations.

Q Will you continue to have a defense and international affairs role?

MR. MARSH: I think we will have to see as things evolve and develop. I can't answer that now. I think it is a little too early.

Q Is what you will be doing comparable to Bryce Harlow in the past?

MR. MARSH: You made that comparison, Maggie, I didn't.

If I might say one word about the ceremony this morning, it seems to me to be very interesting that the President of the United States cannot swear in one of his own appointees, and so you use the services of a Notary Public, and I think there is a very unique American reference there to the fact that here is the highest officer in the land incapable of performing a constitutional duty that one of the lesser officials in the land can perform, which shows how important these public service posts are.

Incidentally, that was a duty that the Vice President could perform.

Q Sir, could you tell us what you will counsel the President in the matter of General Haig as Chief of Staff? Do you think the staff needs a chief?

MR. MARSH: It would be difficult for me to tell you how I would counsel him in reference to General Haig when the President hasn't asked me to do that, but if he were to ask me, I would assert the very high regard that I have for General Haig and for his capabilities.

MORE

Q Counsellor Marsh, is the transition team assessing the role of the National Security Council staff structure?

MR. MARSH: I do not feel that in this forum at this time that I should get into that particular area.

Q After the transition period, do you expect it to be a smaller White House staff?

MR. MARSH: Since the transition team hasn't met to make its conclusions, I can't really tell you what it might be.

Q Will there be just one meeting?

MR. MARSH: One meeting of what?

Q You said the transition team hasn't met.

MR. MARSH: Hasn't met to make its final recommendations.

Q What piece of the transition problem is assigned to you?

MR. MARSH: The transition team, when they meet, usually share with one another the areas in which those persons have worked that particular day.

THE PRESS: Thank you, sir.

END (AT 12:52 P.M. EDT)