

MEMORANDUM FOR RUMSFELD FILES  
MEETING WITH PRESIDENT  
CABINET MEETING  
November 8, 1972  
11:10 a.m.

The President thanked the Cabinet and thanked the wives and thanked the surrogates. He said the surrogates and the wives were terrific. Said "politics is a game of inches" and that we had 49 touchdowns and they, the Democrats/McGovern, had one touchdown and a field goal - the field goal being Washington D. C. He said the campaign is four years old because we have been governing for four years, and it is tough to take on a record like we have had.

He said as to the future there will be the usual budget howls; the President referred to his speech Sunday night when he said, "he has complete confidence that there will be peace". The President then said, "Richard Nixon doesn't shoot blanks". He said that he was sending General Haig to Saigon today. He said we knew, and McGovern was hitting us hard, that the problem had sorted out, but we couldn't say so. The breakthrough was on October 5, and it has held and it has been expanded in the last four days. That is why he was able to say, and why we can say "we have complete confidence". The opponents will look bad on this, very bad in the next six weeks.

The President said that in the next four weeks he has a lot of decisions to make on the role that Cabinet members will play. He said he had discussed it with a few in another context. He said as far as his Cabinet members go, he was very proud. He wants to discuss with each of them, their own role, some may stay in their present positions, some may stay in different positions, some may leave, but he wants to discuss with each one, their future. He said it is a fortunate thing, all have rendered outstanding service and he wants the decision made with them to be fully mutual.

The President said as to his plans, he was going to take a week off until November 15, recharge his battery, stay out of touch, think through the White House staff and the Executive Branch, and the extension of ideas to implement. He said he planned to slim down in the White House staff and in government generally because of budget problems, and also because government runs better when it is slimmed down. He said he would then go to Florida and from there to Camp David between November 15 and December 15, where he would meet with each Cabinet member on their own situation and the situation in their respective Departments.



He asked the White House staff and the Cabinet members, at the end of the campaign, to look over their whole organizations, have some talks, just like the President was having with his Cabinet, and they should talk to their senior people. He said for future reference he wanted them to know that it would be very tough to hold on to any Presidential appointee who was in office when the President was sworn in office on January 20, 1972. He said there will be no exceptions unless there is a great excuse. He said there are other appointees that are made not by the President, but by the Department heads, and they serve at the Department heads pleasure, and the same kind of appraisal should be made with respect to them. He said he wants that done in the next thirty days. He said he did not want to be merciless, but government needs an enema.

The President said that his favorite period in history was the British Parliamentary debates of the 1850's - the Peelites, Winston Churchill's father, a brilliant Tory, whose career was destroyed by, I believe he said, syphilis, who wrote a brilliant biography of his father. The President mentioned Gladstone and Disraeli debates. Gladstone was in office longer. Disraeli's was a more brilliant record. He was Prime Minister twice, at the age of 60, and he ended at the age of 74, after he had come back at the age of 68. Gladstone, the great reformer, Disraeli described Gladstone as "an exhausted volcano". He said this argues for a one term President (what his logic was escapes me). I understood his point, but from the standpoint of a historical record, it seemed to me to be tangential and not central, because Disraeli was a perfect example of the reason you shouldn't have a one term President in the sense the President was talking.)

The President went on to say that after a period of immense activity, an organization or an individual can be an exhausted volcano. He said, now that is not true of us, or our Administration, but in most instances the second term is usually not as good as the first term is. But we must avoid the exhausted volcano syndrome. If we stay in we must recharge ourselves. Above all, we have to reform and inspire our organizations and bring in new blood. He said it was true also of Roosevelt. His biggest victory was in 1936, his biggest defeats were between 1936 and 1940. Only the war saved Roosevelt. The President went on to say that we have so much more to do in foreign policy and in the domestic field. We should think in terms of reform and new ideas, not of continuing the first four years. During the first term you have a goal of having to be re-elected, and that is good. He is proud of every member of the team, and he knows the savage attacks on some in government, but that this is a group of honest men, and they have made their mark on history and themselves and the next generation. Next week we should



think through how to best serve, and that he will have the individual conversations with each. He said we are too busy doing things instead of thinking. He said that Richard Nixon does more thinking because of the discipline he imposes on himself. We ought to think through where the Administration ought to go. He said that with one exception he will have no appointments on Sunday afternoons because he has missed enough football games already. The President said he wants all of this done by December 10 to 15. He said we won't make the mistake of making too few changes. He added that the 1972 election he had won the most states since Monroe and got the highest percentage at 61.38%. He said that in the period where ticket splitting is a fact of life, he won 64% in Iowa, while Senator Miller lost by 60,000 votes. He said Margaret Chase Smith shouldn't have run. He said that he made audio tapes for all Senate candidates except Carmichael, had photos with them, called them all, and appeared in 8 states. He said Chafee never recovered from being a dove. Pell got to the right of Chafee. Talmadge was clever to defeat Thompson. He said that Talmadge said that if you elect a Republican you will put in Javits.

As to the future, the President said, the age factor can be rough at a certain point. He said Allott didn't bounce; Thurmond, who is older, seems younger. He said we must look at our candidates and get younger ones. It is inexcusable not to carry the United States House of Representatives, with those margins, in the Presidential race. The reason is we had bad candidates and we had too few candidates. He said Republican candidates tend not to be hungry. They are good in business and in the private sector and in the law, but the Democrats go into things like medicine, law and education, so it is easy for them to go into politics.

