

MEMORANDUM - RUMSFELD PERSONAL FILE
August, 1974

Following is a brief description of the period prior to my first meeting with President Ford at 5:30 p.m., August 9, 1974

I completed the first phase of the Cyprus crisis. Joyce and the children had left for Switzerland and northern Italy on our vacation which I missed the first portion of because of the Cyprus where I even slept in the office a few nights -- one or two nights.

I then met the family in Florence and we went on a week's boat trip to the Greek islands, not seeing newspapers or hearing a radio. We arrived back in Ancona on Saturday, August 3. We drove to Naples the night of the third with Admiral Johnston.

We spent the nights of the fourth, fifth, and sixth in Rome with the Volpes seeing the sights.

The night of the seventh we spent in San Remo.

Thursday, August 8, we left San Remo by car, bought a morning Herald Tribune in Nice and caught up on the news. I was driving, Joyce was reading. She said that she thought I ought to stop the car and pull over to the side and read the paper. She tried to avoid talking about the Watergate problems in front of Nicholas too much because it seemed to bother him a good deal.

I was not in the mood to read and gauge those subjects and kept driving through Nice and Cannes to St. Tropez. We found a beach Thursday afternoon about three in St. Tropez and went swimming, and after I finished swimming I picked up the newspaper and starting reading it and got the full feel of what Joyce had been talking about. It was basically Tuesday and Wednesday's news in the Thursday paper, the Herald Tribune, but it certainly left one with the impression that things were coming apart at the seams back in Washington. Joyce and I visited about it and agreed that I should probably go back to Washington. We left the beach and drove to Grimaud, about 15 Kilometers away, where we were to have spent two or three nights with Ambassador Andre de Staercke of Belgium.



I got on the phone to Leona in Brussels and asked her to arrange air transportation for me that evening or the next morning, as soon as possible back to Washington and to call me back at de Staercke's later that evening with the details.

De Staercke was hosting a dinner that evening, that included Ambassador Rothschild, the Belgium Ambassador to England; Bridgette Bardot's manager, a woman; and several other very interesting people. It was a group of about ten. The phone rang throughout the dinner and late into the evening. We stayed up to watch the President's announcement that he was resigning the next day which was on at 2:30 a.m. in the morning or 3:00 a.m., Grimaud time. Leona called back with the arrangements that she had made on the flight and told me that the Vice President's office was trying to reach me - Tom Whitehead. After talking to Whitehead, it became clear that the Vice President's office and some of the friends of his felt it would be useful if I came back to Washington. Interestingly, I had already made arrangements, which I was able to tell them I had made for an Air Force plane to pick me up at the Nice Airport at 7:00 a.m. in the morning and take me to London and then catch a Pan Am flight arriving at 1:55 p.m. Friday afternoon. That was the soonest I could get there.

Went to bed that night about 3:30 a.m. and got up at about 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. for a two hour drive from Grimaud to the Nice Airport. De Staercke made our breakfast and the Rumsfelds packed up and departed for Nice. I got on the T-39 about 7:00 a.m. and Joyce left by car to return to Brussels in a 17-hour marathon by herself with the children.

In effect, I had decided to go back before I knew that Ford's office wanted me to come back. My decision was based on the feeling simply that someone might need some assistance. Before I actually left to come back, however, I was made aware that Ford's office felt that it would be a good idea if I came back.

When I arrived at 1:55 p.m. at Dulles airport, there were three people there to meet me. One was Dick Cheney who Lee had alerted I would be coming in. The second was a man from the Vice President's office with a note to me from Scranton and Whitehead indicating that the new President, Ford, had asked me to be the coordinator of a four-man transition team to handle the transition from the Nixon Presidency to the Ford Presidency. The third was Mr. John King of the Department of State who was there with a form letter for me to sign submitting my resignation as Ambassador to NATO. Kissinger had obviously had those letters drafted after the President's speech and before the new President was even sworn in because there was no other way it could have been done after



Ford became President because you couldn't have gotten out to Dulles Airport in time.

I drove in in the State Department car and went right to the Executive Office Building and met with Scranton, Whitehead and Phil Buchen, the President's former law partner, who were all working on the transition.

They told me there would be a meeting with the President at 5:30 p.m. with the Transition Team and some others who had worked on the problem. Buchen said that the first meeting had really been a meeting at Mr. White's house of U. S. Steel with Griffin, Harlow, Byrnes, Buchen, Whitehead and maybe one or two others. They had met Wednesday evening. He said that there was a second meeting on Thursday evening of the same group, plus possibly one or two where they had decided on Rumsfeld, Scranton and Morton as the coordination team. The second meeting, I believe, had been at the Executive Office Building. He told me that he and John Byrnes had gone on Friday morning after the announcement of the resignation, but before Ford was sworn in to give him the details of their tentative ideas as to what he might do with respect to the transition, and that Ford had agreed and had added Marsh to the Transition Team.

I was given a little of the byplay as to the resignation itself with an indication that Zeigler and the family had opposed it right up to the end, with the Hill people basically being the ones who urged it.

After asking Buchen a lot of questions as to what the President wanted by way of work from the Transition Team, it became clear that there really was no road map that had been discussed or agreed. I spent the rest of the period between about 2:30 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. and the meeting with the President at 5:30 p.m. thinking about the problem, busy with various people, and preparing myself for the 5:30 p.m. meeting.

