

August 8, 1974 - I flew all night - got back to Washington and missed a breakfast scheduled with Dean Burch. I did call from the house the Vice President's office and told Mildred that I would like to see the Vice President though I would understand if he couldn't do it. They called back - set the appointment for 12:30 - I came to the office, took a lot of calls, confirmed with Burch that the schedule was to go ahead -- meeting with the congressional leaders in the afternoon -- the meeting with friends after was cancelled but there would be a going away at 9:30 the next morning with the Vice President to be sworn in at 12:00 - the family to leave with the President. The day was unreal. A pall was over the White House. I met with the Vice President. We discussed Dan Rostenkowski's offer to be helpful in lining up votes for the Vice President to grant immunity. I talked about the White House staff and my concerns about it. I particularly mentioned the press section, and that Ziegler had to go. I told the Vice President that I had dealt with this situation for a year and a half and would like to have an input based on experience with whomever was going to sort that all out. He indicated that he had seen the President, the President had told him that of the whole Cabinet in his view Kissinger should stay and in the White House Haig should stay.

I then went on to the National Security Council. I told him that in my judgment he should revert to something between what it used to be when Rogers was Secretary of State and what it is now when Kissinger totally dominates it. I said that the President must put an imprint of his own on foreign policy, that there must be a mediator in the White House as the head of NSC who would mediate between the Secretary of State and the Defense Department, and represent solely the President or present solely to the President the views of these two departments. But Kissinger while brilliant must not be permitted to run away

with things and that the foreign policy though it might be identical in thrust should be a forward foreign policy. The Vice President made little comment on this but seemed to have some appreciation of what I was talking about. I then went to the National Committee, told him that I should resign from there, that again the Vice President should be looking forward to '76 very soon, that there would be a honeymoon period during which the National Committee would do anything he wanted, that he should get his own man in there and get him in right away. He indicated that he wanted me to stay for awhile, that he had total confidence in me, that he didn't want it to look like he didn't have confidence in me, nor did he want it to look like I didn't have confidence in him, by doing anything precipitous. But of course I knew what he wanted short term, but that I was not suited for the job, there was some maneuvering going on by other candidates, that clearly the country ought not to go through a switch in our party in '76. I am convinced it should be Ford and he should get total control of the committee. The committee is not terribly important at all times but in election years it is. I also told him I was ill-suited to do this nuts and bolts job that is necessary for conventions and seminars. There was no real response from Ford on all of this. He did ask me about whether I was going to be in town this weekend. I think it was when we talked about the selection of the staff people. During the visit his son called in from way out in Utah. It was really amazing to hear the father talking to the son - down to earth. The son has heard part of what was happening -- and Jerry told him matter of factly that the next day at noon he would be sworn in and about how the kid was going to get there. There was a natural quality about it all. Bob Hartman and Jack Marsh were at the meeting. Hartman looked nervous. They were talking about a picture that he had to get out. Call from

Art Fletcher. Mentioned that Kissinger was coming at 3:00. It all seemed tremendously overwhelming.

I went over and saw Rose Woods. There was a pall over the entire White House. I debated about seeing her but I felt it was a kind thing to do. I felt she would probably be sore about my resignation request letter and she was strained at first. Eddie Cox was in there the whole time. Rose had some tears. I told her you'll probably differ with me but I am convinced that this is much the best thing for the President as well as the country. She said, "Yes, I do differ with you." She was sore with Griffin and Rhodes and others who have been close friends with the President. She was apparently blind to the enormity of what he had done. Faithful to the end. I pointed out that I remember a conversation she and I had had over a year ago when we talked about those around the President. She warmed to that subject and was rather bitter about Haldeman and having the taping system in there in the first place, going to the Secret Service to do it instead of the GAO who would normally do it. Again there was great sadness there. Phones were ringing on her secretary's desk offering support to the President, urging him not to resign. She said the prisoners had called to see what they could do and she was somewhat bitter, suggesting they should have done it six months earlier. I am glad I went by and I expect maybe she did appreciate it, but it was strained and again unreal.

I saw big Rog Morton. He I am sure felt exactly as I did. I had luncheon in the mess. There was a kind of hush and whispers throughout the building. It was like someone had die around there. I did not see Al Haig. I called Jimmy Stewart, Linkletter, Paul Keyes, thanked them for helping on the show. They all said they would help in the future. They felt the country was going to survive and the two-party system was. There was a certain optimism around the country once they realized what was happening I think.