

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR. PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION FILE, 1974

Collection Type

Federal Records

Extent

0.4 linear feet (ca. 800 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

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Provenance

[Provenance of the National Security Adviser Files](#)

Processed by

Geir Gundersen, July 1996, revised by Donna Lehman, January 2004

Scope and Content Note

The Presidential Transition File is one of many subcollections that comprise the National Security Adviser Files.

On August 7, 1974, after having been informed by Alexander Haig that Richard Nixon's decision to resign the office of the presidency was near, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger began preparing for the transition from the Nixon to Ford administrations. While maintaining a normal schedule, Secretary Kissinger asked his deputies, Brent Scowcroft (NSC) and Lawrence Eagleburger (State Department), to quietly prepare a transition plan: the procedure and order for notifying foreign governments, who would get letters and what they would say, and what foreign ambassadors, if any, the new President should receive. Once President Nixon's decision to resign became final, Kissinger would present the plan to Vice President Ford for approval.

The next morning, President Nixon, knowing he could no longer survive a vote of impeachment in the United States Senate, decided to resign, effective at noon, August 9. Upon hearing of Nixon's decision, Secretary Kissinger immediately began drafting messages for the new President to send to key world leaders. The messages reassured friendly governments that the United States would not abandon its foreign policy and security commitments. The messages to potential adversaries reaffirmed U.S. strength and purpose and warned against any military incursions in regions where the United States might seem vulnerable. That afternoon, Vice President Ford approved the transition plan, signed off on the notification messages, and received a lengthy foreign affairs briefing from Secretary Kissinger. Ford also agreed to meet briefly with all foreign ambassadors stationed in Washington, mostly in regional groups, following his swearing-in ceremony.

The Transition File primarily documents the role played by Secretary Kissinger and the State Department in the Nixon-Ford transition. The majority of the collection consists of the notification messages sent by President Ford and the responses and congratulatory messages he received from numerous heads of state. Of particular interest are several memoranda summarizing world reaction to President Ford's assumption of office and a briefing book compiled for the President detailing US-USSR exchanges between August 9 and November 5, 1974.

The collection also contains the transition and briefing materials prepared by the State Department at Secretary Kissinger's behest. The transition plan prepared by Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger consists of checklists of things to do and meetings to hold, and background materials prepared for Kissinger's briefing of Vice President Ford on August 8. The briefing materials summarize the status and direction of US foreign policy on the eve of Gerald Ford's presidency, as well as the issues awaiting the new President's attention. Included are substantive issue papers on a wide-variety of foreign affairs topics ranging from Africa, South Asia, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the World Food Conference. In addition, there are talking points and background papers summarizing bilateral and multilateral relations prepared in anticipation of President Ford's meetings with foreign ambassadors following his swearing-in ceremony.

Many of the notification messages sent to world leaders are duplicated in the White House Central Files Subject File country categories. The briefing book of US-USSR exchanges are duplicated in the Henry Kissinger/Brent Scowcroft Office File. The checklists and other briefing materials prepared by the State Department are unique and not duplicated elsewhere.

Last Modified Date

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Transition Subject File, 1974.

(Box 1, 0.4 linear feet)

Letters, telegrams, briefing papers, talking points, memoranda, and checklists concerning the transition from the Nixon to Ford administration. Included are letters sent to world leaders assuring them of a smooth transition and continuity of US foreign policy and responses offering congratulations on President Ford taking

office. Of particular interest is a briefing book prepared for President Ford documenting US-USSR exchanges from August 9 through November 5, 1974. There are also issue papers prepared by the State Department on many facets of American foreign policy, including Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the status of foreign affairs legislation awaiting congressional action, oil conservation, Law of the Sea, and the World Food Conference. In addition, there are talking points and background materials prepared for President Ford's meetings with foreign ambassadors following his swearing-in ceremony, as well as State Department checklists of things to do and meetings to hold.

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Box 1 - Transition Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Issue Papers (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Issue Papers (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Issue Papers (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (5)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (6)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (7)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders (8)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders - Memoranda to the President</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders - Sample Letters</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Letters to and from World Leaders - US-USSR Exchanges, 8/9/74-11/5/74</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>President's Talking Points for Calls by Ambassadors, 8/9/74</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Transition Plan (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Transition Plan (2)</u>