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**MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL**

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

YOU WERE CALLED BY—       YOU WERE VISITED BY—

OF (Organization) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. CODE/EXT. \_\_\_\_\_  
 WILL CALL AGAIN       IS WAITING TO SEE YOU  
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MESSAGE

RR 7-1

SF91

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**STANDARD FORM 63**  
REVISED AUGUST 1967  
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63-108

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN CLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

LIVE TELEVISION INTERVIEW WITH  
WALTER CRONKITE, ERIC SEVEREID AND BOB SCHIEFFER  
CBS NEWS

Monday, April 21, 1975  
The Blue Room  
10:00-11:00 p. m.

From: Bob Mead *S*

PURPOSE

To televise a one-hour interview with Walter Cronkite, Eric Severeid and Bob Schieffer on a full range of subjects.

BACKGROUND

This interview will be carried live at 10:00 p. m. EDT on the CBS television network. (The exception will be on the West Coast, where the interview will be videotaped and played back on a three-hour delayed basis (10:00 p. m. PDT). No restrictive ground rules on subject matter have been laid out. The interview will be conducted on the same basis as was the NBC interview with John Chancellor and Tom Brokaw from the Residence in January.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Early evening                      Private time for preparation.
- 9:25 p. m.                              Proceed from Residence to Blue Room.
- 9:30 p. m.                              Meet with Mr. Cronkite for brief discussion, and set mood of the conversation.
- 10:00 p. m.                              Telecast begins.
- 10:59 p. m.                              Telecase concludes.
- 11:00 p. m.                              A brief still photo session will follow.

April 21, 1975

Questions Most Likely to be Asked During CBS Interview

Vietnam

1. You have said repeatedly that you are not going to engage in recriminations or blame on the question of who caused the loss of Vietnam. But in almost every speech you make, you point to Congress for failing to provide the military aid the United States promised. How do you reconcile those two seemingly opposite positions?
2. Your chief military and foreign policy advisors say that additional military aid to South Vietnam at best give the Saigon Government only a chance to stabilize the situation. But you told the ASNE meeting that you are absolutely convinced that more aid would stabilize the situation. Why are you so optimistic?
3. Why have you really requested more military aid to South Vietnam when the situation appears to be lost? Do you really think that additional aid can stabilize the military situation, or are you asking the money only (1) So you can't be blamed later for pulling the plug; and (2) To keep South Vietnam from turning on Americans before they can be evacuated?
4. Why did the United States wait so long to evacuate the Americans there? Is it true that Graham Martin refused to move on the evacuation soon enough?
5. Why do you keep referring to a commitment to an ally? Who gave the commitment, and why do you consider the corrupt and inept government in Saigon to be an ally?
6. The White House has disclosed that Former President Nixon wrote secret letters to President Thieu promising "a vigorous American reaction" to any North Vietnamese violations of the Paris Accords. Did these secret promises amount to a commitment for American military intervention? Why should Congress and the American people be expected to live up to a commitment about which they knew nothing and were not consulted at the time?

Secretary Kissinger-

1. Secretary Kissinger's policy in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere all seem to be failing at one time. Why do you keep Kissinger as your Secretary of State when he has been so wrong, so often?
2. Most people feel that you are totally dependent on Secretary Kissinger for information and recommendations on foreign policy. Wouldn't it be a sign that you are running foreign policy yourself if you appointed ~~your~~ own new Secretary of State?
3. Some of your other White House advisers are reported to be urging you to appoint a new Special Assistant for National Security Affairs because Secretary Kissinger cannot do both jobs well and because the present system gives you only one source of foreign policy information. Do you plan to get a new NSC Director?
4. Are these stories that some of your advisers are trying to break Secretary Kissinger's strong influence on you true?
5. Is there anything that you can point to to disprove the popular belief that you are merely a puppet to Secretary Kissinger's foreign policy views?

*Presidential  
conspicuous  
reflects intention*

*Public record  
same commitments!  
Must by Congressional  
action*

Foreign Policy after Vietnam

1. What were the mistakes the U.S. made, going all the way back to the beginning, that led to the fall of Vietnam?
2. What have you learned from this experience and what should the American people learn from this experience that will help guide foreign policy in the future?
3. With the fall of Cambodia and Vietnam, do you see the "domino theory" now coming into play? What will be the next domino to fall and what, if anything, can we do to prevent it?
4. Public and Congressional opinion seems to be strongly against anymore American military commitments overseas. Are we entering a new period of isolationism? What can we do to persuade Americans that they still have a leadership role in the world given the present mood?
5. What effect will the fall of Cambodia *and the lack of aid to Vietnam* have on the attitudes of American allies and adversaries in the world: the Mideast? Russia? China? NATO?
6. In the wake of the fall of Cambodia and *the imminent fall of* Vietnam, can you state clearly and simply what is American foreign policy?
7. Is the Nixon doctrine of supplying allies with arms to defend themselves inoperative?
8. If detente has any meaning at all, why were you not able to use the new ~~FRATERNITY~~ *FRATERNITY* with Russia and China to persuade them to stop supplying weapons to North Vietnam and to force North Vietnam to stop its invasion of the South?
9. Last week you said you did not blame Russia and China for keeping its commitment to supply arms to North Vietnam but the next day Secretary Kissinger said we will never forget that Russia and China gave this help. How do you explain this contradiction? *Read speech when USSR + PRC withdrew weapons they take complete*
10. In your State of the World speech to Congress why did you leave out any mention of Portugal and Taiwan? Does the U.S. still consider its mutual security treaty with Taiwan still in force?
11. If South Vietnam falls to the Communists as now seems likely, this will be the first time that the United States has ever been on the losing side of a war. You yourself have said this will be a traumatic experience for Americans. What advice do you give to Americans, and how will you conduct yourself in order to lessen the trauma of losing this war?

*Negotiations  
Exploring all possibilities  
Don't talk about*

*Base minimum  
6000 to 7000*

7. How many Americans are left in Saigon? Can you get them all out before the Communists begin to attack Saigon? How many ~~troops~~ <sup>+ COOPs</sup> will you have to use to get these Americans out if fighting starts in Saigon?
8. Do you have any hope at all of getting any South Vietnamese out of Saigon before the Communists attack? Where will all the South Vietnamese go if you get them out of Vietnam?
9. John Hersey quotes you as saying it is "unfortunate" that Congress forbids the reintroduction of American military forces into South Vietnam. Leaving aside the legal restrictions, do you personally favor the use of American military forces in Vietnam? If it were not for the legal restrictions, would you be using American military force now to try to save South Vietnam?
10. How long do your military advisors now tell you that Saigon can hold out with no U.S. aid? How do you now rate the prospects for getting Congress to approve additional military aid for South Vietnam?

President Thieu

*Requested  
No VN - said  
was attack to negotiations*

*Controlled situation  
Halt*

*New  
Don't bring forward  
morning -  
will be in contact*

1. What effect if any will the resignation of President Thieu have on ending the war in South Vietnam?
2. What role did the United States play in forcing President Thieu to resign?
3. Has Thieu asked for asylum in the United States? Will he be welcome to live in the United States?
4. Are there any negotiations going on now with the North Vietnamese to end the war, or at least to allow the Americans to leave Saigon before the Communists take over?
5. In his resignation statement President Thieu criticized the United States and particularly Secretary Kissinger for forcing him to accept the continued presence of North Vietnamese troops in the South at the Paris Peace negotiations. He also accused the United States of pressuring him to resign. Are these charges true?
6. If the corruption and ineptitude of the Thieu Government was one of the causes for losing the war, why did the United States support him for so long?

Middle East

1. How are you progressing with the reassessment of our policies in the Middle East which you announced some time ago?
2. Are you holding up on additional aid to Israel pending the completion of that reassessment?
3. There are indications now that the Soviets want the Geneva talks to resume in June. Have we heard from the Soviets on this? Would we be willing to go along with this or would we want to see Kissinger make one more step by step approach?

- Economic arrangements*
4. <sup>Yamari</sup> ~~Yamari~~ yesterday said that the oil talks should be resumed or prices would inevitably start going up again. He also said that Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are engaged in working out a long-term bi-lateral agreement. How do you feel about a resumption of the oil talks? Would we be willing to go back to the oil talks and under what conditions would we be willing to resume talks?

General Foreign Policy

1. What is your response to President Kaunda's statement in his toast the other night that the U.S. has no policy to Africa except for ~~the remaining white governments?~~  
*SUPPORT OF*
2. Are you replacing John Scali with Pat Moynihan as Ambassador to the United Nations? If so, why?
3. Do you have a new assignment for John Scali?



Politics

1. Do you agree with Vice President Rockefeller that the question of "who lost Viet nam" could be a major issue in the 1976 Presidential election? You and your administration seem to speak out of both sides of your mouth on this issue. On the one hand you call for reason and conciliation in the wake of Vietnam. On the other hand, you and others blame Congress for the fall of Vietnam and Cambodia. Which is your position? Don't these charges against Congress plant the seeds of a divisive national debate and don't they make it inevitable that the loss of Cambodia and Vietnam will be a nasty politic issue next year?
2. Do you expect Ronald Reagan or some other Republican to challenge you for your party's nomination as Congressman Anderson and others predict?
3. Since you have never been elected to the White House don't you have to get into the New Hampshire and other primaries next year to prove yourself?
4. Will you dump Vice President Rockefeller as your running mate in order to placate the conservative wing of your party?
5. If you are serious about running for President next year, why is it no one at the White House seems to have done anything about preparing for a political campaign?
6. Public opinion polls indicate that you may have trouble winning the Republican nomination, and if you do win it, you may have trouble getting elected. Could this low level of support persuade you not to run next year?
7. Many of the top officials of your Administration and most of the domestic and foreign policys are merely carry-overs from the Nixon Administration. When can we expect your own people and your own policies?
8. Are you satisfied with the way your White House is running considering the numerous reports of infighting among staff members, frequent leaks to the press, and constant disagreements over major policies. If this is not the way you want your White House to run, what do you plan to do about it?

9. John Hersey described you as somewhat cold and lacking in compassion for our most needy citizens. Is this the way you view yourself? Considering that you raised the price of food stamps and tried to limit social security increases, isn't that an accurate description by Hersey?
10. How can you justify to the American people your playing golf and socializing exclusively with extremely rich Republicans while Indochina is falling and more than 8 million Americans are unemployed? Even if the golf playing and socializing don't interfere with your concern and action, doesn't this present an image to the American public of a typical Republican president who doesn't really care about the less fortunate?

Domestic Questions:

1. Are you going to veto the Farm Bill?
2. Are you going to veto the Strip Mining Bill?
3. Are you going to impose another \$1 on the imported oil tariff and ~~to~~ control old domestic oil on May 1 if Congress does not approve a domestic energy bill, as you said you would?
4. Do you really believe that the government deficit can be held to \$60 billion, or was that just a gimmick you used on television?
5. How much higher will unemployment go? Will it go to 9 or 10%? A member of your Administration predicted that unemployment would go beyond 9%. Do you concur in that assessment? And what do you think the peak unemployment figure will be?

INTERVIEW WITH  
WALTER CRONKITE, BOB SCHIEFFER &  
ERIC SEVERAID

MONDAY, April 21, 1975

10:00 P. M.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

*df*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 21, 1975

Mr. President:

Here are some points your advisers think you should emphasize during the CBS interview tonight, aside from your direct answers to questions. These memos contain the input of the Economic Policy Board, the OMB, Alan Greenspan, the Domestic Council and the Energy Resources Council.

The NSC has not yet prepared its talking points for the broadcast.

  
Ron Nessen

Attachments

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 21, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM ECONOMIC POLICY BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SUBJECT TALKING POINTS ON THE ECONOMY FOR  
CBS INTERVIEW

1. There is growing amount of commentary that the recession is bottoming out and the economy will soon turn up. Do you agree?

It is true that a number of early indicators that normally appear prior to the bottoming of a recession have begun to emerge in recent weeks. Although we expect the economy to stabilize and to begin to recover in the months ahead it is still declining - more slowly than earlier but the trend is still downward. Consequently, we must expect to see several months more of unfavorable economic indicators. Among these we should expect another increase in the unemployment rate to be reported for the month of April - perhaps even to 9 percent or even more.

The evidence that is gradually appearing is consistent with and supportive of our view that the economy would bottom out around mid-year. This was our forecast in January in the Economic and Budget Messages and we see as yet no evidence to suggest that the expected mid-year bottoming out has been advanced or delayed.

Memo: A number of key indicators have continued to do better than we expected: retail sales, a stabilization in new orders and, most importantly, the growing evidence that the recession is to a very large extent an inventory recession, and by its nature means that both the depth and the duration of the recession are limited.

2. Inflation rates, though down, are still too high.

The rate of inflation has declined significantly since last year. But the current rate of inflation of about 7-8% is still unacceptably high and needs to be reduced further. Further improvement will, however, be a slow and gradual process because the present rate of inflation is deeply imbedded in the current structure of prices, costs, and wages. However, we will continue to work on this problem.

3. Larger deficits threaten future inflation and a sound economic recovery.

The deficits for this year and next are sure to be extremely large. Most of that is due to the recession itself, which causes sharp reductions in tax receipts and sharp increases in unemployment benefits. But the problem now is that the deficits may get too big, and that threatens us with two very serious dangers. One is that the enormous borrowing will force interest rates to rise, which will choke off private investment. The housing industry would be sent into a tailspin, and we would not have the capital that we need to do things like developing our energy resources and insuring an adequate supply of electricity. The second danger is that these large deficits will send inflation soaring again. The bigger the deficits, the more serious is the danger that these problems will develop.

4. We should guard against over-reaction to lagging declines in unemployment.

The unemployment rate usually lags and does not start to improve as soon or as fast as economic activity does. We must be careful not to over-react to this situation. Many of the spending bills now before Congress would take time to implement, and if the experts are right, they will have no effect on the timing of the trough in economic activity or on the speed of recovery during its early phases. Rather, they would stimulate the economy later in the recovery and add to budget deficits in 1977 and beyond. This is just when many experts believe that the inflationary danger could again be growing rapidly.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 21, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

RON NESSEN

FROM:

JIM CANNON

SUBJECT:

The President's Interview  
with Walter Cronkite Tonight

The Government spending issue is the key point that the President should make tonight in the Domestic area. He needs to make the point over and over again that the Federal Government can't solve all of our problems by continuing to increase Federal spending. He should hit hard on his concern about increasing the size of the Federal deficit and urge the Congress to act more responsibly as they review budget issues in the weeks and months ahead.

## ENERGY POINTS

- Since I announced my comprehensive energy program on January 15, the Congress has come a long way
  - . There is a realization that the energy problem is serious and a program must be enacted now, not next year.
  - . Hearings have been held on all of my proposals and legislation is moving through several committees.
- However, we still have a long way to go
  - . We do not have a comprehensive program enacted.
  - . The Congress still seems unwilling to enact a tough conservation program with meaningful savings during the next few critical years.
  - . Even if there were a resolution of the Middle East situation and the threat of an embargo diminished, we must save energy now— otherwise we become more vulnerable to a further round of oil price rises.
  - . Many are still looking to allocation, quotas and rationing as an easy way to cut use. It is certain that this approach will cause more economic impact, burgeoning Federal bureaucracy and restrictions of individual freedoms than the market approach I have proposed — and it will save less energy.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON  
April 21, 1975

Mr. President:

Here is an NSC proposal on a point they feel you should make during the CBS interview tonight.

This should be the last of the preparation material.

Ron Nessen

## THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER VIETNAM

Q. It now looks as though South Vietnam will be lost militarily within a matter of weeks and perhaps days. Now, where do we go from here? Will we revise our world-wide policies or will we keep them? Will we avoid other entanglement or will we want to rush into it? Why are you talking so much about the Domino Theory and about the decline in American influence -- will that not bring about precisely that decline that you fear?

A. As I said in my speech to the Congress, our national unity is a priceless asset, and one of the most tragic consequences the situation in Vietnam could have would be to use it to pit Americans against other Americans. Some Americans have believed throughout this conflict that the war and our involvement in it was a mistake. Many others lost a member of their family or a friend, or must watch a wounded veteran trying to make a new life. And countless others grieve for our frustrated attempts to help a small, brave country preserve its independence. The Vietnam war has touched too many American and Vietnamese lives for there not to be an effect on our country. The important point is what we learn from our experiences. What expectations for the future will we have and how do we envision our role in helping to shape that future?

We have a sound foreign policy structure and we must keep that in mind as we try to put an end to our self-inflicted wounds.

If we can respond to adversity with dignity and demonstrate to all that we can and do intend to continue our role as a major force for peace throughout the world, then our commitments to our allies and our warnings to potential adversaries will be heeded and will be believed. We have no choice but to play a major role in world affairs; therefore, we should resolve not to shrink from the duties of leadership on complex issues of our interdependent world.

There is so much to be done: We have allies who have relied upon our cooperation and support for more than a generation. We have adversaries with whom we have begun to lessen tensions and seek common grounds of cooperation in the interest of reducing the dangers of war. We must meet the challenges of hunger, lead the way for technological advancement while preserving the environment and help to assure that the oceans are used as a basis of peaceful cooperation rather than conflict. In sum, American leadership is needed in the creation of new institutions and practices for worldwide prosperity and progress. A new order is emerging which all nations must have a part and in which American will have a leading role as long as I am President.

Question:

Mr. President, in the piece that appeared in the New York Times Magazine Section yesterday, the observation is made by the writer that there is a distinction between procedures you followed in policy and decision-making on domestic matters as opposed to procedures followed in the field of foreign affairs. What would your comments be on this?

Answer:

First, I am sorry that the series of interviews on which this article was based occurred at a time when the Secretary of State was out of the City for a series of negotiations in the Middle East because I think that would have given a somewhat different perspective to John Hersey, the author, on how the subject of foreign affairs is considered on a day-to-day basis.

Although as he explained it was not anticipated he would sit in on the foreign policy sessions with Secretary Kissinger, nevertheless had the Secretary been here, I believe there would have been a number of situations in other meetings Hersey would have had the chance to view the interchange of people and ideas in this particular area.

Also it should be observed that those who are involved in foreign policy from NSC are somewhat different persons from those John Hersey met on the senior White House staff.

The decision had been made earlier that the writer not participate in the meetings that I might have with Dr. Kissinger or with members of the NSC staff inasmuch as there was a question of sensitivity that was not involved in meetings on domestic matters.

WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 18, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

EPS CONTROL CENTER  
SECRET SERVICE  
TECHNICAL SECURITY

FROM:

ANN GRIER *AG*

Walter Cronkite, Eric Severeid and Bob Schieffer of CBS will be conducting a live television interview with the President in the Blue Room of the Residence at 10:00 p. m., Monday, April 21. Four cameras will be utilized in the Residence (three in the Blue Room, one on the small balcony outside the Blue Room). A fifth camera will be located on the North Lawn.

Sunday, April 20:

On the above date, two CBS tractor-trailer vehicles will arrive at the NW Gate at approximately 8:00 p. m. They should be directed to drive past the North Portico and park just East of the North Portico on the Northeast Drive. The vehicles will not off-load. They will be locked and will remain overnight on the Drive. TSD should be on hand to check equipment. The drivers of the vehicles will be Willis Webster and Richard Jarrett, both White House Press passholders.

Monday, April 21:

Technical personnel from CBS will arrive on Monday, April 21 at approx. 12:30 p. m. and should be cleared thru the NW and East Gates. Also arriving at approx. 12:30 p. m. will be a CBS truck carrying lighting equipment. The truck should proceed to the NE Drive area to offload. TSD should be on hand to inspect equipment. After offloading, the truck will then depart the grounds and proceed to park on East Executive Ave.

Around mid-afternoon, another CBS van will arrive carrying the mini-camera to be used on the North Lawn. The van should be directed to the NE Drive area where it will remain for the rest of the day. The three-man mini-cam group will be: Al Levin, Norman Thurston and Bob Johnson. All have White House Press passes.

Following are CBS Technical Personnel:

White House Passholders

Norman Thurston  
Al Levin  
Earl Ringold  
William Vogan  
Willis Webster  
Richard Jarrett  
Donald Crane  
Larry D'Anna  
Robert Johnson  
James Duffy  
Emil Franks  
George Christian  
Frank LaTorre  
Charles Grenier  
Sandy Socolow - CBS Bureau Chief  
Bill Headline - Production  
Bill Linden - Production  
Jack Nishimura

Non-White House Passholders

Robert Stone  
Born: 6/7/26  
SS #: 568-01-3369  
Place of Birth: Spokane, Wash.

Jeffrey Matthews  
Born: [REDACTED]  
SS #: [REDACTED]  
Place of Birth: [REDACTED]

Kenneth Wright  
Born: [REDACTED]  
SS #: [REDACTED]  
Place of Birth: [REDACTED]

cc: Cdr. Coates, Tom DeCair, Mike Farrell, Rex Scouten, Dave Hoopes,  
Jack Hushen, Jerry Jones, Dick Keiser, Bob Mead, Ron Nessen, Terry  
O'Donnell, Bill Roberts, Dan Spaulding, Lou Sims



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 18, 1975

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Born: 6/7/26  
SS #: 568-01-3369  
Place of Birth: Spokane, Wash.

Jeffrey Matthews  
Born: 11/14/44  
SS #: 212-44-2173  
Place of Birth: Baltimore, Maryland

Kenneth Wright  
Born: 3/10/40  
SS #: 217-36-9442  
Place of Birth: Olney, Maryland

cc: Cdr. Coates, Tom DeCair, Mike Farrell, Rex Scouten, Dave Hoopes,  
Jack Hushen, Jerry Jones, Dick Keiser, Bob Mead, Ron Nessen, Terry  
O'Donnell, Bill Roberts, Dan Spaulding, Lou Sims

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 17, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. RON NESSEN  
FROM: WARREN RUSTAND *WR*  
SUBJECT: Approved Presidential Activity

Please take the necessary steps to implement the following and confirm with Mrs. Nell Yates, ext. 2699. The appropriate briefing paper should be submitted to Dr. David Hoopes by 4:00 p.m. of the preceding day.

Meeting: One hour interview with Walter Cronkite alone or with Bob Schieffer and Eric Severaid. LIVE

Date: Monday, April 21, 1975 Time: 10:00 p.m. Duration: 60 minutes

Location:

Press Coverage:

Purpose: CBS has requested one-hour interview. In addition President personally promised Cronkite that he could do interview when ready.

cc: Mr. Hartmann  
Mr. Marsh  
Mr. Cheney  
Dr. Connor  
Dr. Hoopes  
Mr. Jones  
Mr. Nessen  
Mr. O'Donnell  
✓ Mrs. Yates

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 14, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DONALD RUMSFELD  
VIA: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*  
FROM: WARREN RUSTAND  
SUBJECT: Proposed Addition to the President's  
Schedule for the Week of April 21

Monday, April 21  
10:00 p.m (60 minutes)

One-hour Interview with the President at  
10:00 p.m. on Monday, April 21 with  
Walter Cronkite alone or with Bob Schieffer and  
Eric Severaid.

CBS has requested a one-hour interview with the President on April 21 at 10:00 p.m. It could be done live or pre-taped the day before.

The other two networks have already done interviews with the President and it is legitimately CBS' turn. In addition, the President personally promised Cronkite during a recent chat in the Oval Office that he could do an interview whenever he was ready.

Ron Nessen is in favor with one concern: it could be there would be some major development in Southeast Asia at the time of the interview and the President would then be committed to go on live TV and, obviously, would not be able to avoid responding to questions about the development, perhaps before he was ready.

APPROVE *WR* DISAPPROVE \_\_\_\_\_

(Live: *WR* Pretaped \_\_\_\_\_)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 9, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JIM CONNOR  
WARREN RUSTAND

FROM:

RON NESSEN *RHN*

CBS has requested a one-hour interview with the President at 10:00 p.m. on Monday, April 21. The interview would be conducted by Walter Cronkite alone or with Bob Schieffer and Eric Severaid. It could be done live or pre-taped the day before.

As you know, the other two networks have already done interviews with the President and it is legitimately CBS' turn. In addition, the President personally promised Cronkite during a recent chat in the Oval Office that he could do an interview whenever he was ready.

I am in favor of doing this with one concern: it could be that there would be some major development in Southeast Asia at the time of the interview and the President would then be committed to go on live television and, obviously, would not be able to avoid responding to questions about the development, perhaps before he was ready.

I promised CBS I would get them a definite answer as soon as possible. One technical matter: CBS needs about seven or eight hours to set up their cameras for this interview and this, obviously would cause some disruption in whatever area of the White House the interview was staged.