

# 'Index' for The Change

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## Washington

Not long before President Nixon came to the ineluctible conclusion that he would be impeached by the House and perhaps convicted in a Senate trial if he did not resign, Clay T. (Tom) Whitehead reduced the rough plans for a transition program to a single typed page of shorthand notes.

He called it the "index." It looked like this:

1. First principles, themes and objectives.
2. The transition team.
3. The "first week":
  - Assumption of office.
  - Transition team.
  - Message to the American people.
  - Cabinet and White House staff resignations.
  - Congressional leadership meetings.
  - Cabinet, NSC (National Security Council) and economic policy meetings.
  - Meetings with national and foreign leaders.
  - Vice presidential search process.
  - Personnel decision process.
4. Address to the American people.
5. Assessment of the executive branch.
6. Press and Congress: Philosophy and tactics.
7. Background papers: Policy and machinery.
  - Foreign policy and national security.
  - The economy.
  - Budget.
  - Domestic Council.
  - White House mechanics.
8. Organization of the presidency:
  - Background.
  - White House staff and reorganization.
  - Role of the cabinet.
9. Key personnel actions:
  - Recruitment process.
  - Transition of agency heads.
  - Handling of old White House staff.

The items were not so much recommendations as a checklist of issues that should be considered, quickly, in the event Gerald Ford became President overnight.

What, if any "first principles" should he pronounce? Who should he call upon to help, immediately, in the transitions?

What should he do in the early days of his administration — called, after Genesis, the First Week — about retaining or dismissing Mr. Nixon's advisers and aides or about nominating a new vice president?

Should there be a different, and thus more open, attitude toward Congress and the news media?

It would be, Whitehead said, something that could be taken to Mr. Ford and say, "Here, this will get you started."

It was all very informal, Whitehead remembered. "We had no notion the thing would come up as soon as it did."

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