

## “He Liked to Make Decisions”

**Interview Date:** August 23, 1977

**Participant:** Brent Scowcroft

**Participant Title:** Deputy Assistant to the President

**Participant:** Donald H. Rumsfeld

**Participant Title:** Secretary of Defense, Assistant to the President

SCENE SETTER: President Ford and President Nixon had very different personalities and operational styles. As a longtime member of the House of Representatives, Ford was far more collaborative and liked to hear from his advisers before he made a decision.

**Brent Scowcroft:** I don't think, again, we ought to underemphasize the importance of personality in this whole thing. President Ford was action oriented. It was his whole career, that way. It was the way he was personally. He liked to get into things. He liked to look at papers. He liked to make decisions.

**Donald H. Rumsfeld:** He really *did* like to make decisions.

**Scowcroft:** And one of the ways he arrived at decisions was meeting and having people bounce ideas back and forth. That's the way he got to his decisions. And President Nixon did it very differently. He liked to get the papers, and he liked to squirrel himself away and think about them, or however he did it, because he did it by himself. Now, you can say one is better or one is worse, but the purpose of this whole process that we're describing here is to help the President make the best possible decisions, and in doing that, you've got to direct yourself to the personality of the man.

*End of excerpt.*

CITATION: The Ford White House, First Session, April 23, 1977, Gerald Ford Oral History Symposium, Miller Center, University of Virginia.

URL: <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/ford-white-house-restoring-executive-office>