

## “A Better Feeling”

**Interview Date:** August 23, 1977

**Participant:** Jerry H. Jones

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

SCENE SETTER: White House morale changed dramatically following President Nixon’s resignation in August 1974, one of the many differences staffers noticed when Gerald R. Ford became president. As a longtime member of the House of Representatives, Ford was far more collaborative with West Wing employees than his predecessor.

**Jerry H. Jones:** There’s no question that President Ford saw three, four times as many decision action papers as Nixon did. And I think that was a response to his being unwilling to delegate to the White House, the referee or command authority. And I think President Ford did not want to do that, and I think that’s one of the reasons that you had a better feeling in the cabinet, and in the various offices of the White House, about him and about how the decisions were going, because he was involved with them. And we did have a better feeling. There’s no question that morale was better. There’s no question that people in the administration liked the guy better and wanted to work for him more. But I think we have to point out the cost of that.

I remember one time Dick and I, sitting in Dick’s office, talking about, are we really de-aligning with the major questions that are facing the United States or are we dealing with the short-term questions that are being forced upon us, and why can’t we get enough time to deal with the long-range questions? The cost to President Ford to ameliorate the White House imperialism, if you will, was to spend all of his time on these shorter-term questions at a cost of being able to get into some longer-term ones.

*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>