



QUOTES FROM TRANSITION CHAIRMAN DICK CHENEY: IMPLICATIONS OF A DELAYED TRANSITION

The Florida recount and litigation aftermath of the 2000 election left George W. Bush with the shortest official transition in history – 39 days. In November of 2000, and with a winner still undetermined, then-Governor George W. Bush and former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney prepared for a transition with the expectation of victory. On November 26, Dick Cheney was named chairman of the Bush-Cheney transition team. Cheney recognized the importance of a transition for building a strong administration, facilitating relationships between an administration and Congress and preparing for unexpected but inevitable crises to come.

In the days following his appointment as chairman of the transition team, Cheney communicated the implications of a delayed transition, the requirements of building a new government and his thoughts on the General Service Administration's denial of transition resources. The quotes below were primarily spoken during news conferences on Nov. 27 and Nov. 29, 2000.

Effects of a delayed transition

- “There's been a tendency, I think, for many people to believe that there is, quote, “plenty of time” before we begin to pay any kind of a price for the delay in certifying a winner in the Florida election. That may be true if one looks only at the timetable for the Electoral College. But **we will pay a heavy price for the delays in planning and assembling the next administration.**”- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “One of the important considerations that has not received attention because of all of the focus on the Florida circumstances in recent weeks has been the fact that virtually nothing has happened publicly from the standpoint of the transition. While we've been able to do some internal planning among ourselves, **we've been able to do very little by way of actually beginning the process of working to put in place the new administration.**”- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “**The quality of the transition has a direct bearing on the quality of the administration** that follows it, a direct bearing on the quality of the people that are recruited to serve in an administration. The transition affects the **quality of planning**; the building of **relationships between the administration and the Congress**, the capacity of a new administration to develop and **execute a legislative program**, and even the **ability of the new team to deal with that first crisis** when it arises as it inevitably will.”- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “For all of those reasons, we believe it is absolutely essential for us to get on with the business of a transition. Indeed, **it would be irresponsible for us not to move as rapidly as possible** to carry out these responsibilities.”- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “**We look forward to getting this matter resolved as quickly as possible so we can get on with the important business of transition** and are optimistic that once this process is complete, as the governor said, that there will be a clear and decisive result once the final count is completed in Florida tomorrow.”- Cheney, Nov. 8, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3nkwAvr>.

- “My problem is **I've got a job to do and I've got to get on with that. I don't have time to worry a lot about how cooperative somebody is or is not being at this point.**” - Cheney, Nov. 29, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/2JXuW13>.

Assembling an administration

- In the 10 days after there was no election verdict in 2000, Dick Cheney asked Clay Johnson to begin raising money and making staffing decisions. Cheney reasoned that the race, “is going to be resolved one way or the other.”- Approx. Nov. 17, 2000. Retrieved from <https://to.pbs.org/2ICic2x>.
- “This is an unusual set of circumstances and **the campaign ended about 9 days ago and there's still a lot of work to be done** and we've got a lot of great folks who are helping out and put in a lot of time and effort and energy... **we look forward to a quick and speedy resolution** and are confident that in the end having won the vote in Florida originally and won the recount now been certified once the absentee ballots are in this weekend we hope that that will wrap it up to everybody 's satisfaction.” - Cheney, Nov. 15, 2000 Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/36NaZWb>.
- “Despite the decision, we feel it is **our obligation to the American people to honor their votes by moving forward and assembling the administration** that they've chosen in this election. Therefore, at the direction of Governor Bush, we will proceed, drawing on other sources.” - Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “**Under normal circumstances we had approximately 10 weeks get ready to assume the responsibility for governing after an election.** Given the enormous complexity of interviewing, recruiting, and confirming hundreds of senior officials, most administrations in recent years have not been fully staffed and organized until well into their first year in office. This year, because of admittedly unusual circumstances, **we have already used up nearly three weeks, or roughly 30 percent of the original time available for a transition.**”- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- **But we have to get on to the business now of beginning to talk to people about possibly joining the administration,** sourcing others for their ideas and thoughts on who might be willing to serve, beginning the process of **preparing people to go through the full field investigations the FBI requires, the complete financial disclosure that's required by the Office of Government Ethics, preparation for the confirmation process in the United States Senate** ... as I say, 30 percent of the time ordinarily available is already gone”- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- Given the closeness of the election and our responsibilities, a nearly evenly divided Congress, that **we really do need to reach out to people from all walks of life,** from every political faith, Republican and Democrat alike, to find principles we can agree upon, programs that we can develop and support mutually together. And I think that will be very much a part of our effort.” - Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “**There is a lot of preliminary work that can be done,** once we can begin to interact with prospective administration officials ... **We can assemble,** for example, packages of the

kinds of things that are going to be required for **background investigations, financial disclosure**; what the requirements are of the Office of Government Ethics. And even though we cannot actually initiate action by those federal agencies yet, **we can do everything short of that in terms of getting people ready to go through the process.**”
- Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.

Security briefings

- “Andy Card announced earlier this week that he has been in touch with Mr. Podesta at the White House on a number of matters. **I look forward next week to beginning the receipt on a regular basis of national security briefings that have been offered by the administration and will be happy to accept those.**” - Cheney, Nov. 29, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/2JXuW13>.
- **Reporter:** “Will you be going to the White House for these security briefings?”
Cheney: “**I expect I'll receive the security briefings probably at transition headquarters.**”- Cheney, Nov. 29, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/2JXuW13>.

The General Services Administration

- “**Traditionally, the day after the election, GSA provides keys to the transition office and funds appropriated by the Congress** for a new administration to begin the transition process. Because of the closeness of the election this year and the situation in Florida, that clearly was not the case this time, and we understood the reasons for that, given the fact that a recount was underway under Florida law.” Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “Now that the election results in Florida have been certified in accordance with Florida state law and rulings by the Florida Supreme Court, **we believe it is time to get on with the business of organizing the new administration.**” - Cheney, Nov. 29, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/2JXuW13>.
- “We were disappointed therefore when **the General Services Administration announced that they will continue to deny us access to taxpayer funds** set up that are specifically appropriated by the Congress and **set aside to pay for the transition.** This is regrettable because we believe the government has an obligation to honor certified results of the election.” - Cheney, Nov. 27, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/3eXOEbR>.
- “The **GSA is not yet to the point where they believe they can release the funds and provide access to the office space that's available. That's fine,** they're the ones who have to make that judgment and that decision, as I said when we met.” - Cheney, Nov. 29, 2000. Retrieved from <https://cs.pn/2JXuW13>.

Sources

- [Bush campaign news conference](#), CSPAN, Nov. 8, 2000.
- [Cheney visits Bush campaign headquarters](#), CSPAN, Nov. 15, 2000.
- [Dick Cheney speaks about the effects of a delayed transition and GSA's decision to withhold public funding](#), CSPAN, Nov. 27, 2000.
- [Dick Cheney speaks about opening up transition headquarters](#), CSPAN, Nov. 29, 2000.