

President George W. Bush's Historic Transfer of Power

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Description

For more than two hours on June 29, 2002, Vice President Dick Cheney became the President. The transfer of power took place while doctors performed a colonoscopy on President George W. Bush at Camp David. NBC's Norah O'Donnell looks at the 25th Amendment in action.

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Transcript

President George W. Bush's Historic Transfer of Power

JOHN SEIGENTHALER, anchor:

And now to the President's health. For more than two hours this morning, Vice President Dick Cheney became the President. The transfer of power took place while doctors performed a successful colonoscopy on President Bush at Camp David. NBC's Norah O'Donnell joins us tonight from the White House with that story. Norah?

NORAH O'DONNELL reporting:

Good evening, John. Tonight, the White House says the President is feeling great, after a colonoscopy in which his doctors say no medical problems were found.

Just hours after the procedure, President Bush today took advantage of the beauty of Camp David on a warm summer day to walk four miles with his wife and others and then work out at the gym. White House Dr. Richard Tubbs said today's colorectal screening was precautionary, since four benign polyps were found and removed in two previous examinations several years ago.

Dr. RICHARD TUBBS (White House Physician): Procedure lasted for 20 minutes and was completely uncomplicated. No polyps were found; no abnormalities were found.

O'DONNELL: The White House said at 7:09 this morning President Bush officially invoked the 25th Amendment, temporarily transferring power to Vice President Dick Cheney.

Mr. ALBERTO GONZALES (White House Counsel): In this particular case, he looked at all the circumstances, the--the length of the procedure, the relationship with the Vice President. Things going on domestically and internationally made the decision that it was the right thing to do for this country.

O'DONNELL: The procedure performed by a team of military doctors at Camp David. The President sedated with a drug called Propofol, a type of anesthesia chosen because it takes effect in less than a minute and wears off quickly. While Bush was unconscious for just 22 minutes, the Vice President at the White House today assumed the powers of the Executive Office for exactly two hours and 15 minutes out

of what the White House called an abundance of caution.

Mr. GONZALES: We wanted to reassure everyone that the President was not going to be making a decision--a hasty decision to rush back into and assume authority.

O'DONNELL: It is only the second time in history a President has handed over power. The last, July 13th, 1985, when then President Reagan underwent surgery for colon cancer transferring power to then Vice President Bush. Tonight, the President's doctors say Bush will continue to get his annual physical examinations. But because today's tests showed nothing unusual, Bush will not need another colonoscopy for five years. John?

SEIGENTHALER: NBC's Norah O'Donnell at the White House. Norah, thank you.