

# Ford Solicits Suggestions On No. 2 Man

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Gerald R. Ford enlarged his imprint on the presidency yesterday, announcing his plan for selecting a Vice President, telling top government officials to emulate his openness with the press, and embracing a policy of face-to-face dealings with each Cabinet member.

On behalf of the Cabinet, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger reciprocated with a pledge of "our unflagging support and total loyalty to you."

Mr. Ford met with the Cabinet and key aides and then with the National Security Council less than 24 hours after taking the oath of office as the 38th President of the United States.

Commuting from his home in Alexandria, he went first to his old vice presidential suite in the Executive Office Building.

Then he walked over to the White House for meetings that started at 10 a.m. and continued into the afternoon.

Press secretary Jerald F. TerHorst told an afternoon news briefing that the plan to nominate a Vice President will involve collecting suggested names from possibly hundreds of persons in a broad spectrum of the political community—a reflection of Mr. Ford's sensitivity to the fact that the electorate will have chosen neither of the nation's top two leaders.

TerHorst said each person participating in the process will list in order of preference, with an accompanying explanation, three names to be considered for Vice President in an "eyes only" envelope for Mr. Ford.

The press secretary said the participants will be Republican legislators working

through Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott and House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes; GOP governors and members of the Republican National Committee working through chairman George Bush; House Speaker Carl Albert and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, and Cabinet members, White House advisers and friends of Mr. Ford.

The President has set no limits as to "geographical, political or ideological coloration," TerHorst said. Mr. Ford himself will make the decision, but not "on the basis of who gets the most votes," the press secretary said.

The President wants the suggestions in hand by Wednesday. He is expected to announce his selection a few days later.

The plan is an expanded version of one that Mr. Nixon had set in motion before choosing Mr. Ford to succeed Spiro T. Agnew in the vice presidency.

On the walls of White House corridors and offices yesterday, color photographs of the new President and of the swearing-in ceremony ac-

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cented a sharp change in atmosphere and style from the Nixon presidency.

But so did some of Mr. Ford's first presidential acts, as announced by TerHorst at the news briefing.

For example, the President "likes" press conferences and soon will start to hold many of them, TerHorst said. In contrast, President Nixon held few press conferences. His top domestic affairs adviser, John D. Ehrlichman, said two years ago that newsmen ask stupid questions.

President Ford told his Cabinet personal visits to spend forma resignations. Mr. Nixon required them from all high appointive officials before he was re-elected in 1972.

Mr. Ford also told the Cabinet that he wants to meet with them individually on major business matters. Mr. Nixon relied heavily on written memos.

TerHorst noted that the President does not want in such personal visits to spend time on "chit-chat." He had once told New Republic columnist John Osborne that Mr.

Nixon loam rovtsm dtio ids-eh traction with small talk in business hours.

TerHorst also announced that Mr. Ford has sent personal letters to many heads of governments "assuring them of the continuity of American foreign policy and America's desire for continued good and strong relations."

Among the countries that Mr. Ford wrote to were the Soviet Union and China. But, again emphasizing the newness of the administration, TerHorst was unsure to whom in those countries the letters were addressed.

Further underscoring Mr. Ford's desire to let the world know that there will be no change in foreign policy, Kissinger and his top aides met at the State Department yesterday with more than 60 ambassadors from African, Asian and European nations.

On Friday, he and Mr. Ford saw ambassadors from 57 other nations at the White House.

TerHorst said he does not expect the new President to make any trips—either overseas or around the country—in the near future.

"He feels the most pressing problems to be solved are here in the White House and in Washington," TerHorst said.

Mr. Ford planned a full weekend of work to tackle these problems—including the major one of taking over the government on such short notice.

After the morning meetings with the Cabinet and the National Security Council, he spent the rest of the day conferring with his transitional staff about the shape of the administration.

He also named his long-time friend and congressional associate, John O. Marsh Jr., as a presidential counselor with Cabinet rank. Marsh, a former four-term Democratic congressman from Virginia, served as liaison for defense and national security affairs when Mr. Ford was Vice President.

The President designated Donald Rumsfeld, ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as coordinator of his four-man transition team. Others on the team besides Marsh and Rumsfeld are Interior Secretary Rogers, C. B.

Morton, who is in charge of federal agencies and Cabinet-level departments, and former Pennsylvania Gov. William W. Scranton, who heads the reshaping of the White House staff and the talent search.

TerHorst said the transition team's job is to shape the operation of the government and the White House to fit President Ford's own work habits.

Emphasizing the transitional nature of the White House staff, TerHorst clarified his own position. He said he is on leave from his job as Washington bureau chief for The Detroit News at Mr. Ford's request, and any decision as to whether he will be the permanent presidential press secretary will be made later.

Indeed, TerHorst is so new on the job that he slipped twice and ascribed actions to "President Nixon" instead of President Ford.

Mr. Ford plans to return to the White House to work today after attending the 10 a.m. services at Immanuel on the Hill, an Episcopal church in Alexandria. TerHorst said the President will concentrate on drafting his address to a joint

session of Congress Monday night.

TerHorst said the speech will be short—about 15 or 20 minutes—and its theme will be unity and the drawing of the country together.

Mr. Ford feels that this is a major problem facing the first days of his administration. He told the Cabinet, TerHorst reported, that he wants continuity and stability in government.

"I believe that is what the country wants," TerHorst quoted President Ford as saying.

But interest yesterday centered principally on the choice of a Vice President, especially because of divisions within the GOP over whether he should be a conservative, such as Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (Ariz.) — favored by Rep. Rhodes — or a more liberal leader, such as former New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller — favored by Sen. Scott.

Uncertainty prevailed as to whether any "elder statesman" of the party would be picked. Rep. Charles Wiggins (R-Calif.) predicted Friday that one would not be.

In the Cabinet meeting, Mr. Ford did not criticize anyone's relations with the press. Instead, said TerHorst, the President suggested that each department and agency head be "affirmative" in their press relations.

No one at the meeting mentioned the Friday announcement by General Motors that it was raising prices of its 1975 cars by 9.5 per cent, an average of \$480 per unit, TerHorst said in response to questions. He stressed that the meeting had been brief, lasting only 45 minutes.

The 30-minute National Security Council meeting dealt in part with apparent plans to try to restore \$300 million in military aid for South Vietnam that was cut from defense appropriations bills that are about to go to a House-Senate conference for reconciliation.

During the few moments the meeting was opened up to picture-taking, newsmen heard Mr. Ford praising House Majority Whip John J. McFall of California, who had backed the Nixon administration's request for \$1.4 billion in Viet-

nam aid, as a "first-class guy" who had "stood strong and tall" on Vietnam policy.

The President looked as if the new job agreed with him. He appeared fit and healthy during the Cabinet meeting, sitting at the long table that Mr. Nixon donated to the White House across from the empty chair in which the Vice President usually sits.

He wore a gray suit, a pin-collar shirt and a blue tie.

TerHorst said the Ford family will remain in their Alexandria home until late this week. The move will be made with "some reluctance" since the Ford children had grown up there. The delay, TerHorst continued, is due to the time it takes to pack up in the old home and get the White House rooms ready for the new occupants.

The Fords plan to keep their Alexandria home, probably renting it out, White House aides said. At day's end, Mr. Ford returned to the home and its swimming pool, which he loves. President Nixon had converted the White House pool into press facilities.