

Ford Advisers Are Old *Ford 8/12/74* Close Friends From House

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gerald R. Ford's closest advisers are his close friends from a quarter century in the House and his obscure, hard-working vice presidential staff.

The only ones who held prominent positions in the Nixon administration are former Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird and White House aide Bryce Harlow, a top presidential assistant in both the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations.

Ford generally has operated on his own, relying less on his staff than his predecessors in the vice presidency.

While traveling outside Washington as vice president, he often was accompanied by only a single military aide and his press secretary.

The top members of his vice presidential staff are Robert Hartmann, a 57-year-old former newspaperman who has been chief of staff, and L. William Seidman, a 53-year-old management consultant who joined his

staff earlier this year.

Hartmann, who joined Ford's staff shortly after Ford became House Republican leader in 1965, is more of a political adviser than operating staff chief.

Laird, who was a member of the House before President Nixon named him secretary of defense, served with Ford on the House Appropriations Committee and helped Ford win the GOP leader's job. As chairman of the House Republican Conference, Laird was one of Ford's key lieutenants in the Republican leadership of the House.

Another former House member close to Ford is former Rep. William Cramer, R-Fla., who lost a 1970 Senate bid.