

New White House Mood Emerges

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 11— In these hectic days of transition, the outlines of a Ford Presidency are slowly taking shape at the White House.

Despite a first-days-of-school atmosphere of confusion mixed with anticipation as aides and secretaries from the old Vice-Presidential staff try out new offices and desks — some with obvious embarrassment, others with pleased grins — there has been an almost tangible change in the mood of the busy West Wing.

The tension that seemed to all but envelop the place during much of the last part of the Administration of Richard M. Nixon has melted

away in the face of a new excitement born of an unspoken sense of adventure.

And while Mr. Ford searches for a Vice President, his transitional team of four former Congressional friends and colleagues grapples with the problem of molding the tightly run Nixon White House to fit what one aide called the "personal and peculiar working habits" of the new President.

"By peculiar, I mean individually held," J. F. terHorst, the new press secretary, explained with a laugh.

"They're still trying to determine President Ford's working habits," he added, so that they can develop a structure "in which he would be most comfortable in run-

ning the executive branch."

One thing on which all those around the new President agree is that the Nixon style—seclusion except from a few top advisers and decisions based on prepared papers—will never do for Mr. Ford, a product of 25 years of the personal give and take of Congress.

"He prefers person-to-per-

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son dealings," Mr. terHorst said. "He does not like decisions based on memos."

And it is already clear, from his first staff appointments and the stream of Congressional and other visitors he has invited to the White House in his first three days in office, that Mr. Ford does not intend to change his busy week.

In the weeks before he succeeded Mr. Nixon, as resignation or impeachment and conviction appeared increasingly likely, Mr. Ford was chided by some critics, for not beefing up a vice-presidential staff that they considered too thin, too inexperienced and perhaps too weak to handle the heavy burdens of the White House.

But Mr. Ford declined to bring in new talent, according to some close to him, at least in part because he felt it might be taken as a sign that he expected Mr. Nixon to fall.

Now, he is expected to add some new high level aides, but he is taking his time about doing it. And he has shown no signs of abandoning the closest advisers from his vice-presidential staff.

Long-Time Associates

In fact, of the first three appointments he made, two were from that staff and the third was Mr. terHorst, who had been Washington bureau chief of The Detroit News and whom he had known

since 1946 back in his home city of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Some of those around the President read significance into his almost immediate appointments of Robert T. Hartmann and John O. Marsh Jr. as counselors with Cabinet rank.

Mr. Hartmann, a former Washington bureau chief of The Los Angeles Times, was chief of the Vice-Presidential staff. Mr. Marsh, a four-term conservative Virginia Democratic Congressman, was assistant to the Vice President for defense affairs.

Mr. Ford, who usually exudes an old-shoe, Middle-American affability around his staff, appears to be most comfortable with those he has known and worked with for years.

For that reason, some White House insiders are guessing that Mr. Hartmann and Mr. Marsh will continue to exert considerable influence on the President, no matter who else is brought in to assist him.

Reliance Noted

Speaking of Mr. Hartmann, one White House aide predicted that "on a day-to-day basis he would be his [Mr. Ford's] closest adviser."

"He's practically the President's shadow," the aide said. "He has been for years. If he needs some quick input in politics or public relations or whatever, the President relies on him. Obviously, he must, he's in his shad-

ow every day."

Mr. Hartmann, a stocky 57-year-old who is a captain in the Naval Reserve, was born in Rapid City, S. D., but spent most of his early years in California.

Before heading up Mr. Ford's Vice-Presidential staff, he was legislative assistant to Mr. Ford when he was minority leader of the House of Representatives.

Mutual Respect

They work together with an easy rapport that bespeaks friendship as well as mutual professional respect.

On Mr. Ford's recent trips as Vice President, in which he visited 40 states and traveled more than 115,000 miles in eight months, Mr. Hartmann was usually at his side.

A crusty former reporter, Mr. Hartmann deals easily with his old colleagues from the press. On Ford trips, he frequently turned up in hotel bars, after Mr. Ford had retired for the night, to swap tales with newsmen into the small hours.

Mr. Marsh is a 47-year-old lawyer who in 1959 was named the outstanding young man in Virginia by the state's Junior Chamber of Commerce.

He was elected as a Democrat to Congress from Virginia's Seventh District for four straight terms, starting in 1962.

"He calls himself an independent now, rather than a Democrat," an acquaintance said, "but he does not call himself a Republican."

Mr. Marsh decided not to run for re-election in 1970 and re-entered the practice of law in Washington. However,

in 1973 he was named Assistant Secretary of Defense for legislative affairs, a post he held until he joined the Vice President's staff last January.

Served With Ford

He has known Mr. Ford since his days in Congress when he served on an appropriations subcommittee on which the current President was the ranking Republican.

In their new posts, according to Mr. terHorst, Mr. Hartmann and Mr. Marsh will act as advisers to the President, "undertaking whatever assignments the President cares to give them."

Mr. terHorst, the third appointee of the last few days, took a leave of absence from The Detroit News to help the President "reorganize the

press office."

Unlike Ronald L. Ziegler, Mr. Nixon's press secretary, whose background was in advertising, Mr. terHorst has been a newsman since he joined The Grand Rapids Press in 1946.

"It's the only thing I've ever done all my life," he said, emphasizing that at some point he hoped to return to newspaper work.

Meanwhile, the 52-year-old Mr. terHorst has already started trying to heal the wounds left from the old battles between the White House press corps and Mr. Ziegler, who also held the rank of Assistant to the President.

There is no evidence that Mr. terHorst will occupy anything like Mr. Ziegler's role as a Presidential adviser,

but as a former member of the White House press corps himself, he appears eager to remove the points of friction that have existed for years.

It's a small thing, but yesterday when the daily briefing was delayed for more than an hour, Mr. terHorst kept apologizing and explaining that because of his newness to the job he just wasn't ready. When briefings were delayed in the days of Mr. Ziegler, the press corps was usually given no explanation.

Among other key members of the former Vice-Presidential staff who have made the move to the White House but have not been given new titles as yet are L. William Seidman, Warren Rustand and Richard T. Burress.

Mr. Seidman, a bald, wiry lawyer and accountant from Grand Rapids who worked in the abortive Presidential campaign of former Gov. George Romney of Michigan in 1968, was brought into the Vice President's office last February.

A management expert, he was put in charge of bringing order to that operation. Now he is playing a similar role at the White House, sitting in on meetings of the transition group.

Mr. Rustand, 31, once played basketball for the San Francisco Warriors and headed an investment analysis concern in Tucson, Ariz., before coming to Washington last August as special assistant to the Secretary of Commerce.

In December, he joined Mr. Ford's staff as scheduling officer. At the moment, in the White House, he is described as being in charge of the President's "minute-to-minute schedule."

Mr. Burress, a former agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was counsel to the Republican leadership in the House from 1965 to 1969. He then became a deputy counsel and deputy assistant to President Nixon, and more recently he had been Mr. Ford's Congressional liaison man.

At the moment he had no official role at the White House but is said to "be doing many things for the President."

A more important figure without portfolio at the

White House is Philip W. Buchen, Mr. Ford's old friend and law partner from Grand Rapids. In discussing his closest advisers, Mr. Ford always includes the 58-year-old Mr. Buchen, who is executive director of the Domestic Council Committee on the Right of Privacy, a post to which he was named by Mr. Ford, who headed the committee as Vice President.

Like Mr. Seidman, Mr. Buchen has been sitting on some meetings of the transition group, which includes Mr. Marsh, former Congressman and Gov. William W. Scranton of Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton and Donald M. Rumsfeld, Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

There has been speculation that some members of the transition team will play important roles at the Ford White House. Others mentioned frequently are among those the new President usually includes with Mr. Buchen when he lists his closest advisers aside from his staff.

They are Melvin R. Laird, former Secretary of Defense and an old Congressional colleague of Mr. Ford; John W. Byrnes, another former Congressman who was ranking Republican on the Ways and Means Committee; Bryce N. Harlow, a former aide to both Presidents Eisenhower and Nixon, and William G. Whyte, assistant vice president of the United States Steel Corporation.