

The President Gets Away From It All; Goes Fishing as Return to Capital Nears

AUG 30 1971

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON
Special to The New York Times

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., Aug. 29—The man in the maroon blazer sat in the noon-day sun on the deck of the 85-foot yacht Mojo as the ship trolled unsuccessfully for marlin off Santa Catalina Island in the placid Pacific. He was Richard M. Nixon. The President was on vacation.

Since he assumed office 31 months ago, Mr. Nixon has rarely had an opportunity to get away from the diplomatic brushfires and domestic confrontations that inhabit the White House.

As a matter of fact his spokesman, Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, does not concede that Mr. Nixon is currently like son many millions of other Americans, on something of a two-week late summer holiday.

Tranquility in Evidence

Officially Mr. Nixon is said to be dividing his days between leisure activities in and around La Casa Pacifica, his ocean view home in San Clemente, and more formal duties in the prefabricated metal frame building nearby that serves as the Western White House.

But before Mr. Nixon came to San Clemente on Aug. 19, his engagement calendar, which normally calls for "work and rest" at the Western White House, was said to have prescribed merely "vacation."

And the unaccustomed tranquility is evident. Only

two senior members of the White House staff—H. R. Haldeman, the chief of staff, and Henry A. Kissinger, the President's assistant for national security affairs—remain on duty here.

With Mr. Nixon on his overnight cruise were C. G. Rebozo, the Miami entrepreneur who is a personal friend; Manolo Sanchez, the President's valet; Comdr. Craig Campbell, an unobtrusive naval aide, and Victorio de la Cruz, the chief White House steward. They were joined later by another guest—Paul Keyes, producer of the "Laugh-In Television show.

Fallout from Mr. Nixon's international economic moves was consuming the attention and efforts of much of the bureaucracies in Washington and other world capitals. An argument over domestic aspects of the new economic policy flared between the Administration and organized labor. United States troops in South Vietnam were on alerts that kept them off the streets while the American ambassador in Saigon, Ellsworth Bunker, was hurriedly consulting with President Nguyen Van Thieu and Mr. Thieu's disgruntled political opponents.

While all that was happening, Mr. Ziegler on three occasions started his daily briefing for White House correspondents by declaring that he had nothing to say. The correspondents took 30 minutes or so of questioning to determine each time that he meant it.

The bulletin board in the

temporary press room contained four items one day: a notice that President Nixon had gone swimming at Red Beach; and invitations to newsmen and their families to visit Disneyland on Friday, take in a professional football game on Saturday and participate in a pickup softball game on Sunday.

Mr. Nixon was said to be occupying much of his private time reading books and background materials on China in preparation for his visit sometime before May to Peking. Asked for a list of publicly available documents being studied by Mr. Nixon, Mr. Ziegler replied that the President had declined to provide such a list.

'Same Pattern'

"The President will be following basically the same pattern next week as he has this week," Mr. Ziegler said yesterday. That means, he added, doing some work on the budget for fiscal year 1973, consulting with Mr. Kissinger on foreign policy, reading on China and "thinking about policy directions for the future."

Is it urgent reading? "No, he's not doing urgent reading, not at all," responded Mr. Ziegler.

Soon Mr. Nixon's hiatus will be over, though, and no one was heard here to begrudge him the rest. Less than a week after Mr. Nixon returns to the capital Friday, Congress will do the same, from an even longer recess. Opportunities for another vacation will be unlikely before the elections of November, 1972.