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**Nixon at 60: Quiet and Contemplative**

By JOHN HERBERS

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 9— President Nixon quietly observed his 60th birthday today in continued silence and isolation so far as his conduct of the Vietnam War is concerned.

But if aides who have been in close touch with the President and who usually reflect his views are any indication, Mr. Nixon feels deeply that he has been unfairly attacked, at home and abroad, for his Christmas season bombing of the population centers of North Vietnam.

Aides who have been close to the President have been saying for the last few days, publicly and privately, that the November landslide election was a mandate for Mr. Nixon to conduct the war and negotiations as he feels he must without sniping by Congress and his critics.

This impression was reinforced by Mr. Nixon's meeting on Friday with Congressional leaders in which he said he was determined to do what he thought was necessary to achieve "the proper kind of settlement."

On Sunday, Herbert G. Klein, director of communications for the executive branch, said on the National Broadcasting Company's televised "Meet the



Associated Press

President Nixon at the White House on his 60th birthday

Press" that "the President had a very clear mandate to proceed in the way that he has on Vietnam." This theme has been repeated over and over in the White House.

At the same time, a number of White House aides are reported to be somewhat surprised and fascinated by the degree of isolation that Mr. Nixon has imposed on himself since the election, beginning

with long November stays at Camp David and continuing into the New Year.

Yesterday, Mr. Nixon agreed to an interview with Helen Thomas of United Press International and Frances Lewine of The Associated Press, with questions restricted to the subject of his becoming 60.

It was largely a monologue. Continued on Page 18, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5 with the President observing that de Gaulle, Churchill and Adenauer were strong leaders at advanced age but with no revelation of the President's inner feelings at this stage of his Presidency.

At a White House briefing today, Sarah McClendon, reporter for The El Paso Times and other papers, asked if Mr. Nixon could not go beyond "froth" and express at least "a birthday wish."

"It's his birthday," replied Ronald L. Ziegler, the President's press secretary. "He can express what he wants to."

The mood of Presidential isolation was further reinforced by Mr. Ziegler's disclosure that Mr. Nixon would not deliver his State of the Union Message to Congress in person. Mr. Ziegler said it would be submitted in writing because it would closely follow his inauguration speech on Jan. 20.

President Woodrow Wilson began the precedent of delivering State of the Union Messages, required by the Constitution, in person to a joint session of Congress. Mr. Wilson's precedent has been broken twice, by President Eisenhower in 1956 because of illness and in 1961 when he was going out of office.

**A Sign of Aging**

Some who have visited the President regularly since his inauguration in 1969 say the only clear sign of aging is more gray in his black hair. In the present Vietnam crisis, they say that he seems somewhat more remote. Today, he held office hours as usual, receiving a large bouquet of "Forever Yours" red roses from his staff. "Sixty of them," Mr. Nixon said as a group of visitors were shown into the Oval Office. "Do you know how much red

roses cost?" He had asked his staff not to send him gifts.

In the afternoon, Mr. Nixon received a six-foot-high birthday card from Boy Scouts in the Washington area. Tonight, he was honored at a small White House family dinner, also attended by a circle of close friends, including Charles G. Rebozo, the Florida developer, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Abplanalp of New York. The cake was topped with red, white and blue icing and was inscribed, "Happy Birthday R.N."

Mr. Nixon noted in his interview yesterday that at 20 he was a junior at Whittier College who tried but never made the football team, at 30 during World War II he was a Navy lieutenant, at 40 he had just been elected Vice President and at 50 he had recently been defeated in his race for Governor of California.

**Air of Suspense**

Now, at 60, he has just been re-elected to a second term by one of the greatest Presidential landslides in history. But because of the Vietnam War an air of suspense, and uncertainty heightened by the President's silence, permeates the White House.

What is going on in the President's mind has become a guessing game in Washington, in and out of the White House. One former White House aide, who still has ties there, said he could detect a case of "post-election blues" to which Mr. Nixon has admitted in the past and which involves staff changes and dreary work after a victorious campaign.

Painful staff shuffles, part of the President's pledge to cut down on the large White House hierarchy he has built up, were evident today.

Mr. Ziegler, the press secretary, appears to be emerging as the unchallenged chief spokesman for Mr. Nixon's second term. Earlier, high White House sources put out reports that Mr. Klein, who has served as communications director for the White House, would soon be leaving to return to private life and Mr. Ziegler would assume Mr. Klein's duties, as well as his own.

Mr. Ziegler denied that there had been any struggle for power between himself and Mr. Glein, that the office created for Mr. Klein four years ago would remain, the President had asked Mr. Klein to stay on and that he, Mr. Ziegler, did not intend to take it over even when Mr. Klein left. Mr. Klein has acknowledged that he does not expect to stay for the full term.

Nevertheless, Mr. Ziegler acknowledged that the two communications offices were being reshaped, and he implied that he would have an expanded role in the Administration that would include overseeing some aspects of public information offices in the executive departments and agencies.

Mr. Ziegler today also added three more names to the list of officials returning to private life—Robert C. Moot, Assistant Secretary of Defense as Comptroller; Barrq J. Shillito, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Installations; and Robert A. Frosch, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.