

An Anguished Farewell

BETWEEN Chairman Mao and Leonid Brezhnev there was an empty space last week at Madame Tussaud's waxworks. The figure of Richard Nixon, which had stood in the spot until ten days ago, was now in storage because Mr. Nixon "no longer occupies a relevant position," said Tussaud officials in London.

The real Richard Nixon and his family (with the exception of Julie and David Eisenhower, who stayed behind in Washington to supervise the packing) were now in San Clemente, where they had flown immediately after the outgoing President's farewell speech to his cabinet and staff.

Florist trucks trundled through the gates of Casa Pacifica (as the Nixons had named their seaside estate), delivering "Welcome Home" wreaths and bouquets from San Clemente neighbors, 5000 of whom had gathered at the nearby El Toro air base to greet him at the end of his final journey in the presidential jet Spirit of '76.

"This great plane that took us to China, to Russia on two occasions, to the Midwest, this great Spirit of '76 has got to be long remembered because of those trips," said Mr. Nixon as he disembarked.

'We Love You'

Some of the airport audience carried signs reading "We Love You, PRESIDENT Nixon," with the word President underscored. But Casa Pacifica's presidential trappings were fast disappearing.

The press corps was operating without an established headquarters, briefing room or special communications facilities; the once-efficient switchboard was understaffed. Mr. and Mrs. Nixon would have lifelong around-the-clock Secret Service protection wherever they lived or traveled, but at 3 a.m. Monday the Coast Guard withdrew the cutter which had maintained ocean surveillance of the shoreline during the Nixon presidency.

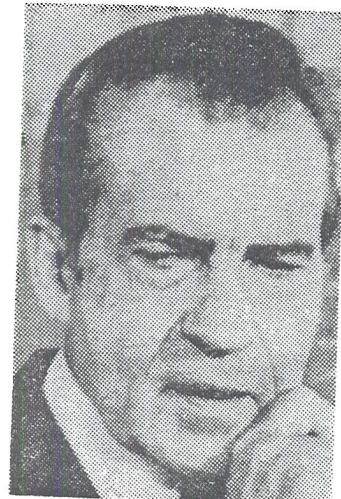
"We are very private people now," said an aide.

Over the Midwest

Richard Nixon was above the clouds somewhere over the Midwest at 11:35 a.m. Friday, August 9, when his formal transition to private status took effect with the delivery of a one-sentence letter to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Washington.

"Dear Mr. Secretary," it read, "I hereby resign the Office of President of the

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AP Wirephoto

THE LAST SPEECH

United States. Sincerely,
Richard Nixon."

The terse note of resignation culminated a week of mounting tension and 15 hours of unprecedented history. At nine o'clock the night before, while some 140 million Americans watched and listened on television and radio, the 37th President of the United States (making, as he noted, his 37th address from the Oval Office of the White House) had announced his intention of resigning.

His speech made no direct

'Those who hate you don't win un- less you hate them'

mention of his apparent involvement in the two-year Watergate nightmare or of the belated release of tapes, less than two weeks ago, which seemed to confirm his active participation in covering up the scandal at the same time he had been publicly denying knowledge of it.

'No Political Base'

Nor had he referred to his probable impeachment by the House if he remained in office, and the likelihood of conviction and removal by the Senate — where Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep-Ariz.) estimated Nixon supporters had withered to 15 after the latest taped revelations.

Instead, the outgoing President told the nation: "I no longer have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continu-

ing" the effort to complete his term. "To leave office before my term is completed is opposed to every instinct in my body," he said. "But as President I must put the interests of America first."

'Process of Healing'

Mr. Nixon urged "the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America," and added: "I regret deeply any injuries that may have been done in the course of the events that led to this decision (to resign). I would say only if some of my judgments were wrong — and some were wrong — they were made in what I believed at the time to be in the best interests of the nation."

Once he had reached his decision, according to White House aides, his mood had become "serene." In private, however, he had reportedly broken down in "naked anguish" with old congressional friends just before making his historic address. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house," said Michigan Senator Robert Griffin, the minority whip.

And in taking leave of his cabinet and staff the following morning — his final public appearance as President — Mr. Nixon controlled his emotion at times with difficulty as he reminisced about his parents and took out his glasses to read a quotation from Theodore Roosevelt on the death of Roosevelt's first wife.

'Good Plumbers'

"I only wish that I were a wealthy man," said Mr. Nixon.



AP Photo

THE LAST GESTURE AS PRESIDENT

on. "At the present time I've got to find a way to pay my taxes." (By resigning rather than risking congressional eviction from office, he would be entitled to an annual presidential pension of \$60,000, plus up to \$96,000 annually for office expenses.)

At another point he declared: "This country needs good farmers, good businessmen, good plumbers . . ." He had insisted that not one man or woman in his administration had ever feathered his private nest "at the public expense or the public till." (And before a final promise to the assembly that "always you will be in our hearts and . . . in our prayers," he had delivered some advice: "Never be petty. Always remember others may hate you but those who hate you don't win unless you hate them — and then you destroy yourself.")

Then, escorted by Mr. and Mrs. Ford, the Nixons had walked outdoors and down a red carpet to a waiting helicopter. Mrs. Nixon was plainly fighting back tears. But Mr. Nixon looked almost exhilarated. At the top of the helicopter steps he turned to the well-wishers below, smiled broadly and for the last time as chief executive raised both his arms in his familiar V-sign gesture.

'I'm Home'

A few hours later as he landed at El Toro and announced "I'm home," he said: "America came into the world 200 years ago for the purpose of making the whole world come closer to the dream of peace . . . Having completed one task doesn't mean we're going to sit in the marvelous California sun and do nothing. I am going to continue to work for peace among all nations."

And according to a Gallup survey released four days ago, a 54 per cent majority of Americans approved of his international accomplishments. But in the same poll only 26 per cent had given him their overall approval: His rating had slid an unprecedented 42 percentage points from its high of 68 per cent 18 months ago.