



AP Wirephoto

GERALD FORD RETURNED HOME TO WATCH PRESIDENT ON TV
He is expected to speak to the nation today

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Ford Praises Nixon for His 'Personal Sacrifices'

Washington

Vice president Gerald Ford praised President Nixon last night for "one of the greatest personal sacrifices for the country and one of the finest personal decisions on behalf of all of us as Americans."

Ford vowed to continue the President's foreign policy and announced that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has agreed to stay on during the new administration.

"I pledged to you tonight, as I will pledge to you tomorrow and in the future, my best efforts in cooperation, leadership and dedication to what's good for America and good for the world," he said.

After watching Mr. Nixon on television with his family, the vice president stepped

outside into a slight drizzle at his suburban split-level home in Alexandria, Va., to face television cameras and photographers assembled in the street and about 100 cheering neighbors.

Speaking without notes or a prepared text, Ford pledged to continue the Nixon foreign policy and called the secretary of state "a very great man" whom he has known for many years.

On domestic policy he said that he had been "very fortunate in my lifetime" to have adversaries in the Congress but said that he did not think he had "a single enemy" there.

President Nixon had cited in his resignation address his lack of support in the Congress as one of the major reasons for his resignation.

"The net result is that I think tomorrow I can start out working with Democrats and with Republicans in the House as well as in the Senate to work on the problems — serious ones — which we have at home."

Ford began his remarks with no jubilation or pride

Back Page Col. 1



UPI Telephoto

Vice President Ford and President Nixon met yesterday in the Oval Office at the White House

FORD PRAISES NIXON 'SACRIFICES'

From Page 1

but instead expressed his feelings of regret at what had come to pass in the Watergate affair that brought on the first presidential resignation in U.S. history.

"This is one of the most difficult and very saddest periods and one of the very saddest incidents I've ever witnessed.

"Let me say that I think the President of the United States has made one of the greatest personal sacrifices for the country and one of

the finest personal decisions on behalf of all of us as Americans by his decision to resign as president of the United States."

Thus Ford, who never sought this nation's highest office and disclaimed any intention of seeking it after Mr. Nixon's term found himself on the eve of becoming the 38th President of the United States.

The ceremony was set for noon today in the east room of the White House where Ford is to raise his right

hand and "solemnly swear" to faithfully execute the office of the President and protect and defend the Constitution.

And thus he will become the first President to serve without a vote of the American people. He was appointed by Mr. Nixon when Spiro Agnew resigned as vice president.

Ford's aides announced that Chief Justice Warren E. Burger was flying back from a vacation in London to administer the presidential oath.

His aides had said earlier that he probably would make a broadcast speech to the nation tonight. House Republican Leader John Rhodes said Ford would address a joint session of Congress on Monday.

An aide said the vice president ate dinner shortly before watching the speech on television. The aide quoted Ford as saying afterward, "It was the finest speech that Richard Nixon ever delivered."

New York Times