

Nixon, Khrushchev: Two ways to fall

Associated Press

President Nixon's departure from office, contrasted with that of the topmost Soviet leader 10 years ago, illuminates the vast gulf between the political systems of the two superpowers.

On October 12, 1964, Nikita Khrushchev lazed luxuriously in the brilliant sunshine of a Black Sea resort. It was a routine break from the day-to-day governmental drudgery of Moscow. Khrushchev that day made a television appearance that showed him a relaxed and confident leader, secure on his pinnacle of power.

In Moscow, leading figures of the ruling Politburo and military leaders who had been out of town returned suddenly in response to an urgent summons. A secret meeting of the top inner circle would be held, without the presence or even the knowledge of the leader himself.

Two nights later, just before midnight, came the coup. The most powerful

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Nixon assured of pension and benefits

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No matter what legal troubles he may have in the future, former President Nixon will receive \$156,000 a year for life in pension and allowances for his 5½ years of White House service, regardless of any future legal difficulties.

He would have lost the benefits had he been removed through impeachment.

Nixon will draw a \$60,000 annual pension, receive up to \$96,000 a year for staff assistance and be provided free office space.

His wife, Pat, would be entitled to a \$20,000 pension — should she survive him.

The benefits were established by Congress in 1958.

man in the Soviet Union was out of office, informed to his surprise that it was "at his own request." Overnight, to the shock of the world, a new regime ruled one of the two mightiest superpowers.

The obvious contrasts with the way the head of the other superpower has just left office tells an impressive story. The drama of Richard Nixon's departure unfolded, act by act, with the inevitability of Greek tragedy toward its denouement before the eyes of a spellbound world.

The Nixonian fall was a

gradual Goetterdaemmerung, a twilight of what had been a community of immensely powerful figures. The machinery of republican democracy, conceived two centuries before by the nation's founders, had dictated the outcome.

No such machinery exists in any totalitarian system. When a government under so-called proletarian dictatorship falls, a machinery of naked power struggle comes into play. Khrushchev was brushed aside by his own men near the top, just as he in his time brushed aside other powerful men: Malen-

kov, Molotov, Kaganovich and others.

When the government of Hungary was changed in 1956 and when the government of Czechoslovakia was changed in 1968, the issue was decided not by any constitutional process but by Soviet guns.

Khrushchev at the Black Sea resort had seemed a man without a worry in the world. Millions saw him on television congratulating three cosmonauts just hurried into space, and he had bubbled with enthusiasm and confidence.

Khrushchev's top Politburo

lieutenants and some military men had concluded his activities were harmful to national interests: his political war with China, his backdown in the Cuban missile crisis, the agricultural failures and such prolegues as taking off his shoe in the United Nations to bang tempo for what a watching world had been seen as a shockingly boorish demonstration.

Once the Politburo and military leaders decided their course, the next step was to make it look legal. They did so by summoning into session the Communist central committee to rubber stamp the decision by a show of hands. Leonid Brezhnev became party chief, Alexei Kosygin premier. Khrushchev would be unceremoniously ejected from both positions.

When Khrushchev returned to Moscow from the Black Sea he found himself, to his astonishment, under house arrest.