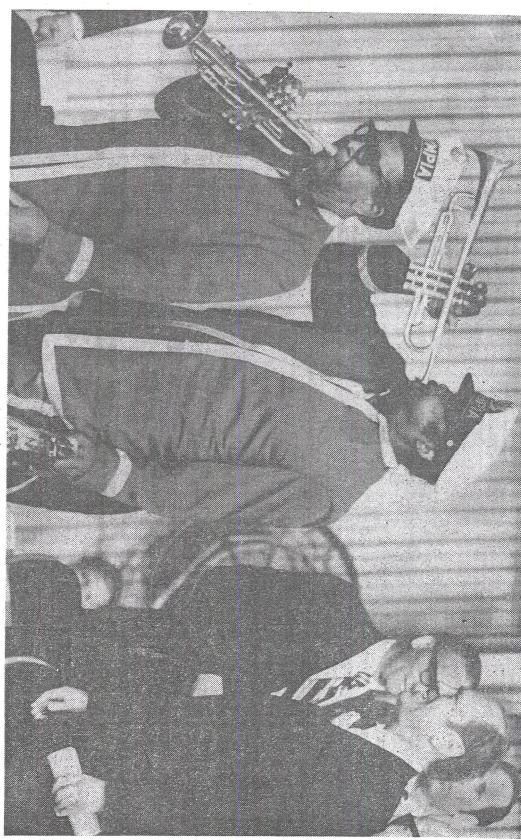
Ford Sticks to Safe Themes in Southern Swing



Ford follows, Olympia Brass Band to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In" on arrival for dedication of a New Orleans terminal. Associated Press

stuck to safe and familiar PENSACOLA, Fla., May Washington Post Staff Writer By George C. Wilson President Ford Rouge, and Pensacola bein New Orleans, Baton fore friendly if not enthusichose to strike in remarks shoring up his President and his Republican Party.

13—Vice

Republicans. So today it was Ford the politician acquiring political capital — not Ford the Vice President ing of Democrats, not fellow all three places at the urg-Ironically, he traveled to

sharing, pride in countrythe beleaguered President. no mention of Watergate or though the South today with themes in a political swing

National defense, revenue

those were the notes Ford

astic audiences.

forced to answer questions Apparently to avoid being of President

long day of traveling. press conferences during a Nixon, Ford shunned any on Watergate and possible mpeachment

dent has changed his relatraveling with Ford since last fall said the Vice Presi-Reporters who had been since

> structured one. tionship question approach to a more within the last few days from an easy, answer-anywith press

the President's Watergate about the possibility that protested afterward to some Russians—publicity that Ford did not welcome. Ford troubles might weaken his hand in dealing with the Ford was quoted last week

remarks along those lines to be off the record. newsmen that he considered

related problems if possible. The Vice President, who stick to safe subjects specialized in military affairs while a member of the try to avoid Watergate and From now on, if today roves typical, Ford will if toda and

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Ford Uses Safe Themes

FORD, From A1

House Armed Services Committee, feels comfortable speaking about those matters and did so repeatedly today.

"Strength brings peace, and military strength continues peace," Ford told his audience in New Orleans. "We must maintain that military capability so that others respect us."

The occasion was the dedication of a new terminal building at the Port of New Orleans in the district of Committee Chairman F. Edward Hebert (D-Lia.). Hebert accompanied Ford from Washington and sat on the platform with an approving look as Ford spoke about the need for military strength.

At Baton Rouge he addressed a joint session of the Louisiana state legislature and the need for "a strong national defense to detered aggression."

He also pleaded with the lawmakers to look at "what is right in America.

"I do not come before you today as the Vice President of a nation suffering from the plagues of slavery, pestilence, famine, revolution, or war," he continued.

"That we have seen problems in our time is without question. But more importantly it is my belief that when the historians of the ebb and flow of power in America write about these times from a quieter future vantage point, they will record that some great deeds have been done and some great goals have been accomplished."

Ford said that power is flowing back from the federal government to the states, where it belongs.

He also hailed progress in bringing peace to the Mideast "through the genious of our Secretary of State," but he did not mention Mr. Nixon in that connection.

And without mentioning Watergate, Ford said, "Our institutions have not lost their ability to move forward in solving our nation's problems. Our institutions are sound; they are strong; and our course is steady and our cause is just."

At Pensacola, Ford toured the Naval Air Training Center and was briefed there on world naval strategy before attending a Chamber of Commerce dinner.

Louisiana's Democratic Gov. Edwin W. Edwards hosted the Vice President when he addressed the Democratic-dominated state legislature at Baton Rouge. U.S. Rep. Robert L. F. Sikes, a Democrat whose district includes the Pensacola Navy base, persuaded Ford to attend the Chamber of Commerce dinner.