

Prestige of Ford's Old Allies to Rise

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The elevation of Gerald R. Ford to the presidency is likely to enhance the prestige and power of several of his long-time political aides and allies on Capitol Hill.

For much of his 25 years in Washington, Mr. Ford has been depending on men like Sen. Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.), Rep. Albert Quie (R-Minn.), Rep. Elford Cederberg (R-Mich.) and Rep. Barber B. Conable Jr. (R-N.Y.) for advice, help and a reading on the "feel of things" on Capitol Hill. House and Senate insiders believe he

will continue to rely on them, giving them an input into presidential decision-making.

But the betting is that, while he will seek their advice and be open to their ideas, he won't try to turn his administration into a government of cronies, or ignore the congressional leadership in favor of his long-time personal friends.

And there is virtual unanimity that with his wide contacts and long experience as a House leader, Mr. Ford will enjoy generally good working relationships with Congress and avoid some of the needless hostilities that poisoned relations

between the Nixon White House and Capitol Hill.

Griffin and Quie, along with then-Rep. Charles Goodell (R-N.Y.) helped engineer the 1965 political coup that ousted Rep. Charles A. Halleck (R-Ind.) as House GOP leader in favor of Jerry Ford.

Griffin is perhaps Mr. Ford's closest adviser and confidant among political officeholders. During the presidential crisis of the past six months, he continually consulted with Mr. Ford, and he is already in the thick of things in the new administration.

Griffin is the only member of Congress sitting in

daily on White House "transition" meetings to help make the shift from the Nixon regime. A former Griffin press aide from Michigan, Jack Hushen, has moved from the Justice Department to the White House press staff.

The Ford elevation could pay handsome dividends for Griffin. Already assistant Republican leader of the Senate, he is more or less in line to move up to leader when Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) steps down. (Scott will be 76

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Labor faces a President whose record is considered unfavorable. Page A8.

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in 1976 when his Senate term expires, and it appears possible he won't run again.) Griffin might still face a challenge from John Tower (R-Tex.) or some other senator for the top post. But now his relationship with Mr. Ford, probably makes him a heavy favorite.

Although Griffin is far and away Mr. Ford's most intimate political associate in the Senate, the new President has had better-than-casual relationships with many other senators, among them. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), chairman of the Armed Services committee, and Hugh Scott. For more than two years, before he became Vice President, Mr. Ford as House minority leader met weekly with Scott and a handful of staff aides to coordinate House-Senate GOP business and legislative plans.

In the House, Mr. Ford is close to GOP Leader John J. Rhodes of Arizona as well as Quie, Conable, other GOP leaders, and Michigan Republicans like Elford Cederberg and William S. Broomfield.

Mr. Ford's other close friends in the House are in three groups: the Appropriations Committee where he served for many years; the round table in the House restaurant where he used to lunch regularly with associates, and the Chowder and Marching Society, a group of members who came in at the same time a quarter-century ago.

Among close Ford associates from these groups are Reps. Glenn Davis (R-Wis.), Clarence (Bud) Brown (R-Ohio), Samuel L. Devine (R-Ohio), William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.), Appropriations

Committee Chairman George H. Mahon (D-Tex.) and Robert L.F. Sikes (D-Fla.).

Mr. Ford also has a high regard for House GOP Conference Chairman John B. Anderson (R-Ill.), although Anderson is generally considered more liberal.

Over the past year, Mr. Ford, Rhodes and Quie, plus former Wisconsin Congressman and Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, have been meeting in the House GOP leadership office once a week at 11:30 a.m. for what an aide called "a serious half-hour of prayer and ethical discussion."

Speculation that the new chief executive might try to shove aside the existing congressional party leaders and maneuver Griffin, Quie and other intimates into leadership posts is dismissed by most Capitol Hill insiders. Nor will he simply ignore the present leaders.

For one thing, that would throw away the long, close relationships with Scott and Rhodes.

Moreover, as a former leader himself, Mr. Ford knows how brutally divisive and destructive any leadership contest can be, and how much the members would resent ham-handed presidential intervention in something that many consider a private matter of Congress.

As President, he needs unified and enthusiastic GOP support all down the line, and few think he would risk losing it by trying to dictate a change in leadership.

What insiders envision is something entirely different from any switch in leadership. They believe Mr. Ford will operate through the existing structure, making his wishes and legislative positions known at meetings

with Scott, Rhodes and House GOP Whip Les Arends (R-Ill), and depend heavily on their advice as to the congressional moods and voting lineups.

But in addition, having always listened to a lot of people's views and then sifted through them to form his own opinion, Mr. Ford will continue to use Griffin, Quie, Conable and others whose judgment he trusts as added personal advisers. These men will thus have an extra input into the President's thinking, but they won't play any obvious divisive role as out-front "power brokers" in conflict with the House and Senate leadership. No favored congressional princelings will be wheeling and dealing with the President behind everyone else's back.

The whole prospect that emerges is in some contrast to the 5½ years of the Nixon regime. Mr. Ford, with his 25 years in Congress and his low-keyed open personality, knows an enormous number of people on Capitol Hill. He can pick up the phone any time and reach a powerful chairman or party leader.

That wasn't true of former President Nixon, who had spent only six years in Congress, didn't have long-established working relationships with many members, and tended to talk to them in more formal meetings and hold them somewhat at arm's length.

H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, the White House watchdogs, tended to shield him from direct intimate contact with members of Congress, issuing what members in many cases felt were imperious demands for loyalty and truckling to Mr. Nixon.

During the Nixon regime, also, there were many dark mutterings from various White House sources about possible political "purges" of Republican senators like Charles McC. Mathias (Md.), Mark O. Hatfield (Ore.) and Clifford P. Case (N.J.) who opposed Mr. Nixon on major policy issues. In the end, the White House didn't attempt to move against these men and probably President Nixon himself had never intended to—the mutterings were simply from hatchetmen lower down the line. But there was a resultant poisonous and divisive atmosphere.

Also during the Nixon regime, there was a tendency to work with individual "loyal" senators outside the leadership and use them as spokesmen on occasion. This seriously damaged party unity.

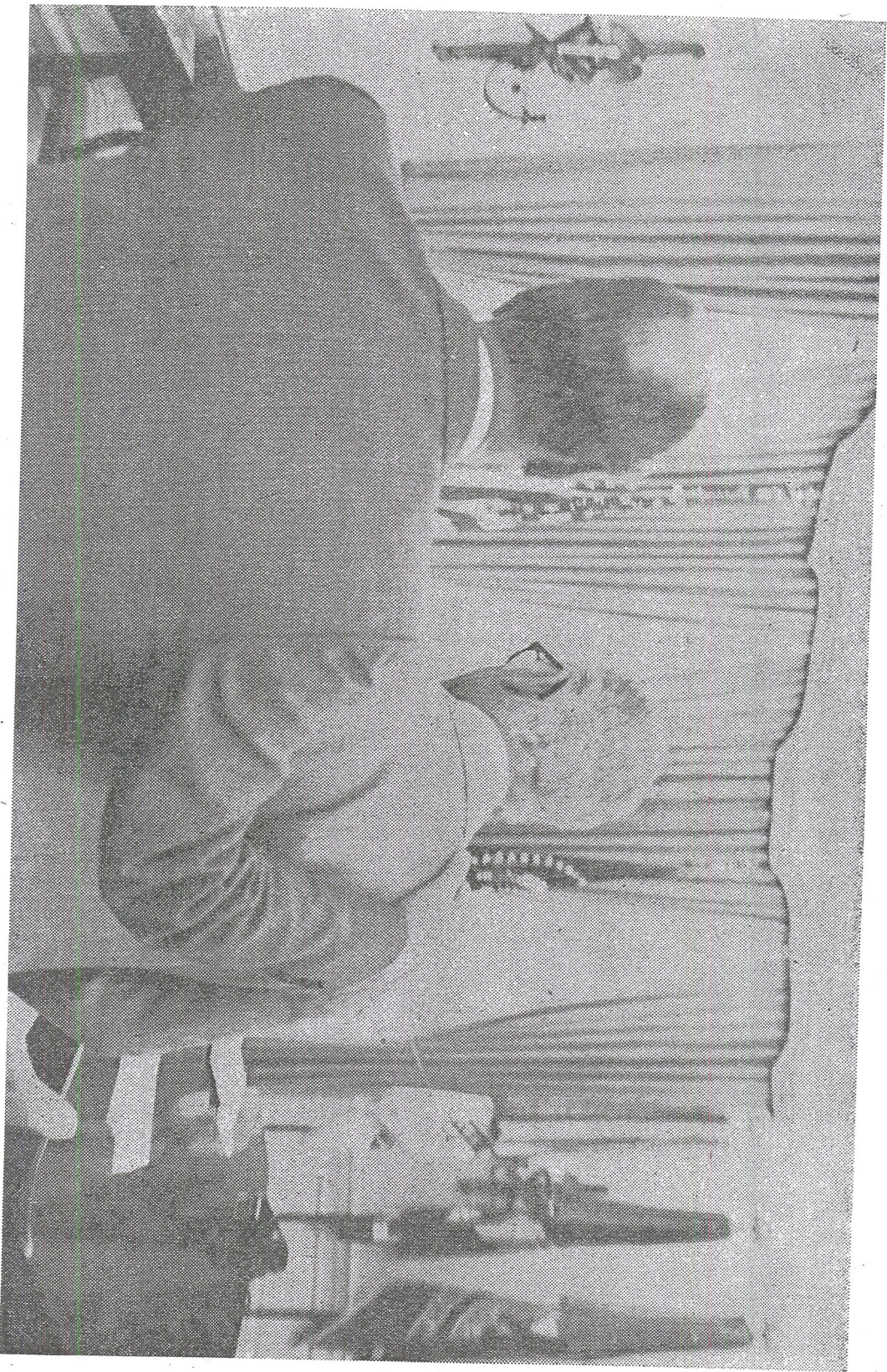
Such developments aren't likely in the Ford administration, because Mr. Ford understands that the GOP's diverse elements can't always hew to single party line. For example, he campaigned for the re-election of Rep. Paul N. (Pete) McCloskey (R-Calif.) although many in the Nixon White House hated McCloskey for opposing Mr. Nixon in the 1972 party primaries and criticizing his stand on the war.

"You just watch Jerry work," said a long-time friend and admirer in the Senate. Recalling the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, he said, "The best congressional relations we've had around here in generations was LBJ. But I think Jerry will do every bit as well and, because he is low-key, maybe a bit better."



President Ford tends to business in the Oval Office during the first week of his presidency. Another picture, related stories on A8.

Official White House Photo by David Hume Kennerly



President Ford has a private conversation with Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.) in the Oval Office of the White House.

White House Photo

After more than a week, desk empty except for feet and phone (see second picture, too);
bookshelves empty; wastebasket also empty to the extent visible. What it takes to be
President of the U.S. This is the Oval Office.