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'Anxiety' Report
Prompted Ford

By Lou Cannon

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The sudden, abrupt nature of President Ford's decision to pardon Richard M. Nixon was determined largely by reports that the former President was in a depressed and anxious emotional state, sources close to Mr. Ford said yesterday.

One informed source said that J. Fred Buzhardt, the former White House counsel handling Watergate affairs, conveyed to Mr. Ford after a trip to San Clemente, Calif., that Mr. Nixon was in "a considerable state of anxiety."

Senate Minority Whip Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.), one of the President's closest congressional associates, said that concern about Mr. Nixon's mental and physical health was a key factor in the decision.

Another Ford associate said that the timing of the President's decision, rather than the decision itself, was based on reports that Mr. Nixon was "highly emotionally agitated."

This source said that Mr. Ford acted against the recommendations of various aides and associates, including Robert Hartmann, his longtime personal aide in the House of



By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

Crowd outside Pittsburgh hotel where Mr. Ford spoke protests Nixon pardon.

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Representatives a White House counselor.

Unlike White House press secretary J. F. terHorst, who dramatically quit Sunday with a statement that he could not support the decision, Hartmann apparently was one of a select few aides or associates who knew of the pardon in advance.

One source said that Alexander M. Haig Jr., the hold-over White House staff chief who was known to favor a pardon, did not know about the decision until after it was made.

The list of those who did know, in addition to Hartmann, included Philip W. Bu-

chen, the President's counsel; and Benton Becker, a Washington attorney who last Thursday conveyed news of the forthcoming pardon to Mr. Nixon's staff at San Clemente. Others who were consulted by the President apparently included his old friend Melvin R. Laird, Griffin and Buzhardt.

W. Clement Stone, a major Republican Party fund-raiser and Nixon supporter, spent the Labor Day weekend at San Clemente and subsequently conferred with Presi-

dent Ford. However, a spokesman for Stone denied that the Chicago multimillionaire had served as an emissary between Mr. Ford and the former President. He said that Stone was unaware that a pardon would be forthcoming.

The decision also caught unaware most high-ranking Republicans in Washington. Rep. John J. Rhodes (R-Ariz.), the House minority leader, said he was advised by Mr. Ford last Thursday, when both of them were in Philadelphia, to await an important announcement Sunday but was not told what it was. *LS SER*

The decision also surprised former Nixon associates in California, such as Robert Finch and Herbert G. Klein.

Until Becker sat down with former White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler and Nixon lawyer Herbert J. Miller at San Clemente last week, it had been the expectation of the Nixon staff and of the former President himself that he would be indicted. According to persons in a posi-

tion to know, Mr. Nixon did not believe that he would be pardoned until after indictment.

Instead, the President decided to act, according to White House sources, after he received legal research from Buchen which convinced him that it would be difficult for Mr. Nixon to receive a fair trial.

The President "reached a conclusion that President Nixon couldn't get a fair and speedy trial," Griffin said, and "was faced with the decision of moving now or waiting through some indefinite period of time."

The clincher on the timing, apparently, were the reports from people who had seen Mr. Nixon about his health. Mr. Ford alluded to this in his for-

mal statement of pardon, when he said:

"It is common knowledge that serious allegations and accusations hang like a sword over our former President's head and threaten his health as he tries to reshape his life," Ford said.

"In general, persons who saw Mr. Nixon when he first returned to San Clemente were more concerned about his emotional state than those who saw him within the past week.

Paul Presley, owner of the San Clemente Inn, chatted with him for 30 minutes a week ago and said "he looked super." F. Donald Nixon, the former President's brother, saw him at about the same time and said that he was "in good health and good spirits."