

Rep/ Ford Picked for Vice President;
Nixon Ordered to Surrender Tapes

Quick Approval Seen

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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President Nixon turned to Congress last night to pick House Republican leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan to succeed Spiro T. Agnew as Vice President of the United States.

The nomination of Ford, which the President said will be sent to Congress today, is expected to be confirmed with a minimum of delay and little opposition.

In making the dramatic announcement before members of the Cabinet, leaders of Congress and members of the diplomatic corps at a ceremony in the East Room of the White House, the President urged Congress to confirm Ford "as expeditiously as possible because of the great challenges we face at home and abroad."

The peace "we have worked so hard to build . . . is now threatened because of a new outbreak of war in the Middle East," the President said in his brief address, which was broadcast to the nation by radio and television.

Ford, 60, is a Nebraska native who was reared in Grand Rapids, Mich. He was elected to Congress in 1948 and has been easily re-elected every year since. He has been the House Republican leader since 1965.

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resigned as he pleaded no contest to a charge of evading income taxes in 1967, when he was governor of Maryland.

In his brief speech, Mr. Nixon made no reference to Agnew or why he was acting to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of his two-time running mate.

Potential Democratic and Republican presidential candidates campaigned against the nomination of men like former Treasury Secretary and Texas Gov. John B. Connally, Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York or California Gov. Ronald Reagan on the grounds that the President, by picking one of them, would in effect be trying to dictate his successor.

Asked about the 1976 campaign, Ford said, "I have no intentions of running for President or Vice President."

Asked if he had told the President that, Ford said he had done so last night after he was chosen.

Although his comment does not completely take him out of the running, much less so if he should succeed to the presidency before Mr. Nixon's term ends, Ford's ability as a national campaigner remains to be tested.

Democrats particularly seemed to be delighted that no obvious heir apparent was nominated, and for Republicans the field still appears to be wide open.

Mr. Nixon's secret was extremely well kept. Although Ford's name had been mentioned as a possibility, chief attention centered on Con-

Ford is known as a genial, hard-working legislator, a strong friend of business and a loyal Nixon supporter. He told reporters after last night's announcement that he did not know he had been chosen until 7:30 p.m., an hour and a half before the President spoke.

The President had told him earlier in the day that he was under consideration, but not until Alexander M. Haig Jr. telephoned his home was he told of the President's decision.

"I am very pleased to notify you and your wife that the President will nominate you to Congress to be Vice President of the United States," Haig said.

"I am very honored," Ford replied, and his wife, on another telephone, said: "This is wonderful."

Speaker of the House Carl Albert (D-Okla.), who is next in line for the presidency until a Vice President takes office, said he was told of the decision 5 or 10 minutes before Mr. Nixon spoke.

Reaction to the announcement on Capitol Hill was favorable, with Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) echoing the sentiments of many when he said "because of his character and integrity he is a choice I can support without reservation."

The President's decision to nominate Ford came only two days after Agnew

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nally, Rockefeller, Reagan and Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.). There was a report late yesterday that the President had decided on Gov. Linwood Holton of Virginia.

In a veiled reference to Watergate and the turmoil caused by the Watergate investigation, the President said that "at this particular time it is vital that we turn away from the obsessions of the past and turn to the

great challenges of the future.

"This is a time for a new beginning for America, a new beginning in which we all dedicate ourselves to the tasks of meeting the challenges we face, seizing the opportunities for greatness and meeting the dangers wherever they are, at home or abroad."

The President listed three criteria that guided him in his choice. First, he said, the nominee "must be qualified to be President." Second, he must be one "who shares the views of the President on the critical issues of foreign policy and national defense." Third, he must be an individual "who can work with members of both parties in Congress."

Ford had entered the East Room with other leaders of Congress; he was not seated in a conspicuous place. When the President said he had picked a man who had served 25 years in the House, the audience rose and applauded, with Ford remaining seated.

Mr. Nixon laughed and said, "Please don't be premature. There are several who have served 25 years in the House."

When the President said he "proudly" presented Ford for nomination as Vice President, the audience again rose and applauded.

After the President presented him to the audience in the White House and on radio and television, Ford, speaking gravely, said he was "deeply honored," "extremely grateful" and "terribly humble."

He pledged that if confirmed "I will do my utmost to the best of my ability, to serve this country well and to perform those duties that will be my new assignment, as effectively and as efficiently and with as much accomplishment as possible." self-loo

He said that he had "with pride" supported the administration's policies at home and abroad.

Speaker Albert said that when he and Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield of Montana conferred with

the President shortly after Agnew resigned Wednesday, he asked the President if he could make a suggestion.

The President said he knew of Albert

knew Albert would recommend, and name Ford. "That's right," the speaker replied, emphasizing that Ford will have no difficulty being confirmed.

"I think I was the first congressman to tell the President that Jerry would be easier to sell to the House of Representatives than anyone else," Albert said.

In Texas, former Treasury Secretary Connally, whose name led the lists in speculation for the past two days, said he had not been offered the job. He said Ford "is an able leader, a man of integrity and dedication with a long record of distinguished service to his party and the nation."

George Willeford, chairman of the Texas Republicans, said: "I think that if John Connally has presidential aspirations, the President did him a great favor in not asking him to join the administration at this time."

After an enthusiastic reception in his honor at the White House, President and Mrs. Nixon shook hands with the Fords and went upstairs to their private apartments. The Fords were then nabbed by the press and the congressman and his wife, Betty, told the story of the day's excitement.

Ford said that he had seen the President in the morning, but at that time the only thing the President said to him was, "The man I nominate for Vice President will get a call from General A. Haig tonight."

"Looking back on it," said Ford, "I probably should



Rep. and Mrs. Ford accept congratulations from President and Mrs. Nixon after announcement of Ford's nomination to be Vice President.

Photos by HARRY NALTSCHAVAN—The Washington Post

have taken it as a hint, but at the time it passed me by.' The call came to Ford's home after he had had a swim and was eating a steak prepared by his daughter, Susan, 16.

His private telephone rang, his daughter took the call and summoned him to the phone. It was the White House operator who said that President was calling him. The President said to him, "General Haig has something to say to you."

When Haig came on the line and said to Ford, "Do you want Mrs. Ford to hear what I'm going to tell you?"

Mrs. Ford was upstairs on their other telephone, which has an extension, talking to their son Michael, 23, who was calling about radio reports that his father was to be nominated for the vice presidency. Mrs. Ford was saying she didn't know a thing about it although she had been swamped with calls from radio and television people all day long.

Finally, Ford got his wife off the phone from their son and got the call from Haig switched so that both of them could hear the news.

Senate Minority Leader

Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania said last night he had not known earlier in the day when reporters asked him if it would be Ford and he shook his head negatively.

Scott explained that he took that view because the President told him it would be a "surprise" announcement.

As usual when the President faces a crucial decision, he flew alone to Camp David, Md., late Thursday to get his thoughts in order and to make preparations for the historic announcement, the first time a President has nominated a Vice President under the 25th Amendment.

Mr. Nixon spent Thursday evening at Camp David going over suggestions that had poured into the White House from throughout the country.

Although the President obviously had been thinking for days if not weeks about the choice he would make, the decision was made early Friday, Ziegler said.

On Thursday evening, the President narrowed the choice to five men, Ziegler said. He would not name them.

The President arose at 6:30 a.m. and was back in the White House at 8:30 a.m. when he told his staff he had made a decision and would announce it to the nation in a televised report from the East Room.

Shortly after returning to the White House, the President summoned Scott and Ford to separate meetings with him. Scott told reporters that the President said he nominee is one whose name "may not leap to mind."

That led many observers to believe that a dark horse would be chosen. Yet some persons thought then that it might be Ford because he flowed Scott into the President's office. Normally, they would have conferred with the President at the same time.

The following reporters contributed to this story: John P. MacKenzie, Mary Russell and Dorothy McCordie.