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Editorials

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America Sizes Up A New President

NEWLY CATAPULTED INTO an office which one of his ablest predecessors, Thomas Jefferson, pronounced to be one of "splendid misery," President Gerald Ford confidently informed his fellow Americans last Friday: "Our long national nightmare is over."

He did so in a few brief words which he offered as "Not an inaugural speech, not a fireside chat, not a campaign speech, but just a little straight talk among friends." It was a simple, quiet, direct talk, empty of oratorical eloquence but full of conviction, fortified no doubt by the fact that he was indeed among friends — fellow Congressmen with whom he had served for years, who like him, who confirmed him as vice president, and who have, Democrat and Republican alike, publicly displayed a disposition to assist him in carrying the heavy burden he did not seek.

HE HAS ASSURED these friends that he will share his views on national priorities with them and solicit their views; and that is a most welcome sign that an era of good feeling may now replace the sniping and open warfare that has prevailed between the White House and the Capitol.

He has declared himself a "dyed-in-the-wool internationalist," sought and received Henry Kissinger's agreement to remain as Secretary of State, and brought the ambassadors of 59 nations into the White House to hear the Secretary's assurance that U.S. foreign policy will not be changed.

MR. FORD'S MOST ANXIOUS and immediate problem will be to find good advice on how to fight inflation. Not much of that has been evident around the Nixon White House lately. But with Mr. Ford in command — and he is already looking like a man who takes charge — there may be some hope for a plan of attack.

A fortuitous fact working for Mr. Ford is that all but 38 Congressmen facing the voters in November are experiencing great relief at avoiding having to stand up and vote on impeachment. Spared that, it's likely they will, instead, be critically judged on how they have supported the new president between now and November 5. This political fallout should help him in launching his program.