

COURIER FLIGHTS TO NIXON HALTED

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Ford Orders Suspension—

Ex-President Gets Secret
Data 'by Other Means'

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 25—

President Ford has suspended special courier flights carrying secret briefing documents to former President Richard M. Nixon, the White House announced today.

However, Mr. Nixon will continue to receive such documents by some other means of transmission, according to Ron Nessen, President Ford's press secretary.

Suspension of the courier flights would appear to mark the latest in a series of moves by the White House to downgrade existing links with the former Nixon Administration.

Further evidence of this came today when it was announced that Raymond K. Price Jr., a special consultant and speech writer for Mr. Nixon, had resigned from the White House staff, effective Nov. 8.

Mr. Price, who wrote Mr. Nixon's resignation speech, has divided his time between the Nixon estate in San Clemente and the White House since the resignation of the former President.

But while Mr. Ford is obviously intent on gradually severing ties with the former Administration, no abrupt break appears imminent.

A Liaison Designated

While not saying so publicly, White House officials have intimated that Mr. Nixon, as a former President, might possess knowledge essential to President Ford in making certain policy decisions.

It was disclosed today that John O. Marsh Jr., a counselor to the President, had been designated as liaison between the White House and Nixon aides in California.

Mr. Marsh said that his role was to serve as "contact point" for matters involving transition from the Nixon to the Ford Administrations. These matters, he said, include such things as phasing out employees now assigned to the Nixon staff and working with Congress on funding for the former President under existing laws.

Mr. Marsh said that neither

he nor any of his staff had conferred with Mr. Nixon. His principal contact, he said, has been Ronald L. Ziegler, who was Mr. Nixon's press secretary.

The last courier flight carrying secret documents to Mr. Nixon was on Oct. 11, Mr. Nessen said today. He said that materials were sent to Mr. Nixon "by other means" last Friday. 18 OCT

Coded Messages Used

It was learned from other sources that the secret data, principally foreign policy documents, were now being sent to Mr. Nixon by means of coded messages transmitted over military communications circuits.

The weekly courier flights of military planes between the White House and Mr. Nixon's estate in California began days after Mr. Nixon resigned on Aug. 9.

The existence of the arrangement became public in mid-September when it was disclosed that Julie Nixon Eisenhower, the former President's daughter, had flown from Washington to California on board one such flight.

White House officials said at that time that it was standard practice for past Presidents to be briefed, chiefly on international policy matters, on a regular basis. They said that such briefings were given to Lyndon B. Johnson and Harry S. Truman after they left the White House.

When asked about the propriety of the briefings since Mr. Nixon had resigned from the Presidency when he was under threat of impeachment by the House, a White House official replied, "He is still a former President."

In announcing the new arrangement today, Mr. Nessen said that the special courier flights were suspended "while the White House explores alternate methods of providing the former President with briefing materials."

In a response to a question, Mr. Nessen said that the suspension had been ordered by President Ford, but he declined to say why the order had been issued.

Mr. Nessen also said, in response to other questions, that the President and Mr. Nixon had not talked by telephone in recent weeks; that Mr. Ford had not had any direct report on the state of Mr. Nixon's health since the former President was readmitted to the hospital this week; and that Mr. Ford had no plans to visit Mr. Nixon during a campaign trip to California late next week.