Ford & Congress: the gap widens

By Norman D. Sandler
Washington - At the beginning of every session, legislative leaders here talk of reform and a refreshing new wave of "congressional resurgence."

The 94th Congress is no different. But this year the situation has changed. Congressional leaders are not only talking about reform - reform is taking place.

The first victims of the move are Capitol Hill war heroes, Wright Patman, D-Tex., and F. Edward Hebert, D-La., chairmen of the House Banking and Currency and Armed Services Committees respectively.

The ouster of Patman and Hebert - symbols of the House of Representatives' archaic seniority system - have been attributed by many of the new "young" freshmen congressmen, reacting en masse to traditions within the House which they believed to be outdated.

But the new sentiment that is setting in on Capitol Hill was not brought about by the resignation of two old-time colleagues. It will be setting in on the nation's legislature, which they believed to be out-of-date.

The new sentiment that is setting in on the nation's legislature was expressions of how successfully congressional activists are working their magic.

Energy and the Economy

Ford's most immediate problem is convincing Congress of the viability of his newest energy/economic game plan, despite the fact that even his closest advisors remain divided over proposals sent to the House last week and others announced earlier this month.

Characteristic of the attitude of Capitol Hill were comments by Rep. Al Ullman, D-Ore., new chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

"We're not going to be boxed in by his proposals," Ullman said last week prior to a meeting of the committee, during which he grilled Treasury Secretary Simon on the administration's combined tax rebate - fuel rate hike strategy.

The committee moved to prevent Ford's increase in crude oil import tariffs from taking effect, making a presidential decision (please turn to page 8).

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News Analysis

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