

NYM/2092003/41

FINANCIAL
TIMES

20/1/93

Clinton's last day as president in waiting

By Jurek Martin in Washington

AT NOON today Mr Bill Clinton becomes the 42nd president of the US. Yesterday he spent a few quiet moments on a cold morning at the grave of the man who inspired him to take up a political career, President John F Kennedy.

Mr Clinton, his wife Hillary and about 20 members of the Kennedy clan placed white roses on the graves of the two assassinated Kennedy brothers. He read the inscriptions on their tombstones, but said nothing.

He hardly needed to, because it is the stuff of legend (and captured on film) how, just four months before Kennedy was killed in Dallas in 1963, the gangly 17-year-old youth from Arkansas, as a member of the American Legion's Boys Nation, shook hands with the president at the White House.

There is an additional symbolism to the tribute. At 46, Mr Clinton is three years older than JFK when he assumed office, yet both represent the ascent of a younger generation of Americans to the seat of power. It is more than likely that Mr Clinton will again invoke the example and memory of his idol when gives his inauguration speech today.

Most of Mr Clinton's last full day as a president-elect had a youthful theme. He took his customary morning jog and later was to attend a couple of galas mostly for the young. He interspersed this with a lunch for the governors of the 50 states, "our laboratories in democracy", he told them.

Elsewhere, serious business was afoot, with new US bombing raids over northern Iraq and evidence of dissent from members of the US-led coalition forces. On



President-elect Clinton prays at the grave of John F. Kennedy

Capitol Hill, more confirmation hearings for his cabinet nominees were under way.

At least from Congress there was good news for Mr Clinton. The Senate foreign relations committee unanimously approved Mr Warren Christopher as secretary of state, the necessary prelude to confirmation by the full Senate, probably later today. Mr Mickey Kantor, named to be trade representative, got a similar blessing from the finance committee.

The judiciary committee heard

an apology from Ms Zoe Baird, the attorney general-designate, for having employed two illegal aliens. More to the point, its senior Republican, Mr Orrin Hatch of Utah, said the incident was no disqualification to her serving as head of the justice department.

Aides to Mr Clinton promised that as many as 100 sub-cabinet level appointments would be

Continued on Page 14
Rallying call, Page 4