

# Crisis and Its 'Exquisite Agony,' M

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The President did not have to describe how it felt, a public man caught in the crucible of an epic political crisis, forced to explain himself before the national audience of television.

Richard Nixon has been there before. "Exquisite agony," he once called it.

"When a man has been through even a minor crisis," Mr. Nixon wrote some years ago, "he learns not to worry when his muscles tense up, his breathing comes faster, his nerves tingle, his stomach churns, his temper becomes short, his nights are sleepless.

"He recognizes such symptoms as the natural and healthy signs that his system is keyed up for battle. Far from worrying when this happens, he should worry when it does not."

More than anything else, more than ideas or programs or personality, crisis is the mark of the man's public career, a measure which he popularized himself in his memoirs of the 1950's, "Six Crises."

"Crisis can indeed be agony," he wrote. "But it is the exquisite agony which a man might not want to experience again—yet would not for the world have missed."

Doubleless, Mr. Nixon does not at the moment

feel quite as philosophical

about his present crisis. His two most trusted, most powerful associates resign in scandal, the White House counsel fired, the Attorney General compromised. The house-cleaning will be followed by grand jury action, by more public inquiry, and probably by more recriminations among the Nixon men themselves over who launched the illegal espionage in last year's presidential campaign and who covered it up.

This one is enormous beside all the others. It is more threatening than any of the other temporary episodes, large and small, from which Mr. Nixon emerged each time larger and more successful than before, a rare political resilience that is being tested once again.

By his own recounting, Mr. Nixon's career was studied by dramatic moments of crisis—his expose of Alger Hiss in 1948, the "Nixon Fund" scandal of his 1952 campaign for Vice President, the suspense of President Eisenhower's heart attack and the suggestion that Mr. Nixon would be bumped as a second-term running mate, the mobs that stoned his car in Caracas in 1958, and his hair-line loss to John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential race.

Since he wrote that book, the man has been in major

crises at least three or four times more. In 1962, he lost his "cool" after defeat in the California governor's race and lambasted the reporters at his "last press conference."

A few years later, after his stunning political comeback had made him President, Mr. Nixon was facing global crisis, notably when he launched a U.S. invasion of Cambodia in the spring of 1971 and when he ordered the mining and retaliatory bombing against North Vietnam last year. In both instances, he was bombarded by hostile public reaction, but the controversy never reached its current peak.

Even if Mr. Nixon's national television address stirs a swell of public sympathy, as his famous "Checkers" speech did in 1952, the remainder of his term will still be marred by the tangle of courtroom action surrounding Watergate. And his reputation will be hauled by the question that once seemed wildly impertinent: What did the President himself know?

Haldeman, Ehrlichman et al stayed notably close to the Oval Office in every important decision. Mr. Nixon himself once remarked to reporters in early 1971, the year when his re-election campaign was being planned: "When I am the

candidate, I run the campaign."

That tantalizing quotation has been dredged up lately and will likely be explored further in the political gossip, no matter how convincing Mr. Nixon's actions seem to the general public.

In the past two weeks, his behavior had followed the familiar pattern of past crises, at least according to what little is known of it. He drew back to himself in isolation, consulted a very few close and long-trusted associates, then sweated out his decision in singular privacy.

This past weekend was spent at the presidential retreat, Camp David, where he was accompanied by his personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, and a speech writer, Raymond K. Price. Others—including the men who were about to make their exit—visited briefly. The President however, drafted his remarks himself.

One of the men he turned to for counsel last weekend was Secretary of State William P. Rogers, a friend and lawyer who has been a trusted sounding board in several other great personal trials of the Nixon career. Rogers was chief counsel for the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee in 1948 when Nixon, a young congressman from California, asked his advise on whether to pursue

the Alger Hiss case, a case of Communists in government which eventually catapulted Nixon to national prominence. Rogers encouraged him to push on in the exposure.

Rogers was also close-by in 1952 when Nixon, as Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's running-mate on the Republican national ticket, was accused of maintaining a secret slush fund, financed by millionaire contributors. As the political steam gathered behind the charges, the GOP vice presidential candidate asked Rogers what his public reaction should be.

"Let them shoot their wad first, then give it to them," Rogers responded, a strategy which might also have been applied to the Watergate crisis.

In the 1952 campaign, the tempest over his private fund was a six-day sensation which developed with such fury that Nixon was momentarily stunned. The Democratic innuendo was that Nixon was "selling" his performance as senator to private fat-cats. The fund, used for political expenses, only involved \$18,000 and Nixon dismissed it as a "left-wing smear" until Gen. Eisenhower himself and his top advisers expressed concern. The Republican ticket, Ike said, must be "clean as a hound's tooth."

Like other crucial mo-

ments in his career, the episode involved Nixon's belief that certain newspapers were trying to do him in politically. In his book, he noted that The Washington Post and the now-defunct New York Herald-Tribune simultaneously called for his resignation from the GOP ticket.

"I could shrug off a demand for my resignation by a paper like The Washington Post," Mr. Nixon explained then. "The Post has been consistently critical of

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# Nixon's Statement on Resignations

*The text of President Nixon's statement announcing the resignations of Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and White House aides H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and John Dean:*

I have today received and accepted the resignation of Richard G. Kleindienst as Attorney General of the United States. I am appointing Elliot L. Richardson to succeed him as Attorney General and will submit Mr. Richardson's name to the Senate for confirmation immediately.

Mr. Kleindienst asked to be relieved as Attorney General because he felt that he could not appropriately continue as head of the Justice Department now that it appears its investigation of the Watergate and related cases may implicate individuals with whom he has had a

close personal and professional association. In making this decision, Mr. Kleindienst has acted in accordance with the highest standards of public service and legal ethics. I am accepting his resignation with regret and with deep appreciation for his dedicated service to this Administration.

Pending Secretary Richardson's confirmation as Attorney General, I have asked him to involve himself immediately in the investigative process surrounding the Watergate matter. As Attorney General, Mr. Richardson will assume full responsibility and authority for coordinating all federal agencies in uncovering the whole truth about this matter, and recommending appropriate changes in the law to prevent future campaigns

abuses of the sort recently uncovered. He will have total support from me in getting this job done.

In addition, I have today accepted the resignations of two of my closest friends and most trusted assistants in the White House, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman.

I know that their decision to resign was difficult; my decision to accept it was difficult; but I respect and appreciate the attitude that led them to it.

I emphasize that neither the submission nor the acceptance of their resignations at this time should be seen by anyone as evidence of any wrongdoing by either one. Such an assumption would be both unfair and unfounded.

Throughout our association, each of these men has

demonstrated a spirit of selflessness and dedication that I have seldom seen equaled. Their contributions to the work of this Administration has been enormous. I greatly regret their departure.

Finally, I have today requested and accepted the resignation of John W. Dean III from his position on the White House staff as Counsel.

Effective immediately, Leonard Garment, Special Consultant to the President, will take on additional duties as Counsel to the President, and will continue acting in this capacity until a permanent successor to Mr. Dean is named. Mr. Garment will represent the White House in all matters relating to the Watergate investigation and will report directly to me.