

# Nixon's Mood Stirs Anxiety: Some Find Him Distraught, Others Say His Spirits Are High

By JOHN HERBERS

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 14—A White House official who recently saw President Nixon expressed concern the other day that Mr. Nixon seemed to be committed to a hard-line defense of his Administration in the Watergate scandals.

At a rigid stance, the aide said, could foreclose the reconstruction he believes necessary for the President to accept responsibility for the worst of his actions.

Outside the Government, however, great wealth and power are being drawn to the Bay Area. New York to the Bay Area. Carsons in Washington, who form a kind of mid-level government, and have been on the telephone asking one another one unanswered question: "What is the state of mind of Richard M. Nixon?"

### Two-Fronted Defense

These two instances point up the extent of the anxiety in Washington as Mr. Nixon after a long period of silence and hours of lonely contemplation at the mountaintop at Camp David, prepares to make his defense in the Watergate case. He will appeal for public support in a nationally broadcast address at 8 o'clock tomorrow night and will issue a document by his lawyers seeking a day to rest for allegations made before the Senate Watergate committee.

The audience of Mr. Nixon's address is expected to be composed of people who have seen him and talked with him, is ambiguous. To some, he has appeared worried and distraught. To others he seemed in remarkably good spirits, considering the circumstances. Mr. Nixon remains a very private man who rarely conveys his feelings even to those associates.

However, after five months of public disclosures of White House involvement in Watergate and related matters, the following clear tendencies have emerged.

The President has gone through several periods of anxiety and frustration, expressed in occasional outbursts to members of his staff about charges that he considers irresponsible. His associates insist he has come out of the worst of it and is now in a philosophical mood as he prepares his defense.

He has not shown any of the kind of physical and mental deterioration displayed by previous Presidents, such as Wilson and Harding, when under great stress. A Democratic Senator who saw the President in mid-July and again a few days ago said, "On both occasions he looked all right.

He did seem rather nervous and tense, but he did not look fatigued. He looked rested."

His tendencies toward seclusion, his restless search for retreats away from Washington and his preference for making his own decisions without advice from independent minds have increased in the Watergate period.

The belief that political enemies of the Administration, Democrats and some Republicans, are using the Watergate charges to thwart the President's efforts to carry out the policies he was elected to achieve has increased among White House aides, presumably with Presidential encouragement.

Some long-time White House servants and associates say his refusal to compromise on the release of tape recordings of his conversations with former White House counsel John W. Dean Jr. and his plan for desegregation in the

Watergate charges are making small, unimportant, and little things lead the President's mood as one of the temptations to fight to the bitter end for his position. In this position he had previously considered.

Some think he could pull out of it. For a long time Nixon friends and campaign workers have asked that his name not be used. But if under a this way to go, it could be done.

A lack of hard information about what has been going on since Mr. Nixon's aide has identified the search for clues. Some who have talked to the President described him as worried and distraught. To others he has seemed in remarkably good spirits, considering the circumstances. He has been seen to change from day to day.

However, one Nixon associate said that the stress Mr. Nixon had undergone over the five-month period was much greater than his aides would admit. There are the following bits of evidence to bear this out:

An associate dining with the President, and his family one evening noted that the dinner was marked by the most awkward kind of silence.

At rare public appearances in the last few weeks—with the Soviet leader, Leonid I. Brezhnev, in San Clemente and in greeting crowds in Illinois and Florida—the President's countenance bore expressions of intense pain in unguarded moments, according to several observers.

In San Clemente in July, in the presence of staff members, the President angrily de-

nounced newspaper attacks about what he considered the fair charges of the expending of public funds on his vacation homes, and on another occasion the failure of his May 27 statement on the Watergate case to quell criticism of his role in the matter.

Visitors to the President's office have reported, on occasion, a mood of irritation and brooding that they have previously noted in the President.

### Seems More Withdrawn

Over the five-month period, the President has appeared to become more withdrawn as he has pondered the charges. He has been seen to make overtures to thought after the departure of his aide, John D. Ehrlichman, and to the President's close aide, Henry Kissinger. In the Watergate case, he was seen to talk with John B. Corbin, who is thought to be a close adviser in May in Washington. But the Nixon family closings were reported, and Mr. Corbin left the White House.

### Draining in Melvin R. Laird

as domestic adviser and Paul Barlow as counsel in an effort to widen the Administration's political base did not change Mr. Nixon's habit of conferring chiefly with his closest subordinates—Gen. Alexander Haig, Ronald D. Reagan, who still carries the title of press secretary although he has given up daily meetings with the press, and Rose Marie Woods, his long-time personal secretary.

The President seems at ease with people like Laird and Barlow, said a Nixon associate.

His frequent meetings with Henry A. Kissinger, his chief foreign policy adviser, are businesslike and unrevealing as to Mr. Nixon's personal thoughts, according to several sources.

Mr. Nixon still has long meetings with his close friend, Charles G. Rebozo, the Florida businessman, who was a recent guest at Camp David, but no

one pretends that Mr. Rebozo advises Mr. Nixon on Government policy.

The President's trips away from the Washington White House have increased. In the five-month period the President has spent five long weekends at Key Biscayne, 25 days at San Clemente and most weekends at Camp David. He has recently made several trips to Camp David at midweek and has gone on a number of even-

ing excursions to Camp David each week.

### Officers Disclose

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