

SECURITY MAR 5 1976

Nixon Writes About Why He Resigned

Washington

Richard Nixon resigned the presidency lest a "weak" political base in Congress and a protracted impeachment trial by the Senate "deprive America of the leadership it needed," he has written in his first published explanation of his resignation in 1974.

In forewords to the two final volumes of public papers of his presidency, just published by the National Archives, Mr. Nixon virtually disregarded the allegation of criminal and constitutional wrongdoing on which the House of Representatives was preparing to impeach him when he resigned.

In the 1974 volume, Mr. Nixon wrote that his first and second administrations had made "real progress — sometimes slow but always sure — towards achieving" his proclaimed goals of world peace and "rebirth of responsive and responsible government at every level in this country."

The charitable accounts of his own tenure suggested, as did Mr. Nixon's recent journey to China, that after exiling himself to his home in San Clemente, he began trying to rehabilitate the image that history will have of his White House years.

"All the events of this year were played against the ever-darkening background of Watergate," Mr. Nixon wrote of the months preceding his emotional departure from the White House on Aug. 9, 1974. He continued:

"Effective leadership is a prerequisite for great people and a great nation, and by August it was clear that whatever its eventual outcome, a protracted trial of the President in the Senate would deprive America of the leadership it needed. It was also clear that my own political base in Congress had become too weak to accomplish the important things that needed to be done in America and in the world during the remaining two years of my administration.

"Therefore, on August 9, in the second year of my second term, I resigned as President of the United States."

The two volumes together contain many of the documents — from transcripts of Watergate tape recordings to a record of speeches and news conferences denying any wrongdoing — that ultimately led to the first resignation by an American President.

Beyond acknowledging, in the forward to the 1973 volume, that some documents "reflect the mistakes and judgements of the way I dealt with Watergate," Mr. Nixon made no reference to the substance of the accumulated charges against him.

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