

President Viewed As Man in Anguish

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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The Watergate crisis, in the opinion of some of Richard Nixon's friends, has caused him far more personal anguish and torment than White House pronouncements have implied.

Some of them think he has been on the verge of resignation—and still may resign.

Others describe him as "philosophic," combative, and optimistic.

The fact that their judgments vary, that they have different impressions of the President under pressure adds to the mystery of how the President has and will respond to this present crisis.

"I can tell you," said one old friend last week, "that he has been desperately worried." This man—who didn't want his name used—said Julie Nixon Eisenhower accurately described the President's emotional state when she said recently that her father has seriously considered resigning because of his present troubles.

Mr. Nixon's own philosophy about troubles was outlined in his 1962 book, "Six Crises." He didn't enjoy a crisis, he said, and added:

"We tend to think of some

men as 'born leaders,'" he wrote of his pre-presidential crises. "But I have found that leaders are subject to all the human frailties; they lose their tempers, become depressed, experience the other symptoms of tension. Sometimes even strong men cry."

To get behind the image of the unruffled, disciplined leader which White House spokesmen have depicted,

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FRIENDS, From A1

The Washington Post interviewed a number of old friends of the President in an attempt to understand this very private man through their eyes.

All were asked to speak on the record, and many of them did. A few insisted that their names not be used.

They were not in total agreement that the President has suffered terribly during the crisis, but the overwhelming majority said he had. One of them, Charles McWhorter, who served as a Nixon aide when he was Vice President and has been a loyal supporter since, still does not rule out the possibility of a resignation.

"Yes, I can see him resigning if a situation develops where his ability to govern is seriously undermined," McWhorter said. "But that is in the future."

The others interviewed argued that Mr. Nixon is the kind of person who would never resign under fire.

While all the friends spoke of the "suffering" and "unhappiness" and "bitter disappointment," the President has been through, everyone said that he had the physical stamina to stand up under the weight of his burdens.

"Physically, he has a helluva lot of stamina and drive," said Ralph de Toledano, a biographer, friend and supporter. "Emotionally, he's a real brooder, I'm sure this hurts him a great deal. He would be unhappy about what it does to his family.

"I suspect he's doing a lot of brooding. I also suspect he's examining every scrap of paper and preparing a real legal brief. But I'm sure he's suffering."

"He's become even more isolated," one friend who declined to speak on the record said.

Not many of the old friends claim that they have seen him lately. Only one remarked during the interviews that "the President telephoned me ves-



MURRAY M. CHOTINER

... Nixon "comes out fighting"

terday." Mr. Nixon spoke emotionally about how everything was Watergate, Watergate and he couldn't even get his staff to think or talk about anything else, the friend said.

"It's been mental torture," he added.

Murray M. Chotiner, who has known the President intimately and worked with him in all his California and Presidential campaigns, said: "I would say he would be most unhappy with what's happening. But he manages to ride most things out, and I would say that he will this time."

"By now, I would say he is probably finding himself and is ready and willing to fight back. He's the kind of fellow you can't push into a corner; he comes out fighting. He would rather have peace, but he won't take things lying down."

As do other friends, Chotiner describes the President as "a shy man."

"He's more of an introvert than an extrovert," Chotiner says. "He doesn't like crowds. I've often said that if he could see the American people in groups of 20 at a time he'd get 98 per cent of the vote. I've seen him go into a meeting of 15 or 20 people, many of them hostile, and win them over by his forthrightness, knowledge and sincerity."

The friends agree to a man that the President is honest, particularly on financial matters. They all assert that aides or the Secret Service or overzealous bureaucrats must be responsible for excessive expenditures on the Florida and California properties.

"He never has had any interest in money," one friend said. "Even when he was practicing law in New York he wasn't trying to make money; his mind was on politics."

"He's the most ungregarious person I ever knew, yet I never saw anyone who needed politics more. He pushed himself at all times to get ahead in politics, although he hated the public aspects."

"I'm sure the expenditures on the houses bother him a lot, but I don't think he ever gave the matter a thought. I'm sure he is financially honest, very honest. He just has no interest in money." This was from a fellow lawyer and long-time associate who has made a lot of money.

McWhorter said that Mr. Nixon was "scrupulously honest, almost to a fault" when he was Vice President.

Then how can so many charges of corruption fly about? McWhorter was asked.

"There seemed to be an emphasis in the administration on how to get results," he replied, "and there were not enough people on the staff asking whether it's right or wrong."

Another weakness at the White House was the "opposition to having independent-minded people around," he acknowledged.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers, one of Mr. Nixon's most intimate

friends during the Eisenhower years, said he was confident that the President could stand up, physically and emotionally under the Watergate pressures.

"He's conducting meetings in an orderly, structured way," Rogers said. "Obviously it is a difficult period for him."

Asked how a shrewd politician could have allowed himself to get into so much trouble, Rogers gave essentially the same answer many of those interviewed gave: concentration on foreign affairs.

In 1972, "I never detected any real concern that he would lose," the Secretary of State said. "So he was devoting a lot of time to foreign policy."

"First, he thought he would win and, secondly, he firmly believes he has a mission in life to work for peace."

"It is also true that any President after serving one term has less interest in the menial tasks of politics and more interest in the greater and more profound questions that face a President."

Chotiner also thinks the President was preoccupied with foreign affairs during the campaign. "In his own thinking, his strong point even when he was in Congress was foreign affairs," Chotiner recalls. "He was convinced it was so important that if he could make progress in foreign affairs everything else would fall into place."

"What annoys me and must be affecting him, and Pat, too, is that it is almost a crime to have the record he built up in foreign affairs being smeared by Watergate."

Earl Mazo, who helped Mr. Nixon write "Six Crises" and also wrote a Nixon biography, said that before Mr. Nixon became President politics was his life blood.

"Last year, you couldn't talk politics with him," Mazo recalled. "Oh, he would talk it a little, then he would start talking about what he had done at the summit or in Vietnam."

"Last year, he was not a smart politi-



WILLIAM P. ROGERS
... Nixon in "difficult period"

cian but a single-minded person preoccupied with foreign affairs, and he thought that was the best politics. In 1960, he made every decision down to what parade route to take, but in 1968 that bored him."

Raymond K. Price, a former newsman, the President's principal speech writer and the man working with Mr. Nixon on the Watergate defense speech he will deliver in a few days, denies that the President is moody, bitter or incensed with persons on his staff who were involved in Watergate.

Unlike the others, Price maintains that Mr. Nixon is "quite philosophical. He's seen people exploit things before."

Price also defends the President against the charge that his habits of isolation have contributed to his problems.

"I don't follow the logic of that,"

Price says. "Contacts on his part would not have affected what other people did. He could have talked to hundreds and never have found out about it (the Watergate cover-up). He thought John Dean was on top of things, and, well, I suppose he was."

De Toledano, who knew the earlier Nixon well but admittedly has not seen him in recent months, doubts that the President is altogether philosophical. "He's a pretty emotional guy," he says. "He has flashes of temper. I think he's very mad about what happened."

"He's very earnest about his responsibilities, whatever his job. I'm sure he's bitter because all he sees in the papers is Watergate."

McWhorter says: "I still get the impression that he is going to try to tough it out, and I think that is a miscalculation. There needs to be some recognition of error and candid acknowledgement of what went wrong."

"I still cannot understand why he was so upset with Daniel Ellsberg anymore than I can understand why Bobby Kennedy was so obsessed with Jimmy Hoffa. Both have the appearances of a vendetta."

"One of the first mistakes was setting up the counter-intelligence unit (to combat leaks). Once you go down that road, those things have a life of their own."

Now, working at Camp David on one of the most critical speeches of his life, the President is determined to get Watergate over with and behind him, Price says. "He's thinking through the problems it creates," Price explains. "He's trying to get above the events of the day and take a longer-range look, which is the way he approaches every problem."

As he faces the test of making his report to the people, the President is "quite confident" that he can recover from the Watergate crisis, Price reports. "I think that he's in quite remarkably good form, recognizing that this is a real problem."