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President's Staff—A Different Viewpoint
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When demands for President Nixon's resignation were at their height a few days ago, a middle-level White House aide pulled a visitor aside and expressed disbelief that any significant sector of the public could entertain the belief that Mr. Nixon should consider resigning. That was before Mr. Nixon's strong assertions that he would continue in office. The Presidential aide

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had no special knowledge of what was going on. He was simply expressing the predominant view from the White House which as usual was far different from the way the President's difficulties were perceived elsewhere.

The people who work there, with some exceptions, do not see things in the same light as do people in Congress, in the executive departments and agencies across town, in newspaper offices and on the street corners. The difference is so great that it seems to transcend a strong sense of loyalty and partisanship that characterizes the Nixon Presidency. Rather, it seems related to the mystique of the modern Presidency and particularly the way in which Mr. Nixon conducts the office.

The Cox Affair

Some who visit the White House regularly have long felt this was so. In the recent turmoil of the Watergate scandals there has been some hard evidence of it.

Around Washington, outside the White House, it had become conventional wisdom that the one thing President Nixon could not risk was to discharge the Watergate special prosecutor, Archibald Cox. Yet, after Mr. Nixon did so, it was confirmed by those who participated that no one involved expected the burst of public outrage that followed.

The day after the Oct. 20 dismissals and resignations, the President's aides seemed sincerely confident that the public would understand that Mr. Nixon had made a more than generous offer to compromise and was forced to discharge Mr. Cox for preventing it from going into effect. Two days later disbelief was so widespread that Mr. Nixon suddenly agreed to surrender the tape record-

ings he had held onto as a matter of principle.

There seemed to be genuine surprise, also, at the lack of ready acceptance of the White House explanation that tapes of two conversations were not in existence for technical reasons.

Throughout the traumas of the White House this year, Mr. Nixon's spokesmen have consistently asked supporters to accept the statements of the President and his aides on faith and seemed surprised when they did not do so.

In the spring, Ronald L. Ziegler, the Presidential press secretary, proclaimed the innocence of John W. Dean 3d, the former White House counsel who later confessed to a leading role in the Watergate cover-up, because Mr. Dean and others had said he was innocent.

In the fall, Gerald L. Warren, the deputy press secretary, told reporters they should believe there was nothing improper about the \$100,000 gift from Howard R. Hughes, the industrialist, to Charles G. Rebozo, the President's friend, because Mr. Nixon had told him there was not. No documentation was offered.

Decline in Aura

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., Republican of Tennessee who is vice chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, said at a recent seminar on the Presidency here that in the public mind much of the aura of the office had been dispelled in recent months.

As an example, he cited the conduct of members of Congress at the recent White House ceremony for the nomination of Gerald R. Ford as Vice President. Such a ceremony, he said, once would have commanded awe and respect.

"But some of the splendor of the White House was gone," he said. "They were chatty. Some were joking. Some of the jokes were rather cruel."

There is no indication, however, that the sense of majesty is gone for those who work there. Everything about the place suggests power and order: the scores of security guards, the fleets of limousines and airplanes, the reams of cables coming in daily from all over the world, the banks of the most efficient secretaries in town, the consoles of telephones and other communica-

tions, the manicured gardens, the meticulously decorated offices. Some young people who work there see themselves at the center of the universe.

Under Mr. Nixon, the command is militarily vertical. Decisions are made from memorandums and position papers rather than free-wheeling discussions. The aides with whom Mr. Nixon meets regularly appear to be more servants than advisers. People do as they are told by superiors without much questioning why.

From the President on down, the things that are viewed as important are the Nixon diplomatic initiatives abroad and efforts to institute his policies at home. At least a good portion of the scandals that have been the center of public attention are perceived as purely the result of a political vendetta by the President's enemies—an effort to prevent him from carry-

ing out the "mandate" of last year's election.

In this context, the Nixon Presidency is viewed as a viable one in which the President's words and intentions should be taken at face value. The outside view, that the Nixon Presidency is subverting the traditional American system of government, is simply given no credence.

However, because of the President's decline in public confidence, as reflected in the polls, Mr. Nixon has promised to release over the coming weeks a series of statements and information intended to clear his name.

In light of the predominant White House view, a number of people are asking whether the new effort will contain as complete a documentation as possible or another request to accept Presidential statements on faith.