

Top Nixon Aide Leaves

Washington

Frederic V. Malek relinquished his high federal post yesterday, declaring that a "supercharged atmosphere to perform and succeed" in the White House that he helped foster led to Watergate and President Nixon's downfall.

Malek, the deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, was the first top Nixon administration official to have his resignation accepted by President Ford.

A 37-year-old self-made Los Angeles millionaire who joined the administration in 1969, Malek has held a variety of jobs in the government. Most of them have involved hiring and firing federal executives and motivating them to work harder at carrying out Mr. Nixon's wishes.

So accomplished was he at the firing part that friends once offered him a hatchet as a paperweight.

In an interview in the Executive Office Building next to the White House, Malek said the pressure-cooker atmosphere he and others

helped encourage was productive in that it drove people to put in 18-hour days in the service of the taxpayers. more

However, it also "resulted in those who were not mature enough to handle it going beyond the lines of propriety," Malek said.

"I'm thinking, for example, of Jeb Magruder (deputy director of the Nixon re-election committee), who definitely crossed the line when he authorized the Watergate break-in."

Magruder is now serving a prison term of ten months to four years for his role in the Watergate conspiracy.

Malek's job during the 1972 re-election campaign included running what was called the "responsiveness" program. In a 1971 memorandum, Malek explained the purpose of the plan under the heading "politicizing the executive branch."

He wrote that it was designed to insure that day-to-day operations of government departments "are conducted as much as possible to support the President's re-election."

Critics have charged that

this resulted in lucrative federal grants and contracts being directed toward Nixon supporters and away from nonsupporters.

Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski has been investigating whether any activities of this program violated federal law.

Malek said he is confident he has no legal problem because of the program and has not even retained a lawyer to advise him about it.

As for the Nixon administration, Malek said: "At this point in time, from everything you read, everyone believes it's good he's gone...but as you look back on it, I really believe that the Nixon administration will be remembered as a very successful administration, with one major scar."

Malek said he met with President Ford last week and was invited to stay on. But, he said, he had been planning to leave for four months, and had reached an agreement to help manage the business of New York shipping and real estate magnate D. K. Ludwig.

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