

President Nixon And His Defense

NIXON



Fuller column filed W/gate, 19 Dec 73.

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NOW THAT there is once again a Republican replacement, press speculation is increasing that President Nixon might resign. The problem with such stories is that the reporters, who are writing them, haven't talked to the President.

They report he is, at the same time, both defiant and depressed. The Watergate imbroglio has put him under great strain. He is basically an introvert who tends to bottle emotions, to keep them inside. Our sources say he is beginning to show the strain. He doesn't seem to be able to shake off the gloom.

They quote him as insisting, nevertheless, that he won't quit. He believes he is still better qualified than any available successor to handle the delicate diplomatic relations with Russia, China and the Middle East.

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HE ALSO FEELS, say our sources, that he would be left defenseless without the power of the presidency. As a private citizen, he fears he would be stripped of his best protection and would be ripped to shreds by his adversaries.

Our sources also point out, although the President himself hasn't mentioned it, that his legal expenses would be astronomical if he left the White House and had to pay them himself. He now has a dozen lawyers working on his defense at the taxpayers' expense.

The legal staff is headed by Fred Buzhardt, who was borrowed from the Pentagon and still draws a \$38,000 Pentagon salary.

However, the President is reported to be unhappy with his free legal help. He feels that the White House attorneys have been outmaneuvered in court by the Watergate prosecutors.

Angrily, he has dispatched his aides to find better lawyers. They even tried secretly to recruit lawyers from the district attorney's office, which originally handled the Watergate case.

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FINALLY, the President turned to an old friend, Illinois judge John J. Sullivan, who had served with him in the Solomons during World War II. Sullivan agreed to come to the White House long enough to recruit some young lawyers and to shake up the legal office.

He established a research unit, for example, to prepare files on the dozen major Watergate problems that could develop during an impeachment proceeding. But the real problem, our sources say, is that the President has been masterminding his own defense rather than turning it over to the lawyers. He has also withheld crucial information from them until the last minute, leaving them to operate in the dark.

It won't be a very merry Christmas, our sources agree, at the White House.