

EX-NIXON WRITER FOR IMPEACHMENT

John Andrews Says Moral Leadership Is Lacking and Trust Is Abused

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 24—A former speech writer for President Nixon has called for his impeachment—the first member or former member of the White House staff to do so.

The speech writer, John K. Andrews Jr., said that impeachment "may ultimately be interpreted as a conservative action, or an action which will conserve the essence of our liberties and our democracy to bring to account a leader who has abused his trust, and I'm afraid the President has."

In a taped interview for the National Public Affairs Center for Television program, Washington Straight Talk, to be broadcast here tomorrow night, Mr. Andrews said that he had begun early in 1973 to conclude that Mr. Nixon was "extremely negligent in the kind of moral leadership I feel we need."

He resigned from the White House staff in December after serving in relative obscurity on the President's staff.

Meanwhile, Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, said today that he did not think the country could "afford" impeachment.

"It's something that will put

Continued on Page 12, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

the country through a terrible trauma," Mr. Hutchinson said on the Columbia Broadcasting System television "Face the Nation," and something that should be avoided if at possible."

Mr. Andrews told the interviewer, Paul Duke, that he had resigned because of Mr. Nixon's handling of the Watergate case. Since then, he said, he has received the silent treatment from most of his old colleagues, but no "lashing back."

The former White House aide said that he did not believe that Mr. Nixon had any criminal involvement in any of the acts involved in Watergate.

Finds Lack of Leadership

But he argued that from the time of the approval of the controversial domestic intelligence plan in 1970 through the implementation of the Watergate cover-up last year, the President "was not exerting the kind of leadership, was not monitoring the acts of his subordinates as he is obligated to do under his oath of office and his constitutional duties."

"The reaction has been to defend, to minimize the exposure, to fight ditch by ditch against giving out evidence, against giving out detailed explanations of what's going on," Mr. Andrews added. "And this to me compounds his responsibility for a great tragedy that's overtaken this country."

He said that he had therefore concluded "with terrible reluctance" that, "to let it be on record for all Mr. Nixon's successors that the public trust must not be abused," the impeachment process should go forward.

Mr. Andrews said that he spoke to the President last April 17 after Mr. Nixon made his disclosure of new developments in the Watergate case and promised to crack down. He said that the President had referred to the statement "as though it was a minor detail that he had to dispose of that afternoon."

Through Haig

Then last fall, before leaving the White House, the former aide said, he tried to put his views before the President through Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., the chief of staff at the White House. But Mr. Nixon "doesn't like that kind of thing," Mr. Andrews said, "so my opportunity never came."

Mr. Hutchinson said in his interview that he was confident the "White House is going to cooperate" with the Judiciary Committee in its investigation of impeachment. He said he based his view on Mr. Nixon's State of the Union address and on "the attitudes of his counsel."

At the same time, he said, "the President has a right to protect himself in his official capacity and his branch of the Government from improper demands on the part of either of the other two branches."